BEAD Grant Award Management Platform

Methodology and Rules Document

WI BEAD Grant Award Management | SaaS platform

Developed for:

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW)

Authored by:

CostQuest Associates, LLC

Publication date:

December 17, 2024

Revision date:

March 4, 2025

Document Version: V1.0

Table of Contents

Version

Version Number	Date Issued	Notes
V1.0	12/18/2024	Initial release
V2.0	3/4/2025	Updates and clarifications

Background

Through the BEAD program, Wisconsin has been allocated approximately $1.056B to expand high-speed Internet access through infrastructure deployment to address the unserved and underserved locations within the state and other approved non-deployment activities. Pursuant to the NTIA directives and those outlined in NTIA's NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity), the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) and the Wisconsin Broadband Office (WBO) have developed a fair, open, and competitive process to select subgrantees for the BEAD funds. Those processes are described in detail in the Initial Proposal Volume 2 (IPv2) approved by NTIA in July 2024. To support the implementation of the subgrant award process described in IPv2, PSCW selected CostQuest Associates' (CostQuest) BEAD Grant Award Management Platform to ingest potential subgrantees' BEAD applications, score those applications consistent with the WI IPv2, and support the selection of BEAD subgrants.

This document is intended to be one of a series of support documents for the WI BEAD Grant Award Management platform. Although some overlap with other documents is anticipated, e.g., the platform User Guide, this document is intended to address how the methods and concepts PSCW included in IPv2 are implemented within the platform.

Reasonable accommodations

The Commission will provide reasonable accommodations, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, for qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. If you need accommodations, contact Alyssa Kenney at (608) 267-9138 or Alyssa.Kenney@wisconsin.gov.

BEAD Platform

System Requirements

The system is designed/optimized for use on desktop or laptop computers using the most recent versions of the Windows operating systems and the Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge browsers. It is anticipated that the platform will be compatible with other devices and browsers, however it is not designed for use in those environments. Further, the platform is intended for use via the provided user interface, APIs and automation should not be used.

The platform is deployed so that client IP addresses outside the U.S., Canada, Germany, or Great Britian are blocked. Additionally, if an applicant's IT organization uses a whitelist for internet domains, they may need to whitelist wi.grantaward.io.

User Access

Invitations to access the BEAD Grant Award Management Platform are sent to potential subgrantees that have been approved to participate in the BEAD program by PSCW. For each organization it qualifies to participate as an applicant in the WI BEAD program, PSCW will approve one Administrative User (often the AOR). The Administrative User

will receive emails with instructions on how to establish access to the WI BEAD Grant Award Management platform as well as to the associated support desk. Once the Administrative User gains access to the platform, they will be able to activate up to four (4) additional non-administrative users that can access the platform. Any newly activated users will go through the same onboarding process via emails for both the platform and the support desk. The Administrative User also has the ability to deactivate users. **If at any time an applicant must change the Administrative User, this must be performed via the support desk and with approval from PSCW.**

Users can access the platform by going to https://wi.grantaward.io. Each user, upon entering the platform for the first time, will be required to accept the CostQuest End User License Agreement (EULA). The platform also requires that the CostQuest Privacy Policy and the website accessibility statement are accessible.

Due to the sensitive nature of the data being entered into the platform, an auto-logout has been implemented. Administrative User users receive a two-minute warning after 5 minutes of inactivity, and non-administrative users get a two-minute warning after 20 minutes of inactivity. The warning provides the opportunity for the user to logout at that time or continue.

A user is registered within the platform using an email address. That email address can only be associated with one organization, and that user will only have access to that organization's application data.

The platform will be available to accept applications only on the days/times established by PSCW. The platform will operate using the Central Time Zone and will open and close automatically at dates and times predetermined by PSCW.

User Permissions

While all users can input and view applications, only the Administrative User can approve applications for submission. Submission of an application within the platform is required for PSCW to consider the application during the awarding process, and thus the Administrative User makes a series of attestations when submitting each application – attestations that only the Administrative User can make on behalf of the applicant.

General Approach

The platform is designed to allow access to PSCW-approved applicants (via the BEAD LOI process) and allow them to input the information required to apply for BEAD funding per the requirements outlined in WI IPv2. The platform provides the ability for each applicant to submit their applications, for PSCW to review and assess those applications and to score, rank and determine, with PSCW input, which applications may be selected for BEAD subgrants.

Each phase of the process is separated to ensure users only have access at appropriate times. The phases of the process are as follows:

- Application Submission: All approved applicants have access to the platform and can enter one or more applications, per the rules established in IPv2. The dates and times each round is open is determined by PSCW. The platform will automatically open and close at the specified times. Applicants have access only during these times.
- PSCW review of applications. Once the applications for each round have been received and the platform has been closed to applicant access, the PSCW will commence a review of all applications, per IPv2. The platform provides PSCW staff the ability to enter their review for each application.
- Automated calculation of application scoring; The platform includes a "scoring engine" that performs the calculations to determine the score of each unit that can be awarded. Details of the calculations are shared below.
- Curing: Based on PSCW feedback, any application can be identified as requiring curing. Curing will be limited to circumstances when PSCW observes an obvious mistake, such as incorrect file uploaded, or if the application does not meet the minimum score. The Administrative User of each application that requires curing will be notified via the support desk of the PSCWs decision, and application-specific instructions will be included. The platform will re-open to the applicants that have any applications identified for curing. The curing period will have a definitive length, determined by PSCW and dependent on the number of applications.
- A repeat of the PSCW review process for any applications that were changed during the curing phase.
- Repeat of the scoring process for each application and each project unit within the application.
- Decisive Winner Threshold: Once the scores are finalized for Round 1, PSCW will analyze the application scores and develop a decisive winner threshold. Round 2 analysis does not include a decisive winner threshold.
- The ranking, deconfliction and identification of applications/project units that can be selected/awarded is different for each round. During Round 1, only certain priority ~~fiber~~ applications can be selected, per IPv2. Round 2 selection is based solely on score. Note that ties will be awarded to the larger of the applications.

Per IPv2, awarding is performed first based on the non-separable components of each application. Separable project units on an application can only be considered for award after the non-separable component is awarded. In alignment with IPv2 description of

combination of project units, PSCW will consider these grouping an "awardable unit". An awardable unit is:

- the group of non-separable project units on each application; and,
- each individual separable project unit on each application.

For example, an application with 18 project units where 11 of those units are designated non-separable by the applicant, will have 8 awardable units. One awardable unit that consists of the 11 non-separable project units, and 7 awardable (separable project) units.

The platform will analyze the applications based on overlap and score and identify the awardable units that are eligible to be selected in Round 1. Once PSCW approves these selections, the project units that make up the awardable units will be removed from the list of available project units for future rounds. All project units not selected in Round 1 will be available for the next round, with some constraints for "no decisive winner" and non-~~fiber~~priority hold project units.

Application Submission

Applicant Inputs

The inputs requested for each application are necessary to support scoring and obtain the commitments required from applicants pursuant to IPv2. The following are not intended to be a replica of the questions, but rather an explanation of the inputs, with context, that are representative of the input language within the platform.

- Application name and description
- Confirmation of information provided in Letter of Intent (LOI) submission (yes/no question)
- Application technology selected from the following:
    - Priority: Optical Carrier: Fixed wireline service using end-to-end fiber-optic cable to the premise (FTTP) (Code = 50) for all locations. Applicant commits to providing fiber connectivity to each unit for all MDU locations within the project units selected on this application.
    - Non-Priority: Coaxial Cable / HFC: Fixed wireline service using coaxial cable or hybrid fiber-coaxial (e.g., DOCSISx) (Code = 40)
    - Non-Priority: Terrestrial fixed wireless: licensed spectrum only (non-FTTP) (Code = 71)
    - Non-Priority: Terrestrial fixed wireless: hybrid licensed/unlicensed spectrum (non-FTTP) (Code = 72)

- Non-Priority: Copper/DSL (Codes=10)
- Non-Priority: mixed technology: where the project is a combination of fixed technologies (Code = 0)

Note that the technology selected will apply to all locations within the project units associated with the application.

- Each non-priority application must select the appropriate speed from the following options. The applicant commits to deploying as the minimum certified speed and maximum latency provided to all eligible locations within the project units associated with the application.
  - 100/20 Mbps, 100 ms max latency
  - 200/20 Mbps, 100 ms max latency
  - 300/30 Mbps, 100 ms max latency
  - 500/50 Mbps, 100 ms max latency
- For Non-Priority Mixed Technology applications, the applicant must enter the distribution of BSLs to each of the technologies. The values entered for each technology must sum to the total BSLs for the entire application.
- Deployment speed is a yes/no commitment to completing the deployment for the application within 36 months of executing the subgrant agreement.
- Affordability questions are dependent on whether the application is for a priority or non-priority technology.
  - Priority Affordability Commitment is a yes/no agreement to a five-year commitment to offer symmetrical 1 Gbps service for a monthly price of less than or equal to $165, with no installation, equipment rental, required bundling or other charges to the end user beyond those established in the BEAD grant agreement.
    - If the applicant makes the commitment (answer "yes" to above question) then the applicant is asked to enter the Priority Affordability Price, which is a value between $0 and $165.
  - Non-Priority Affordability Commitment is a yes/no agreement to a five-year commitment to offer 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps service for a monthly price of less than or equal to $165, with no installation, equipment rental, required bundling or other charges to the end user beyond those established in the BEAD grant agreement.
    - If the applicant makes the commitment (answer "yes" to above question) then the applicant is asked to enter the Non-Priority Affordability Price, which is a value between $0 and $165.

- Middle Class/Low-Cost Affordability questions are dependent on whether the application is for a priority or non-priority technology.
    - For Priority applications
        - A yes/no question for a five-year commitment to expand the BEAD required low-cost plan to all of their eligible subscribers in the State of Wisconsin.
        - A yes/no question for a five-year commitment to provide 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps service at a price point of not more than $75 per month with no additional costs or fees within the BEAD project.
    - For non-priority applications
        - A yes/no question for a five-year commitment to expand the BEAD required low-cost plan to all of their eligible subscribers in the State of Wisconsin.
        - A yes/no question for a five-year commitment to provide 50 Mbps / 10 Mbps service at a price point of not more than $75 per month with no additional costs or fees within the BEAD project.
- CAI Commitment is a yes/no commitment to serving all eligible CAIs within, or proximate to, the project units included on this application with at least 1 Gig symmetrical service. This question is only asked on priority applications.
- Tribal Consent
    - Is the network to be deployed to the locations associated with this application within, connected to, or traverse Tribal lands? (yes/no)
        - If the answer to the above question is yes, then the applicant must upload the Tribal Resolution of consent, or an explanation of why consent is not yet available.
- Engagement
    - Public Engagement including evidence of public meeting(s) to engage the community in the project planned with the application.
        - If files are uploaded the applicant must specify in the area provided where and with whom the meetings were held.
    - Municipal Engagement including letters of public support from municipal government(s) within the application area.
        - If files are uploaded the applicant must specify in the area provided where and with whom the meetings were held.

  - Other Engagement including letters of support from school districts, public library or organization within the application area.
    - If files are uploaded the applicant must specify in the area provided where and with whom the meetings were held.
  - To the extent that there are any third-party contributions expected for this application which are included in the contribution match inputs for the project units on this application, list those third-party source and the amount of their contributions.

- Additional files to be uploaded for each application include:
  - Proposed Network design (use template provided)
  - Detailed network plan including geospatial data for fiber routes, tower locations, etc.
  - Past Labor Compliance (use template provided)
  - Future Labor Plan (use template provided)

PSCW requires that the templates provided be used. The templates should be downloaded from the platform, completed and uploaded back into the platform.

Project Unit Selection

In addition to the questions above, each application will require the selection of one or more project units. Applications without at least one Project Unit will not be eligible for submission. Per IPv2, an applicant can include a particular project unit on no more than two (2) applications. The platform implements this rule as inclusion on no more than two (2) submitted applications.

