

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

1.0 - Document Overview

This document sets forth the specific scoring and evaluation criteria that will be used to evaluate and rank applications to potentially receive funding from the Broadband Opportunity Program. Of the total appropriated dollars, after subtracting any allowable administrative funds, the Office will initially set aside forty (40) percent for the eligible project applications within a rural community. If all set aside dollars are not awarded, the remaining balance of set aside dollars may be awardable to eligible non-rural project applications. No score guarantees funding of an application. Scoring is competitive. Eligible Applicants must obtain a minimum evaluation score of 130 points to be considered for funding; however, this does not guarantee an award. Only the highest scoring applications may earn funding and total applications funded will be limited based on available funds to the program.

2.0 - Evaluation Criteria, Consideration Factors, and Scoring

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's ("DEO") Florida Office of Broadband ("Office") will award grants to projects for the installation or deployment of infrastructure that supports the provision of broadband Internet services within the state, while demonstrating optimal impact of Broadband Opportunity Program funds. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the Office using the criteria and associated point values set forth below. Each category uniquely contributes to the Office's mission to increase the availability and effectiveness of broadband internet throughout the state through creating a Connected Economy. The three steps of Availability, Adoption, and Use lead to a Connected Economy supporting development of Workforce, Education, and Health Care, and each step must be undertaken with a high level of Accountability to ensure positive impacts in Business Growth, Job Growth, development of Workforce Education and Job Training opportunities, Healthier Floridians, and connected Workforce Housing. Grants will be awarded to projects that help advance the Office's mission, which is articulated in DEO's The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband.

There are eight major evaluation criteria listed below with sub-categories and consideration factors identified for each. The Broadband Opportunity Program Grant Application and supporting documentation will be reviewed and points awarded for each category based upon the scoring and evaluation criteria. The total maximum point award available for each major evaluation criteria is listed. To ensure that your application receives the highest possible scoring, please provide complete, comprehensive, and clear responses for all information requested. ***Applications must align with the Florida Broadband Strategic plan's strategies for a connected economy. You may access the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband on the Office of Broadband's website at www.floridajobs.org/broadband.***

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points (300)
A. Broadband Impact	50
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Impact & Percentage of Premises Passed • Economic Development & Workforce Development Impact 	
B. Network Scalability	35
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Capacity and Scalability (see table for scoring) 	
C. Project Viability & Sustainability	35
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Sustainability • Organization’s Capability and Track Record • Public-Private Partnerships 	
D. Economic Distress	40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Distress Factors 	
E. Funding Sources and Community Support	40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage of Non-state funding (see table for scoring) • Evidence of Community Support • Local Technology Planning Team of Broadband Committee • Verified Financial Commitment from Community Members and Organizations 	
F. Alignment with State Strategic Plan	40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan meets minimum goals in strategic plan 	
G. Project Readiness	40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed, Reasonable Project Schedule • Detailed Engineering Design and Network Map • Leveraging Existing Resources and Operating Assets 	
H. Affordability & Adoption Assistance	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level service tier and/or discounted rates for low income, small business and community anchor institutions • Participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program • Strategies for adoption to general public • Programs to raise awareness and adoption. 	

3.0 - Consideration Factors per Evaluation Criteria

The following tables list the eight Evaluation Criteria key areas and main sub-categories that represent the scoring criteria. Under each sub-category, factors are listed for consideration that will be used to assign points. The Application will ask the questions to enable a comprehensive, detailed filing by the Applicant.

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

A. Development Impact (50 points)

This evaluation criteria measures the potential impact that broadband expansion could have within the proposed project area. Specifically, this criterion measures the degree to which the project will increase access to broadband service and promote community and economic development within the project area. Projects that offer access to greater numbers of underserved or unserved locations will be scored higher. This is measured by the anticipated percentage of premises passed within the project area. This scoring criteria also evaluates and measures the benefits to the communities that will be served within the project area and the degree to which broadband access will enable workforce, education, and healthcare.

