

Capital Projects Fund- Broadband Infrastructure Program

Application Scoring and Evaluation Criteria Overview

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the DEO using the criteria and associated point values set forth below. Each category uniquely contributes to the DEO's mission to increase the availability and effectiveness of broadband service throughout the state and its economy.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points (500)
A. Project Readiness and Deployment	50
A.1 Detailed, Reasonable Project Schedule	10
A.2 Detailed Engineering Design	20
A.3 Network Map	20
B. Digital Equity and Inclusion	50
B.1 Monthly Cost of Service	10
B.2 Data Caps	10
B.3 Participation in ACP or Other Low-Cost Service Offering(s)	10
B.4 Opportunity Zones	10
B.5 Digital Literacy Training	10
C. Economic and Community Impact	100
C.1 Broadband Impact and Percentage of Premises Passed	25
C.2 Economic and Workforce Impact	25
C.3 Benefits to Targeted Customer Segments and the Community	50
D. Project Budget	50
D.1 Project Budget and Cost Metrics	50
E. Non-Federal Funding Sources and Community Support	100
E.1 Leverage of Non-Federal Funding	50
E.2 Financial Commitment from Community Stakeholders	10
E.3 Public Private Partnerships	10
E.4 Evidence of Community Support	10
E.5 Local Technology Planning Teams	20
F. Network Capacity and Scalability	75
F.1 Network Capacity and Scalability	75
G. Project Viability and Sustainability	50
G.1 Financial Capability and Sustainability	30
G.2 Organization's Capability	10
G.3 Track Record / Past Experience	10

H. Affordability and Adoption Assistance	25
H.1 Low Price Service Tier	10
H.2 Commitment to Improving the Adoption Rate	15

To maximize chances of receiving a high score under this review, applicants must be mindful to provide complete, comprehensive, and clear responses for all sections of the application and information requested.

This is a competitive grant application and eligibility for funding is based on scoring a minimum of 250 points out of a maximum 500 points. Based on the number of applicants, the amounts applied for and awarded, and the score given to each application, the potential exists that not all applicants scored as eligible for funding will be awarded funding.

Evaluation Criteria Consideration Factors

There are eight (8) major evaluation criteria listed below with sub-categories and consideration factors identified for each. Under each sub-category, factors are listed for consideration that will be used to assign scoring points. The applicant should answer all questions to enable a comprehensive, detailed filing of the application.

Project Readiness and Maps (50 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.

A.1 Detailed, Reasonable Project Schedule (Maximum 10 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.

A.2 Detailed Engineering Design (Maximum 20 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). <p><i>Note: Professional Engineer, Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers, or similar certification is required</i></p>

A.3 Network Map (Maximum 20 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.). ✓ Maps of the proposed project area should be included in both PDF version, and a spatial data version, preferably in .kmz, or .kml, as an electronic attachment. ✓ Information provided on these files should be provided individually within the above-mentioned formats with no accompanying data. ✓ The applicant should ensure the functionality of these files within Google Earth to ensure the data is properly loading/displaying.

Digital Equity and Inclusion (50 points)

This evaluation criteria measures the affordability and usability of the proposed networks. Digital equity and inclusion efforts ensure that once a connection is available, residents and businesses are able use the connection and are aware of the benefits of being connected to high-speed internet service, all of which contribute to the long-term viability of newly deployed networks. This scoring criteria section relies on data related to the delivery of last mile internet service. For middle mile projects, applications will be scored based on the impact the proposed middle mile infrastructure will have on the deployment of last mile service to unserved areas. Middle mile applicants must demonstrate commitments and partnerships with last mile internet service providers that will leverage the proposed middle mile infrastructure to deploy service to unserved locations. Middle mile applicants must gather and present the relevant information by which the application will be scored.

B.1 Monthly Cost of Service (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of service is affordable to those they intend to serve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participation in ACP is mandatory. ✓ The ratio of the proposed cost of the minimum service offering compared to the national benchmark standard published by the FCC for the same level of service. DEO uses the FCC's Broadband Reasonable Comparability Benchmark tool to compare the applicant proposed service costs for the minimum speed offered to customers to a national standard for the same type of service. <p><i>Note: Please see table below for how this criterion will be scored.</i></p>

Monthly Cost of Service Scoring Table:

Ratio of Proposed Cost of Service to FCC Reasonable Comparability Benchmark Calculator	Points
Greater than or equal to 85%	0
75% - 84.9%	4
65% - 74.9%	7
Less than 65%	10

B.2 Data Caps (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants are encouraged to deploy services that do not have a data cap of any kind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Applicants proposing data usage caps of any kind will receive zero points in this category.

B.3 Participation in ACP or Other Low-Cost Service (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants are encouraged to establish a low-cost service offering that when coupled with FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provides eligible households with a net \$0 monthly cost of service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The low-cost service offering must meet the minimum speed requirements for the program (100/100 Mbps) and those of the ACP. ✓ Applicants offering a low-cost service option will receive full points in this section. Those without such an offering will receive zero points.

B.4 Opportunity Zones (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants are encouraged to include federal Qualified Opportunity Zones ("QOZs") in their applications, in whole or in part. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ QOZs are an economic development tool with the purpose of spurring economic growth and job creation in low-income communities. ✓ QOZs are designated at the Census Tract level and a listing and map of QOZs can be found here: https://www.cdfifund.gov/opportunity-zones <p><i>Note: Please see table below for how this criteria will be scored; The State of Florida does not make any guarantees or warranties as to any preferential tax treatment afforded or not afforded to an Applicant due to the deployment of broadband service within a QOZ.</i></p>

Opportunity Zones Scoring Table:

Opportunity zones included in application	Points
Proposed service area does not include any part of a QOZ	0
Proposed service area contains part of a least one QOZ	5
Proposed service area wholly contains at least one QOZ	10

B.5 Digital Literacy Training (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants are encouraged to establish meaningful partnerships with organizations in the proposed project area that support the development of digital skills, workforce development, cyber safety, and other related skillsets among residents and businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evidence of partnerships with libraries, schools, senior centers, related non-profit organizations, and other similar entities, or any consortia thereof to provide digital skills training to community members including letters of support, MOUs, or other similar documents, if applicable. Applicants should also include information on any training they plan to provide to subscribers of the newly deployed service.

