



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF BROADBAND
JB Pritzker, Governor



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

Closing the Digital Divide in Illinois

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Updates & Risks

May 2025

Agenda

1

BEAD Success to Date

2

Risks to BEAD Program

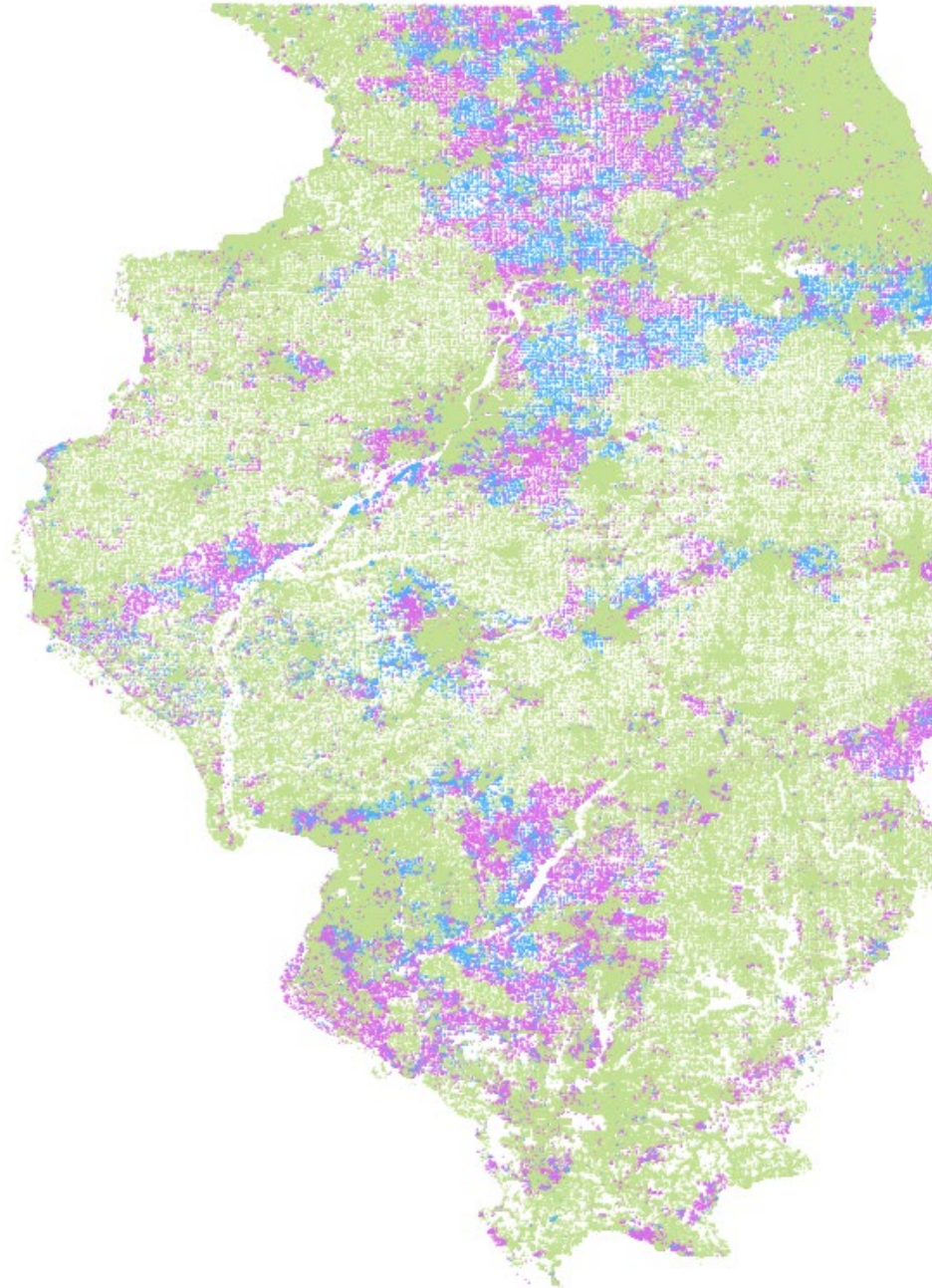


1

BEAD Success to Date



Illinois is required to connect 175,293 locations through BEAD



Broadband service availability in Illinois, per BEAD-eligibility data

~4.2M

Total Broadband Serviceable
Locations (BSLs)

