

Bridging the Digital Divide in Colorado

2024 CML Annual Conference

On the road to connecting **99%** of Colorado households to high-speed internet



COLORADO

Broadband Office

Governor's Office of Information Technology



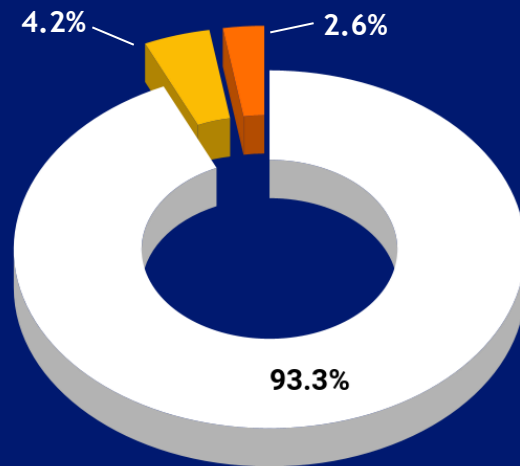
Colorado Broadband Office



Executive Order on Broadband

- 99% of Colorado households connected to high-speed broadband by Dec. 31, 2027

Total: 2.8 Million



● Served ● Underserved ● Unserved

The Broadband Roadmap



Connecting 99% of Colorado households to high-speed internet by 2027



Build a network for future generations

Prioritize fiber, the fastest, most-reliable broadband

Invest in mapping and analytics to assess areas of critical need

Support the industry by expanding workforce development programs and addressing labor shortages



Strengthen resilience across Colorado communities through broadband

Foster stakeholder engagement

Share broadband networks

Encourage public-private partnerships



Expand digital inclusion & adoption to achieve affordability, access and digital literacy

Promote programs that make high-speed internet more affordable

Invest in programs that supply devices and educate residents on how to use them

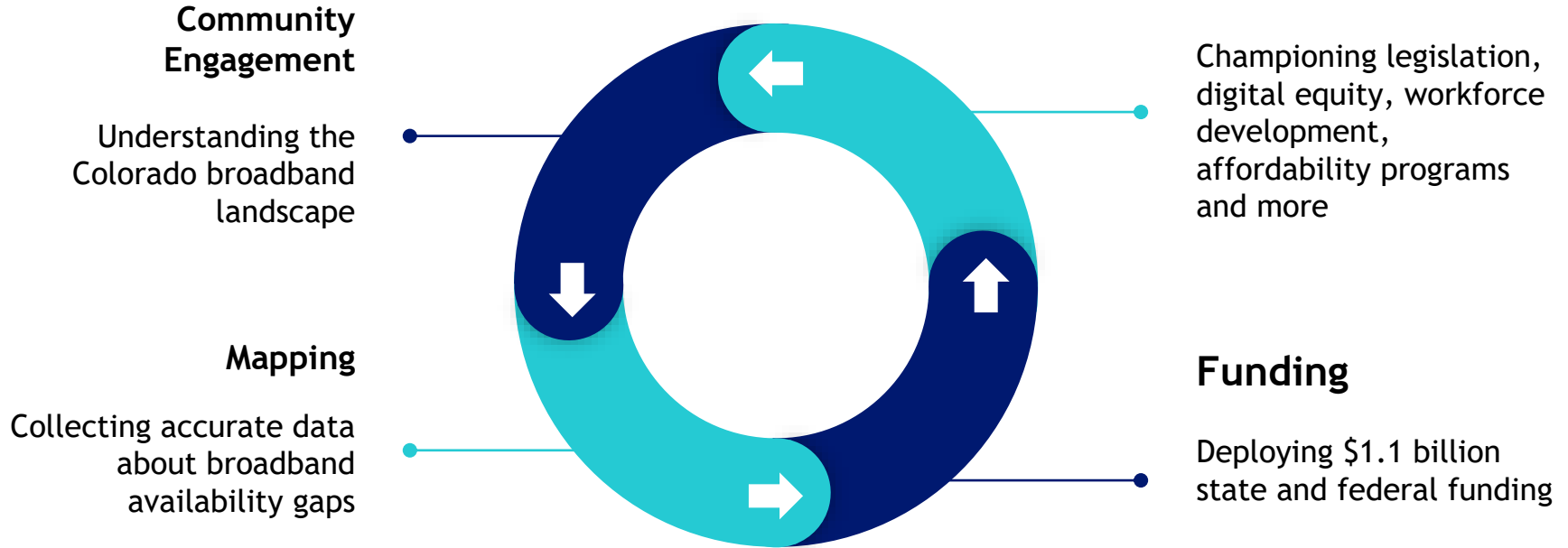


Enable Colorado to thrive by fostering and supporting a digital economy

Foster a culture of innovation and efficiency among government agencies

Leverage technology and improve government services

The Colorado Broadband Office



Ensuring Colorado has a robust and scalable broadband infrastructure.

