

**Addendum #1 to NOFA #008**

**Written Responses to Questions**

**Jul 14, 2023**

**Disclaimer: The Office has endeavored to recreate the questions submitted during the Written Question and Answer window verbatim, or as they were received from the submitting party. Be advised, however, that some questions may have been slightly modified as deemed necessary by the Office in the interests of brevity and/or clarity, or to otherwise protect the identity of the submitting party.**

**1. MAPPING / BUILD OUT SINCE MAP V5**

**Q1.1: If a NOFA 8 grant applicant submits their application based upon 80%/75%/70% location build out rate/coverage, and then it is discovered or realized that there are FTTH locations within the BIZ zone, it's our understanding that the FTTH locations will be removed and declared "ineligible". How will the OCIO handle situations where the removed FTTH locations results in a drop in the applicant's coverage percentage potentially to a lower threshold? Will the applicant be awarded funding based upon the initial percentage within the grant application? Or alternatively, will the awarded funding percentage be lowered, resulting in jeopardizing the initial business case for the grant applicant?**

**A1.1:** Applicants proposing to construct service within a Broadband Intervention Zone (BIZ) must declare any Eligible Service Locations (ESL) within the BIZ zone for which they have already facilitated service to receive credit for those locations in the scoring and evaluation of proposals. Applicants will indicate whether ESLs are currently being served within the Core Application, Exhibit B. ESLs within a BIZ that have been previously served by an Applicant will count towards the calculation of the 80% threshold for buildout in BIZ ESL's, but they will not be funded through the program. Cost to construct previously served ESLs within a BIZ must be omitted from the Budget set forth in Exhibit D.

For example: There are 100 ESLs within a BIZ. Applicant facilitated service to 30 of those ESLs prior to NOFA 008. An Applicant cannot achieve the 80% threshold for ESLs served under a grant as a result. An Applicant submits an application that includes 70 unserved ESLs and includes the additional 30 previously served ESLs, but indicates they are already served. The Application is evaluated by OCIO as serving 100% of the ES's in the BIZ and thus qualifies for increased match and rankings. No costs for the 30 previously served ESL's are included in Exhibit D (Budget).

Post-Map V5 buildout identified by other broadband providers will be taken into consideration post-award but will not impact award percentages. Also, NOFA section 1.7.8.3 provides, "As part of the Grant Agreement process, the Office may evaluate and consider in conjunction with the Grantee any information about broadband buildout received by the Office after the As of Date. Consideration of such after-acquired

information may result in a change of Grantee buildout obligations as compared to the buildout proposed in Grantee's Application."

**Q1.2: If I have already committed to building out an exchange with fiber and I have already bought all of the materials and hired contractors to do so, but it is not getting built until 2024, is there any way to prevent anyone from getting a grant for this exchange?**

**A1.2:** Proposed Project Areas, and corresponding awards, are based on Broadband Availability Map V5, as of August 2, 2022. Proposed conflicting builds will not be a barrier to an award for the same location. However, the Office encourages providers to communicate with Awardees of planned buildout to an awarded Project Area in order to avoid overbuild and allow for grant funds to be used in areas entirely lacking in broadband.

**Q1.3: We are aware of a small town within a BIZ zone where the locations should be deemed ineligible because of a previous FTTH project. When submitting a grant application, it's our understanding that we should still include the town locations as FTTH locations would be removed from the award at a later date. However, including the FTTH locations will show an increased overall budget in the grant application, which could result in the application not being chosen for grant funding versus a similar application with lower costs. Please advise as to how this situation should be addressed to not negatively impact our grant application.**

**A1.3:** Applicants must remove existing FTTH locations within their project area in Exhibit B of the Core Application wherever those locations are known to have service facilitated by another provider.

**Q1.4: A correction on the map, [Provider] serves [two additional addresses in Denver, IA]. "**

**A1.4:** A map challenge process will be associated with the next state broadband mapping update, dates for which have not yet been established.

