



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

April 24, 2026

The Honorable Arielle Roth
Administrator
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Administrator Roth:

We are writing to urge the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to issue the delayed Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program non-deployment guidance and begin releasing the full remaining funds allocated to states, including Wisconsin's over \$300 million, without delay. We also request that NTIA's guidance on BEAD non-deployment funding aligns with the criteria outlined in the authorizing legislation of BEAD, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), as well as state priorities.

Affordable, accessible high-speed internet is a necessity for how we live, work, and stay connected. That's why expanding high-speed internet and closing the digital divide in Wisconsin has been a top priority for us, both at the state and federal levels. Since 2019, the Evers Administration has allocated more than \$345 million in state and federal funds to expand high-speed internet, including the largest state investment in state history. Thanks to these investments, more than 410,000 homes and businesses will have new or improved broadband services. In addition, the IIJA included historic investments in broadband expansion via the BEAD program, championed by Senator Baldwin. Under the IIJA, Wisconsin was awarded \$1.05 billion in federal funds to connect more Wisconsinites to high-speed internet.

Since the significant BEAD restructuring commenced by the Trump Administration in 2025, the state of Wisconsin and many Wisconsin broadband stakeholders actively participated in NTIA's listening sessions on the use of BEAD savings funds. We anticipated that NTIA would release the aforementioned non-deployment guidance by the March 11, 2026, deadline established by President Trump's Executive Order "*Ensuring A National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence*." However, this guidance has yet to be released. Wisconsin's planned and intended uses for BEAD non-deployment funding are critical to the overall success of our program, but many of these plans are time sensitive and must be sequenced and coordinated closely with our approved broadband deployment efforts. Activities like permitting, workforce development and training, and additional broadband deployment will be the most efficient and impactful if they are approved and implemented immediately. For our last-mile deployment projects aimed at connecting very rural Wisconsinites to be the most successful, non-deployment guidance must be issued, and the funding must be released to the state to put to work as allowed by the law. The unnecessary delay in accessing Wisconsin's \$300 million is hindering our state's ability to expand critical access.

We'd also like to highlight Wisconsin's top priorities in utilizing BEAD non-deployment funds and reemphasize recommendations previously communicated to NTIA by the Wisconsin Broadband Office. Wisconsin's highest priority for non-deployment funding is prompt and flexible access to ensure service to all

eligible locations. NTIA and states should anticipate that a portion of awarded projects may not be completed as proposed. Although the BEAD program incorporates safeguards to mitigate risk, external factors such as evolving market conditions, mergers, and more may result in project withdrawals, defaults, or incomplete service delivery. To fulfill the goals of the BEAD program and Wisconsin's goal to reach all people and businesses in BEAD-eligible locations, states must be able to rapidly access allocated non-deployment funds to address unforeseen circumstances for continued broadband infrastructure investment.

Another key priority is workforce development and broadband adoption activities that support the timely completion of broadband deployment projects and ensure networks are operational, maintained, and ready for subscriber activation. Eligible workforce activities should include education and training for broadband deployment and network operations occupations, such as broadband installation and service technicians, telecommunications specialists, fiber and wireless technicians, trenchers, radio frequency and field engineers, utility construction technicians, network and systems administrators, technical support specialists, tower installers, cybersecurity professionals, and related roles.

We further recommend that NTIA recognize workforce readiness and broadband adoption as measurable, essential enablers of long-term program success and economic resilience. Allowable activities should include broader workforce training and digital upskilling needed for participation in an AI-enabled economy. Strategic investment in workforce and adoption activities will accelerate deployment timelines, strengthen network sustainability, increase subscriber uptake, and ensure communities are prepared to fully leverage high-quality broadband service now and into the future.

Finally, we recommend that NTIA establish a flexible, iterative, and expedited approval process for states so Wisconsin can respond to urgent and time-sensitive BEAD program needs both now and in the future. We request that NTIA provide a transparent and consistent framework through which all states may propose and receive timely review of additional non-deployment activities or projects.

Flexibility is essential for states, and by providing flexibility states will be better able to make strategic investments in infrastructure and activities that maximize the value of last-mile deployments already committed under the BEAD program. Supporting state-led BEAD strategies is essential to maximize national value and ensure the timely, effective achievement of program objectives, including connecting all Wisconsinites to high-speed internet.

These funds have already been designated to each state and should be accessible for state to utilize without delay. We urge you to release the BEAD non-deployment guidance and ensure that Wisconsin and other states promptly receive our full BEAD allocation. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Tony Evers
Governor



Tammy Baldwin
Senator