

# New America Foundation

## BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption: *Application Guide for Applying for Funding from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program*



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Applying for funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) can be a challenging process. This guide is to help those interested in funding for Sustainable Broadband Adoption projects understand the application process and eligibility requirements, as well as recommendations for dividing the application among a project team to provide an understanding of what is required to complete an application by the March 15th deadline. Although this guide is not a replacement for the January 15, 2010 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) or other resources published by the NTIA, this guide is a roadmap for applying to BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption funding.

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Additional information and resources about this opportunity is available from the Open Technology Initiative at: <http://www.newamerica.net/broadbandstimulus> or Native Public Media: [www.nativepublicmedia.org](http://www.nativepublicmedia.org)

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## Opportunity Background

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), allocated \$7.2 billion for broadband projects. The first round NOFA was released in July 2009 and made \$2.4 billion available through Rural Utilities Service and \$1.6 billion through NTIA BTOP. The NOFA for the second and stated final round of broadband stimulus funding was released on January 15, 2010. Of the \$2.6 Billion currently available for BTOP, approximately \$100 million is allocated for Sustainable Broadband Adoption projects.

Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) Projects create a measurable increase in demand and subscribership to broadband services. Projects should identify barriers to adoption in a given area and. NTIA expects the project impact to be verifiable, including through market research and surveys.

The expected grant range is \$500,000 to \$15 million. To be competitive, applicants should seek local community partners, including but not limited to community colleges, libraries, health facilities, municipal facilities, and contribute at least 30% of the projects costs as a cash or in-kind match. Projects are encouraged to collaborate with applications for other projects types, such as a Comprehensive Community Infrastructure or Public Computer Centers project. Each funding opportunity requires a separate application and synergies between applications should be discussed in appropriate areas.

### Additional Resources

- Broadband USA: <http://www.broadbandusa.gov>
- Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for BTOP Round 2: [http://www.broadbandusa.gov/files/FedRegNOFA\\_R2\\_NTIA.pdf](http://www.broadbandusa.gov/files/FedRegNOFA_R2_NTIA.pdf)
- BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption Grant Guidance: <http://www.broadbandusa.gov/files/SBA%20Grant%20Guidance%202.11.10%201500%20FINAL.pdf>

## Application Details

### Application Process

Applications undergo several steps: Initial Review, Evaluation Critical Review, Consultation, State and Tribal Consultation, Due Diligence Review, and the Selection Process. To pass the Initial Review, applicants must be an eligible entity, submit a completed application, and have at least a 20% non-federal cost share match for the project, or submit a waiver, though the NTIA recommends at least 30% matching funds. All components of the application are required at this time.

### Important Terminology

**Broadband** – Defined by the NOFA as a connection to the Internet with speeds advertised as faster than 756 kilobits per second (kbps) downstream and 200 kbps upstream.

**BTOP** – Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, administered by the NTIA, distributes grants for broadband infrastructure, adoption, and public computer center projects.

**Community Anchor Institution** – As defined by the Recovery Act: “schools, libraries, medical and healthcare providers... and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband services by vulnerable populations.”

**“Last mile”** – The network connecting to end-users, such a connection to a residence or small business.

**“Middle mile”** – A network providing a high-capacity connection but not connecting to end-users, such as a network connecting community anchor institutions. Last mile networks connect to middle mile networks that connect to the public Internet.

**“Underserved”** – An area with 50% lack access to broadband, no provider offers service with 3 mbps downstream, or subscribership is 40% of households or less.

**“Unserved”** – An area where 90% lack access to broadband.

**“Vulnerable population”** – Includes groups such as low-income, the unemployed, children, minorities, seniors, and people with disabilities.

## Evaluation Criteria

Projects will be scored in the categories below. For more detail see NOFA section VII.A.3.

- **Project Purpose**

- Alignment with BTOP's purposes
- Potential for job creation or retention
- Collaboration with other Recovery Act or Government Programs
- Partnerships with Indian Tribes and Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Small Businesses

- **Project Benefits**

- Number of new subscribers
- Cost per user
- Use of replicable new ideas
- Support for vulnerable populations

### Important Dates

- Applications are due March 15, 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time.
- NTIA intends to announce BTOP Round 2 awards on a rolling basis starting in June 2010. All awards under BTOP must be made by September 30, 2010.