Further, during the Letter of Intent process, each applicant will have established a set of counties within which they intend to apply for BEAD projects, as well as a limit on the quantity of eligible BSLs they may apply for within those counties. While creating an application, the platform will provide a notification to the user if they select a project unit outside of the applicant's list of counties, or if the sum of the unique BSLs on their applications exceeds the quantities of BSLs. The applicant will have the opportunity to provide an explanation, but the platform will not restrict applicant inputs based on the limits for counties or BSL. PSCW will be notified of any exceedance of BSLs or counties and the information can be used to support PSCW's selection criteria.

As noted in IPv2 the WBO will align parameters to ensure efficient allocation of funding and seeks to retain project contiguity and adjacency. In order to ensure efficient deployment, fair bidding and promote contiguity the sub-granting process will limit a single application to project units within (4) connected counties. Project units on a single application are required to be from no more than four (4) counties, each that

shares at least one border with another of the four counties. This county adjacency requirement will be validated based on the table in Appendix A that identifies the counties that are considered to have a boundary with each of the 72 WI counties.

For each project unit the applicant must enter

- BEAD funds being requested;
- Matching contribution from the applicant and all third parties; and,
- the ability to designate a project unit as non-separable is available, but not required.

Project Unit Endorsement

For each project unit, as available, upload a letter of endorsement from the appropriate county government(s) and/or Tribe(s). These uploads are not required inputs since applicants are not required to have these letters of support. If the applicant does upload a letter of endorsement, they should select the name of the county or tribe that provided the endorsement from the dropdown list.

Note that a list of applicants that have enforceable commitment defaults and the locations on which they defaulted will be provided by PSCW. This will apply to the Released Enforceable Funding Commitments provision within IPv2. Upon submission of an application, the platform will assess if it includes a project unit with a location for which that applicant has an enforceable commitment default. The user will not be notified, but per IPv2 this application can only be considered for award if it is the only application including that project unit.

Round 2 Application Inputs

The inputs for Round 2 applications are the same as those in Round 1. However, there are constraints for the project units that can be added, as well as limitations on changes for existing applications that are moved to Round 2.

- Project units preliminarily ~~selected~~ awarded in Round 1 are not available for selection in Round 2
- Project units not included on any application being considered at the start of Round 2 can be added to any application. Project units only on disqualified and/or carried forward applications can be allowed on any application in Round 2.
- A new priority application can include project units that did not receive a priority award or no decisive winner status ~~bid~~ in Round 1 ~~(not on a priority bid at start of Round 2)~~, including those subject to the non-priority "hold." Note that if a

priority application has carried forward status, those project units can be included as well.

- Non-priority "hold" project units can be included on priority applications in Round 2 (new or existing), but not on non-priority applications.
- If a separable project unit is "released" from an application whose non-separable units were awarded, and it becomes a "no decisive winner", it will be forwarded to Round 2 and have all the characteristics of a "no decisive winner" application.
- Applications that remain on the platform after the opportunity to retract "no decisive winner" awardable units at the beginning of Round 2, cannot be retracted by the applicant at a later time
- After the retraction window, project units cannot be removed from an application moved from Round 1 to Round 2
- Priority p~~P~~roject units with ~~included on~~ "no decisive winner" status ~~applications~~ moved to Round 2, cannot ~~only~~ be included on any other applications~~from the applicants of those "no decisive winner" applications~~.
- Non-priority project units with "no decisive winner" status moved to Round 2 cannot be added to another non-priority application, but can be added to priority applications (new or existing).
- Project units cannot be removed from an application that has been moved from Round 1 to Round 2
- Project units subject to a non-priority "hold" cannot be edited or retracted by the applicant in Round 2.
- Each applicant still has the constraint of each project unit being allowed on no more than two (2) applications.
- For applications moved from Round 1 to Round 2, e.g., no decisive winner applications, not all inputs are allowed to be changed. Constraints are:
    - Any application moved from Round 1 that is edited in Round 2, will automatically receive a new application_id. This will support tracking of the application changes, if any.
    - Applications moved from Round 1 into Round 2, including applications of (re)grouped separable project units, will start with the inputs from the application/project units they were originally on in Round 1, with the exception of non-priority hold applications which cannot be changed.
    - BEAD funding requested cannot be increased for any existing project unit on the application.

  - Project units not included on any application at the start of Round 2 can be added to the application – subject to the limit of two applications for each project unit per applicant rule
  - Non-priority holds and non-priority no decisive winner project units can be included on priority applications that have been moved to Round 2

- Applicants are not required to change applications moved from Round 1 to Round 2. However, if the application is modified, o~~O~~nly the following inputs can be changed
  - Project units can be added to an application (not removed) and the applicant must enter appropriate inputs for these project units (BEAD funding, Contribution Match and Endorsement).
  - For project units on the application in Round 1
    - BEAD funds requested can be reduced only
    - Contribution match can be increased only
  - ~~A new geospatial file can be uploaded if the project units have changed~~
- The BEAD Match threshold is NOT a gating criterion in Round 2

Round 2 maintains the validations for ~~the county adjacency, as well as~~ the counties and BSL limits from each applicant's LOI submission. The BSL validation in Round 2 would include any awarded BSLs from Round 1. The BEAD Match threshold, the four-county limit and the county adjacency validations are not enforced in Round 2 processing.

Application Status

Applicants can create applications within the platform, and those applications proceed through a process as they are entered, approved, evaluated by PSCW, scored by the platform, and ultimately ranked and deconflicted. Applications can be in any one of the following statuses (at one time) once created.

- An "In Progress" application has been created by an applicant but is still in the process of being developed and can continue to be edited by the applicant.
- "Pending Approval" applications are those that were "in progress" but have been selected for review and approval by the applicant's Administrative User.
- If the Administrative User approves a "Pending Approval" application, the application's status changes to "Submitted". Only applications in submitted status at the end of each round will be examined by PSCW for potential selection.

