



Ways for Stakeholders to get Involved: Communities of Color

An overview of stakeholder roles and ways they can get involved in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Programs. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) envisions and welcomes extensive coordination between States, Territories, local governments, community organizations, industries, women- and minority-owned Business Enterprises (WMBE), and citizens throughout the broadband program lifecycle including planning, grantee selection and implementation. The stakeholders bring specific expertise which is critical to the success of these programs.

Program	Funding	Description	Who Can Apply to BIL Programs?
Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)	\$42.5B	Aims to deploy broadband service to unserved and underserved locations, gigabit connections to community anchor institutions, and funding to pursue access-, adoption-, and equity-related uses.	States and territories are the <i>only</i> Eligible Entities for BEAD. A broad range of stakeholder entities could potentially apply as to be a subgrantee applicant to the State and Territory BEAD programs
State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program (DEA)*	\$2.75B	Promotes digital equity through activities to build capacity related to the adoption of broadband across three different planning and implementation programs.	States, territories, and tribal governments/tribes are the <i>only</i> Eligible Entities for DEA. However, a broad range of stakeholders may be an “administering entity.”
Middle Mile Grant (MMG)	\$1.00B	Expand middle mile infrastructure, reducing the cost to serve unserved and underserved areas and increasing resilience of the internet backbone	MMG has the most grantees, which include: State, territories, political subdivisions of states, tribal governments/tribes, private entities, and community-based organizations and groups..

Stakeholder Roles in the BIL Grants Program

Stakeholders can perform a role of an *advocate*, a *collaborator*, *data and information provider* as well as a *subgrantee*, and are encouraged to engage with the Eligible Entities starting with the **planning process and extending all the way to the implementation** of the programs. For each program, Eligible Entities are **required to involve stakeholders** and **obtain public comments** to create successful applications. Local coordination and stakeholder engagement is **evaluated in every step of the application process**, and it will determine distribution of funds and approval of plans.

Local Coordination

Each Eligible Entity must develop a comprehensive **local coordination approach** that will begin in the development of the Five-Year Action Plan and continue at each stage of the application process all the way to awarding. Entities are required to **coordinate and document its coordination with all types of stakeholders**.

DEA/BEAD Collaboration

There is a lot of overlap between BEAD and DEA, so planning teams should be sure to work with **stakeholders from both programs** to reduce duplicating stakeholder work. Many elements can be incorporated into both application processes and will also strengthen each application (for example, emphasizing DEA elements in a BEAD application).

Forming Partnerships

Stakeholders are **encouraged to form partnerships** to submit applications. Especially because a wide variety of stakeholders are eligible to apply to MMG funding programs, collaborating on applications and forming partnerships with like-minded groups (State/local govts, ISPs/community groups) will strengthen applications.

* “Ways to get involved” will be expanded to include other Digital Equity programs after NTIA releases the future NOFO’s



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Defined as identity-based communities that hold a primary racial identity that describes shared racial characteristics among community members. Not only do communities of color have a large say in the planning process across programs, but small businesses and women- and minority-owned business enterprises (WMBE) will be emphasized by Eligible Entities across all program lifecycles. Communities should activate their connections to local civil rights agencies/organizations and institutions that serve as trusted organizations for community members to have open discourse (e.g., churches)

Different Ways to Get Involved per Program

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

- ❑ Collaborate with Eligible Entities, as defined in the NOFO, in the **planning** process.
- ❑ Share current state of local broadband availability and infrastructure deployment challenges, as well as future needs of broadband infrastructure.
- ❑ Apply to be a **subgrantee**, if eligible, as defined in the BEAD NOFO. Organizations can apply through the **Administering Entity Grants Office** and learn more using the program specific resources below. *Sub-grantees may use BEAD funds to **deploy network infrastructure***
- ❑ **Advocate** for vulnerable communities to ensure their specific needs are being accounted and addressed.
- ❑ Reach out to the **state broadband office** to get involved with the planning process and stay involved across the timeline. Find your state broadband office using the **SBLN resource** linked below.

State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program (DEA)

- ❑ Collaborate with Administering Entities in the **planning** process.
- ❑ Share **specialized insight on adoption and affordability** into DEA plans, contributing ideas on community specific development, community broadband needs, and ways to incorporate vulnerable community needs.
- ❑ Apply to be a **subgrantee** soon, if eligible, as defined in the NOFO. Communities can apply through the **Eligible Entity Grants Office** and learn more using the program specific resources below. *Sub-grantees must use their funds to **assist in the development of the State Digital Equity Plan.***
- ❑ Reach out to the **state broadband office** to get involved with the planning process and stay involved. Find your state broadband office using the **SBLN resource**.

Middle Mile Grant

- ❑ Minority-based community institutions (e.g., HBCUs, churches) can **directly apply for the Middle Mile program**. These institutions can learn more on applying using the MM Program resource below.
- ❑ **Applicants may use funds for:** construction of telecommunications equipment, engineering, personnel costs, pre-application expenses, and other costs necessary to carrying out program activities.
- ❑ Coordinate on **planning and execution**, along with **advocating for community interest** across programs with the Eligible Entity.
- ❑ Explore **partnerships and collaboration opportunities with groups with shared visions/goals** on applications.
- ❑ Reach out to the **state broadband office** to learn more about MM and how it interacts with other programs. Find your state broadband office using the **SBLN resource**.

Resources



Information about all the programs, including the application process

InternetforAll.gov



Information about States and Territories Broadband Program and Points of Contact

[State Broadband Leaders Network \(SBLN\)](https://StateBroadbandLeadersNetwork.org)



Information about the BEAD program, including timeline

[BEAD Program](https://BEADProgram.gov)



Information about the DEA program, including timeline

[DEA Program](https://DEAProgram.gov)



Information about the MM program, including timeline

[MM Program](https://MMProgram.gov)