



Broadband
Accessibility and
Affordability
Office

Albemarle County ARPA Broadband Expansion Grant

Purpose: Albemarle County, as authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act, would like to provide a grant to an internet service provider to expand broadband to the remaining unserved and underserved locations in the County.

Background: Albemarle County has been a local government leader in administering broadband expansion grants, receiving funding for all but one year of the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI). During the VATI 22 round, Albemarle County joined a proposal by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission to partner with Firefly for a project that would connect over 36,000 locations. The project covered nearly all of the locations receiving less than 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, and represents over 5,000 locations in Albemarle County.

A similar joint proposal was submitted for VATI 23, which would have addressed the nearly 1,600 locations in Albemarle County that were considered “underserved,” receiving service greater than 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, but less than 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up. That proposal was not selected for funding.

Program Description: Albemarle County’s Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office will serve as administrator for this grant, which will utilize ARPA funding and authority to fund a project to provide last-mile broadband service for unserved and underserved areas of the County.

The objective of this grant is to provide financial assistance to supplement construction costs by private sector broadband service providers to extend service to areas that presently are unserved or underserved, and which are not currently included in other publicly-funded grants.

Eligible Applicants: Applicants should be private sector internet service providers that do not currently have publicly-funded projects which are out-of-compliance with Federal or State regulatory bodies.

Eligible Areas: As per ARPA, any area with broadband serviceable locations that are not served by an internet service provider delivering service at 100



Broadband
Accessibility and
Affordability
Office

Mbps down and 20 Mbps up, or above, is eligible for funding through this proposal.

Appendix I illustrates the areas BAAO has previously identified as eligible for this proposal. This area represents approximately 1500 locations which would be eligible for service through this program. BAAO reserves the right to adjust the target number of passings based on increased clarity in service distribution.

Challenge Process: Providers that would like to submit a challenge for any area included in this proposal should do so by August 21, 2023. Challengers must demonstrate that they:

- 1) Currently deliver services at each location within the area at speeds of 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up, or above; or
- 2) Have begun, and expect to complete prior to December 31, 2025, construction to provide such services; or
- 3) Have an enforceable commitment to provide such services, in a timeframe similar to the proposal.

Challenges should include all necessary documentation to demonstrate validity of the claim. BAAO will review all challenges and make a determination within 10 business days of receipt.

Deployed Service: Except where a provider has already received exception for a lower level of service, selected provider will deliver symmetrical 100 Mbps service to target locations. Selected provider will also be required to be a participant in the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Implementation Deadline: All construction activities should be completed by December 31st, 2025, and all close-out activities and invoice submissions should be completed by July 31, 2026. Limited extensions for construction may be considered, should the project encounter delays due to circumstances beyond applicant's control.

Evaluation Criteria: Applications will be evaluated based on cost, scope, and feasibility of meeting project guidelines. Strong preference will be given to applications expected to deliver 100% of project scope. Additionally, feasibility must demonstrate ability to fulfill all relevant ARPA reporting as laid out in Treasury guidance ([Recipient Compliance and Reporting Responsibilities | U.S. Department of the Treasury](#)).

Submission: Interested participants should submit a letter of intent, by August 18th, that states whether the participant will apply for the whole or a portion of the project. Applications should be received by August 31st.



Broadband
Accessibility and
Affordability
Office

Appendix 1:

