

Streamlined Environmental Review & Permitting for Broadband: A Roadmap

This document is intended solely to assist applicants in better understanding the Broadband Equity Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant program and the requirements set forth in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and follow-on policies and guidance for this program. This document does not and is not intended to supersede, modify, or otherwise alter applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, the terms and conditions of the award, or the specific application requirements set forth in the NOFO. In all cases, statutory and regulatory mandates, the terms and conditions of the award, the requirements set forth in the NOFO, and follow-on policies and guidance, shall prevail over any inconsistencies contained in this document.



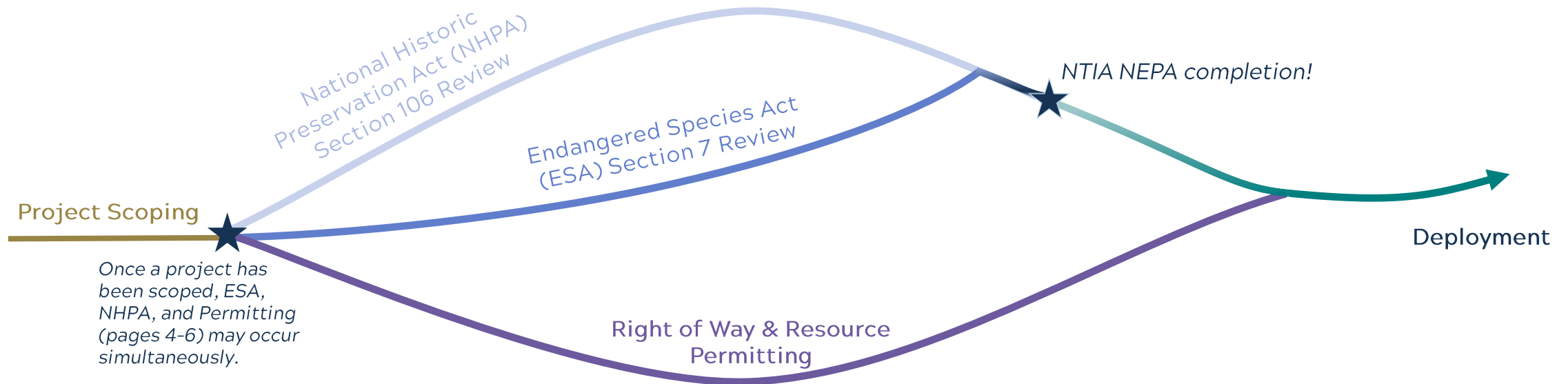
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NTIA's Streamlining Tools Roadmap

NTIA grant recipients can leverage NTIA's streamlining tools to navigate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and permitting review and approval processes for broadband projects.

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

This resource highlights key programmatic tools, efficiencies, and technical assistance (TA) documents provided across NTIA programs.



Project Scoping | Tools and Efficiencies

NTIA has developed tools and materials to support NTIA grant recipients in early project planning and permit identification to reduce potential delays to deployment.



ArcGIS Pro Permitting and Environmental Information Tool (APPEIT)

Summary: APPEIT includes all the layers from the [NTIA Permitting and Environmental Information Application](#), as well as the APPEIT Tool, which allows users to input a project area and identify the overlapping permitting layers.

How to use: Grant recipients will download APPEIT and complete guided tasks, including adding proposed project boundaries to identify permits and environmental factors. The application will return a pdf or csv report identifying the jurisdictional overlaps from the mapping tool.

View the [ArcGIS Pro Permitting and Environmental Information Project Package](#)



Permitting and Environmental Information Application

Summary: The ArcGIS platform combines federal, state, and environmental layers to improve early site identification and permitting and EHP decision-making.

How to use: Grant recipients can view, download, and export data layers to identify permit requirements early and select sites to avoid significant environmental impacts.

View the [Permitting and Environmental Information Application](#) via NTIA's National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM) GIS tool.



Milestone Schedule for BEAD

Summary: The Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment Program (BEAD) subgrantees' NEPA milestone schedule will include key permit and authorization deadlines and descriptions. BEAD subgrantees must develop a milestone schedule per the [BEAD General Terms & Conditions Chapter 13b](#).