- "Retracted" applications are those which an applicant's Administrative User has determined should not be considered by PSCW for selection/award. Applicants can only retract applications that are not "Preliminarily Selected" or "Hold" applications, and only while the platform is open for Round 1 and Round 2.
- "Preliminarily Selected" applications are those applications selected by PSCW Administrative Users to be offered BEAD preliminary subgrant awards (assuming all conditions are met including final proposal approval by NTIA).
- A "Deemed Withdrawn" application is one that has a non-separable awardable unit that has overlap with a preliminarily selected awardable unit from another application. These applications cannot be selected due to overlap with a selection/award and are therefore withdrawn. Note that a separable project unit will also be deemed withdrawn if it is awarded on another application.
- A "No Decisive Winner" application is a Round 1 awardable unit that has been automatically forwarded to Round 2 due to an overlapping competitive application.
- "Hold" – after Round 1 scoring and deconfliction for non-priority applications, the highest scoring awardable units from non-priority projects will be receive a "hold" status for all areas (awardable units) not receiving a preliminary award for a priority project. Project units in "hold" status cannot be included in non-priority applications in future rounds.
- "Disqualified" is an application that the PSCW staff has reviewed (during manual review process described below) and designated as an unacceptable application. This application remains in the database but would not be further processed by the platform.
- "Carried Forward" applications are those identified by PSCW (during manual review process described below) as not meeting all the requirements of the current round, e.g., too many exceptions, and should be forwarded to the next round.

Please note that it is possible for an awarded, priority no decisive winner, non-priority no decisive winner, non-priority hold, or deemed withdrawn status to apply to a awardable unit, but not a full application. In these cases, the application status will display as "Mixed" and the status of each awardable unit will be indicated within the application.

For an application to be considered by PSCW for an award, the applicant must complete the application within the specifications established within IPv2 and the platform, and the application must be reviewed and approved by the applicant's Administrative User during the dates/times PSCW has established for each round. Only applications in "submitted" status will be analyzed for potential selection.

Note that this approval and submission process is a two-step process that must be taken by the Administrative User. Any user can request that an application be approved, i.e., moved from "In Progress" to "Pending Approval." However, once in "Pending Approval" status, only the Administrative User can grant the approval of the application, commit to the required attestations and move the application to "Submitted" status.

Validations

During the creation, editing and submission processes, an application goes through several quality assurance validations. These validations can take several forms. Some of the validations are simply restrictions on the entry of values for an input. For example, the Priority Price commitment must be a value less than or equal to $165. In this case, if an applicant attempts to input $170, the platform will reject the input as invalid. An application with an invalid response cannot be submitted. The following are more complicated validations performed within the platform.

- BEAD Match Threshold validations occur at two levels
    - The percentage of BEAD funding requested (relative to the total budget) is compared to BEAD Match Threshold established by PSCW. Applications that fail to meet the threshold will be asked to provide justification for why this level of BEAD funding is required. The justification will be specific to the circumstances on the ground for this application and why it is necessary to exceed the threshold. This explanation is required if the application fails the validation, i.e., the application will not be submitted without the explanation.
    - The calculation compares the applicant BEAD percentage to that established by PSCW.
- Applicant percentage of BEAD funding equals the sum of the BEAD funds requested ~~by~~ divided by the total budget provided by the applicant (BEAD funds + contributions).
- PSCW percentage will be the sum of the public funding divided by the total investment. PSCW has identified different values for priority and non-priority investments. The appropriate values will be used depending on the application.
    - Per IPv2, during Round 1, this validation is applied as a gating criteria, i.e., if validation check fails and the exception is not granted, the application may be deferred or disqualified per PSCW discretion, but may not be awarded in round 1. For this Round 1 gating, the calculation is performed at the application level, i.e., the sum of all the project unit data on the application.
- Project units have a county adjacency requirement. The platform will validate that an application does not include project units from more than four (4)

counties and that those counties meet the adjacency requirement. An application that fails this validation will not be allowed to be submitted. More information on the adjacency criteria can be found in Appendix A.

- For released enforceable commitment locations included on an application, the applicant will not receive any warning or validation, but the platform will indicate this to PSCW during the manual review process.
- The platform checks that each application includes project units only from counties identified in the applicant's LOI. If validation fails, applicant must provide an explanation (via file upload) but will be allowed to submit the application.
- If the total quantity of unique BSLs included on ALL submitted and awarded applications (plus the one being submitted) exceeds the quantity of locations provided during the LOI process, the applicant will receive a warning. The application will still be submitted. If the applicant wishes to make a change to any applications to reduce their unique BSL count, they can retract and create new applications to adjust. To the extent that the round ends and the BSL count still exceeds the LOI limit, PSCW will be notified that the applicant has exceeded their LOI limit.

PSCW Review of Applications

PSCW review of applications. Once the applications for each round have been received and the platform has been closed to applicant access, the PSCW will commence a review of all applications, per IPv2. This review process is PSCW's opportunity to review each application. Note that only applications in "submitted" status will be presented to PSCW for review as these are the only applications that have both received the attestations required as well as been approved by the Administrative User.

The reviews will result in PSCW providing scores for several components, as well as an examination of any requested exceptions as noted below.

PSCW Exceptions Review

PSCW staff will be shown the exceptions that were either requested by the applicant or that have been flagged by the platform. For each, PSCW will be able to download all related files, review and record an appropriate response. Each of the exceptions is noted below with specifics as to how it will be addressed.

- In Round 1, exceeding this BEAD Match threshold is a gating criteria. Per IPv2 it can be used to disqualify the application. However, when an application does exceed the threshold established by PSCW, the applicant can submit an explanation. PSCW will review that explanation and determine if the

explanation is acceptable, and if so, the application would be considered for award in Round 1.

- If the platform determines (based on data provided by PSCW) that the applicant has included a released enforceable commitment on one of their applications, the application will be flagged by the platform and PSCW can confirm the location is indeed a released enforceable commitment and determine how the application should proceed.
- If an applicant selects project units from counties not included on their LOI county list, the applicant will have provided a justification. PSCW will review that justification during this review process and determine how the application should proceed.
- Any applicants that have exceeded the BSLs planned per the LOI will have this exceedance noteds on all of their applications. A report created for PSCW will identify all applicants which have exceeded their LOI planned BSLs (and by how much), and based on this information PSCW can determine how the applications can proceed.

PSCW Manual Review Inputs

In addition to the review of the exceptions noteds above, PSCW will enter the following inputs.