A.1 Broadband Impact & Percentage of Premises Passed		Maximum 25 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of unserved (or underserved) premises and improvement in broadband speeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Percentage of premises passed within the project area – including homes, businesses, community anchor institutions (including but not limited to, libraries, educational institutions, public safety facilities, and health care facilities), farms, and government facilities. Note that grant funding may only be awarded to projects that will serve areas that lack at least 25/3 Mbps broadband service per Florida Statutes ✓ Degree of broadband unavailability – extremely unserved (below 10/1 Mbps), unserved (below 25/3 Mbps) or underserved (below 100/20 Mbps) See table for scoring ✓ Anticipated improvements in broadband speed offerings from pre-existing broadband service levels to proposed service levels e.g., above 25/3, 100/10, or 1G/1G+ ✓ List of businesses and institutions being passed or covered ➤ <i>Note: Please see table below for how impact for broadband access will be scored</i> 	

Percentage of Anticipated Premises Passed Scoring Table

*The percentage of anticipated premises passed will be scored using a multiplier that is proportional to the percent of passings currently in each speed category. For example, a proposed project that anticipates serving 100% of passings with 1G/1G Mbps, where 25% of the area has current speeds at 25/3 Mbps (23 points) and 75% currently have 10/1 Mbps (25 points), the applicant would receive a total score of 24.5 points (i.e. (23 points * 0.25) + (25 points * 0.75) = 24.5 total points)*

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

% of Total Passings	Current Speed (Mbps)	≤ 10/1: Extremely Unserved			≤ 25/3: Unserved		
	Maximum Available Speed After Build (Mbps)	100/20	100/100	1G/1G	100/20	100/100	1G/1G
≤ 25%	Points Awarded	0	0	0	0	0	0
25% - 40%		10	13	16	8	11	15
40% - 80%		13	16	20	11	14	18
80%-100%		16	20	25	15	19	23

A.2 Economic Development & Workforce Development Impact		Maximum 25 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed impact in traditionally hard-to-serve areas where infrastructure is deficient • Proposed impact to strengthen broadband as a tool for workforce, education, and healthcare • Examples of potential uses of proposed broadband availability • Proposed impact to workforce development and job creation • Proposed economic impact to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Residents: ability to telework, remote learning engagement, ability to facilitate telehealth, including the use of telemedicine and electronic health records, new housing starts, etc. ✓ Businesses: degree of competitiveness, market expansion, workforce development, job creation, attracting new business establishments, etc. ✓ Farmers and agricultural use customers: farming efficiency and productivity, new applications for precision agriculture, etc. ✓ Community anchor institutions: enhancement to capabilities to execute mission in more effective and efficient manner (across schools, libraries, hospitals, clinics, social service centers, community gathering centers, etc.) ✓ Other: public safety improvements; other complementary infrastructure improvements; etc. ✓ Degree to which project will include local hires and provide opportunities for local hires such as apprenticeship programs, job fairs, and training programs ✓ Substantive evidence provided demonstrating the impact of broadband within the project area ✓ Letters of support describing project impact – specific to the target customers’ circumstances ✓ Petitions or listings of a significant number of the available households and businesses expressing a strong desire to subscribe to broadband service provided from the proposed project 	

Incorporated by reference in Rule 73C-50.001, F.A.C.

New 11/2022

Page 4 of 10

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

B. Network Scalability (35 points)

This evaluation criteria measures the level of scalability of transmission speeds that the project will provide within the proposed project area. Projects that provide for greater scalability will be scored higher (see table below).

B.1 Network Capacity and Scalability		Maximum 35 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration that the capital investment today delivers a network that meets demand today and for the long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Useful life and capacity of the technology ✓ Process and investment for long-term network scalability, operation, and maintenance ✓ Degree of evidence provided that demonstrates the installed broadband infrastructure is scalable 	

Network Scalability Scoring Table

Network Scalable to	Points
≥100mbps/20mbps	12
≥100mbps/100mbps	16
≥250mbps/250mbps	20
≥500mbps/500mbps	24
≥1gb/1gb	35

C. Project Viability & Sustainability (35 points)

The criteria evaluates the likelihood that the project can be successfully deployed and financially sustained beyond the project period. Scoring in this section will focus on how clearly the applicant identifies project sustainability.

