

Addendum #1 to ITQ #001

Written Responses to Questions

Feb 28, 2023

Q1: Does failing to respond to the ITQ disqualify an entity from applying for funds?

A1: No. Prospective applicants should ensure they meet the definition of Community Applicant before submitting an Application to this ITQ. The ITQ is not a grant opportunity. Broadband Intervention Zones will be used to help prioritize funding in a future grant opportunity.

Q2: Does a successful ITQ prioritize, or provide preference points, to a later applicant?

A2: A successful Application will result in the Geographic Area of Concern becoming a prioritized Broadband Intervention Zone. It is anticipated that a future broadband grant funding opportunity will provide either (1) some form of financial incentive to providers to build out within Broadband Intervention Zones, or (2) increased points and thus higher rankings and increased likelihood to receive funds for Communication Service Providers who propose buildout in Broadband Intervention Zones. This approach is subject to change and will be formalized upon publication of a future grant funding opportunity.

Q3: The organization is, presumably, the municipality or other eligible entity, submitting the ITQ. Should contractors or external consultants supporting the ITQ applicant be associated with eligible entity?

A3: Contractors or external consultants may be associated with the Community Applicant within the Iowa Grants System. However, it must be the Community Applicant who submits the Application. Future broadband grant funding opportunities issued by the Office will be used to select broadband providers to build out service, so inclusion of a particular consultant or contractor in the ITQ submission will have no impact on the provider's success in the future NOFA grant-making process.

Q4: We are consistently putting fiber in the ground independent of grant projects. The V5 map as it stands today (2.16.23) does not represent all of the fiber we currently have in the ground. In particular there is a community that we completed fiber in last year, that shows likely eligible locations today though it is served with 1000/1000 capable fiber. When will we have an opportunity to update the map again?. Is it likely that these locations will be available for ITQ? Should funds be dispersed to an area that already has buried fiber?

A4: The Office's most recent map challenge process closed as of September 2, 2022. The decisions from that challenge are posted online at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-5-challenge-process> and those decisions will reflect on the Map within the coming days. The Office anticipates opening another map challenge window in 2023, although dates are unconfirmed.

Unless these locations were challenged in the last map challenge process, these locations will reflect for purposes of the ITQ as they are on the Map today. Therefore, if address locations reflect likely eligible, a community will be able to include this area in its Geographic Area of Concern. **No broadband mapping process will ever be 100% accurate because, in part, the status of buildout across the state is always changing. The Office does work with grant awardees throughout the process to make adjustments to awarded buildout areas in an effort to avoid overbuilds.**

Q5: Is an Iowa Legislator (Senator, Representative) an approved entity that can apply for this ITQ process?

A5: As long as the legislator represents the Community's interests, there is no prohibition that would restrict a legislator from representing the Community. ITQ determinations by the Office will be based on analysis of data. The Community's choice of representative will have no impact on ITQ listings. The representative must be a member of the community that's being represented.

Q6: Will the information regarding the State's Challenge of DSL Service be incorporated into the upcoming new map that is due to come out prior to March 1, 2023?

A6: Yes, the results of the map challenge process will reflect on the Map prior to March 1, 2023.

Q7: In the case that an address submitted a challenge and there are multiple decisions (ie. accepted, accepted, declined) tied to that one address, how will the final verdict be decided whether that location is deemed eligible or ineligible for future grant funds?

A7: Eligibility turns on whether the address location receives service at 100/20 or faster. Accepted challenges indicate a change to the Map *for that provider*, whereas Declined indicates there will not be a change to the map for that particular provider. If the remaining provider facilitates service at speeds of 100/20 or faster, the address location will reflect ineligible.

Q8: If there is no ITQ submitted for a particular community, can future grant applications be made on behalf of that particular area?

A8: Future broadband grant opportunities issued by the Office in 2023 will likely incentivize broadband providers to build out in the areas included in the ITQ listing. However, inclusion in the ITQ listing will not impact the eligibility of a serviceable location. In other words, a broadband provider could elect to submit a grant funding request for serviceable locations that are all outside of any ITQ intervention zone (see also A2 above).

Q9: I thought I heard that providers can still apply for funds, they just won't get extra points if they don't select one of the qualified sites? So can they still apply for funds and not choose any qualified site? And if so, does it still have to be one of the blue areas on the map?

A9: In a future grant opportunity, Communication Service Providers will be able to apply for funding to facilitate broadband service in any Eligible Service Location published on the final version of Broadband Map V5, but it is anticipated that priority will be given to broadband grant funding applications that address the need identified in the Broadband Intervention Zones established through the ITQ process (see also A2 above). Eligible locations are listed as blue dots on the final version of Broadband Map V5.

Q10: Is there a limit to how many ITQ's a COG can apply for a city or county? If we have both cities and rural county rural areas is there a limit?

A10: There is not a limit to the number of Applications any one COG may submit. However, the Office will limit the number of Broadband Intervention Zones that are contiguous, adjacent, or close to each other. In considering which Applications to disqualify due to geographic proximity, the Office will prioritize disqualifying Applications with lower Broadband Readiness scores (ITQ Section 2.32). Further, please note that an Applicant may not submit multiple Applications that include duplicative address locations. If an Applicant submits Applications that have duplicative address locations, only the initial Application will be scored; subsequent Applications will be rejected and disqualified (ITQ Section 2.33).

Q11: If a city or county selects one area only to qualify and a provider wants only part of that area, do they still get extra points? Or do they have to include the whole qualified area?

