



BEAM PERFORMANCE REPORT

2024

1. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Approved Program Plan number (as provided by Treasury): CPF_GP-000265

Program start date: May 30, 2023

Program end date: December 31, 2026

Actual CPF funds allocated to this Program: \$151,478,883.80

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document serves as the State of Mississippi's (the "State") Performance Report for the period ending June 30, 2023, as required by the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund ("CPF").

On May 23, 2023, the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) approved the Mississippi Capital Projects Fund Program Plan for \$151.5 million under the Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) fund grant program. This funding is being used to implement projects within the Broadband Infrastructure expenditure category, designed to support recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency, address inequities in access to critical services, and work toward Mississippi's goal of providing every resident with access to high-quality, affordable broadband internet.

Mississippi intends to prioritize its CPF allocation with the overall goal of bridging the digital divide across the State and achieving the below identified measurable outcomes:

UNDERSTAND NEEDS	Understand the specific needs across the State through community feedback, input, and public comment in an effort to understand gaps, needs, and barriers to access and coverage
MAXIMIZE CONNECTIVITY	Utilization of competition and Internet Service Provider (ISP) match to enable the State to connect the largest number of unserved residents
SPENDING STRATEGY	Establish mechanism for multi-level, data-driven review process that aligns the State's goals with Treasury's statutory requirements
MONITOR AND IMPLEMENTATION	Implementation of key monitoring procedures to ensure the efficient, compliant use of all CPF funds awarded by the State

In order to achieve the State’s key priorities and objectives, in accordance with State statute, awards are in the process of being made to eligible ISPs in the three categories identified below::

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL FUNDING AMOUNT	AWARDS ANNOUNCED
BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE	To fund large scale projects designed to serve sizeable numbers of targeted addresses	\$116,400,000.00	\$99,308,860
LINE EXTENSION AND DEPLOYMENT	To fund extensions of existing last-mile broadband networks that can be constructed quickly	\$20,000,000.00	\$1,461,960.00
ARPA BROADBAND COMMUNITIES	To fund projects where an applicant partners with a county, municipality, or an affiliated organization that dedicates a portion of its ARPA or other funds to a broadband deployment initiative	\$15,000,000.00	\$11,257,890.00

3. USES OF FUNDS

Broadband Infrastructure

Prior to approval of the Program Plan, the State worked to collect robust data from a variety of stakeholders with the goal of creating a publicly available map that presently serves as the CPF Eligibility Map. This map enables the public, specifically prospective applicants seeking CPF awards, to readily eligible areas statewide.

Following approval of the State’s Broadband Infrastructure Program Plan on May 23, 2023, the State immediately worked to publish key resources on its program website. The website can be accessed here. Specifically, a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was compiled and published to inform prospective applicants of the key details regarding the application process including but not limited to eligible uses, form and content of applications, matching requirements, as well as various other administrative matters. The NOFO can be accessed here.

On June 15, 2023, the State of Mississippi officially opened the application period which included the launching of a web-based application portal. At the request of numerous providers, the original application period of 30 days was extended to 60 days, closing on August 17, 2023.

BEAM is prioritizing different types of broadband projects based on their scope and community impact. For large-scale and line extension projects, the primary focus will be on last-mile fiber applicants, ensuring these critical infrastructure developments are given precedence. Additionally, for community-based broadband projects, BEAM is prioritizing initiatives that provide high-speed, reliable internet access to public areas. This dual prioritization aims to enhance connectivity in both residential and commercial sectors, promoting comprehensive digital inclusivity and economic growth.

Applicants were required to provide details within their applications regarding the below topics/areas of interest:

- Proposed project area
- Type of construction
- Upload and download speed assessed on a Megabit per second basis upon completion of the proposed project
- Pricing structure including participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program
- The applicant's commitment to sustain the infrastructure and the scalability over time of such infrastructure
- The community impact of the project

A complete listing of all application questions can be located [here](#).

Additionally, the State developed an objective scoring system designed to award points to prospective projects based on the following factors:

- Adequacy of the description of the project
- Timeline over which project can be deployed
- Applicant's readiness to comply with federal awards
- The impact the project will have on the community
- The speed offered by the project

The complete Scoring Criteria can be found in the NOFO referenced above.

