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MBPS Program Q&A

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Will you be sharing this deck with us that is being covered today?

Yes, it will be posted to broadband.wv.gov.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is ending at the end of 2021, and the Affordable Connectivity Program will take over. The benefit drops from $50 to $30. Does a "fully covered" service offering have to be $30 or less for ACP, since this application deadline falls after the expiration of EBB?

Yes, the fully subsidized service must cover both EBB and the ACP program. This is optional, it is something to add points to your application, it is not required. What is required is participation in EBB and ACP, required by US Treasury, but the fully subsidized service is optional.

That means you would have to offer a fully subsidized service. Not only under EBB, which has a $50 per month subsidy, but also under ACP which has only a $30 per month subsidy. The minimum performance requirements for that service is 25 by 3 Mbps with no data caps and we positioned it with a fairly modest service to encourage a fully subsidized service.

Will decisions regarding the LEAD program be made before the MBPS application deadline? If so, will those areas that are awarded be removed from the MBPS eligible service area map?

Targeted Addresses will be funded by only one Program. LEAD awarded addresses may be removed from MBPS. Targeted addresses will be funded by only one program,

whether they would actually be removed from the MBPS eligible areas map or dealt with in a slightly different manner.

The lead program has three rolling deadlines. The first one has passed. So, we now have proposed areas from the first set of applicants, who submitted their applications by the first deadline. Both program procedures contain language related to overlap. If there's an overlap between proposals in the two programs, it will be resolved in a manner consistent with the Program procedures.

In the slide Project Prioritization under Cost Efficiency "unavoidable underground construction". Does this point suggest that you are not recommending proposed projects include as much underground construction as possible versus aerial construction being preferred?

We don't have a formal recommendation about use of underground vs. aerial. However, recognizing that underground is often more expensive, it may make a project more costly. The program will evaluate cost-efficiency of a project based on available context, including why a project may need to use underground construction.

The point is we do recognize that certain projects, certain proposed funded service areas and certain targeted areas, will have a higher cost of construction than others and we are not necessarily comparing applications against one another on the sole metric of cost per premise passed or cost per mile. We are looking at the question of cost efficiency of the proposed project and we are taking into consideration factors such as whether there's a certain amount of required or unavoidable underground construction in an area, or the make ready in a particular area is very high. Unlike some other grant programs which may compare applications against one another in terms of their definition of cost efficiency which might be the cost per premise passed, we are not looking at that necessarily, we are looking at the overall project. So we are certainly not encouraging projects limited to areas with low-cost construction. In fact we want to see projects that connect the most difficult to serve and to connect those locations that would otherwise not have a path to receiving broadband infrastructure.

If RDOF funded locations are along the cable route proposed to serve targeted addresses – do those RDOF locations have to be counted as part of the $500/address calculation for minimum matching requirements?

To calculate passed addresses, include all addresses within 250' of the proposed route, including those that may be part of another funded project, such as RDOF. Also include the Targeted Addresses, whether or not they are within 250' of the proposed route.

If they are within 250 feet of the proposed route they need to be included. All passed locations, served or not, need to be included within 250 feet of the proposed route for the $500 per address match. Of course, with this program, there's the option to have a 25% of eligible costs match in lieu of the $500 per address.

Can you share the recording from today's meeting?

Yes, it will be uploaded to broadband.wv.gov

If a grant is awarded and the final project costs actually underrun the costs projected in the grant application, will the total amount of the cost savings be taken entirely out of the grant funding, or will the savings be shared between the applicant and the grant program?

The program procedures say that you have to spend the match before you can ask for reimbursement for the program. So, you do need to spend the proposed match and then get reimbursed. However, in the amended Program procedures there is a section on modification of grant funding awarded that includes a provision that covers modifications, if there are cost savings and what you can do with that. Essentially, it allows you to propose to reach additional Targeted addresses if you have grant funding left over. If you are able to achieve those cost savings, you may be able to plow those cost savings into some additional infrastructure

If there is a cost underrun or a cost savings, at the end of the initial approved project, you can request that the remaining funds be allocated to another eligible area. We'd have an opportunity to review that and grant an official approval. If the approval is not granted or if there is no other use for that funding, the department would recapture that funding and use it for other projects.

What do all the #'s of the SiteADDID mean?

The SiteADDID is a unique identifier for each address.