C.1 Financial Sustainability		Maximum 15 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of financial sustainability • Demonstration regarding financing viability to enable deployment today and long-term operations • Demonstration of the ability to obligate and expend funds by program deadlines • Business case analysis to demonstrate project’s financial viability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Audited financial statements and other documentation to demonstrate financial standing (which may include SEC filings, or financial records of a parent company along with clear documentation establishing that corporate relationship) ✓ Clear identification of additional funding sources and proof of financing being available ✓ Detailed financial statements (cash flow, balance sheet, income statement) for project period (deployment and operational sustainability) – enables review of capital deployment stage and recurring revenue and operating expenditures ✓ Degree to which the applicant demonstrated the ability to obligate and spend funds in compliance with the program deadlines ✓ Detailed narrative explaining how the grant recipient will obligate and spend funds in compliance with the program deadlines 	

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Key metrics regarding the financial targets required by non-State fund contributors and how the business plan achieves those objectives ✓ Discussion of key financial risks that could impede sustainability (e.g., revenue shortfalls, cost overruns) and mitigation strategy ✓ Discussion of plans to ensure supply-chain, available materials and workforce, and project resiliency
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C.2 Organization’s Capability and Track Record		Maximum 10 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration that the applicant and partners are strongly positioned to deploy and operate network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Details regarding experience and results in having deployed similar networks ✓ Details regarding key personnel (e.g., qualifications, resume) ✓ Identification of key partners, roles, and letters of project commitment 	

C.3. Public-Private Partnerships		Maximum 10 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of viable public-private partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Details regarding public-private partnerships established to implement, operate, and sustain the project 	

D. Economic Distress (40 points)

This evaluation criteria evaluates how the project will serve economically distressed areas, including rural areas of the state, as measured by the greatest percentage difference between the indices of unemployment, poverty, or population loss and the statewide average.

D.1 Economic Distress Factors		Maximum 40 Points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project targets a community in economic distress • Demonstration of the level of economic distress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rates for unemployment, poverty, and free/reduced lunch eligibility are more adverse than Florida statewide averages ✓ Project is a Rural Area of Opportunity as designated in 288.0656(7)(a), Florida Statutes 	

Economic Distress Factors

Economic Distress Factor	Points
Entire project within Rural Area of Opportunity	25
Poverty rate above state average	5
Unemployment rate above state average	5
Free/reduced lunch eligibility	5

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New 11/2022

Page 6 of 10

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

E. Funding Sources & Community Support (40 points)

The amount of the grant award to an eligible applicant of the Broadband Opportunity Program may not exceed 50 percent of the total project cost when combined with any state or local funds. With respect to cost-sharing, this evaluation criteria evaluates the percentage of non-state funding that the applicant has available to cover the cost of the project. Applicants demonstrating the ability to cover a larger percentage of the projects' total cost will receive higher points. This evaluation criteria also measures the level of community support within the proposed project area. Applicants who are able to provide quantitative/substantive evidence of community support will score higher.

E.1 Leverage of non-state funding		Maximum 20 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of non-state funds • Viable public-private partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greater points will be assigned to degree of non-state funding over 50% of the total project costs as a direct indicator of the local commitment, longevity of the project, and accountability for project completion. ✓ Details regarding public-private partnerships established or the coordination between the applicant and local entities to finance, implement, operate, and sustain the project. 	

Non-state Funds Provided Scoring Table

Percent of eligible project costs covered by non-state funds	Points
70% or more	20
66 – 69.9%	16
63 – 65.9%	12
60 – 62.9%	8
55 – 59.9%	4
50 – 54.9%	0

E.2 Evidence of Community Support		Maximum 5 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of breadth and depth of community support for the project • Evidence of Community Support and demonstration of community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Degree of “personalized” letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members ✓ Degree to which project fits into an existing community strategic plan ✓ Recent survey or other similar community-focused analyses or study that covers broad spectrum of community with statistically meaningful results regarding level of need, gaps, and project support ✓ Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project ✓ Other community feedback that shows compelling need and project support 	

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New 11/2022

Page 7 of 10

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

E.3 Local Technology Planning Team or Broadband Committee		Maximum 10 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration and evidence of the establishment and/or participation in an active county or regional Local Technology Planning Team to support the expansion of broadband within the community • Demonstration of an active broadband committee guiding efforts to address broadband availability and adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Established an active Local Technology Planning Team within the project area or was an active participant or member of a planning team ✓ Conducted and/or participated in regular team meetings ✓ Degree to which teams conducted community-level activities and research to determine the community’s broadband needs, utilization, gaps, barriers, and opportunities ✓ Degree to which the Local Technology Planning Teams completed, and submitted to the Office of Broadband the results of the activities and reports identified in the Broadband Planning Toolkit 	

E.4 Verified Financial Commitment from Community Members and Organizations		Maximum 5 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial investment by community members and organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The degree of financial contribution from community-based members and institutions ✓ In-kind resource commitments from community-based members and institutions ✓ Evidence to support verification of pledge ✓ Evidence to support verification of public-private partnerships 	

F. Alignment with State Strategic Plan (40 points)

This evaluation criteria measures the extent to which the application and proposed project address and align with the Florida Broadband Strategic Plan’s strategies for a connected economy. You may access the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband on the Office of Broadband’s website at www.floridajobs.org/broadband.

F.1 State Strategic Plan		Maximum 40 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration that proposed project is consistent with the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Detailed narrative explaining how the proposed project is consistent with the state’s strategic plan and how the project will address the goals, objectives, and which strategies of the plan. ✓ Degree to which the project fits into the strategic plan and other state or community plans. 	

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

G. Project Readiness (40 points)

This evaluation criteria assesses the readiness of a project by evaluating the details of the project schedule, design, technology, network routes, and the degree to which the project utilizes existing resources as leverage.

G.1 Detailed, Reasonable Project Schedule		Maximum 20 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details regarding project schedule • Details regarding how that project schedule is viable and achievable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Degree that project schedule is detailed, structured, clear, and consistent with committed deadlines. ✓ Detailed narrative on project schedule. ✓ Less than two years till full deployment. ✓ Identification of key execution risks and mitigation plan. 	

G.2 Detailed Engineering Design and Network Map		Maximum 10 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details regarding the technology, design, and network routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear, detailed network route map that is consistent with route miles. ✓ Technology specifications that clearly indicate purported speeds and network indicators can be met. ✓ Vendors details (particularly for new technologies or new applications of technology). ✓ Note: Professional Engineer, Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers, or similar certification is required 	

G.3 Leveraging Existing Resources and Operating Assets		Maximum 10 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree to which project leverages existing network and non-network resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear identification of network assets being leveraged – e.g., middle-mile, data centers, colocation facilities, towers, etc. ✓ Clear description of non-network resources and assets being contributed (e.g. personnel, premises, offices, etc.). 	

BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

H. Affordability & Adoption Assistance (20 points)

This evaluation criteria evaluates the services, activities, and strategies that will be used to actively promote the adoption and affordability of broadband service within the project area.

H.1 Affordability and Adoption Assistance		Maximum 20 points
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low price service tiers for low-income consumers, small businesses, community anchor institutions. • Participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program • Strategies to enable adoption to general public • Program to raise awareness and adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An entry-level service tier(s) that provides minimum level of broadband for an affordable rate for new adopters ✓ Special discounted rates for small businesses and community anchor institutions ✓ Special programs and partnerships that provide significant discounts to economically disadvantaged customers, including discounted devices or services, such as E-rate. ✓ Participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program ✓ Offerings that enable purchase of unbundled Internet at reasonable price points without obligations ✓ Detailed description of broadband adoption activities planned for project – e.g., training, technical support, community networks, etc. ✓ Technology strategies to enable adoption to general public (e.g., community networks that provide public Wi-Fi, others) 	

Affordability and Strategies to Encourage Adoption of Broadband Services Scoring

Program	Points
Entry level service tier and/or discounted rates for low income, small business and community anchor institutions	5
Participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program	5
Strategies for adoption to general public	5
Programs to raise awareness and adoption.	5