A listing of the key milestones achieved is included below:

- Published CPF eligibility map
- Conducted and participated in 39 community engagement meetings
- Collected speed test and survey data
- Conducted a challenge process to the State's map of eligible addresses
- Published resources for applicants including a detailed NOFO
- Launched a competitive grant application portal

- State mandated comment/objection process
- Provisional awards made totaling approximately \$115 million

A summary of the outputs produced is included below:

BEAM received 157 applications totaling approximately \$551 million in requests for CPF funding (see below for breakdown of applications received within each category). In December of 2023, BEAM announce preliminary awards which resulted in 52 preliminarily awarded projects totaling approximately \$115 million in CPF funding.

APPLICATION BREAKDOWN		
TYPE OF APPLICATION	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	AMOUNT OF CPF FUNDING REQUESTED
BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE	144	\$529,847,074
LINE EXTENSION	3	\$2,705,550
ARPA CONNECTED COMMUNITIES	10	\$18,425,587
TOTAL:	157	\$550,978,211

As required by MS Code 1972 Section 77-19-15 (2)-(4), each award and project area were required to be posted on a map on the BEAM website for 30 days to allow for objections and/or comments to be made on preliminarily awarded projects. The comment and objection process concluded in January 2024. Considering the volume of location objections received, BEAM separated the preliminarily awarded projects into four groupings based on the total percentage of project location objections to minimize the delay in making final awards, which would ultimately delay broadband service to thousands of locations throughout the state. The first group of projects consisted of those preliminary awards against which no objections were filed. The second group of projects consisted of those preliminary awards with less than 10% of the awarded locations objected. The third group of projects consisted of those preliminary awards with more than 10% locations objected. The fourth group of projects consisted of those preliminary awards upon which the legal basis of the award was objected.

BEAM determined the most efficient and effective way to adjudicate the location objections by dividing the adjudication process into two methods. The two methods of objection adjudication were as follows regardless of the relative percentage of awarded locations objected. For projects with less than 250 location objections, BEAM adjudicated the objections by searching for available services at each address on the objecting entity’s website. For projects with more than 250 location objections, BEAM issued additional requests for information that allowed each applicant to provide documentation supporting their awarded location and providing evidence that there is no service available to the project locations. BEAM also issued additional requests for information that allowed the objecting entity to provide documentation supporting that the entity provides service, or plans to provide service, to preliminarily

awarded project locations. BEAM remains in the evaluation stage of the objections on the legal basis of the award. BEAM is confident that both methods of objection adjudication were contemplated and decided upon in a manner that retained the nature of an open and fair process amongst the project applications. As of June 30, 2024, BEAM is working alongside the contracted third-party legal team to evaluate the objections filed on the legal basis of the awards in the fourth grouping.

During the summer of 2023, BEAM adopted the use fixed amount subawards for CPF Broadband Infrastructure Programs in accordance with the CPF and SLFRF Supplementary Broadband Guidance issued on May 17, 2023, by Treasury through the approval of the Office of Management and Budget. This guidance details that fixed amount subawards may be used under ARPA CPF and SLFRF for broadband infrastructure projects. Fixed amount subawards operate differently than traditional subawards as the reimbursements from grant funding are typically paid on a milestone achievement basis. The milestones vary by project and must be negotiated by project between each ISP and BEAM before executing a subaward agreement. As of June 30, 2024, no final subawards have been made. Projects in the first two groupings of projects are currently in the award milestone negotiation phase and plan to begin construction in Q3_of 2024. Projects in the third and fourth groupings of projects are still in the comment/objection adjudication phase. Upon execution of all subawards under the first round of applications, the projects funded will serve approximately 66,000 broadband serviceable locations by Q4 2026. BEAM is still evaluating the most efficient use of the remaining \$39.5 million that has not yet been awarded. It has not been determined when construction will start on the projects that will be funded through the second application phase scheduled to open in Q3 2024. These projects will also be completed by Q4 2026, and BEAM plans to serve additional potential locations.