A11: No determination has been made at this time on the issue of partial coverage of a Broadband Intervention Zone. However, the Office is considering scoring criteria for a future broadband grant funding opportunity to address this concern and anticipates a minimum threshold for buildout within a Broadband Intervention Zone to qualify for prioritization as further described in A2.

Q12: Several of our counties show they are eligible, but the provider listed currently doesn't offer any internet service in our area, just phone plans. We were told that company received a federal award several years ago, but they have not contacted any of our communities/counties since the award and won't respond to any questions. Will this disqualify these communities/counties from getting an award? That would take out most of our region.

A12: It is anticipated that the next broadband grant funding opportunity to be issued by the Office will use federal funds available through the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund ("CPF"). Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury in relation to permissible CPF expenditures by the states restricts the use of CPF funds to locations that have not received previous state or federal incentives for broadband buildout. Because of this funding restriction, the Office was obligated to take into consideration any prior state or federal funding commitments to build out broadband, regardless of whether the buildout has taken place as of the publication date of Map V5. As a consequence, locations in Iowa were deemed ineligible because of prior grant funding for which buildout has not yet been completed.

Q13: If there is a wireless provider in an area, but their service is less than 1000 mbps download speed, does that make the community/county area eligible to submit an ITQ?

A13: Eligibility determinations for Map V5 were based on whether broadband with sufficient speed was available at the location as of the publication date of Map V5. For purposes of the federal funding to be used under the upcoming broadband funding opportunity, a location was designated as "likely eligible" if the location did not have access to broadband with a download speed of 100 Megabits per second and an upload speed of 20 Megabits per second ("100/20"). If the address had 100/20 or faster service as of the Map V5 publication date, that address is ineligible for future funding. However, surrounding serviceable locations/addresses may not have access to that service and speed. The instructions for the ITQ request that the Community use the online tool to draw a circle on the map to designate the Geographic Area of Concern. This area may include locations that are likely ineligible for funding. However, inclusion of likely ineligible locations will not reflect in the Geographic Area of Concern. Ultimately, the more "~~likely~~ eligible" locations in the circle, the greater the need in the area, and the bigger impact in scoring.

Q14: Can the State of Iowa confirm that a University (as a Community Anchor Institution (CAI) in Iowa) is qualified to be an Eligible Applicant under its ITQ initiative?

A14: A university is a Community Applicant for purposes of this ITQ.

Q15: Will non-ISPs, who use the results of the ITQ (i.e., its resulting Broadband Intervention Zones), be treated the same as an ISP when and if they seek broadband funds from the State in compliance with the NTIA's BEAD NOFO?

A15: It is anticipated that any future BEAD funding provided to the State of Iowa will be awarded to subgrantees to construct broadband projects. Therefore, it is anticipated that future BEAD awardees will be broadband service providers, or ISPs as stated in the question. The ITQ process will establish areas in the state most in need of broadband buildout, and that ultimate listing will be used in an upcoming broadband grant funding opportunity to incentivize broadband buildout in these areas. The ITQ does not result in any form of grant. Rather, the ITQ helps prioritize future grant spending in areas most in need. All awards under future broadband grant funding opportunities will be awarded to broadband service providers. Therefore, it is unclear to the Office what is intended by the questioner when they state "non-ISPs, who use the results of the ITQ . . ." The only "use" of the ITQ will be to prioritize future broadband grant applications by communication service providers, so it is unclear how a non-ISP, other than the Community Applicant, could benefit from the results of the ITQ.

Q16: If you are recognized by the State as a ITQ "Applicant of Record" are you then disqualified from later receiving funds under any subsequent State broadband funding opportunity, such as applications made for BEAD funds?

A16: An applicant must be a Community Applicant for purposes of the ITQ.. Applicants to the ITQ should not be broadband providers, however Community Applicants that currently or may in the future, operate a government-owned broadband network (such as a municipal telecommunications entity) may apply to this ITQ. Under the BEAD NOFO, states as "Eligible Entities" will be obligated to conduct a competitive process to establish grant agreements with subgrantees to construct broadband projects. It is anticipated that the subgrantees under BEAD will be broadband providers. In that BEAD anticipates awards to be made to broadband providers, and the ITQ anticipates that a Community representative will not be a broadband provider, the two groups are mutually exclusive. It should be noted that the next funding opportunity will use CPF.

Q17: Will missed addresses, when added by the State to its next release of the Broadband Availability Map, be considered as unserved or underserved? Can an ITQ Applicant treat these addresses as unserved and/or underserved if the Applicant has reason to believe that these addresses fit the State's definitions of such?

A17: Missing addresses that were submitted as part of the map challenge process were added to the map if the submitted missing address was complete and could be found using commercially available geocoders and/or assessor's records. Internet provider information was added to the record where applicable, and made part of the Office's challenge procedure. The determination of served, underserved or unserved was made according to the Office's challenge procedure. The Applicant may not make its own determinations regarding the eligibility of an address location.

Q18: If the State of Iowa fails to properly adjudicate any properly filed challenge with the State and the Challenger finds that the State has also failed to correct its new Broadband Availability Map, how is an ITQ Applicant expected to treat these undetermined locations?

A18: The Office is unaware of any failures to properly adjudicate map challenges or to correct map availability.

Q19: Can a Community Applicant work with a local internet service provider in developing its Application?

A19: Yes, this is ideal. Working with a Communication Service Provider to develop a Geographic Area of Concern may result in a Broadband Intervention Zone that is more likely to receive a bid when the Office posts the NOFA that corresponds to this ITQ.