**Q1.5: Within the NOFA #008 ITQ #20 [We] will be building a fiber network to quite a few locations along with our NOFA #007 project. Most of these locations were across the road or just down the road from our build-out and the Board of Directors decided to use our own funds to continue the build-out. I'm concerned dollars will be awarded to areas that will have a fiber network this fall/winter (2023). How do we notify you of those locations that will have the opportunity to be served with 100M/100M?**

**A1.5:** See response to Questions 1.1, 1.2, and 1.5. For service that is currently being facilitated to any ESL associated with an Awarded Application to this NOFA, the Office will also post an Attestation form at the time of the Notice of Intent to Award, which will permit third parties to certify to the Office that they have previously completed buildout that should be excised from an Awarded Project Area. This information may be used by the Office to modify awarded applications to remove any existing buildout prior to the execution of the grant agreement. See NOFA section 1.7.8.3.

**Q1.6: We have locations that need challenged as fiber is currently being buried to them as part of NOFA 6. How do we proceed?**

**A1.6:** All qualifying prior NOFA awards have been identified on Map V5. Those awarded locations are not eligible for NOFA 008 funding. See also response to Questions 1.2 and 1.5.

**Q1.7: We have identified locations that are shown as eligible on the map that our company has extended Fiber to the Home network to and now serves with 1 Gbps Broadband. Can the service**

**provider that serves the location apply for that location in the grant process and request \$0.00 reimbursement, effectively eliminating that location from funding eligibility for other service provider applications?**

**A1.7:** See response to Questions 1.1, 1.3 and 1.5. Providers should not submit Application to NOFA #008 in this circumstance.

**Q1.8:** **If an applicant knows of eligible locations within a BIZ zone that now have FTTH deployed since the OCIO map was updated last Fall, when should data be submitted to OCIO depicting those FTTH locations? And will the street address location suffice, or is other data required?**

**A1.8:** See response to Questions 1.3 and 1.5.

**Q1.9:** **When will the next challenge of the map be? We were currently under construction of FTTH with ACAM funds when the reporting of the last map in 2022 was done. Since then, we have locations that we serve up to 1G. How can we be assured that there will be no funding at these locations, since they are ineligible as of today?**

**A1.9:** See response to Questions 1.4 and 1.5.

**Q1.10:** **On NOFA #8 Selection Tool Map there are towns that show as underserved and eligible for the NOFA 8 application. Some providers invested capital to build out the entire town or have sufficient speeds now with 100/20 and serving customers. A few providers or cities also sent in a letter to the OCIO stating that the area has been built out or sufficiently served when the OCIO put out a request for ITQ's. How should these towns now be considered so no provider makes application to serve when the town is already served? Should a provider apply for this area and show zero dollars needed in grant funds so that taxpayer dollars are not being spent to overbuild an area already served?**

**A1.10:** See response to Questions 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, and 1.7.

**Q1.11:** **In NOFA #008 mapping ITQ #20 has addresses that we are actually building out this fall in conjunction with our NOFA #007 award. The addresses were added to our project beyond the NOFA #007 award because they were across the road and we did not want to pass them by. How do we go about letting you know all of the addresses that will be built without funding so that an award is not given when already being built/served with 100/100?**

**A1.11:** See response to Questions 1.2 and 1.5.

**Q1.12:** **I have an area just north of Riverside Iowa that was just completed and will be updated on the June 30, 2023 BDC map. . Please let me know if this area will become ineligible as we have already completed it under the grant.**

**A1.12:** See response to Questions 1.1 and 1.5.

## **2. GENERAL**

**Q2.1:** **Is the “pricing” requested as part of the Product Pricing Form (section 2.2.7) to be current pricing offered in the state, or proposed pricing post-completion? Also, is there a time period that the “pricing” would be required to be “locked-in” post-completion?**

**A2.1:** The Product Pricing Form should be reflective of what products and respective pricing will be made available to the ESLs once the project is complete. There is no pricing or contract term requirements.

**Q2.2: In the NOFA #008 core application spreadsheet, under the Menu tab and under the general applicant information section, what number needs to be entered for the FCC provider ID field (cell C14)?**

**A2.2:** This is identified by the FCC as the Holding Company Number or "Hoconum." Providers are required to use this number when reporting to the FCC.