Community Engagement

A woman with curly hair, wearing a dark blazer, is shown in profile from the chest up, speaking at a podium. The background is a blurred blue-toned setting, possibly a conference room or stage.

In April, 450+ people joined us at our first-ever Broadband Summit, a conference coordinating broadband efforts across the state.

To create a regular cadence with broadband partners, the CBO hosted bi-monthly roundtable calls with community and industry leaders. Late 2023, CBO established the Advance Consult Group, which is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders who can offer input into CBO's strategy and offer insight into the state's broadband landscape.

Mapping



The CBO's data team introduced a new Broadband Mapping Hub, which offers various resources that aid stakeholders in planning for broadband projects, finding partnerships and applying for broadband funding through the state.

Mapping



The CBO's data team challenged 15,000 locations on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s National Broadband Map, resulting in more locations deemed eligible for grants and a higher BEAD disbursement.

Mapping BEAD Eligible Locations



What makes a location eligible?

- No access to “reliable” technology (reliable includes fiber, cable, licensed and LBR fixed wireless)
- Speeds less than 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload (“Underserved”) or less than 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload (“Unserved”)
- Not subject to enforceable funding commitments

Mapping BEAD Eligible Locations



How do we determine eligibility?

- Start with FCC Broadband Data Collection, FCC Broadband Funding Map, and CBO program funding data
- Run NTIA Approved Challenge Process
 - The Advance-BEAD Challenge Process was conducted January through May, 2024
- True up with current FCC data and gain NTIA approval of results

Broadband, Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) Eligible Locations*

Unserved

102 k

Underserved

63 k

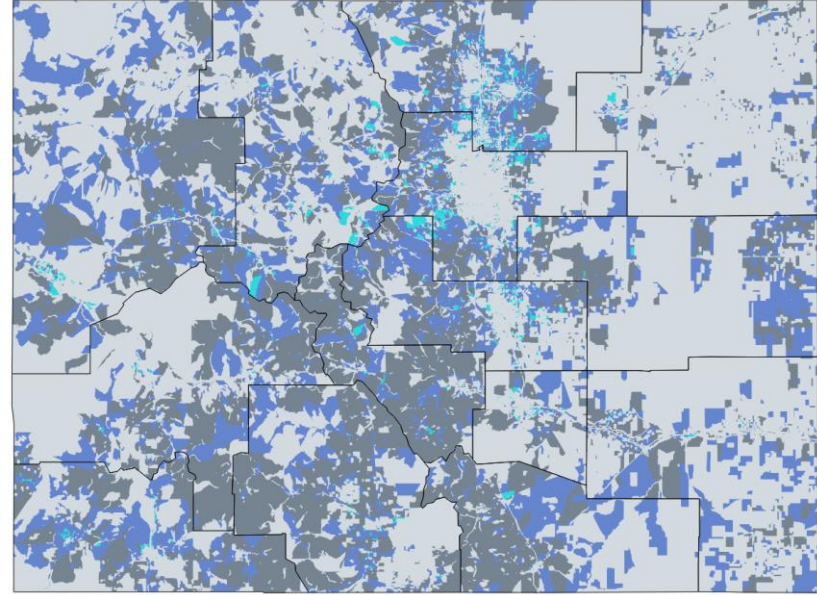
Served
(including enforceable commitments)

1.8 m

*Estimated totals (awaiting NTIA approval)

Project Area Map

- “Project areas” for BEAD are defined in our Initial Proposal Volume 2
- Base geographic unit are Census Blocks. CBO may combine adjacent Census Blocks into a cluster
- CBO will publish a draft Project Area Map (PAM) for public comment this summer





Programs Overview





AD**ANCE** COLORADO BROADBAND

Grant Programs

Capital Projects Fund (CPF)

*\$113.5M – 18K+
locations*

Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD)

\$826.5M

Technical Assistance Program

*\$540K – 22 local
governments*

BEAD Timeline (2024)

Planning Phase (April to June)

Planning Phase

- Draft grant program and compliance guidelines.
- Establish Salesforce grants portal.
- Analyze broadband mapping analysis/recommendations.
- Meet with key stakeholders around the state.