- PSCW provides an assessment of the proposed network quality, with a maximum value of 10 points
- For non-priority applications, PSCW will assess the proposed network's ability to add future locations without adding additional infrastructure with a maximum of 1 point.
- PSCW also reviews the fair labor practice plans submitted and provides two component scores for each application:
    - Past compliance with labor laws with a maximum value of 8 points
    - Demonstrated plans for future compliance with a maximum value of 9 points. The score breakdown will include:
        - A workforce plan up to 5 points
        - Directly employed workforce up to 2 points
        - Locally hired workforce up to 2 points
- Community engagement review is composed of three component scores

  - PSCW assessment of the public meeting engagement documents provided, with a maximum value of 2 points
  - PSCW assessment of the local government engagement documents provided, with a maximum value of 2 points
  - PSCW assessment of the other engagement documents provided, with a maximum value of 1 point
- PSCW will review and score any tribal or county endorsements with a maximum value of 7 points

Note in these cases PSCW will have the opportunity to allow applications to be considered, send applications to curing, push applications to Round 2 or disqualify the application.

Scoring Engine

Application scoring is driven by the detailed scoring rubric established by PSCW in section 2.4.2 of the IPv2. The scoring rubric, with a maximum score of 100, is implemented within the platform as follows.

Primary Criteria

There are three primary scoring criteria with maximum scores as follows:

- Minimal BEAD Outlay (40 points)
- Affordability (18 points)
- Fair Labor Practices (17 points)

Minimal BEAD Outlay is calculated at project unit level, with a weighted average for non-separable awardable units as appropriate. There is a maximum of 40 points for this criterion where the score is based on inputs from the applicant and PSCW's reference inputs for each project unit.

If the applicant requests no BEAD funds for a project unit, the Minimal BEAD Outlay will receive the maximum score of 40 points for that project unit. For non-zero BEAD funds inputs, the Minimal BEAD Outlay score will be the sum of the following three components

- Cost efficiency = BEAD_Outlay_Eff;
- BEAD match threshold = BEAD_Outlay_Match; and,
- BEAD Proposed Network Design = BEAD_Outlay_Disc.

Each of these calculations as implemented in the platform are described below.

BEAD_Outlay_Eff = [((PU_Investment - Budget_Total) /PU_Investment) + 0.2] * 15

Note that the inputs into the calculations can be different dependent on the applicant's technology selection. If the applicant selects a Priority technology, the PU_Investment is the project unit specific investment for priority~~fiber~~. All non-priority technology choices use the non-priority investment. The budget total is the applicant entered sum of the BEAD funds requested and the contribution for that project unit on the application. Note that dependent on the applicant inputs, the result of this calculation can be negative or greater than 15, in those situations, the result will be set to 0 and 15, respectively.

BEAD_Outlay_Match = [1 - ((100-Cont_Match/Budget_Total)/BEAD_Match_Threshold)] x 15

Cont_Match is the applicant input representing the applicant and third-party contributions, and the BEAD_Match_Threshold is established by PSCW for each project unit. Note that dependent on the applicant inputs, the result of this calculation can be negative or greater than 15, in those situations, the result will be set to 0 and 15, respectively.

The final component of the Minimal BEAD Outlay score is the Network Assessment score based on the contents of the uploaded Network Design and performance document and geospatial file, The Network Assessment score is between zero (0) and 10 points, determined by PSCW during the review process. The score is established at the application level but applied to ALL project units/awardable units associated with in the application.

Minimal BEAD Outlay score for a group of project units on a single application, e.g., a non-separable awardable unit; is calculated as the BSL-weighted average of the project unit results.

Priority Affordability is calculated at the application level, with the score being assigned to all project units associated with the application. This component has a maximum score of 18 points and is based on applicant inputs for the pricing commitment and the price. The following scoring calculation is the same for priority and non-priority technology applications, but the commitments are different per the questions.

If the applicant responds "yes" to the pricing commitment question, then the Price Commitment Score = (165-Commitment_Price)*0.2, where Commitment Price is the price entered by the applicant on the application.. A response of "no" to the pricing commitment question results in a score of zero (0) for this component.

The Fair Labor Practice Score is the final Primary Criteria score component. It is calculated at the application level, with the score being assigned to all project units associated with the application. This component has a maximum score of 17 points and is the sum of the following two PSCW components that are based on a review of the labor plans provided for each application.

- Past Compliance Points has a value between 0 and 8

- Demonstrated Compliance Points has a value between 0 and 9

Secondary Criteria

There are five secondary scoring criteria for each of priority and non-priority applications, with maximum scores as follows:

- Speed to Deployment (1 point)
- Local Coordination Support and Engagement (5 points)
- Local and Tribal Endorsement (7 points)
- Middle Class and Low-Cost Affordability (10 points for priority; 8 for non-priority)
- CAI Commitment (2 points, priority only)
- Speed of Network and Technical Capabilities (4 points, non-priority only)

Each of these calculations as implemented in the platform are described below.

Speed to deployment is calculated at the application level, with the score being assigned to all project units associated with the application. The score is dependent on whether the applicant commits to deploying the network described in the application within 36 months. If the applicant responds "yes", this component has a score of 1, otherwise the score is zero (0).

The Engagement score is calculated at the application level, with the score being assigned to all project units associated with the application. This component has a maximum score of 5 points and is the sum of the following three PSCW components that are based on a review of the support letters uploaded by the applicant for each application.

- Evidence of public meetings to engage the community in the project planning has a value between 0 and 2
- Letter of support from local governments included in the project area has a value between 0 and 2
- Letters of support from other local organizations that support the project has a value between 0 and 1

The Endorsement score is assigned at the project unit level and has a maximum score of 7 points based on PSCW review of the endorsement documents provided by applicant for each application. Since this assessment is performed by PSCW at the project unit level, the Endorsement score for a non-separable group of project units will be calculated as the BSL-weighted average of the scores of the individual non-separable project units of that application.

The Middle Class and Low-Cost Affordability score is calculated at the application level, with the score being assigned to all project units associated with the application. This component has a maximum score of 10 points for priority projects and 8 points for non-priority projects. The score is the sum of two components based on the applicant making five-year commitments to: a) expand BEAD low-cost plans to all Wisconsin subscribers; and, b) provide technology dependent speed service for not more than $75 per month. Points are technology dependent.