How to use: BEAD subgrantees will submit the milestone schedule to their state or territory that includes deadlines and descriptions for the completion of consultations, NEPA and Section 106 reviews, and submission of NEPA documentation.

View the [NEPA for BEAD: Milestones Schedule And Timeline](#) guidance.

Key:  Cross-Program Tool  BEAD Program Tool Only

NHPA Section 106 Review | Tools and Efficiencies

NTIA has worked with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to establish and expand Section 106 review efficiencies to streamline consultation and reduce duplicative reviews for eligible undertakings.



Section 106 Delegation Memo

Summary: The memo allows recipients to initiate Section 106 consultations and work directly with State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), in some conditions.

How to use: Grant recipients must include a copy of the memorandum with their submission to the SHPO and provide NTIA with contact details of the authorized representative who will prepare Section 106 documentation.

View the [Authorization of IFA Grant Recipients to Initiate Section 106 Consultation for NTIA Funded Projects](#).

Program Comment for Federal Communications Projects

Summary: The program comment establishes procedures that streamline section 106 review for telecommunication projects by establishing Areas of Potential Effect and limiting historic property identification.

How to use: NTIA's flow chart guidance walks grant recipients through the program comment's review process.

View the [Program Comment for Federal Communication Projects guidance](#).

Program Comment to Avoid Duplicative Reviews for Wireless Communications Facilities Construction and Modification

Summary: The program comment exempts NTIA from conducting duplicative Section 106 reviews for telecommunications projects subject to review by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

How to use: Grant recipients should identify if a project is eligible (e.g., reviewed under the FCC Nationwide PA and/or FCC Collocation PA), notify relevant SHPO, and complete applicable FCC requirements.

View the [Program Comment to Avoid Duplicative Reviews for Wireless Communications Facilities Construction and Modification](#).

Key: ★ Cross-Program Tool ★ BEAD Program Tool Only

ESA Section 7 Review | Tools and Efficiencies

NTIA has coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to expedite Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultations and expand the ability to complete broadband project reviews online.



Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC)

Summary: FWS developed the online IPaC mapping tool to assist proponents in identifying listed species and protected critical habitat within a project's boundaries.

How to use: Upload project boundaries to the IPaC portal to generate an official species list and determine if Section 7 consultation is required.

View FWS's [IPaC](#) portal.



Determination Keys (DKeys)

Summary: NTIA worked with FWS to expand the availability of DKeys that can conclude ESA reviews for broadband projects online in under an hour.

How to use: When available, DKeys pose project specific questions that may support a "No Effect" or "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" determination, eliminating time consuming FWS consultation for qualifying projects.

View FWS's [IPaC](#) portal and NTIA's [Guide to Streamlined ESA Compliance for Broadband](#).



ESA "No Effect" List

Summary: NTIA compiled a list of broadband activities that have "no effect" on listed species or designated critical habitat when certain conditions exist and are exempt from FWS consultation.

How to use: Grant recipients review the list of *broadband deployment activities exempt from ESA Section 7 consultation* and document to file that their project qualifies as exempt.

View the [Authorization of IFA Grant Recipients to Serve as Non-Federal Representatives for Section 7 Consultation](#) Appendix A.



Key:  Cross-Program Tool  BEAD Program Tool Only

NEPA Completion | Tools and Efficiencies

NTIA has developed tools and policy materials to assist grant recipients in significantly reducing NEPA processing time and expediting approval.



Categorical Exclusions (CEs)

Summary: NTIA established 30 new CEs and adopted six additional CEs from the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet).

How to use: NTIA may apply CEs to expedite the NEPA review of qualifying projects (e.g., new construction on previously disturbed ground, construction of buried and aerial telecommunication lines).

View NTIA's [Overview of NEPA, Categorical Exclusions, and Extraordinary Circumstances](#).



Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Summary: Grant recipients may access BMPs and mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts associated with the deployment and operation of NTIA funded broadband infrastructure.

