

## **CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND**

### **BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM PLAN**

#### **Program Summary**

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) mission and vision is to assist the Governor in advancing a connected economy in Florida by championing the state's economic development vision and by administering state and federal programs and initiatives, including broadband, to help visitors, citizens, businesses, and communities. DEO's Office of Broadband (Office) actively provides guidance and works with entities throughout the state to increase the availability and effectiveness of broadband Internet by utilizing mapping initiatives and the goals within The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband. DEO's Local Technology Planning Team (LTPT) initiative helps communities, residents, and service providers identify goals and projects for broadband expansion in last mile areas, especially in rural Florida. The Broadband Opportunity Program ensures DEO's goal of expanding the availability, adoption, and use of broadband Internet to unserved/underserved communities through state grant funding. Availability, adoption, and the use of broadband Internet services throughout Florida allows the state's residents to reap benefits from a connected economy that fuels advancements and allows more Floridians to fully partake in available workforce, education, health, and housing opportunities.

The Office will establish a Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP) subgrant program to provide Capital Projects Fund (CPF) funds to eligible communities for the purpose of the expansion and improvement of broadband Internet infrastructure, ensuring broadband Internet minimum speeds of 100/20 Mbps scalable, to at least 100/100 Mbps.

The primary objective of the Broadband Infrastructure Program is to expand last mile access to homes in communities throughout the state of Florida. The program will do this by providing funds to subrecipients for the construction or improvement of infrastructure necessary for participation in work, education, and health monitoring that will last into the future. The Office also will work to enable investments in capital assets designed to address access to critical services.

The communities prioritized in the program include the unserved and underserved, including rural counties, focusing on deploying infrastructure to deliver broadband Internet service to homes. Eligible entities will be able to submit applications for project areas through a web portal on the DEO Office of Broadband website. Selection criteria will follow the U.S Department of Treasury's (Treasury) CPF guidance, priorities set forth in the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband, data provided through the Faster Florida Broadband Map and the Florida Broadband Availability Map, and the LTPTs. Additional quantitative and qualitative data from the American Community Survey or U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, Internet Service Providers, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) available to the Office will be used. Projects will be monitored for progress at 20% completion intervals.

The Office will obligate/award all project funds before December 31, 2024, and ensure all projects are completed by Dec. 31, 2026.

#### **Objectives**

Following Treasury guidance and in alignment with the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband, BIP will address each of the priorities laid out in Capital Projects Fund guidance by deploying broadband Internet

infrastructure that directly enables work, education, and health monitoring. The Office will address connectivity challenges to ensure availability to the modern infrastructure needed to access critical services. The Program will seek to optimize broadband Internet deployment through identifying last mile barriers and provide last mile infrastructure to ensure connectivity to residents and businesses.

Florida's legislature has designated 32 counties as rural. Twenty-nine of these counties are organized into three Rural Areas of Opportunity (RAO). Rural counties are defined in Florida Statute Section 288.0656(2)(e) as a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer. These counties are among the least served areas of the state. Florida's rural counties also have among the lowest per capita personal incomes in the state. Access to broadband Internet became a critical need for those with chronic health conditions and the elderly to access medical care through telehealth services. In addition to low per capita incomes as identified in U.S. Census data, the 29 counties within the RAOs have the oldest median ages in the state. Median ages in Florida's rural counties average over 100 percent of the US median age.

Targeted capital assets for the BIP include but are not limited to:

1. Network and access equipment (switching, routing, access, transport).
2. Outside plant equipment (cables, fiber optics, conduits, ducts, poles, towers, repeaters, etc.).

## **Eligibility**

Where feasible, Florida will prioritize fiber-optic networks deployed directly to the home or business. Other technologies capable of delivering service at the levels mentioned in Treasury guidance may be deployed where fiber-optic networks are not economically feasible, or other environmental factors make fiber deployment impractical.