**Q2.3: There are some ITQ zones that received NOFA 7 awards with other neighboring providers and building out the 80% of the zone would require overbuilding parts of their NOFA 7 build. Are there opportunities to submit joint applications with other providers so each provider can take the most effective area but the ITQ still gets 80% coverage?**

**A2.3:** Each Application to this NOFA must be submitted by a single legal entity that will (1) serve as the Applicant to the NOFA, (2) serve as the fixed-price subaward recipient for the proposed Project should a grant be awarded, (3) serve as the communication service provider of record and owner of the network, and (4) comply with all other applicable federal law as it pertains to this funding source. The Office will entertain Applications from providers that wish to partner together in this manner, provided that such requirements can be met by the single legal entity that is formed to represent the interests of all parties involved. This entity should be presented as the Applicant of record and the grantee, with all the responsibilities assigned under the grant agreement. Providers considering this option should consult with legal counsel to determine a mechanism to create a single legal entity that could serve this purpose. Applicants should also be aware that establishing a new legal entity for purposes of applying for a NOFA 008 grant could impact aspects of the scoring process, such as points assigned to applicant's experience and the possibility of pre-payment based on an applicant's risk score.

All previous NOFA awards were taken into consideration in the current mapping process. See response to Question 1.6. The Eligible Service Locations on Map V5 do not have any disqualifying previously awarded state or federal incentives. If any errors are identified in this regard, those can be addressed prior to execution of the grant agreement. See response to Question 1.5.

**Q2.4: Can service providers do a joint application that covers an entire BIZ and qualify for the 80% funding?**

**A2.4:** See response to Question 2.3.

**Q2.5: When deploying fiber within a BIZ zone and we pass ineligible locations with fiber to reach other eligible locations, is it correct that the fiber "route" past the ineligible locations will be included in the award when trying to reach other ESLs? We understand that fiber "drops" to ineligible service locations should never be included within an application, even if within a BIZ zone and although the customer may have the option to sign up for service.**

**A2.5:** Fiber routes that pass by ineligible locations for the purpose of reaching Eligible Service Locations are permissible and such costs would be allocated to the eligible locations provided that they are necessary for the Applicant to Facilitate Covered Speeds to the Eligible Service Locations contained within your NOFA 008 application. See NOFA section 1.2.3 "Allowable Expenditures" for additional information.

**Q2.6: What level of project will Davis Bacon Rule apply?**

**A2.6:** NOFA 008 is issued utilizing the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund. A link to CPF Compliance guidance can be found here: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Capital-Projects-Fund-Guidance-States-Territories-and-Freely-Associated-States.pdf>. Compliance with Davis Bacon is conditional and based on the award amount. Other questions in this regard should be addressed to your legal counsel.

**Q2.7: If a "proposed" grant area falls within or directly adjacent to a currently planned project (one that is planned to occur without grant dollars); can construction of planned project begin as planned? Even if perhaps waiting to submit application for more or additional builds within or adjacent to project?**

**A2.7:** Construction of a proposed project cannot begin prior to award. See NOFA section 1.3 "Project Period." Note: Applications for projects that do not require grant funds for buildout may be disqualified pursuant to NOFA section 1.9.4.

**Q2.8: If a new debt/loan is acquired to begin construction after being awarded the grant, is interest expense allowed for reimbursement?**

**A2.8:** No. See NOFA sections 1.2.3.16 and 1.2.3.17.

**Q2.9: Will this grant require a letter of credit?**

**A2.9:** A Letter of Credit is not required for NOFA 008 Applications

**Q2.10: What is the percentage of funding for Middle Mile?**

**A2.10:** Middle Mile expenses are treated just like any other expense associated with the project i.e. fiber, conduit, engineering etc. A blended total match is determined by the various scoring factors applied to all project expenses. See NOFA section 1.1: "Applications to this NOFA may also include expenditures associated with (1) the acquisition of middle-mile network services from a third party, or (2) construction of new middle-mile networks, provided that such expenditures are necessary, as part of an Applicant's proposed Project, to facilitate last-mile Covered Speeds to Eligible Service Locations."