For a priority technology application:

- If the applicant responds "yes" to the five-year commitment to expand the BEAD low-cost plan to all eligible subscribers in the State of Wisconsin, then a priority application receives 8 points.
- If the applicant of a priority application commits to provide 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps service at a price point of not more than $75 per month with no additional costs or fees within the BEAD project, this score component equals 4 points.
- The Middle Class and Low-Cost Affordability score is the sum of the two components above, with a maximum of 10.

For a non-priority technology application:

- If the applicant responds "yes" to the five-year commitment to expand the BEAD low-cost plan to all eligible subscribers in the State of Wisconsin, then a priority application receives 6 points.
- For an applicant with a non-priority application that commits to provide 50 Mbps / 10 Mbps service at a price point of not more than $75 per month with no additional costs or fees within the BEAD project, the score component will be 3 points.
- The Middle Class and Low-Cost Affordability score is the sum of the two components above, with a maximum of 8.

The CAI commitment score is applicable only for priority technology applications. If the applicant makes the commitment to serve CAIs as described, the application will receive 2 points. If the applicant does not commit to serving the CAIs, the CAI commitment score will be zero (0).

The Speed Network and Technical Capabilities score is calculated only for non-priority applications and assigned to all project units associated with the application. The score is the sum of two component scores: a) the response to the non-priority speed question; and, b) the PSCW review of the future capacity of the network.

- Speed of Network, max of three (3) points is calculated as follows:
    - If applicant selects 100/20 Mbps, 100 ms max latency, 0 points

- If applicant selects 200/20 Mbps, 100 ms max latency, 1 point
- If applicant selects 300/30 Mbps, 100 ms max latency, 2 points
- If applicant selects 500/50 Mbps, 100 ms max latency, 3 points

- Technical capabilities score has a maximum of 1 point and is based on the PSCW review of the applications network plan, specifically if the plan demonstrates that the backhaul and network capacity is sufficient to add future locations, beyond those obligated in the proposal, without adding additional infrastructure.

Curing/Application Modification

Applicants will be able to modify, or cure, their applications in circumstances where, for example, PSCW observes an obvious mistake on an application or if the application does not meet the minimum score. PSCW will discuss the change with the applicant and the applicant will be allowed back into the platform to make specific changes and/or corrections.

The rules for entering inputs and submitting applications during the curing process are the same as those during the initial Round 1 application submission, except that applications cannot be retracted by the applicant during curing. This curing process will occur during a defined period of time. The curing of any applications will result in a repeat of the PSCW review and scoring processes.

PSCW can repeat the curing process multiple times, at its discretion.

As applications enter the curing phase, the platform will establish application status as follows:

- If the curing flag has been set by PSCW during review, the status will reflect that the application should be sent to curing
- If an application has a score of less than 40, the status will be set to "carried forward" but could be overwritten by PSCW staff to "curing"
- If the applicant selected counties outside of those that they specified on their LOI and PSCW did not approve their exception, the application will be carried forward.
- If the applicant exceeded the BEAD Match Threshold and PSCW did not approve the exception, the application will be carried forward.
- If the tribal consent flag remains on the application, the application will be disqualified
- If none of the above conditions apply, the application will be considered for award.

-PSCW will have the ability to manually update any application statuses during the review process. Note that Round 2 rules for curing will be different since there is no "carried forward" status in that round.

- If an application has a score less than 40 points in Round 2, it can only be considered if it is the only one bidding on a project unit.
- Any application that has an unapproved exception will be disqualified.

Awarding/Deconfliction Process

Once the scoring engine is run, each project unit on each application will have a score. From those scores, a non-separable awardable unit score will be calculated using the BSL-weighted average of the non-separable project units. If an application does not include any non-separable project units, the platform will evaluate each separable project unit separately. It is this application score that will be used in the initial ranking of applications in preparation for deconfliction.

Round 1 Processing

Decisive Winner Threshold

Per IPv2, as part of the scoring assessment, PSCW staff will review the distribution of scores and establish a Decisive Winner Threshold. This value will be used during Round 1 to determine if overlapping applications can be awarded. This analysis must occur prior to the Round 1 selection process being conducted. Note that the ~~no~~ decisive winner threshold does not impact the applications/units that have no competition, and the decisive winner concept is not included beyond Round 1.

Deconfliction and Selection

Once any curing and PSCW review and scoring is completed and the decisive winner threshold is established, the awarding process for Round 1, as well as those that should be pushed to Round 2 due to "no decisive winner" status, can occur. Note that applications which have been designated by PSCW as carried forward or disqualified are not included in this process.

- Non-separable awardable unit ~~Application~~ score is, ~~i.e.,~~ the BSL-weighted average of the non-separable project units on an application. All separable project units on an application have a score based on that application/project unit's inputs/scores.
- Only awardable units within the application that meet the minimum score of 40 will be included in the assessment. (An application whose non-separable project units ~~that~~ haves ~~a~~ score less than 40 will be moved in its entirety to Round 2, regardless if the separable project units have scores above 40.)
- If an application includes a flag for a released enforceable commitment, the application remains, but will be moved to the bottom of the list of their

technology group regardless of score. Any awardable unit on an application with this flag can only be selected if it is the only reliable technology application bidding for those project units.

- Applications' awardable u~~U~~nits are ranked highest score to lowest score within Priority and non-priority technology. Priority applications are compared to other priority applications. Non-priority applications are compared to non-priority applications.
- Per IPv2, separable project units on an application that has a non-separable unit are "released" only if the non-separable awardable unit is selected. If the non-separable component is never selected, the separable project units are never released and cannot be selected/awarded.
- In Round 1, for *priority* applications that do not overlap with the project units of any other *priority* applications, the platform will assign the project units which make up the non-separable awardable unit of that application as a preliminary selection. The platform will also:
    - remove preliminarily ~~selected~~ awarded project units from consideration in future rounds;
    - withdraw any other applications (in their entirety) if any of the preliminarily ~~selected~~ awarded project units overlap the application's non-separable awardable unit
    - ~~remove~~ withdraw these preliminarily ~~selected~~awarded project units from any other application on which they are separable units
- For Round 1 priority awardable units that do have overlap with other priority applications,
    - if their score is decisively higher (based on the decisive winner threshold) than the overlapping applications, the platform will assign the project units which make up the non-separable awardable unit of that application as a preliminary selection. The platform will also:
        - remove those project units from consideration in future rounds;
        - withdraw any other applications (in their entirety) if any of these preliminary ~~selected~~awarded project units overlap the applications non-separable awardable unit
        - ~~remove~~ withdraw these preliminarily ~~selected~~awarded project units from any other application on which they are separable units
    - If the score of an overlapping priority application is not decisively higher, the platform will assign the application "No Decisive Winner" status and it will be moved to Round 2 along with all the overlapping applications.