Investing in broadband Internet infrastructure will expand access for residents in unserved or underserved areas across the state. Infrastructure expansion will provide broadband Internet service speeds of 100 Mbps downstream and upstream, while Florida will give priority to Broadband Infrastructure Projects where networks will be owned, operated, or affiliated with local governments, non-profit organizations, and co-operatives. These entities will make their networks available to any service provider who requests access as long as such access is on a non-discriminatory basis and service is made available to anyone receiving service over the CPF funded network. This broadband Internet infrastructure plan will assist residents working remotely, or seeking job training and placement, as well as connect employers with their customers and the workforce they need to maintain and grow their businesses. Examples of projects can be seen below:

- **Rural Broadband Infrastructure and Connectivity Projects**
  - Construction and deployment of broadband Internet infrastructure projects in rural areas.
  - Prioritize projects that will deploy broadband Internet infrastructure in areas where broadband Internet service is not currently available from a terrestrial provider.
  - Projects must show partnerships between the local governments and the internet service providers and describe sustainable measures to ensure current and future service needs are provided to residents, businesses, and anchor institutions.
  - Eligible subrecipients: municipalities, county governments, non-profits, or private entities (such as Internet Service Providers), co-operatives, and electric utilities.

- **General Broadband Infrastructure and Connectivity Projects**
  - Projects will include the build-out of broadband Internet infrastructure for communities across the state.
  - Prioritize projects serving underserved areas throughout the state.
  - Projects must show partnerships between the local governments and the broadband Internet service providers and describe sustainable measures to ensure current and future service needs are provided to residents, businesses, and anchor institutions.
  - Eligible subrecipients: municipalities, county governments, non-profits, or private entities (such as Internet Service Providers), co-operatives, and electric utilities.
  
- **Emergency Services Broadband Infrastructure and Connectivity Projects**
  - Project must focus on emergency services and future resiliency efforts in local communities.
  - Projects will include the build-out of broadband Internet infrastructure for communities across the state.
  - Projects must show partnerships between the local governments and the broadband Internet service providers and describe sustainable measures to ensure current and future service needs are provided to residents, businesses and anchor institutions.
  - Eligible subrecipients: municipalities, county governments, non-profits, or private entities (such as Internet Service Providers), co-operatives, and electric utilities.

The adoption of broadband Internet is necessary to directly enable its use by all Americans. Therefore, when selecting Broadband Infrastructure Program for Capital Projects Fund grant funding, the Office will consider whether the broadband Internet service options offered by the service provider will increase adoption and use to the target markets in the proposed service area. The Office will require that services provided by a CPF Broadband Infrastructure Program subrecipient participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and include at least one low-cost option offered at speeds that are sufficient for a household with multiple users to simultaneously engage in telework, remote learning, and healthcare services. Recipients will be required to report pricing data as part of program performance and monitoring, as well as the characteristics of basic service, latency, non-recurring costs, and data caps. The Office will ensure that the service provider(s) for a completed Capital Projects Fund-funded Broadband Infrastructure Program participate in federal programs identified by the U.S. Treasury to provide low-income consumers with subsidies on broadband Internet access services.

To prevent duplication of both federal or state funding, all subrecipients will be required to provide documentation proving that CPF funds will not be used in project areas currently funded to provide speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds.

### **Program Administration**

The Office sought input from all communities around the state for the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband. The State met with and consulted with stakeholders about their needs, expectations, and opinions regarding broadband Internet access. Specifically, DEO used the FCC 477 data, workshops, LTPTs, and other forms of outreach to identify Critical Needs within the state. The Office partnered with the Florida Regional Councils Association to host and facilitate 10 regional workshops with industry sector leaders and statewide partners. The information gathered from these workshops will be used as resources for broadband Internet adoption, deployment, expansion, and resiliency, as well as provide guidance for the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband.