**Q2.11: I see several ITQ cover letters that already reference a broadband provider and almost seem to endorse the provider. This seems to put them at a competitive advantage for funding. I was wondering how this will influence any grant approvals. I thought the providers weren't a part of submitting the ITQ's and was surprised to see specific ISP's referenced. ITQ's 8, 84, and 18 are all areas we plan to submit a request for, but we don't want to waste our time and money putting together an application if another ISP already has a leg up.**

**A2.11:** The ITQ process was a community-led initiative whereby local communities could identify Critical Areas of Need and submit those areas to OCIO for consideration via an ITQ Application. While the applications were submitted by the community, many ITQ applicants worked closely with local service providers to understand the possibilities or limitations of a given project area or BIZ. The ITQ was clear in stating that while a community was free to work with an ISP to develop the ITQ response, inclusion in the ITQ list as a BIZ in no way guaranteed a future buildout or that the provider identified in the ITQ would receive an award in a subsequent NOFA. Applications will be scored and ranked according to the factors

identified in NOFA Section 3–Scoring Methodology. These factors do not include any reference to whether the provider was named in an ITQ submission by a community. Accordingly, any previous relationship with a community as evidenced through an ITQ submission will not influence the evaluation of Applications.

### 3. PROCUREMENT / COSTS

**Q3.1: My client company has significant inventory of materials, including fiber optic cables, that were purchased in anticipation of use in a future project. Can the cost of these materials be accounted for in a NOFA008 application?**

**A3.1:** See NOFA section 1.2.3 "Allowable Expenditures": "Actual costs may be considered Allowable Expenses ... regardless of their purchase date." Allowable project costs must be incurred before September 30, 2026. This is consistent with the latest CPF guidance issued by the U.S. Treasury.

**Q3.2: How do we account for the costs of a project that may be used in the future to also serve ineligible premises? For example, a single distribution fiber run in a rural area could serve eligible locations and ineligible locations. Obviously the cost for a fiber service drop and CPE for an ineligible location is not eligible. But how do we account for the distribution cost, which would be incurred even if no ineligible premises were ever connected?**

**A3.2:** See response to Question 2.5. All costs included in an Application to this NOFA must be “necessary and allowable expenditures” to serve Eligible Service Locations identified in the Application consistent with federal guidance, including but not limited to 2 C.F.R. part 200, subpart E.

**Q3.3: Regarding procurement; can you further define what procurement rules will be for NOFA 008 as opposed to what is required for NOFA 007?**

**A3.3:** NOFA 008 is issued utilizing the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund. A link to CPF Compliance guidance can be found here: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Capital-Projects-Fund-Guidance-States-Territories-and-Freely-Associated-States.pdf>. Purchases must be consistent with all federal guidance and the grant agreement, including but not limited to the obligation that the expenses must be reasonable and necessary. Grantees under this NOFA will be designated as subrecipients receiving a Fixed Amount Subaward. For applicable procurement requirements, please reference 2 C.F.R. part 200.

**Q3.4: How does NOFA 8 work with materials and contractors. I have already purchased materials and hired contractors to put fiber in an exchange that is now eligible for a grant. My contractor is not going to get there until 2024. If I decide to apply for a grant in this exchange, can I still use and get paid for the materials and contractor for this exchange?**

**A3.4:** See response to Question 3.1. This change is based on new guidance issued by the U.S. Treasury. Note: Applications for projects that do not require grant funds for buildout may be disqualified pursuant to NOFA section 1.9.4.

**Q3.5: If our initial grant application is based on costs by an outside contractor, but after award date, if we decide that we are able to do a portion (or all) of the project in-house, do we still submit invoices for reimbursement of the construction costs - the same line item pricing as if the outside contractor had**

**performed the work? The work that the in-house staff performed would be of the same value as the outside contractor.**

**A3.5:** The grant application calls for estimated Total Project Costs. There is no determination on whether those costs (i.e. construction) are incurred in-house or by a separate outside third party. See NOFA sections 1.2.21 and 1.5.2 “Total Project Costs” for additional information.