How to use: Grant recipients can identify BMPs and mitigation measures through the link below or via NTIA's Permitting and Environmental Information Application. Commitments may become part of a NEPA decision (e.g., CE or FONSI).

View NTIA's [Best Management Practices \(BMPs\) and Mitigation Measures](#).



Tiered Environmental Assessment (EA) Template

Summary: NTIA's Tiered EA Template provides a simple, concise, table formatted document with suggested text, figures, and appendices drawn from prior programmatic analyses, eliminating unnecessarily duplicative effort and reducing preparation time and cost. The issues discussed in the First Responder Network Authority Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) can be incorporated by summary, significantly reducing the time and effort to complete NEPA when CEs cannot be applied.

How to use: When an EA is required, recipients may use the Tiered EA template to focus on site specific impacts and incorporate other PEIS content by reference.

View NTIA's [Tiered EA Guidance and Template](#).

Key:  Cross-Program Tool  BEAD Program Tool Only

NEPA Completion | BEAD Tools and Efficiencies

NTIA has developed tools and policy materials to specifically assist BEAD Eligible Entities in significantly reducing NEPA processing time and expediting approval.



Joint Lead Agency Status for BEAD

Summary: NTIA is partnering with states and territories as NEPA joint lead agencies to maximize environmental review efficiency.

How to use: BEAD Eligible Entities as joint lead agencies must build NEPA capacity, design a compliance program, and prepare, supervise, or review NEPA documents for NTIA approval.

View the [BEAD NEPA Smart Start Guide](#) and Section 13 of the [General Terms And Conditions for the NTIA BEAD Program Funds](#).

Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking Tool (ESAPTT) for BEAD

Summary: BEAD Eligible Entities will use ESAPTT, NTIA's Salesforce based environmental screening tool, to identify categorical exclusions, facilitate document exchange, and expedite NEPA approvals.

How to use: NEPA Specialists will complete questionnaires, upload environmental documents, track permits, and receive automated NEPA approvals for BEAD projects in an online platform integrated with NTIA's Grants Portal.

View [NEPA for BEAD](#) resources, including an ESAPTT demo webinar.

Key:  Cross-Program Tool  BEAD Program Tool Only

Permitting | Tools and Efficiencies

NTIA provides resources for grant recipients to learn more about right of way and resource permitting processes, identify best practices to reduce delays, and track permitting progress across projects.



Permitting Roundtables

Summary: NTIA developed a model to support states and territories in establishing *Permitting Roundtables* to enhance communication and resolve project specific permitting issues.

How to use: Grant recipients may request to add project specific issues to the agenda of Permitting Roundtables held at the state/territory level to proactively navigate and resolve permitting challenges at the earliest possible time.

Contact your State or Territory Broadband Office or NTIA Federal Program Officer for more details.

Broadband Permitting Resources

Summary: NTIA co-hosted a multi-agency broadband permitting Summit and collected and published information on the processes and requirements of 13 federal permitting agencies.

How to use: Grant recipients can review presentation recordings and access slide resources on NTIA's BroadbandUSA [Permitting webpage](#).

View NTIA's [recordings and access presentation materials](#).

ESAPTT's Permitting Dashboard for BEAD

Summary: BEAD Eligible Entities can use the ESAPTT permitting tracking function to validate permitting schedules, track permit progress, and escalate federal permitting issues to NTIA leadership.