The input from the regional workshops, ongoing input from the LTPTs, and objective data gained through crowd sourced speed testing and mapping have been combined to identify unserved and underserved areas. The Office will prioritize deployment to these areas by working with communities to identify specific projects and service providers, as well as prioritize deployments at minimum speeds of 100 Mbps downstream and upstream using the best available technology. A crowdsourced speed testing project has shown that 26 of the 29 RAO counties have median download and upload speeds less than the FCC definition of broadband of 25/3. Awards will be prioritized by the relative number of homes and businesses that will be served by the new infrastructure. In the 29 RAO counties, more than 29 percent of households access the Internet with no subscription or have no Internet access.

DEO has extensive experience designing, implementing, and administering construction grant programs, including the Community Development Block Grant and various disaster resiliency and mitigation projects through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

DEO plans to issue a procurement for contracted support for financial and performance auditing services for monitoring and compliance of state and federal requirements for the Programs. The DEO Project Manager will ensure the Program meets federal program requirements, reporting requirements, and awarded projects are reviewed efficiently and accurately in accordance with Federal law, rule, and Treasury guidance.

Monitoring will include verifying subrecipient compliance with federal labor and procurement regulations and law including Part 2 CFR 200, Davis-Bacon compliance, and strong labor practices. The Office will acquire 5 additional staff to support and complement the knowledge, skills, and ability of the existing Office staffing. One of the additional staff members will act as the Team-Lead and Capital Projects Fund subject matter expert and the remaining new hires will be grant managers responsible for maintaining direct liaison with awardees to ensure projects progress on time, on budget, and in accordance with the Subrecipient Agreements. It is anticipated between 50-60 grant awards will be made under the CPF program. Depending upon response for this program, workload may be adjusted to account for the anticipated 80 Subrecipient Awards under Broadband Opportunity Program. Charge codes have been initiated to appropriately account for time worked under each of the programs.

DEO plans to issue a procurement for contracted support for management consultant services for intake, initial review for applicant and project eligibility, and system of record document management for all applications received for this program.

DEO Plans to issue a procurement for contracted services to develop a public facing application portal to be used by CPF, Broadband Opportunity Program and the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment program with costs allocated appropriately across each of the programs. This portal will interface with existing systems at DEO and serve as system of record for all applications and subsequent awards.

LTPTs will assist communities with identifying critical needs and identifying eligible projects. LTPTs are familiar with the local communities and are acutely aware of the challenges and barriers faced by Florida's small, capacity-constrained communities. LTPTs can provide more accurate and relevant information on the needs of the communities they serve. This close level of communication will continue throughout the performance period and provide the Office with direct communications with subrecipients.

## Performance Measures

DEO will ensure program performance is measured in a robust manner, measuring outputs and outcomes for projects and programs, through a program evaluation plan. Grant applications will include sufficiently detailed data, aggregated and anonymized appropriately, which will be useful for the Office's planning efforts as well as for the evaluation of the service area proposed for the funded project. The funding application scoring system will include weighting factors that will result in selection of grantees most likely to achieve the specific program goals. The Office will have sufficient contract management expertise in-house to monitor subrecipients' progress toward fulfillment of grant requirements during and upon completion of projects. Such monitoring includes field verification of work in progress and upon completion. Agreements will include provisions for regular reporting to the Office with data necessary to track project progress and evaluate the extent to which identified goals are met as a result of the project. In keeping with the Treasury Guidance and application scoring criteria, all agreements will require identification of at least one low-cost option offered at speeds sufficient to support a simultaneous multiple user household, and participation in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or its successor program.

All agreements with subrecipients will be for cost reimbursement as an additional compliance and expenditure control measure.