- **Project Viability**

- Operational feasibility of the project
- Applicant's ability to execute the project
- Community partnerships

- **Project Budget and Sustainability**

- Reasonableness of budget
- Sustainability of project impact
- Matching funds

States and Tribal governments will have the opportunity to prioritize projects in their state or territory, and outreach to these governing bodies is recommended while preparing an application. During the Due Diligence phase, applicants may be asked to submit additional information to clarify or expand upon their applications. Selections for awards will be made on a number of factors including scoring, analysis of the program, avoidance of redundancy with other projects or programs, and availability of funds. These criteria are expanded upon in the NOFA, or *Changes, Requirements and Critical Details: Final Broadband Stimulus Opportunity for BTOP*. See <http://www.newamerica.net/broadbandstimulus> for further details.

## Eligibility

### Eligible Entities

- States or local governments
- The District of Columbia, territories, and possessions of the United States
- Indian tribes and native Hawaiian organizations
- Non-profits
- For-profit entities or corporations
- Limited liability companies
- Cooperative or mutual organizations

### Eligible Costs:

All projects costs, including match and award request, must be eligible costs which include:

- Acquiring broadband-related equipment, instrumentation, networking technology for broadband services
- Developing and providing training programs including reasonable compensation for employees
- Conducting broadband awareness outreach
- Programming to facilitate greater access to broadband services or equipment
- Reasonable Indirect costs (see section V.E.1.b. for more details)
- Reasonable pre-application expenses, up to 5% of the total award
- Undertaking other projects the NTIA determines is consistent with BTOP purposes

Ineligible expenses are those not predominantly for "the provision of broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support" including but not limited to constructing or leasing broadband facilities (section V.E. 4.b.).

### Matching Funds

Applicants must contribute at least 20% of project costs in matching funds, or apply for a waiver, to be eligible for funding, though the NTIA recommends at least 30%. Matching funds can be cash or in-kind

and must contribute towards eligible costs. As general rule, the matching funds should be from non-federal sources. See section V.2.C. for more details or information on matching funds or a waiver.

## Necessary Documents and Details

### *Records*

- Contact Information (will be made public) and additional contacts
- Organization Details
- DUNS number available from 1-866-705-5711 or at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
- Central Contractor Registration (CCR): <http://www.ccr.gov/StartRegistration.aspx>
- Name, title, and employer for key individuals unless exempt.
- Buy American Waiver, if applicable
- Description of Federal Debt, if applicable (1500 characters)
- Congressional Districts affected by the project
- Historical Financials for 2007-2009

### *Written Documents*

#### **Big Picture**

- Project Title
- Project Description (400 characters)
- Synergies or dependencies between project and any other applications (3000 characters)
- Executive Summary (9000 characters)
- Project Purposes as applied to BTOP (6000 characters)
- Collaboration with Recovery Act or other Government Collaboration (3000 characters)

#### **Project Details**

- Technology Strategy (3000 characters)
- Innovative Approach to Sustainable Broadband Adoption (3000 characters)
- Description of Partners Involved in the Project (6000 characters)
- Details of Community Anchor Institutions involved in the Project
- Impact on Vulnerable Populations (3000 characters)
- Accessibility (3000 characters)
- Multilingual training (3000 characters)
- Methodology used to estimate jobs (1500 characters)
- Measuring Adoption Impact (3000 characters)
- Broadband Training Programs (6000 characters)
- Awareness Campaign Programs (3000 characters)
- Environmental Questionnaire

#### **Organizational and Budget Documents**

- Project Budget
- Reasoning if budget is outside of NTIA's target range (1500 characters)
- Matching Funds (6000 characters)
- Sustainability (3000 characters)
- Unjust Enrichment (3000 characters)
- Budget Reasonableness (3000 characters)
- Demonstration of Need (3000 characters)
- Licenses, Regulatory Approvals (1500 characters)
- Implementation Plan (3000 characters)
- Disclosure of Federal and/or State Funding Sources (3000 characters)
- Budget Narrative (3000 characters)
- Organizational Readiness (3000 characters)
- Management Team Resumes and Organizational Chart
- Detailed Budget

### *Other Documents and Uploads*

- Buy American Waiver, if applicable
- Government and key Partnerships
- Community Anchor Institution Detail
- BTOP Certifications
- Waivers, if applicable
- FCC Universal Service Fund Provider Identification Number, if applicable (1500 characters)
- SF 424 A Budget
- SF 424 B Assurances

#### **Project Team**

To effectively complete an applicant each applicant will need a team with a diverse set of skills. Below are recommended team-members your grant writing and development team should include along with which

parts of the application each team member will be responsible for. Items in italics are shared between multiple team-members.