Economic and Community Impact (100 points)

This evaluation criteria measures the potential impact that broadband infrastructure 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.

C.1 Broadband Impact and 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. ✓ 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. <p><i>Note: Please see table below for how this criterion will be scored.</i></p>

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)

% 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

C.2 Economic and Workforce 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Substantive evidence provided demonstrating the impact of broadband within the project area. ✓ Documents 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.
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C.3 Benefits to Targeted Customer Segments and the Community (Maximum 50 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Need identified or exacerbated by the pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Impediments that would be remediated by the proposed project including lack of access to work, education, and health monitoring. ✓ Extent to which the proposed project addresses disadvantaged communities that have experienced disproportionately poor work, education, and health outcomes demonstrated by federal, state, and other relevant data, reports from the targeted community/communities. ✓ Established an active Local Technology Planning Team within the project area or was an active participant or member of a planning team and document critical needs.

Project Budget (50 points)

The applicant should provide information on the budget narrative and should identify all major expenditure categories and the total sums for those categories. The applicant should describe the steps that will be taken to achieve efficiencies in expenditures. These can include a) leveraging existing assets; b) engaging in competitive procurement through request for proposals (RFPs) for major purchases; etc. The applicant should also provide a detailed budget schedule and cost metrics for fiber optic deployment.

D.1 Project Budget and Cost Metrics (Maximum 50 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of budget efficiency. • Budget schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Narrative should identify all major expenditure categories and the total sums for those categories. ✓ The cost elements should include engineering design; permitting; pre-construction costs (e.g., make ready); outside plant materials (e.g., fiber, poles, hardware, conduit, splitters, etc.); labor; and construction management.

Non-Federal Funding Sources and Community Support (100 points)

With respect to cost-sharing, this evaluation criteria evaluates the percentage of non-federal funding that the applicant has available to cover the cost of the project. Applicants demonstrating the ability to cover a larger percentage of the project's total cost with non-federal funding will score higher. 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-Federal Funding (Maximum 50 points)	
Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of non-federal funds. • Viable public-private partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greater points will be assigned to projects that utilize a higher portion of non-federal funds for 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. <p><i>Note: Please see table below for how this criterion will be scored.</i></p>

Non-Federal Funds Provided Scoring Table:

Percent of Eligible Project Costs Covered by Non-Federal Funds	Points
64.9% or more	50
55 – 64.9%	30
45 – 54.9%	20
35 – 44.9%	15
25 – 34.9%	10
15 – 24.9%	5
0 – 14.9%	0

E.2 Financial Commitment from Community Stakeholders (Maximum 10 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 percentage 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.

E.3. Public-Private Partnerships (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of viable public-private partnership(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Details regarding public-private partnership(s) established to implement, operate, and sustain the project.

E.4 Evidence of Community Support (Maximum 10 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"> ✓ Documents that reflect a broad spectrum of community members. ✓ Degree to which project fits into an existing community strategic plan or Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband. ✓ 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 or documentation that shows compelling need and project support.

E.5 Local Technology Planning Team or Broadband Committee (Maximum 20 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.

Network Capability and Scalability (75 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).

F.1 Network Capability and Scalability (Maximum 75 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. ✓ Priority will be provided to fiber-optic networks deployed directly to the home or business. ✓ Process and investment for long-term network scalability, operation, and maintenance. ✓ Degree of evidence provided that demonstrates the installed broadband infrastructure is scalable. <p><i>Note: Please see table below for how these criteria will be scored</i></p>

Extent to which Fiber Optic Technology is deployed (25 points)

Network Scalability Scoring Table (50 points):

Network Scalable to	Points
≥100mbps/20mbps	17
≥100mbps/100mbps	23
≥250mbps/250mbps	28
≥500mbps/500mbps	34
≥1gb/1gb	50

Project Viability and Sustainability (50 points)

These criteria evaluate 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.

G.1 Financial Capability and Sustainability (Maximum 30 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. 	<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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case analysis to demonstrate project's financial viability. 	<p>deployment stage and recurring revenue and operating expenditures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. ✓ Key metrics regarding the financial targets required by non-federal 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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G.2 Organizational Capability (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 key personnel (e.g., qualifications, resume). ✓ Identification of key partners, roles, and letters of project commitment.

G.3 Track Record/Past Experience (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of experience deploying and operating a network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Details regarding experience and results in having deployed similar networks.

Affordability and Adoption Assistance (25 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 Low Price Service Tier (Maximum 10 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Price Service Tier and program subscriptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Special programs and partnerships that provide significant discounts to economically disadvantaged customers, including discounted devices or services, such as E-rate.

H.2 Commitment to Improving Adoption Rate (Maximum 15 points)

Key Areas	Factors for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication plan and strategies to enable adoption to general public.• Program to raise awareness and adoption.• Level of commitment to improving the adoption rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The communications plan should indicate how the applicant will provide information to homes, businesses, and institutions impacted by the proposed project, and should promote the use of an internet connection for improving a consumer's quality of life, access to resources, economic opportunity, telehealth, distance learning, etc. Special discounted rates for small businesses and community anchor institutions.✓ 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).