A summary of the outcomes achieved is included below:

- Application process: Received 157 applications with requests totaling \$551 million in CPF funding.
- Preliminary awards: 52 projects were preliminary awarded totaling approximately \$112 million in CPF funding. Final awards are expected to be made in the late summer of 2024.
- Compliance & monitoring: The State has developed a robust compliance and monitoring system which involves multiple levels of review and the use of subject matter experts. This system is continuously evaluated and improved to ensure the most efficient use of federal funds.

A listing of the activities planned for the next period covered are included below:

- Determining most efficient use for remaining \$39.5 million in CPF funding
- Execution of grant agreements with subrecipients
- Projects begin broadband infrastructure construction
- Monitoring activities conducted by subrecipients

Notable challenges and the status of each challenge are included below:

CHALLENGE	STATUS
IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE LOCATIONS FOR CPF FUNDING	Complete
UNDERSTAND NEEDS OF STAKEHOLDERS	In progress
NAVIGATING CONFLICTING FEDERAL FUNDING	In progress
ADJUDICATING PROJECT LOCATIONS	In progress

Information about individuals/households benefiting from CPF funds is included below:

Provisionally awarded projects within the aforementioned first two groupings of projects are in the milestone negotiation phase. Provisionally awarded projects in the aforementioned third and fourth groupings remain in the comment/objection adjudication phase. No final awards have been announced as of June 30, 2024. Further information will be available about the individuals/households and the corresponding benefits as awards are made.

Overview and outcomes of ancillary costs incurred to support bringing the capital asset(s) into full use are detailed below:

Provisionally awarded projects within Batches 1 and 2 are in the milestone negotiation phase. Provisionally awarded projects in Batch 3 remain in the comment/objection adjudication phase. No final awards have been announced as of June 30, 2024. Further information will be available about the ancillary costs incurred to support bringing the capital assets into full use as awards are made.

4. PROMOTING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES AND ADDRESSING CRITICAL NEEDS

Communities with Critical Need

For the Broadband Infrastructure category, the State defined critical need areas as those areas with no current access to internet service with at least 25 mpbs download and 3 mpbs upload. Addresses with current or future access to service only by satellite providers or mobile wireless networks are also considered critical need areas. These areas were defined based on FCC data as supplemented by current state data and published as the Mississippi CPF Eligibility Map which can be found at <https://www.broadbandms.com/apply-for-grants/cpf/map>. Potential CPF applicants participated in a challenge process for the eligibility map while Mississippi awaited final approval of its CPF program. The CPF eligible areas reflected in the map cover rural and high poverty areas throughout Mississippi. According to the US Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) 29 of Mississippi's 82 counties have a poverty rate above 25%. These 29 Counties all have areas of critical need that are eligible for CPF funding.

Awareness Efforts

For projects within both the Broadband Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity Technology categories, the BEAM office engaged in 39 community engagement meetings in geographically diverse areas of the state. In addition, BEAM staff attended numerous meetings with local government officials and staffed two days at the Capitol during the recent legislative session to meet with all state legislators and provide information for them to take back to their constituents. BEAM director Sally Doty or a BEAM staff member presented at the Mississippi Board of Supervisors Conference and the Mississippi Municipal League Conference in 2022, 2023, and 2024. A copy of all community engagement meetings is attached to this report. At all meetings BEAM discussed the CPF programs and encouraged all participants to take the speed tests at www.Broadbandms.com to help provide observational data for the CPF eligibility map. The BEAM office distributed flyers publicizing the speed tests at all events, provided flyers at County Office Buildings, and sent 28,000 mailers to underserved areas to further refine the eligibility map. BEAM also provided flyers and information on the ACP program at each event and/or meeting.

For projects within the Digital Connectivity Technology category, applications will be required to include a marketing plan that will inform the communities of the available service. Each awarded applicant will be required to provide a quarterly marketing report that indicates the actions taken to promote awareness of the infrastructure as well as the engagement with such infrastructure within the community.

Progress in Addressing Critical Need

The projects within the Broadband Infrastructure expenditure category are in the provisionally awarded phase of the program. A portion of these projects are in the process of negotiating milestones with BEAM and others are in the comment/objection adjudication process. No final awards have been made.