- Non-priority applications cannot be awarded during Round 1. However, a process similar to the priority process above will be performed for non-priority applications. The process is run and those awardable units that "win" are assigned non-priority "hold" status. Overlapping non-priority applications are withdrawn (but not remaining priority applications). <u>These project units are NOT selected in Round 1, but they can only receive priority bids in Round 2.</u>
- "Hold" status applications/project units are moved to Round 2.

For applications and/or released separable project units with "no decisive winner" status after all Round 1 scoring and curing is complete, the applicant will be allowed – briefly – to notify PSCW of their intent to withdraw their application or revise it (the latter as part of Round 2). If all overlapped applications are withdrawn except one, that one will/can be assigned a preliminary selection and it will not be forwarded to Round 2.

The process to notify applicants of no decisive winner awardable units/applications and request whether they want to retract the applications is as follows.

- PSCW determines no additional curing will be pursued in Round 1
- Round 1 scoring is completed within the platform
- PSCW determines the decisive winner threshold
- The applications will be processed to identify the awardable units which are in 'no decisive winner' status at the end of Round 1 based on the initial scoring
- Applicants will be notified of any Round 1 preliminary awards and non-priority holds.
- Applicants will be notified which of their applications include awardable units in 'no decisive winner' status, and they can decide if any should be retracted.
    - Applicants must retract all the no decisive winner awardable units or keep all no decisive winner units on each of their applications as it is moved to Round 2.
    - Awardable units that have been identified as preliminarily awarded cannot be retracted/removed.
- Notification to each applicant will be via a help desk email with no decisive winner awardable units by application name/id.
- Any applicant that wants their 'no decisive winner' application awardable units to be retracted, and submits a timely request to retract, the platform application will be moved to the curing phase and the applicant will have the opportunity to remove the awardable units. This will ensure the awardable units are not carried forward to round 2.
- A non-response from the applicant - or a response from anyone other than the Administrative User - will result in the application going through the standard process for submitted applications, i.e., moved to Round 2 or awarded if it no longer has competition (the other no decisive winner applications were retracted).

Once all Round 1 preliminary selections have been made and confirmed by a PSCW Admin user, applicants can be notified of applications that are being moved to Round 2.

Any unselected (and not withdrawn) separable project units from each application in Round 1 will be (re)grouped based on the original application. The "new" application will have a new application_id, certain attributes will be editable, and will begin with the inputs from the original application.

Applications are open in Round 2 as follows:

- No constraints on Round 2 participation for applicants with an approved Letter of Intent
- New priority applications can only include project units that are not included on any awarded or no decisive winner ~~existing~~ priority applications from Round 1. ~~and any non-priority hold project units~~
- New non-priority applications can only include project units that are no-bid project units and/or those not subject to a non-priority hold. No-bid project units are those which are not included on any application at the beginning of Round 2.
- Applications in "no decisive winner" status may be revised, with some constraints on the changes (details in Round 2 processing~~above~~).
- ~~P~~Priority project units ~~included~~ with~~on~~ "no decisive winner" status ~~applications~~ moved to Round 2, cannot be ~~only be~~ included on any other applications~~from the applicants of those "no decisive winner" applications~~.
- Non-priority project units with "no decisive winner" status moved to Round 2 cannot be added to another non-priority application, but can be added to priority applications (new or existing).
- If a separable project unit is ~~"released"~~made available from an application whose non-separable units were awarded, and it becomes a "no decisive winner", it will be forwarded to Round 2 and have all the characteristics of a "no decisive winner" application.
- Applications that remain on the platform after the opportunity to retract "no decisive winner" awardable units at the beginning of Round 2, cannot be retracted by the applicant at a later time
- After the retraction window, Project units cannot be removed from an application moved from Round 1 to Round 2
- Project units subject to a non-priority "hold" cannot be edited or retracted by the applicant in Round 2.
- ~~—~~

Round 2 Processing

In Round 2, applications will be reviewed starting with priority broadband projects, and according to the scoring and deconfliction procedures outlined in IPv2. Similar to Round 1:

- Applications' non-separable awardable units~~Application~~ score is~~, i.e.,~~ the BSL-weighted average of the non-separable project units on the application. All separable project units on an application have a score based on that application/project unit inputs/scores.
- Only awardable units within the application that meet the minimum score of 40 will be included in the assessment. (An application whose non-separable project units have a score less than 40 will be removed in its entirety, regardless of whether the separable project units have scores above 40.)
- If any awardable unit within an application includes a flag for a released enforceable commitment, the application remains, but all awardable units on the application will ~~should~~ be moved to the bottom of the ranking list for its technology group. Any awardable unit with this flag can only be selected if it is the only reliable technology application in its technology group being considered for those project units.
- Applications are ranked highest score to lowest score within Priority and non-priority technology. Priority applications are compared to other priority applications; same for non-priority applications. Note the one exception to ranking by score are the released enforceable commitment applications/awardable units.
- Separable project units on an application are "released" only if the non-separable awardable unit is selected. If the non-separable component is never selected, the separable project units are never released.
- Any released separable project unit with a score less than 40 will not be included in the ranking.
- The platform automatically prepares preliminary selections based on score/ranking with a process as follows:
    - Step 1: Initial score rank is based on the non-separable component of each application plus the separable components of applications that lack a non-separable component
    - Step 2: The non-separable awardable unit of the highest available scoring application is preliminarily selected
    - Step 3: Separable units from the preliminary selected application, if any, are "released" into the list based on their project unit scores (only those >=40)

