

Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment Program

Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) is a \$42.45 billion program that provides affordable and accessible internet access to rural, unserved and underserved areas.

BEAD is one of the many programs under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) “Internet for All” Program available for public funding. When the required matching funds are added to the government’s investment in this program, it amounts to approximately \$55 billion in spending on communications infrastructure. When added to funding for other technologies, that number jumps to a whopping \$110 billion investment in the nation’s communications infrastructure.

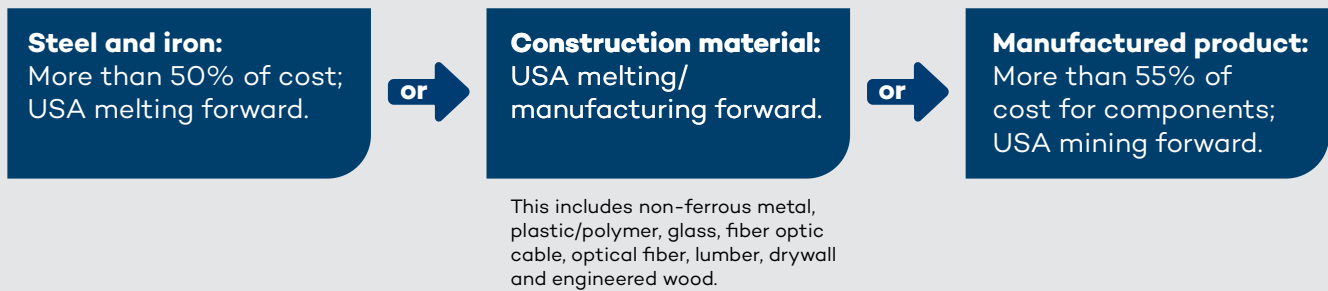
Initial preparation started in 2022, and, in 2024, a four-year project implementation will begin with various government-funded programs under IIJA.

This project will involve infrastructure upgrades to:

- Improve high-speed internet access in unserved or underserved areas.
- Improve access to eligible Community Anchor Institutions, like schools, hospitals and other organizations servicing a community or vulnerable populations.
- Install internet and Wi-Fi connectivity or provide devices at a reduced cost in multifamily residential buildings, prioritizing households living at or below 150% of the nation’s poverty line.
- Provide training and workforce development for employees in the program.

What are compliant materials?

As a federally funded public infrastructure project, BEAD falls under the regulations of Build America, Buy America (BABA) materials' origination.



To determine BABA requirements for a particular product, each product is first categorized as one of the following:

- Steel and iron
- Construction materials
- Manufactured products

These are separated requirements, and an item can only be classified as one of these, as delivered to the site. Fiber optic and optical fiber cables are classified as construction materials. The non-optic glass inputs can be foreign sourced, but the process from manufacturing the fiber optic glass through ribboning (if required) and cabling must comply with BABA. Border States can support BEAD and any broadband projects requiring BABA-compliant products. Please consult with your Border States representative for more information.

You can request special waivers through the Department of Commerce if a compliant material is found to be unavailable or too expensive compared to non-domestically compliant materials. Account Managers, service representatives or Regulatory Affairs can help to provide evidence of manufacturer conflict of the customer to use on their waiver application.

Key takeaways

- BEAD-funded projects must comply with BABA rules.
- For fiber optic and optical cable, BABA requires that ribboning and/or pre-form fabrication of the cables takes place in the United States, but the raw material may be foreign sourced.
- Work with your Border States Account Manager to identify compliant materials.

Questions?

If you have questions about Border States' policies or compliance with BEAD or BABA regulations, please contact regulatoryaffairs@borderstates.com.

Please contact your Account Manager regarding ordering materials, product selection and other similar questions.

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