**Q3.6: When can the project start for allowable reimbursements?**

**A3.6:** See response to Question 3.1. Construction of a project cannot begin prior to an award. See also NOFA section 1.3 “Project Period.”

**Q3.7: Does this grant require the buy American policy?**

**A3.7:** NOFA 008 is issued utilizing the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund. A link to CPF Compliance guidance can be found here: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Capital-Projects-Fund-Guidance-States-Territories-and-Freely-Associated-States.pdf>. At this time, there is no reference to Build America, Buy American (BABA) requirements in guidance issued by the U.S. Treasury. OCIO will reach out to its consultants and may update this answer if additional guidance becomes available.

**Q3.8: Can engineering and consulting costs incurred to prepare a NOFA008 application be included in the application?**

**A3.8:** Consistent with guidance issued by the U.S. Treasury on May 17, 2023, the actual costs of expenditures used in the construction of a broadband project can be considered Allowable Expenditures regardless of their purchase date. Federal funds committed to an award may only be used to cover allowable costs incurred any time prior to September 30, 2026. However, costs regarding grant application development are not an Allowable Expenditure. See NOFA section 1.2.3 “Allowable Expenditures” for additional information.

**Q3.9: Will you be required to utilize competitive wages?**

**A3.9:** See response to Question 2.6. Also, see NOFA 008 Exhibit E, Attachment B sections 9.4 and 9.6, both of which are conditional based on award amount. Applicants are encouraged to offer wages at or above the prevailing rate and include local hire provisions, consistent with federal guidance: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Capital-Projects-Fund-Guidance-States-Territories-and-Freely-Associated-States.pdf>.

**Q3.10: Will this project be a fixed award so if the application is under [the parent entity] we can have [the subsidiary entity] employees do the work without a procurement policy for [the parent entity]? [The subsidiary entity] are under a management contract to [the parent entity].**

**A3.10:** Awardees of NOFA 008 grants will be designated as subrecipients receiving a fixed amount subaward under federal law, with awards funded through the Capital Projects Fund. Pursuant to new guidance issued by the U.S. Treasury, federal procurement standards do not apply in the context of a broadband grant funded with CPF dollars. See: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-and-CPF-Supplementary-Broadband-Guidance.pdf>.

#### 4. SCORING / BIZ % / PROJECT AREAS

**Q4.1: Is the NOFA #8 mainly focusing on the BIZ areas to distribute funds too?**

**A4.1:** Yes. NOFA 008 prioritizes BIZ's through the ranking and scoring associated with technical review as well as through increased funding percentages associated with BIZs. OCIO will accept applications for Eligible Service Locations outside of the identified BIZ areas, but non-BIZ projects will be ranked lower than projects within a BIZ, regardless of scoring. Consistent with the Rank Ordering Procedure outlined in NOFA Section 3–Scoring Methodology, the Office will group Applications accordingly: Group A will consist of Applications that will Facilitate Covered Speeds to at least 80% of the Eligible Service Locations in at least one Broadband Intervention Zone (“Group A”), and Group B will consist of all others.

All Applications in Group A will be awarded until funding is exhausted. If funding remains after awards are made to Applications in Group A, Applications in Group B will be awarded funds until funding is exhausted.

**Q4.2: How much consideration will be given to non-BIZ areas?**

**A4.2:** See response to Question 4.1. See also NOFA Section 3–Scoring Methodology for additional information.

**Q4.3: Do you have to apply for a whole BIZ area or can you apply for just a portion?**

**A4.3:** You may apply to facilitate broadband service to any Eligible Service Location(s) regardless of whether they are located in a BIZ or not. However, Applications that propose to facilitate service to 80% or more of Eligible Service Location within a BIZ will receive more points, higher matching levels, and higher rankings than Applications that do not propose to facilitate service to 80% of Eligible Service Locations within a BIZ.

**Q4.4: ITQ zones 33, 43, and 23 – [Wireless broadband provider] won a NOFA 7 wireless award for the census blocks in these areas. I would like to better understand how these are still a priority area if there is already grant funding associated with it and if we were to apply for the remaining available locations through upgrades to our NOFA 7 towers to reach these, how do those applications get scored and awarded?**

**A4.4:** All qualifying prior incentives have been identified on Map V5. If you believe an error has occurred, please contact the helpdesk at [ociogrants@iowa.gov](mailto:ociogrants@iowa.gov).