- Step 4: Applications/project units are withdrawn based on any overlap with preliminarily selected awardable units
- Step 5: Repeat above steps 2-4 until all ~~fiber~~ priority applications/units are exhausted;

- Round 2, for the highest scoring priority awardable unit, assign the project units as a preliminary selection, and:
  - remove those project units from consideration in future rounds;
  - withdraw any other applications (in their entirety) if any of these project units overlap the application's non-separable awardable unit
  - remove these project units from any other application on which they are separable units
- For project units which remain unselected (after priority selection) and have a non-priority "hold" status, preliminarily ~~select~~ award these project units.
- Round 2, for the highest scoring non-*priority* application still available, assign the project units which make up the non-separable awardable unit of that application as a preliminary selection, and:
  - remove those project units from consideration in future rounds;
  - withdraw any other applications (in their entirety) if any of these project units overlap the applications non-separable awardable unit
  - remove these project units from any other application on which they are separable units

Appendix A – County Adjacency

Any point on a county boundary that touches another county's boundary will be sufficient condition to consider those countries as adjacent. This includes a single point of one county touching a single point of another county but should not include instances where counties share a border only via water (e.g., Door and Marinette). The following table is consistent with this definition.

CountyFIPS	Name	Adjacent Counties
55001	Adams	55111, 55021, 55077, 55057, 55137, 55097, 55141
55003	Ashland	55099, 55113, 55051, 55007
55005	Barron	55033, 55109, 55017, 55107, 55095, 55113, 55129, 55013
55007	Bayfield	55113, 55003, 55129, 55031
55009	Brown	55015, 55071, 55087, 55061, 55115, 55083
55011	Buffalo	55121, 55091, 55035
55013	Burnett	55005, 55095, 55129, 55031
55015	Calumet	55117, 55039, 55139, 55071, 55087, 55009
55017	Chippewa	55035, 55019, 55033, 55119, 55005, 55107
55019	Clark	55053, 55141, 55073, 55035, 55017, 55119
55021	Columbia	55027, 55025, 55111, 55047, 55077, 55057, 55001
55023	Crawford	55103, 55043, 55123
55025	Dane	55055, 55027, 55105, 55045, 55049, 55111, 55021
55027	Dodge	55133, 55055, 55131, 55025, 55021, 55047, 55039
55029	Door	55061
55031	Douglas	55113, 55129, 55013, 55007
55033	Dunn	55091, 55093, 55035, 55109, 55017, 55005, 55095
55035	Eau Claire	55121, 55011, 55053, 55091, 55019, 55033, 55017
55037	Florence	55075, 55041
55039	Fond du Lac	55131, 55027, 55117, 55047, 55015, 55139

55041	Forest	55083, 55067, 55075, 55037, 55085, 55125
55043	Grant	55065, 55049, 55103, 55023
55045	Green	55065, 55105, 55049, 55025
55047	Green Lake	55027, 55021, 55077, 55039, 55139, 55137
55049	Iowa	55065, 55045, 55025, 55103, 55111, 55043
55051	Iron	55099, 55125, 55003
55053	Jackson	55063, 55081, 55121, 55057, 55141, 55035, 55019
55055	Jefferson	55127, 55133, 55027, 55105, 55025
55057	Juneau	55111, 55021, 55123, 55081, 55053, 55001, 55141
55059	Kenosha	55127, 55101
55061	Kewaunee	55071, 55009, 55029
55063	La Crosse	55123, 55081, 55121, 55053
55065	Lafayette	55045, 55049, 55043
55067	Langlade	55115, 55078, 55083, 55073, 55069, 55041, 55085
55069	Lincoln	55073, 55067, 55099, 55119, 55085
55071	Manitowoc	55117, 55015, 55009, 55061
55073	Marathon	55115, 55135, 55097, 55141, 55067, 55069, 55019, 55119
55075	Marinette	55083, , 55041, 55037
55077	Marquette	55021, 55047, 55001, 55137
55078	Menominee	55115, 55083, 55067
55079	Milwaukee	55101, 55133, 55089, 55131
55081	Monroe	55123, 55063, 55053, 55057
55083	Oconto	55009, 55115, 55078, 55067, 55075, 55041
55085	Oneida	55067, 55069, 55099, 55041, 55125
55087	Outagamie	55015, 55139, 55009, 55115, 55135
55089	Ozaukee	55079, 55133, 55131, 55117

55091	Pepin	55011, 55093, 55035, 55033
55093	Pierce	55091, 55033, 55109
55095	Polk	55033, 55109, 55005, 55013
55097	Portage	55115, 55001, 55137, 55135, 55141, 55073
55099	Price	55069, 55119, 55107, 55113, 55085, 55125, 55051, 55003
55101	Racine	55059, 55127, 55079, 55133
55103	Richland	55049, 55111, 55043, 55023, 55123
55105	Rock	55127, 55055, 55045, 55025
55107	Rusk	55099, 55017, 55119, 55005, 55113, 55129
55109	St. Croix	55093, 55033, 55005, 55095
55111	Sauk	55049, 55025, 55103, 55021, 55123, 55057, 55001
55113	Sawyer	55099, 55005, 55107, 55003, 55129, 55031, 55007
55115	Shawano	55087, 55009, 55078, 55083, 55135, 55097, 55073, 55067
55117	Sheboygan	55089, 55131, 55039, 55015, 55071
55119	Taylor	55073, 55069, 55099, 55019, 55017, 55107
55121	Trempealeau	55063, 55011, 55053, 55035
55123	Vernon	55103, 55111, 55023, 55063, 55081, 55057
55125	Vilas	55099, 55041, 55085, 55051
55127	Walworth	55059, 55101, 55133, 55055, 55105
55129	Washburn	55005, 55107, 55113, 55013, 55031, 55007
55131	Washington	55079, 55133, 55089, 55027, 55117, 55039
55133	Waukesha	55127, 55101, 55079, 55055, 55089, 55131, 55027
55135	Waupaca	55139, 55087, 55115, 55137, 55097, 55073
55137	Waushara	55047, 55077, 55139, 55001, 55135, 55097
55139	Winnebago	55047, 55039, 55015, 55087, 55137, 55135
55141	Wood	55053, 55057, 55001, 55097, 55073, 55019