5. LABOR

The State is committed to ensuring that project deployment will prioritize strong labor practices in the deployment of all CPF projects. Upon award, applicants will be encouraged to report to the State the labor practices undertaken in the deployment of their project. To ensure this objective, the State included elements within the scoring criteria to incentivize those projects who will prioritize local hires, engage in local workforce development efforts, as well as conduct apprenticeship programs, training programs and attends job fairs.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To date, the State's broadband office has participated in 39 community engagement meetings that were attended by local elected officials, community leaders, tribal communities, and residents across the State. These meetings were done in two parts. The first being a presentation educating attendees on grant funding, the timeline of broadband deployment and buildout, who is eligible/ineligible for funding,

and resources available to help bridge digital equity and skills. The second half of these meetings allowed for participants to ask questions and to share their experiences with unreliable internet or no access to the internet. The team documented questions and feedback received from these in-person meetings in an effort to develop programs that yield quality results for communities with critical needs.

To date, community engagement events have been focused on underserved communities and have been conducted only in English. The State's broadband office remains committed to continuing to engage communities statewide including communities with language barriers.

The below list represents the community engagement events attended by members of the State's broadband office:

DATE	LOCATION OF EVENT	TARGET AUDIENCE	NUMBER OF REGISTRANTS
7/25/2022	Bottom Rebuilders Legislative Forum – Jackson, MS	Local Communities	75
9/22/2022	Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus Forum Lexington, MS	Local Communities	100
10/27/2022	Mississippi Delta Cleveland, MS	Local Communities	75
11/17/2022	Clinton, MS	Local Communities	32
12/12/2022	Fayette, MS	Local Communities	22
12/12/2022	Natchez, MS	Local Communities	10 – plus live stream
12/12/2022	Liberty, MS	Local Communities	59
12/13/2022	Brookhaven, MS	Local Communities	24
12/13/2022	Woodville, MS	Local Communities	38
12/13/2022	Magnolia, MS	Local Communities	71
1/19/2023	Quitman, MS	Local Communities	25
1/19/2023	Tunica, MS	Local Communities	30
1/20/2023	Hernando, MS	Local Communities	50
2/17/2023	Okolona, MS	Local Communities	50
2/22/2023	Goodman, MS	Local Communities	23

3/8/2023	Indianola, MS	Local Communities	40
4/19/2023	Perkinston, MS	Local Communities	10
5/2/2023	Kosciusko, MS	Local Communities	20
5/9/2023	Terry, MS	Local Communities	48
6/1/2023	Learned, MS	Local Communities	47
7/14/2023	Carthage, MS	Local Communities	20
7/17/2023	New Hebron, MS	Local Communities	10
7/18/2023	Brookhaven Board of Alderman – Brookhaven, MS	Local Government	25
9/28/2023	Clarksdale, MS	Local Communities	20
11/01/2023	Legislative Black Caucus – Jackson, MS	Local Communities	20
1/18/2024	Southwest MS PDD – Natchez, MS	Local Communities	30
1/19/2024	Southern I PDD – Gulfport, MS	Local Communities	30
1/19/2024	Southern II PDD – Hattiesburg, MS	Local Communities	30
1/26/2024	Senatobia, MS	Local Communities	65
1/30/2024	East Central PDD – Newton, MS	Local Communities	20
1/30/2024	Golden Triangle PDD – Starkville, MS	Local Communities	20
1/31/2024	Three Rivers PDD – Tupelo, MS	Local Communities	40
1/31/2024	Northeast MS PDD – Booneville, MS	Local Communities	30
2/01/2024	North Delta PDD – Batesville, MS	Local Communities	10
2/01/2024	South Delta PDD – Greenville, MS	Local Communities	30
2/06/2024	Central MS PDD – Pearl, MS	Local Communities	50

2/06/2024	North Central PDD – Winona, MS	Local Communities	40
3/18/2024	State Pentecostal Board – Raymond, MS	Local Communities	16
5/03/2024	National Conference of State Legislators – Virtual	Government Leaders	Live Stream

7. CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

The State has incorporated language within each of the administrative contracts executed to date requiring compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights act.

The State has provided each of the provisionally awarded applicants a draft of the subaward agreement which includes a detailed description of the requirements to maintain compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. This provision will be closely monitored by the State in the ongoing monitoring of subawards, once executed.