Utah Broadband Advisory Commission Board Meeting

Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
Date: Friday, October 18, 2024
Time: 2:00- 3:00 PM MST
Location: Virtual

Utah Broadband Advisory Commission Board Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Attending Virtually: Senator Chris Wilson, co-chair, Representative Robert Spendlove, co-chair, Senator Wayne Harper, Representative Scott Chew, Lynne Yocom, UDOT, Kelleigh Cole, UETN, Chris Parker, Utah Public Utilities, Laura Hanson (appointed stand-in for Sophia DiCaro), GOPB, Rebecca Dilg – Utah Broadband Center (non-voting member),

Online GOEO Staff attendance: Claire Shiverdeker, Steve Greene, Robert Busch, Lindsey Thurgood, Elizabeth Henrikson, Jim Grover, Todd Jensen

Online Visitors: Vikram Ravi, NTIA, Ariel Lybarger, and Rick Gordon with Witt O'Brien's, Tara Thue

1. **Welcome and Introductions: Senator Chris Wilson welcomed everyone to the Friday, October 18, 2024, Utah Broadband Advisory Commission virtual meeting.** The meeting was then called to order by Sen. Chris Wilson, co-chair. He welcomed all attendees and expressed gratitude for their participation. A round of introductions followed, where each participant stated their name, affiliation, and role. Representative Robert Spendlove announced that this might be his final meeting, prompting expressions of gratitude for his service.

2. **Meeting minutes approval:** Rep. Robert Spendlove motioned to approve the previous meeting minutes from the July 30, 2024, Utah Broadband Advisory Commission meeting. The minutes are discussed and approved unanimously, with no amendments or corrections noted. No nay votes were recorded.

3. **State Challenge Process Update - Claire Shiverdecker, Program Manager:** Claire Shiverdecker from the Utah Broadband Center provided an update on Utah's state challenge process, regarding the challenge process data that was submitted to the NTIA. She reported that Utah Broadband Center's data from the challenge process had been successfully submitted, but noted that NTIA identified some formatting issues that needed to be corrected. These formatting issues required updating to comply with NTIA requirements. Claire assured the committee that the Utah Broadband Center would be able to make the formatting and data changes necessary to resubmit to the NTIA by the end of the day for re-evaluation by the NTIA.

4. **BEAD - Next Steps. Registration, Pre-application, etc. - Rebecca Dilg, UBC Director:** Rebecca Dilg from the Utah Broadband Center is discussing the next steps in the BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment) program following the challenge process. The initial proposal was approved in July, setting off a one-year timeframe to complete the process. The BEAD program, funded by the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, aims to connect unserved and underserved locations across the US with reliable broadband. Utah's allocation for this program is $317,399,741.54. The challenge map identifies unserved and underserved areas based on download and upload speeds, with priority given to unserved locations.
The process includes a pre-application and registration phase where Internet service providers (ISPs) indicate their areas of interest based on census blocks. This pre-application period will last for two months, followed by the actual application submission, where potential subgrantees will apply for project areas. There will be an application review and scoring process by a reviewing committee, and then a preliminary list of awards will be sent to NTIA for approval before the awards are announced. The pre-application opens on October 22nd and closes on December 23rd. High-level proposals of service areas are required from applicants, based on census blocks. Utah has 7,356 BEAD-eligible census blocks, which will be grouped into project funding areas. The final application period will be open in January, and the final proposal must be submitted to NTIA by July 29, 2025.

5. **Registration & Pre-Application Portal- Kenrick Gordon, Witt O'Brien's Team:** Rick Gordon from Witt O'Brien's provided a detailed overview of the BEAD pre-registration process. He explained that pre-registration is mandatory for entities intending to apply for BEAD funding. Rick clarified the steps involved, including registering on SAM.gov and utilizing the Amplifund grant management system. He highlighted the importance of accurate and timely registration to avoid delays in the application process. Rick also addressed the upcoming question-and-answer period, where potential applicants could seek clarification on the registration and application procedures. He stressed thoroughly reviewing all guidelines and requirements to ensure successful participation.

6. **DE Proposal/Capacity Grant; Competitive Grant Update: Lindsey Thurgood, UBC Digital Access Program Manager:** Lindsey Thurgood from the Utah Broadband Center provided updates on the Digital Equity Capacity Grant and the Competitive Grant. She announced that Utah will receive approximately $7.8 million for the Capacity Grant. This funding aims to enhance digital literacy, provide technical support, and facilitate digital inclusion across the state. Lindsey explained that the Capacity Grant empowers individuals and communities to leverage technology for educational, economic, and social opportunities. She elaborated on the state's responsibilities regarding covered populations and compliance with state legislation related to digital equity initiatives. There was an extensive discussion on identifying priority populations and tailoring programs to meet their specific needs. Lindsey encouraged feedback from all participants on strategies for maximizing the impact of these grants.

7. **BIG BEAD Reviewing Committee- Rebecca Dilg, UBC Director:** Rebecca Dilg opened a discussion on the formation of a BEAD reviewing committee. This committee would be

responsible for evaluating and scoring BEAD grant applications submitted to the state. Various representatives from different state departments, regional entities, and community organizations were proposed. It was agreed that reviewers should be technical experts, community advocates, and individuals familiar with the specific needs of unserved and underserved areas.

8. **Next meeting discussed:** Commissioners discussed whether to schedule another Broadband Advisory Commission meeting. Senator Chris Wilson mentioned that he wanted to be aware of BEAD subgrantee applications and what the Utah Broadband Center accomplishes next. It was determined that the next UBC update can be given through email communications. The commissioners concluded that UBC's next update could be given without having to schedule another Advisory Commission meeting.

9. **Motion to adjourn: Senator Wayne Harper motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and carried with Aye votes from Sen. Chris Wilson, Co-Chair, Sen. Wayne Harper, Rep. Scott Chew, Rep. Robert Spendlove-Co-Chair, Lynne Yocom, Kelleigh Cole, Laura Hanson (appointed stand-in for Sophia DiCaro), and Chris Parker. The motion passed unanimously. No Nay votes recorded. The meeting was adjourned.**