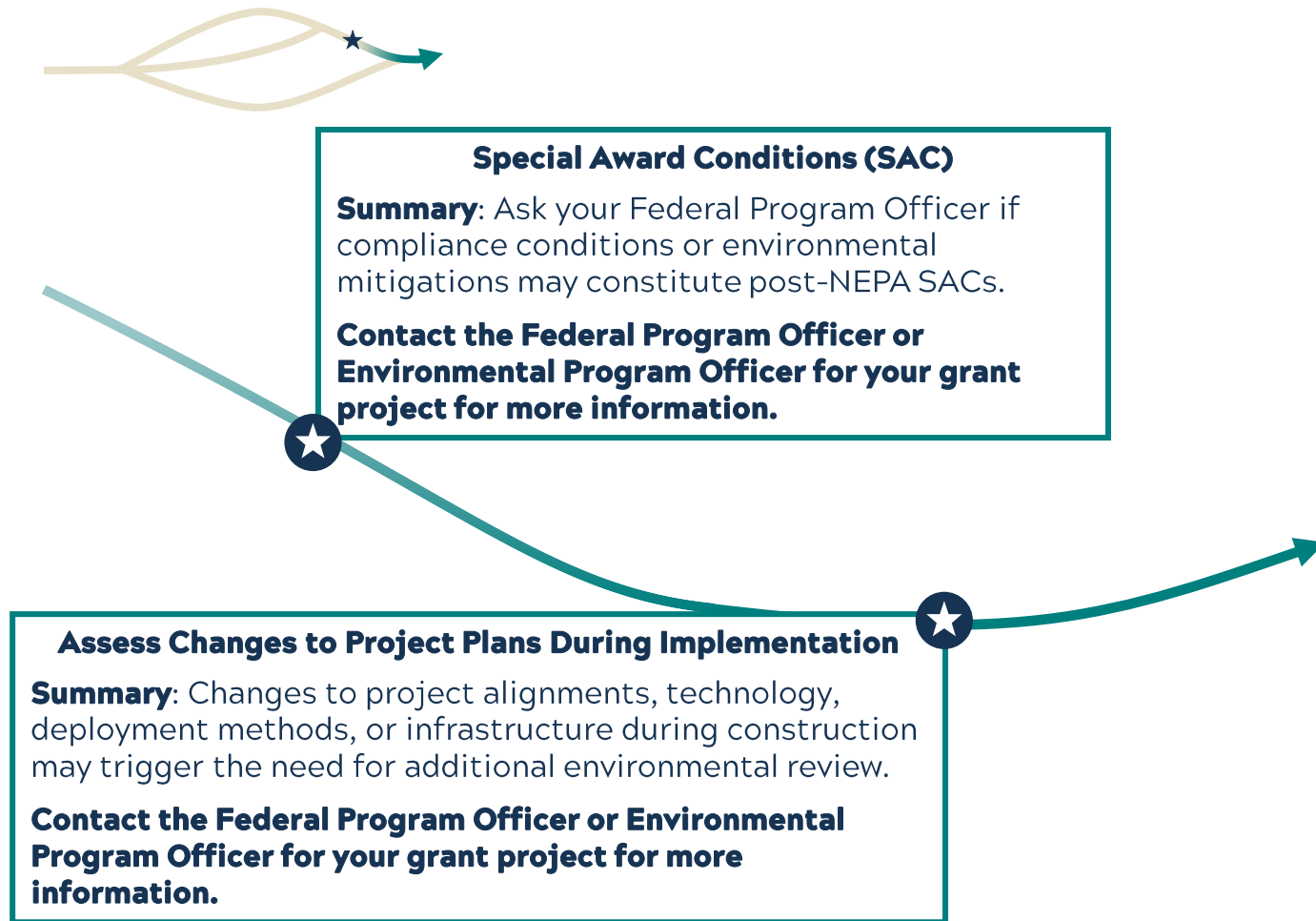
Benefit: BEAD Eligible Entities can use the permitting tracking function to improve project planning and accountability.

View [NEPA for BEAD](#) resources, including an ESAPTT demo webinar.

Key: ★ Cross-Program Tool ★ BEAD Program Tool Only

Post-NEPA | Reminders & Best Practices

Clearly communicating mitigation and compliance conditions to contractors and maintaining post-NEPA contact with your NTIA Federal and Environmental Program Officers will support seamless project deployment.



Ensuring Success After NTIA NEPA Approval



Implement **any mitigation commitments, monitoring, or other compliance requirements** during deployment activities.



Review and include in construction documents NTIA's **Inadvertent Discovery Procedures** and other laws and protocols that apply in the event of unanticipated archaeological resources or human remains.



Obtain any outstanding **Federal, State, or Local permits and authorizations** from jurisdictional authorities prior to accessing rights of way and assets for construction.