## Required Performance Indicators and Project Data

Project Use Code 1A – Broadband Infrastructure Projects

The Recipient must provide Project-level data for the following measures:

- Project technology type(s) (Planned/Actual)
  - o Fiber
  - o Coaxial Cable
  - o Terrestrial Fixed Wireless
  - o Other (specify)
- Total miles of fiber deployed (Planned/Actual)
- Total number of locations served (Planned/Actual)
  - o Total number of locations served, broken out by speeds:
    - Pre-CPF Investment:
      - Number receiving less than 25/3 Mbps
      - Number receiving 25/3 Mbps or greater but less than 100/20 Mbps
    - Post-CPF Investment (Planned/Actual):
      - Number receiving minimum 100/100 Mbps
      - Number receiving minimum 100/20 Mbps and scalable to 100/100 Mbps
  - o Total number of funded locations served, broken out by type (Planned/Actual):
    - Residential
      - Total Housing Units
    - Business
    - Community anchor institution

- Speed tiers offered and corresponding non-promotional prices, including associated fees, for each speed tier of broadband service.
- Confirmation that the provider is participating in the FCC’s Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) (Actual) [Applies only for States and territories]

For each location served by a Project, the Recipient must collect from the subrecipient and submit the following information to Treasury using a predetermined file format that will be provided by Treasury on the CPF website:

- Latitude/longitude at the structure where service will be installed
- Technology used to offer service at the location
- Location Type
  - o Residential
    - If Residential, Number of Housing Units
  - o Business
  - o Community anchor institution
- Speed tier at the location pre-CPF investment
  - o Below 25/3 Mbps
  - o 25/3 Mbps or greater but less than 100/20 Mbps
- Speed and latency at the location post-CPF investment
  - o Maximum download speed offered
  - o Maximum download speed delivered
  - o Maximum upload speed offered.
  - o Maximum upload speed delivered
  - o Latency

**Timeline**

The Office will develop and publish a Notice of Funding Opportunity within 30 days of Treasury’s approval of the Plan. An application and scoring matrix are currently under development.

DEO will award all funds before December 31, 2024, and ensure all projects are completed by December 31, 2026.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Anticipated Completion Date</b>
<b>Submission of Application</b>	60 days after Release of Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)	<<DEO to insert completion date>>
<b>Application Review</b>	30 days	<<DEO to insert completion date>>
<b>Announcement of Awards</b>	10 days after Application Review and Approval Complete	<<DEO to insert completion date>>
<b>Contract Awarded</b>	30 days	<<DEO to insert completion date>>

## Project Milestones

Projects will be broken down by percentage of completion with specific target dates based on 20 percent, 40 percent, 60 percent, 80 percent and 100 percent completion. Progress towards milestone will be monitored by site visits and regular reports attested to by the professional engineer in charge of the project.

It is anticipated that most projects will be awarded within 30 days of the close of the application window. Notice of commencement for each project is expected no later than 30 days from award. All construction must be completed and all CPF funds obligated by December 31, 2026.

<b>PROGRAM BUDGET – Broadband Infrastructure Program</b>						
<b>Program Administrative Costs</b>						
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
2a. Administering the CFP funds (by the recipient)		\$178,311	\$1,877,116	\$1,877,116	\$1,877,116	\$1,877,116
2b. Technical Assistance to potential subrecipients		\$59,437	\$625,705	\$625,705	\$625,705	\$625,705
2c. Complying with grant administration and audit requirements		\$29,718	\$312,852	\$312,853	\$312,853	\$312,852
2d. Community Engagement		\$29,718	\$312,853	\$312,853	\$312,853	\$312,853
<b>2. Total Program Administrative Costs (not to exceed amounts listed in source funding)</b>		<b>\$297,184</b>	<b>\$3,128,526</b>	<b>\$3,128,527</b>	<b>\$3,128,527</b>	<b>\$3,128,526</b>
<b>Project Costs</b>						
3a. Subrecipient Awards			\$61,940,301	\$61,940,302	\$61,940,301	\$61,940,302
<b>3. Total Project Costs</b>			<b>\$61,940,301</b>	<b>\$61,940,302</b>	<b>\$61,940,301</b>	<b>\$61,940,302</b>

**No Pre-Award costs requested**