**Writer:** Someone who can create a compelling narrative for your proposed project. The writer should be responsible for project description, summary, relating to BTOP purposes and other applications submitted (if applicable) as well as describing details of the project and partners involved. Application Items: 7, 8, and 12.

**Administrator:** Someone who can compile the required documentation and manage team tasks. The administrator should be responsible for inputting the application data, compiling organizational charts, necessary licenses and regulatory approvals, coordinating the environmental questionnaire, and preparing necessary uploads. Application Items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16 and 17.

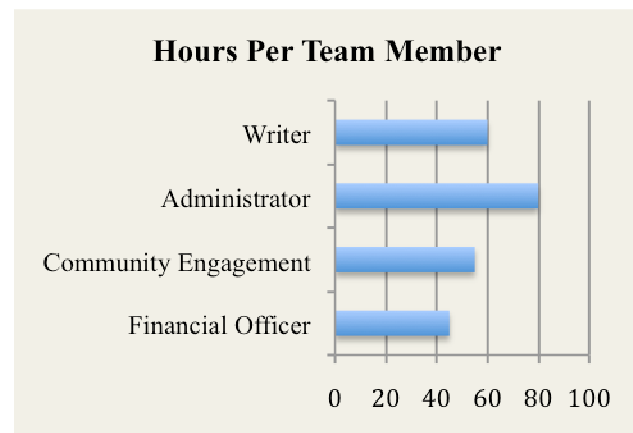
**Evaluation Specialist / Community Engagement:** Someone who can detail the population and community need. Additional responsibilities include designing training, outreach strategy, technology strategy, implementation plan and sustainability. Application Items: 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, and 18 (if applicable).

**Financial Officer:** Someone who can detail the necessary budgets and assist with the development of the business model. The financial officer should be responsible for project budget, historical data, budget projections, and budget narrative. Application Items: 12, 13, 15, and 17.

### Sample Timeline

The following timeline is a best guess estimate of time requirements for team-members to complete their items and we recommend applicants adjust accordingly based on the size and expertise of their team. The timeline assumes a certain level of organizational readiness. We estimate the application will take over 240 hours to complete and those interested in SBA funding with no prior planning, while not discouraged from applying, will find it extremely difficult to meet an already challenging deadline.

Applicants should leave sufficient time to submit the application on-line and should strongly consider completing the application at least two-days prior to the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline to avoid any technical issues related to the application servers or your own Internet connection.



Before beginning the application process, we encourage you take the following preliminary steps:

- Form a Steering Committee
- Form a Project Team
- Identify Key Team Members
- Outline a Responsibilities for the Application
- Form a Grant writing Team
- Create a Management Structure

Hours	Writer	Financial Officer	Evaluation / Community Engagement	Administrator	Additional Actions
5	Big picture documents (20 hrs.)	Outline budget details (15 hrs.)	Tailor training to target population (10 hrs)	Required id. numbers (5 hrs.)	Inform elected officials and continue community engagement (on going)
10				2yr. historical data (5 hrs.)	
15			Develop metrics (5 hrs.)	Resumes and bios (5 hrs.)	
20			Develop sustainability model (10 hrs.)		
25	Project detail documents (20 hrs.)		Formalize partnerships with documentation such as MOUs and Letters of Support (20 hrs.)		
30					
35					
40					
45	Budget documents (10 hrs.)		Detail partners and institutions involved (10 hrs.)	Organizational chart (5 hrs.)	
50					
55	Revising project documents (10 hrs.)	Budget projects (10 hrs.)	Develop outreach (10 hrs.)	Prepare document uploads (10-20 hrs.)	
60					
65	Review application and integrate feedback (40-50 hrs.)				
70					
75					
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85					
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100					
105	Final corrections and changes (10 hrs.)				
110					
115	Submit application (20 hrs.)				
120					
125					
130					