~107K (~3%)

Unserved BSLs

(locations with <25/3Mbps speed)

~65K (~1%)

Underserved BSLs

(locations with ≥25/3Mbps and
<100/20Mbps speed)

~172K
BEAD-
eligible
BSLs

Plus **3,356** eligible community anchor
institutions (CAIs)

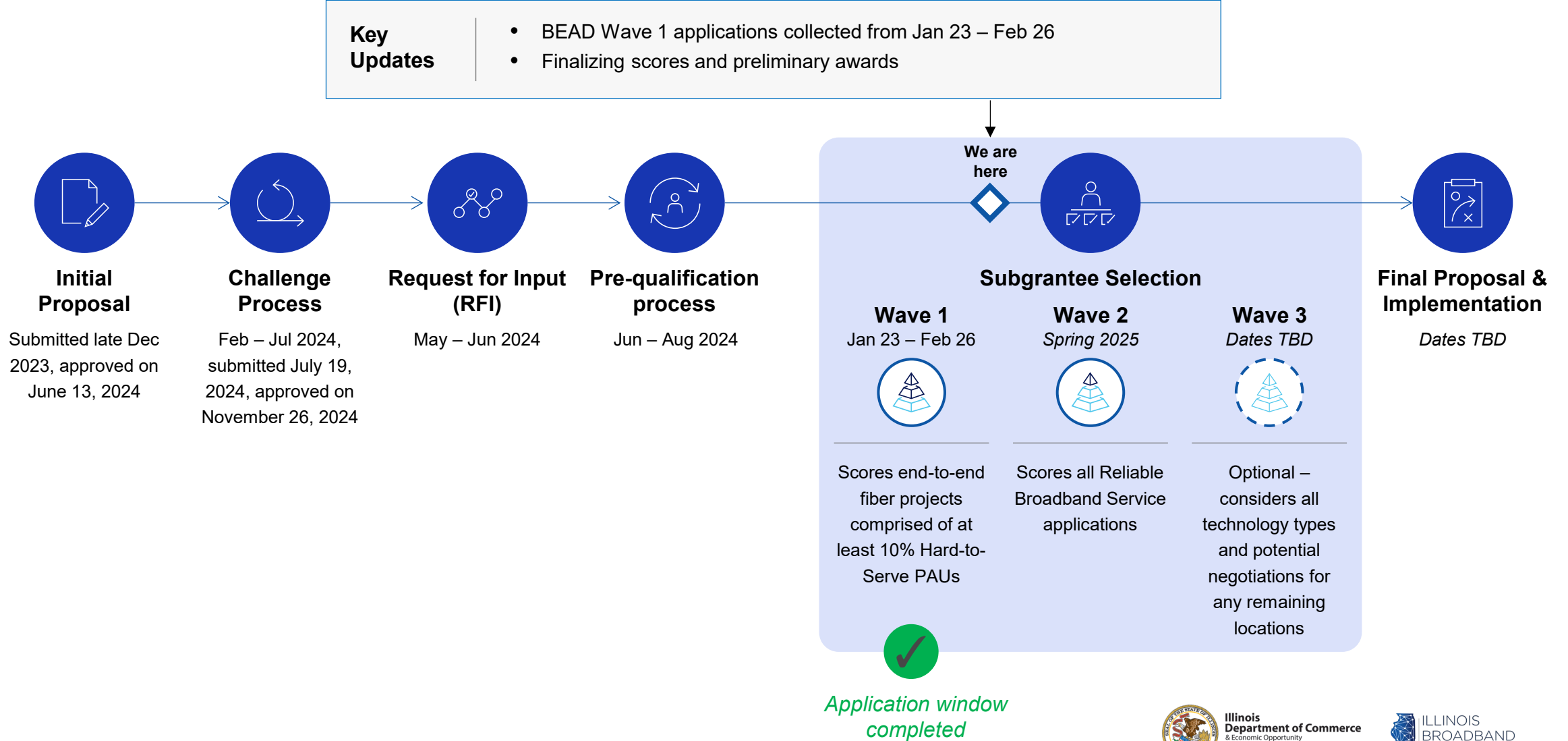
~4.0M (~96%)

Served BSLs

(locations with ≥100/20Mbps speed)

Overview of the BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 timeline

PRELIMINARY TIMELINE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON AN INFORMATIONAL BASIS AND DOES NOT SUPERCEDE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

