

Broadband boost coming to 42,500 homes across New Mexico

[Andy Dossett](#)

New Mexico's \$382 million broadband infrastructure proposal has received federal approval, paving the way to connect more than 42,500 unserved and underserved locations across the state.

The funding will support 31 grants through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, according to a community announcement.

The BEAD program is part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed into law by President Joe Biden in 2021.

The New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAAE) reviewed 90 applications and approved projects for 17 entities across 32 of 33 counties.

Currently, 90% of New Mexico has high-speed internet access. With existing state and federal projects, that figure is expected to reach 94% by the end of 2026. The BEAD

approval secures funding to reach 100%.

Navajo Nation to receive \$111 million for infrastructure investments

The Navajo Nation will receive \$111 million, the largest single OBAE-supported project.

“Our BEAD plan will provide fundamental broadband services to rural and Tribal communities that have waited far too long,” Jeff Lopez, OBAE director, said in the announcement.

Grant recipients include nine internet service providers and satellite companies, five cooperatives, and three Tribal communities. The New Mexico Exchange Carrier Group, comprising five companies, also received awards, as did several rural electric and telephone cooperatives.

The infrastructure mix reflects the state's tech-neutral approach: 43% fixed wireless, 42% fiber and 15% low Earth orbit satellite.

OBAE's competitive bidding process drove costs down to an average \$8,972 per location.

Construction can begin once OBAE executes contracts with each recipient.

Remaining BEAD funds from New Mexico's \$675 million allocation will support connectivity for community anchor institutions, 5G tower deployments and middle mile infrastructure. However, the remaining \$293 million of BEAD funding is not yet available due to pending guidance from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham praised the investment.

"This investment will finally close the digital divide in New Mexico, bringing life-changing connectivity to many of the hardest to reach homes in our state," Lujan Grisham said in the announcement. "Every New Mexico family deserves access to the education, healthcare, and economic opportunities that come with reliable high-speed internet."

This story was created by reporter Andy Dossett, ADossett@usatodayco.com, with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Journalists were involved in every step of the information gathering, review, editing and publishing process. Learn more at cm.usatoday.com/ethical-conduct.