Phase 1: Pre-Application Preparation (July to Aug.)

Phase 1: Pre-Application Intake Process

- Accept Public Comments on Project Area Map and grant guidelines.
 - (30 day window)
- Finalize Project Area Map and grant guidelines based on the feedback we receive: Results and public comments will be posted to the CBO website.
 - (15 days after public comment window closes)

Phase 2: Application Intake Process (Aug. to Oct.)

Phase 2: Application Intake Process

- Registration opens for potential applicants.
- Host webinars on how to apply for BEAD grants.
- Main Application window opens (45 days).
- Applications summary and Project Areas posted to the CBO website.



Broadband Readiness



Technical Assistance Program



- Goal: Create a more equitable opportunity for all communities to participate in grant opportunities
- Allocates funding to support unserved/underserved communities
- State partners with qualified and trusted vendors
- Awarded \$315K (2023) and \$225K (2024) to support 22 local entities
- New round of funding is available to support local governments, applications accepted on the CBO website

Broadband Community Ready Program



Complete Broadband Community Checklist

- Broadband planning and partnerships
- Established a broadband team
- Determine partnership model
- Participation in local or regional broadband planning process
- Establish project communications
- Upon completion, adopt a broadband resolution
- 21 communities are certified!



Affordability



38% of Residents in Colorado Can't Afford Internet Access

- Promote affordability programs, like Lifeline and low cost internet plans
- Require grantees to offer an affordable plan to eligible consumers
- Share information about free digital literacy classes in-person or online
- Recommend refurbishing organizations that offer tech at a low cost

Workforce Development



- BEAD-funded projects will create more than 3K jobs in Colorado
- CBO & Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and Office of Future of Work created a Broadband Workforce Plan:
 - a. Raise awareness of telecommunications and broadband pathways
 - a. Pilot, evaluate, and scale training and job placement programs
 - a. Embed telecom into workforce infrastructure
- Core Working Group



Broadband Deployment Fund Overview



What is the Broadband Deployment Fund?

Historically

- Established in 2014, provides \$14M - \$20M a year in broadband deployment grants to providers, moved under the CBO in 2021
- The revenue from the Fund is supported by a fee charged to customers with landline telephones
- Grants were allocated by the Broadband Deployment Board for last mile connectivity
- There were two grant cycles per year which mostly went to private internet service providers
- Funds could be used to for fix wireless or fiber to the home connections
- The program successfully allocated \$100M over 10 years to connect thousands of rural underserved locations across Colorado

What is the Broadband Deployment Fund?

New legislation has fundamentally changed the program to be more inclusive, what does that mean?

- The program underwent a sunset review and CBO sought feedback from stakeholders to make improvements that included:
 - Improve the grant review process and timelines
 - Expand who is eligible to apply for funding
 - Expand eligible uses for funding
 - Dedicate funding to underfunded broadband needs
 - Prioritize underserved in addition to unserved communities
 - Include transparency in the process

What's New: 2024 Legislation

[HB24-1336](#): Sunset Broadband Deployment

- Expands eligibility to now include industry, local governments, nonprofits, utilities, special districts, anyone who wants to deploy broadband
- Allocates funding into two tiers:
 - 60% - specifically for open access middle mile infrastructure
 - 40% - underfunded broadband needs:
 - Pole replacements and attachments
 - Last mile line extensions or drops to locations
 - Network upgrades that strengthen cybersecurity
 - Wireless facilities such as towers and satellite infrastructure
 - Digital equity initiatives to close the digital divide
 - Grantees have to meet speed and reporting requirements

So What's Next, How Can I apply?

2024 Pre-Planning Summer Activities:

- Develop program grant guidelines for public comment in September
- Recruitment of a diverse Grant Review Working Group to replace the Broadband Deployment Board to help CBO with grant applications
- Automation of the application process to include new grant portal

2025 Application Launch!

Now everyone can participate in bridging the digital divide in Colorado

Resources

- Broadband Fund Website:

<https://broadband.colorado.gov/broadband-deployment-board-fund>

- Previously submitted Applications for Review

<https://broadband.colorado.gov/broadband-deployment-board-fund/broadband-fund/view-applications>

- Broadband Fund Board Policies

<https://broadband.colorado.gov/broadband-deployment-board-fund/board>

- Colorado Broadband Office Mapping Hub

<https://broadbandhub.colorado.gov/>



Connect with the Colorado Broadband Office

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- ✓ Bi-Monthly Community and Industry Roundtables
 - ✓ CBO in the News
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