**Q4.5: Is there a way to determine the number of premises within a BIZ that are considered not eligible for funding? While these premises could not be funded, their presence could make an area more attractive to an applicant as they represent an additional base of potential customers.**

**A4.5:** The project selection tool will only provide the number of eligible service locations associated with a project.

**Q4.6: We are currently set to start construction to BIZ #69 on August 1, 2023 of fiber to the home with a minimum delivery speed of 100x10 up to 1Gx1G, construction will be completed by September 30, 2023 and customers hooked up to fiber by November 30, 2023. Can we still apply for the NOFA #8 for this BIZ, since construction will be completed by the time the NOFA grant is awarded?**



**A4.6:** Project areas in which buildout has commenced prior to the Notice of Intent to Award posting are not eligible for NOFA 008 application. The Office anticipates posting the Notice of Intent to Award on September 22, 2023. Further, Applications for projects that do not require grant funds for buildout may be disqualified pursuant to NOFA section 1.9.4.

**Q4.7:** When establishing a BIZ my understanding was you were required to choose one address as a center location of your BIZ and then select a radius from that center location. By doing this to cover all the area that we wanted to be in the zone it included some surrounding addresses that we were not necessarily interested in as we are trying to fill in gaps next to other providers. Because of this it could possibly make it more difficult or impossible to meet the 80% coverage rate within the BIZ for the extra support. Will any consideration be given to this? In most cases projects don't end up coming out in a perfect circle or radius around a center point. I understand wanting the 80% coverage but feel it should be a detailed polygon provided by the provider or company completing the project and not forced into the radius that was required on the ITQ.

**A4.7:** The 80% threshold for BIZ construction was designed to give providers flexibility in planning while also serving the underlying interests of the program—to extend service to difficult to reach locations across Iowa. In establishing the 80% threshold, the Office recognized that the use of a radius selection tool by ITQ applicants might result in circumstances where some Eligible Service Locations within a BIZ could be difficult to reach due to a variety of constraints and limitations on the ground. Accordingly, the Office did not require Applicants to build to 100% of the Eligible Service Locations. Nor did the Office mandate which of the locations providers are permitted to facilitate service in order to achieve the 80% threshold. A 60% match is still available for Eligible Service Locations within a BIZ should a provider be unable to reach the 80% threshold.

**Q4.8:** Concerning Section 1.6.3.2, if an applicant submits a grant proposal encompassing over 80% of locations within a BIZ zone with 80% match award and an additional BIZ zone with a 75% award match, plus other eligible locations outside of BIZ zones all within the same application, is it correct that each BIZ zone will have their appropriate matches applied (80%, 75% in the example) and the ESLs outside the BIZ are funded at 60%? Or does the highest percentage BIZ zone apply to only that single, highest-rated zone, and all remaining eligible locations are awarded at 60% whether inside or outside the secondary BIZ zone?

**A4.8:** Each ESL within a BIZ will be awarded its corresponding funding percentage (80%, 75%, or 70%) as part of the project. ESLs outside a BIZ but included in the project are funded at 60%. The total ESL count and associated funding levels result in an overall 'blended' maximum funding percentage for the project. The Core Application will automatically calculate this blended percentage so that you can see in advance the maximum funding request that your Application would be eligible to receive.

**Q4.9:** Our company intends to apply for funding to serve an entire Broadband Intervention Zone that is split by a county line. If our company decides to submit two applications for each county, with a portion of the BIZ in each application, will that negatively impact the way the applications are scored? i.e. does an application that includes the entire BIZ receive a higher score than one that includes a portion of the BIZ, even if the same service provider includes the balance of the BIZ locations in a separate application?

**A4.9:** Yes, that approach would negatively impact your score because individually neither Application individually would serve 80% of a BIZ. Each Application is scored only with respect to the information

provided within that Application. Accordingly, a single Application must be submitted reflecting service that will be facilitated to 80% or more of a BIZ in order to trigger the higher matching levels, point allocations, and rankings.