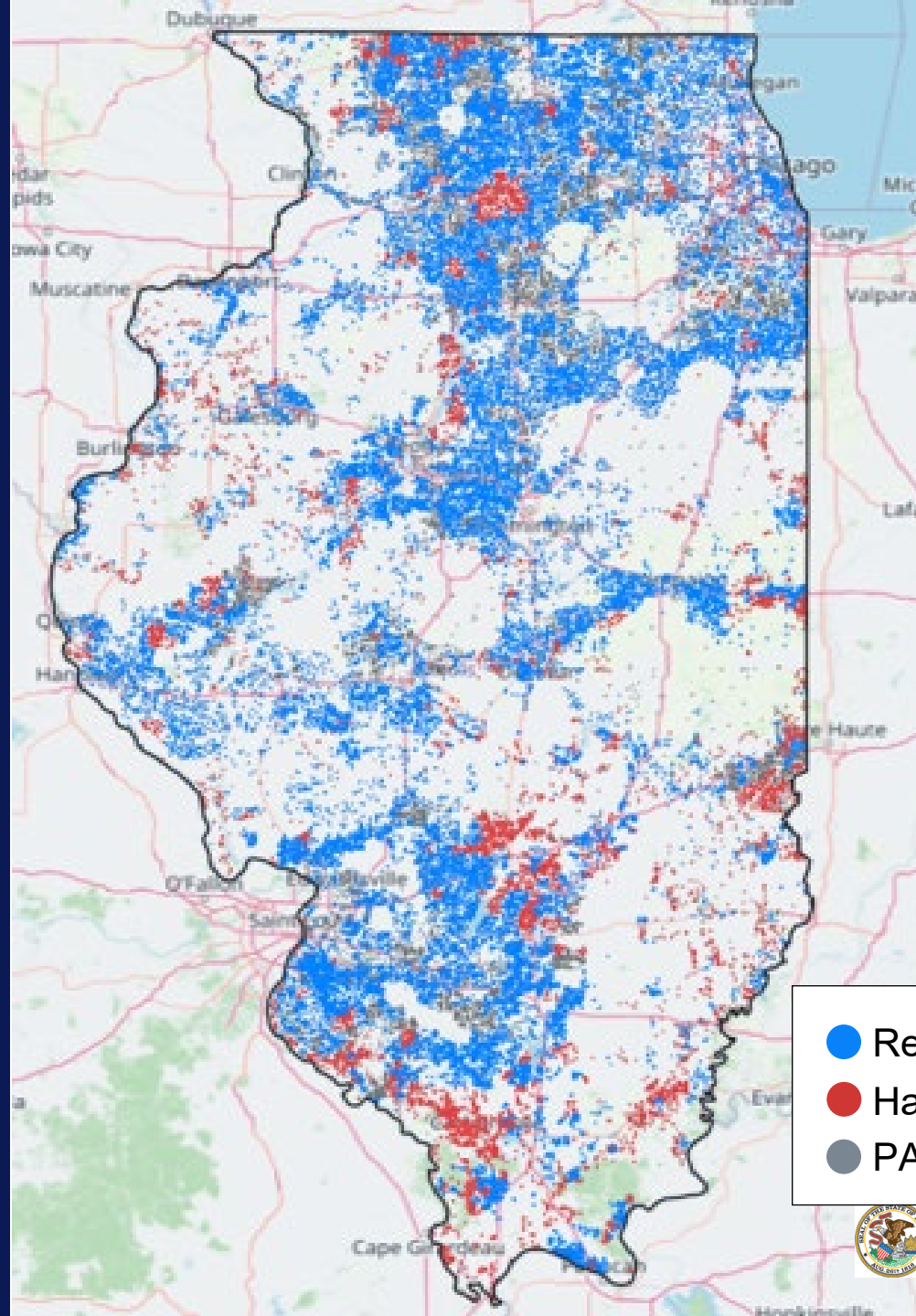
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Illinois received 238 applications covering 86% of eligible locations statewide and 85% of hard-to-serve project area units (PAUs) in Wave 1

AS OF MARCH 16, 2025

Source: Wave 1 applications received by IOB during the Connect Illinois Round 4 BEAD subgrantee selection process



Wave 1 application summary

238

Illinois received applications for...

● **5,615** (76% of total)
Regular PAUs

● **1,582** (85% of total)
Hard-to-serve PAUs

Totaling...

