

**Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority**  
Outreach & Education Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes  
June 27, 2024  
Virtual - Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Sub-Committee members in attendance**

- Dan Alwine, Subcommittee Chair, Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce
- Joe Gerdes, PA Association of Township Supervisors
- Carrie Nace, PA State Grange
- Mark Critz, PA Department of Agriculture, Board Liaison

**Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) staff in attendance**

- Kalie Snyder, PBDA Outreach and Engagement Manager
- Julia Brinjac, PBDA Program manager
- Kyle Snyder, PBDA Broadband Planning Specialist
- Mary Markle, PBDA Executive Assistant

**Guests in attendance**

- Jeramee Aubin, Advanced Media Technologies
- Brian Fallon, Advanced Media Technologies
- Molly LIUNA
- Florence Mauchant, Nevertchlate

**I. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:34pm. Mary Markle conducted roll call and provided housekeeping items.

**II. Approval of the April 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Kalie Snyder provided an update to the committee regarding quorum requirements. She explained that for quorum, a majority (or 5 of 8) active committee members must be present at the meeting. Without quorum, meeting minutes will be tabled until the next meeting.

**III. Committee member Update**

Chair Alwine stated that an appointment from Senator Kane's office is needed to replace former committee Co-Chair, Sarah Hammond. He suggested selecting a co-chair after that appointment.

#### **IV. New PBDA Resources**

##### **a. One-page Overviews**

Kalie Snyder displayed the PBDA website showing the one-page overviews or fact sheets which reference pertinent details regarding BEAD, the BEAD challenge process, grant programs, etc. She showed how to navigate to these resources and suggested various ways to utilize these resources.

Chair Alwine asked if these fact sheets have been sent out through the distribution list. Kalie said that will be forthcoming.

##### **b. Low-Cost Service Plan Option Survey**

With the cessation of the ACP and the PBDA not permitted to establish its own program, Kalie distributed a survey to ISPs and ISP associations from which she intends to gather information on what low-cost options ISPs offer or plan to offer. This information will be compiled and made available on the PBDA website.

She encouraged the committee to share with providers and to tell providers who did not receive a survey to reach out to her.

Chair Alwine asked for clarification of the end date for the ACP. Kalie replied that the program ended in May 2024.

#### **V. Capital Projects Fund (CPF) Programs Update**

##### **a. Broadband Infrastructure Program**

Kalie reminded that CPF-BIP awardees were approved at the April board meeting and the PBDA is finalizing contracts with those awardees. Updates on projects will be posted on the website as they become available.

##### **b. Multipurpose Community Facilities Program**

Julia Brinjac, Digital Equity Program Manager, stated that it is anticipated that the Multi-Purpose Community Facilities grant awards will be announced and voted on at the July 25<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

##### **c. Digital Connectivity Technology Program**

Julia also updated on the Digital Connectivity Technology Program noting that applications opened on June 20<sup>th</sup>. She explained that since smaller organizations, such as community libraries, often lack the capacity to procure, apply for and track funds as is required for monetary awards, this \$20 million grant will be awarded with the distribution of devices, specifically laptops. Awardees are responsible for the devices for 5 years, noting that each device comes with a 4-year manufacturer's warranty and accidental damage coverage. Entities can apply for as little as 20 and as many as 200

laptops. The vendor contract will be voted on at the Board meeting being held July 25<sup>th</sup>. Applications close on August 19, 2024.

Chair Alwine clarified that the application is open, encouraged the committee to spread the word and commended the PBDA for offering this type of award.

#### **VI. BEAD Challenge Process Update**

Kyle Snyder updated on the BEAD challenge process noting that the challenge process is the first step in the BEAD application process. Following the challenge and rebuttal phase the PBDA is currently in the adjudication phase. Following final decisions, they will prepare a deliverable to the NTIA who will cure the submission. He added that just under 3,000 challenges were submitted, covering 89,000 locations. Challenges addressed missing community anchor institutions, enforceable funding commitments and planned service deployments, etc. Subgrantee selection is anticipated for the Fall.

#### **VII. Digital Equity Capacity Grant Update**

Julia explained that the Digital Equity (DE) state plan was used to apply for the capacity grant funds which will be used to implement said plan. She stated that the funds will be dispersed in three tranches with a total allotment of \$40 million. Julia added that the PBDA submitted its first application with a request for approximately \$25 million. NTIA provided feedback on that application and awarding of funds to Pennsylvania is anticipated for the Fall. She informed that there is a competitive grant administered directly by the NTIA and that the PBDA is not involved with the distribution of those funds. The approval of the first capacity grant kicks off the 30-day clock for NTIA to release the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the competitive grant. Those funds will be of a significant amount and awarded to organizations for large programs such as workforce development, education, etc. She encouraged the committee to reach out to organizations and encourage them to look for that NOFO and to apply directly to the NTIA. She ended by noting that the PBDA capacity grant will come online in 2025.

Chair Alwine referred back to Digital Connectivity Technology Program noting that the email notification of that grant was sent out on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **VII. New Business**

Chair Alwine noted that Mary Markle will handle all administrative items for the subcommittee. He confirmed that with seven active members, currently quorum for this committee would be five.

Carrie Nace then asked to be noted as joining the meeting. She also commended Kalie Snyder for her assistance in providing a map to a constituent.

#### **VIII. Public Comment**

Chair Alwine asked Mary to conduct public comment. Mary then invited the public to comment.

Florence Mauchant asked if there will be matching funds for digital literacy programs that are required for the connectivity program.

Julia replied that it is mandatory for recipients of the award to offer a digital literacy program or class. For those to whom the devices are loaned, the PBDA does not require them to take those courses. The PBDA has also identified free digital literacy courses which are listed on the PBDA website

Florence also asked how long recipients are required to keep/maintain the devices.

Julia responded that awardees are required to maintain devices for five years.

Chair Alwine asked for a link to the resources page of the website be placed in the chat. Kalie provided the link.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Chair Alwine informed that the next subcommittee meeting will be August 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm. He added that Mary and Kalie will reach out to committee members in advance to ensure quorum for that meeting.

Chair Alwine called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joe Gerdes motioned and Mark Critz (Board liaison), seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 3:09pm.