**Q4.10: Will an applicant score more points for doing more than 80% in a BIZ? Example: If two applicants apply for the same BIZ and one builds 85% and the other 81%, will the applicant building 85% score more points, or is it just based on the 80% rule?**

**A4.10:** The 80% of ESL's facilitating Covered Speeds threshold determines whether the project receives a higher funding percentage and whether the application will be placed in Group A, consistent with the Rank Ordering Procedures in NOFA Section 3–Scoring Methodology. Competitive applicants selecting ESLs above the 80% threshold could receive more points for Completeness and Total Number of ESLs Facilitating Covered Speeds. For additional information, please see NOFA Section 3–Scoring Methodology.

**Q4.11: If our company's applications include eligible locations both inside and outside a BIZ, will that negatively impact the way the applications are scored? i.e. does an application that only includes BIZ locations receive a higher score than an application that includes both BIZ and non-BIZ locations?**

**A4.11:** Applications are not penalized for including locations inside and outside of a BIZ. See NOFA Section 3–Scoring Methodology. Applications must propose facilitating service to at least 80% of the ESLs within a BIZ to receive higher rankings, points, and matching levels. Such Applications may also include any number of ESLs not in a BIZ without penalty. To the contrary, including additional ESLs (whether located in a BIZ or not) can increase certain scoring criteria in Exhibit A (such as evaluation criteria 3.1.1 Total Eligible Service Locations Facilitated).

**Q4.12: We are in the process of building out a NOFA 7 award area and there are addresses on the edge of the area we are building that qualify as eligible for NOFA 8. If we decide to bury to them while the construction crew is on site and the work is completed prior to 11-1-23 would this qualify on our application if accepted?**

**A4.12:** See response to Question 4.6.

**Q4.13: Going through applications awarded for NOFA #007, it appears as though companies submitted multiple applications. Is this allowed for NOFA #008? If so, are there any rules doing this?**

**A4.13:** Multiple applications may be submitted by a single qualified entity for NOFA 008. Each application is competitively scored and ranked against other applications consistent with NOFA Section 3–Scoring Methodology. Note: Applications from a single entity as well as associated entities will be grouped together for the purposes of determining the Large Project Threshold as outlined in NOFA 008 section 2.2.6.10.

**Q4.14: Can one application contain locations from more than one BIZ?**

**A4.14:** Yes. It is envisioned that a project may encompass multiple BIZ areas. Each BIZ, however, is treated as a stand-alone area for the purposes of reaching the 80% threshold. For example, 50% of the ESL's in one BIZ cannot be combined with 35% of the ESLs in a different BIZ in order to meet the 80% requirement.

**5. NOFA 008 IN RELATION TO PREVIOUS AWARDS**

**Q5.1: I have some complicated questions about BIZ 82, I have completed part of it through a USDA Community Connections Grant. I am building fiber to most of it through NOFA #7 and want to submit an application for the locations that are eligible in NOFA #8 that were not eligible in NOFA #7. I'm not sure of the timing for this as technically I will begin construction of my NOFA #7 area before NOFA #8 is awarded.**

**A5.1:** You may not apply for Eligible Service Locations (ESL) that are currently funded or will be under construction at the time of the Notice of Award. However, if your NOFA 008 locations are being built out in conjunction with other ongoing projects, your accounting methods must be able to account for costs that apply only to NOFA 008 locations. All NOFA 008 ESLs must be imported into an independent project application meeting all of the requirements outlined in the NOFA, including that all costs incurred meet the criteria identified in NOFA section 1.2.3 “Allowable Expenditures.”

**Q5.2: We are in the process of building out a NOFA 7 award area and there are addresses on the edge of the area we are building that qualify as eligible for NOFA 8. Can our application show that we need to increase the mainline to feed these locations and include that cost? Currently we do not have them engineered to expand outside our current NOFA 7 so we need to increase our mainline fiber count for NOFA 8 during the NOFA 7 build.**

**A5.2:** See response to Questions 3.2 and 5.1.

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