~151K (86% of total)
Locations

- Regular PAUs with 1+ bids
- Hard-to-serve PAUs with 1+ bids
- PAUs that received 0 bids



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Risks to the BEAD Program



Federal proposals could add 1-2 years to BEAD

Currently, Illinois' BEAD-funded Connect IL Round 4 is proceeding **as planned**.

However, two federal bodies have proposed changes that could **delay Illinois' BEAD deployment by up to two years**:

1. Policy changes floated by the U.S. Department of Commerce through a rigorous review of the program
2. HR1870 - SPEED for BEAD Act – introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives



What could lead to 1-2 years in delays?

Proposed Wholesale Programmatic Changes

- Including changes to...
- Technology requirements
 - Labor policy (as a part of scoring criteria)
 - Low-cost service option



Subsequent Required Process Steps

- Such wholesale programmatic changes could require the Office of Broadband to...
- Revise state rules
 - Revise Initial Proposal VII
 - Re-run Challenge Process
 - Revise Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO
 - Re-run Sub-Grantee Selection Process



Timeline Repercussions

In total, re-completing these process steps could **delay shovels in the ground by up to two years**

The BEAD Program is not perfect – yet, making wholesale changes at this point will only add -- not save – time and costs.



Next Steps

- Understand the status of your states' BEAD program and share the momentum and success of to date – in Illinois, it's working as planned!
- Encourage the U.S. Department of Commerce and NTIA to:
 - (1) Avoid wholesale BEAD Program changes that would delay implementation
 - (2) Leave technology decisions up to states

Advocate that NTIA should preserve state autonomy so states can implement the program in a way that's best for our communities.



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Appendix



Summary of progress:



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Connect Illinois Round 4 Progress Update

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Stay connected:



Connecting 175K homes & businesses through BEAD

Illinois has been allocated \$1.04 billion to bring high-speed internet access to ~175,000 households, small businesses, and community anchor institutions. Eligible locations are those that do not have access to least 100/20 Mbps broadband speeds today.

Illinois is carrying out a three-wave competitive selection process. Wave 1, which required fiber applications with a share of 'hard-to-serve' areas, will be completed in May.

Wave 1: 238 applications covering 86% of the state



Geographic coverage: Received 238 applications from 26 providers proposing to cover 86% of state, including 85% of areas deemed 'hard to serve'



Matching funds: Internet service providers put forth nearly \$887M in matching funds

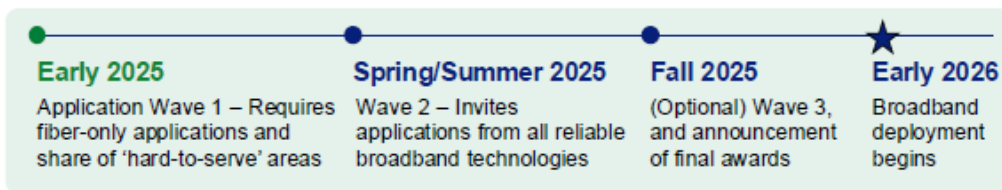


Technology: An overwhelming majority of applications in Wave 1 propose using fiber technology. Fiber is scalable, reliable, and a long-term investment in a community



Community support: 90% of applications included evidence of community support – such as letters, community plans, and other engagement with local governments, institutions, and residents

Timeline



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Summary of progress:

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Connect Illinois Round 4
Progress Update



Connecting 175K homes and businesses to high-speed internet

Illinois has been allocated \$1.04 billion to bring broadband access to ~175,000 households, small businesses, and community anchor institutions without 100/20 mbps internet.

Illinois is carrying out a three-wave competitive selection process. Wave 1, which requires fiber technology with a share of 'hard to serve' areas, will conclude in early May.

Wave 1: 238 applications covering 86% of the state

- 85%** of hard-to-serve project areas covered
- 66%** of Illinois locations covered by all-fiber proposals
- 90%** of applications have documented community support
- \$887M** in matching funds from internet service providers

Early 2025 - Wave 1: Fiber applications and a share of 'hard- to-serve' areas

Spring/Summer 2025 - Wave 2: Invites applications from all reliable broadband technologies

Fall 2025 - Optional Wave 3 and announcement of final awards

Early 2026 - Broadband deployment begins

“ This will create remarkable changes and opportunities for the livelihoods and wellbeing of our community! ”

Illinois Resident via
Evidence of Local Support



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