



Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi

Five-Year Strategic Plan

FY 2025-2029

1. Comprehensive Mission Statement:

The mission of the Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) is to empower Mississippians by arming them with the technological skills, services, and tools to succeed in a global, digital economy.

2. Philosophy and Core Values:

At BEAM, we believe that all Mississippians will require access to high-speed internet to engage and thrive in our ever-changing digital age. To make this a reality, we believe in:

- Maintaining transparency of our funding opportunities and awards of funds to expand broadband in Mississippi, so there is no doubt that the unserved and underserved citizens of our state are our focus.
- Listening to and prioritizing feedback and input from residents in communities which are currently unserved and underserved by broadband providers.
- Gathering the most recent data for analysis to determine how to reach universal service in Mississippi.
- Adhering to the highest standards of professional and ethical standards while executing the duties set forth for our office as defined in H.B. 1029 and signed into law by Governor Reeves on April 13, 2022.

3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks:

- Statewide Goal #1: To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians.
 - i. Benchmark #1: Commercial Activity
 - 1. Per capita gross domestic product
 - 2. Number of new technology start-ups
 - ii. Benchmark #2: Job Growth
 - 1. Number of jobs associated with new technology start-ups
 - iii. Benchmark #3: Employment and Income
 - 1. Percentage of Mississippians receiving workforce training services who are employed one year and five years after receiving training and their average salary
 - 2. Wage and salary disbursements (total earnings)
 - 3. Average pay and total payroll of jobs associated with new technology start-ups
- Statewide Goal #2: To make available a quality K-12 public education for all Mississippians that prepares them, upon high school graduation, to either enter the labor force with an employable skill or to successfully complete a higher education program.
 - i. Benchmark #1: Career and Technical Education

1. Percentage of high school students enrolled in career and technical education programs who earn an approved Industry Certification, by career pathway
 2. Percentage of students earning an approved Industry Certification who obtain a job in Mississippi in their area of certification
- Statewide Goal #3: To make available an accessible, quality public higher education at an affordable cost that prepares Mississippians to become productive, financially self-sufficient members of society while meeting the human resource needs of Mississippi and its employers, including the creation of new jobs through the commercialization of university-based research.
 - i. Benchmark #1: Graduates in High-Need Disciplines
 1. Number of graduates in high-need disciplines (i.e., science, technology, engineering, math, education, including non-teaching areas and nursing), by discipline
 2. Percentage of graduates in high-need disciplines who enter and remain in practice in Mississippi in the high-need discipline five years and ten years following graduation, by discipline

4. Overview of the 5-Year Plan:

BEAM is committed to bringing high-speed, affordable broadband internet to the unserved and underserved communities in our state as we work to close the “digital divide” and shepherd Mississippi into the 21st century.

Over the course of the next five years, Mississippi will receive grant funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) that is allocated to expand broadband internet to the unserved and underserved communities in our state. Our office will work to map current broadband access and speeds to locate these areas and engage with individuals in these communities to hear their experience with barriers to broadband access.

The federal funding streams require a comprehensive five-year state-wide plan to increase digital skills and expand broadband access throughout the entire state. BEAM will enact the five-year plan by awarding the funds granted by NTIA to sub-grant applicants who will work to expand affordable broadband internet access to all corners of the state.

5. External/Internal Assessment

Some of the more significant factors that may affect agency performance are as follows:

- Changes in policy at the federal government level and the resulting loss or gain of federal grant funds necessary to operate cooperative programs.
- The impact of the economic environment in the State of Mississippi.
- Changes in state and federal statutes and regulations.
- The rise and fall of supply and demand in relation to materials required for broadband expansion.

- Technological changes and advances.
- Natural disasters and other environmental factors.

BEAM uses an internal management system to evaluate its performance that consists of a director chosen by the executive director of the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration and who sets the direction and policies for BEAM. In turn, the Director utilizes senior staff to closely monitor performance and make policy recommendations as well as suggestions for improvements and correction of deficiencies. Staff administers the policies recommended and approved by the Director. Also, professional consulting and legal services are used to develop and monitor grant programs as needed and allowed by specific grant partners (such as NTIA).

BEAM uses various information management systems to track grants and sub-grantees and compile information for the review of performance measures, as well as for state and federal reporting purposes. These systems provide BEAM management with a tracking tool for progress, efficiency, cross-training opportunities, and management of staff and resources, thus providing management with the information necessary to formulate performance measurements. In addition, this data is provided to other agencies and groups which BEAM interacts and works in cooperation with, such as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), NTIA, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and various state agencies both in Mississippi and throughout the country.

This data is then used to further enhance and maintain the utmost efficiency within BEAM. The data is utilized by management staff during BEAM's internal review process. Strategic planning and future short-term and long-term goals are then tied to BEAM's output and to employee performance appraisals which allow for appropriate employee and task evaluation for better performance.

6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program

- Broadband Infrastructure Programs Grant

Outcome: Increase in total number of residents with access to affordable broadband internet.

- i. *Goal:* Provide broadband expansion grants for unserved and underserved communities in Mississippi.

1. *Strategy:* Work with consultants and grant monitors to award funding to sub-grantees.

Output: Distribute \$32 million in grant funding.

Efficiency: Percentage of residents with access to affordable broadband internet.

Explanatory: Sub-grantee compliance will impact efficiency and outcome.

- Capital Projects Fund
Outcome: Increase in total number of residents with access to affordable broadband internet.
 - i. *Goal:* Provide broadband expansion grants for unserved and underserved communities in Mississippi.
 - 1. *Strategy:* Work with consultants and grant monitors to award funding to sub-grantees.
Output: Distribute \$151million in grant funding.
Efficiency: Percentage of residents with access to affordable broadband internet.
Explanatory: Sub-grantee compliance will impact efficiency and outcome.
- Mississippi Digital Skills and Accessibility Plan (DSA)
Outcome: Identify where DSA funds can be best utilized in communities throughout the state.
 - i. *Goal:* Ensure that Mississippi citizens have the skills and training needed to encourage broadband use and that broadband is accessible to low-income consumers.
 - 1. *Strategy:* Map current broadband service areas and cost by provider, along with resources for digital skills training.
Output: Develop a state Digital Skills and Accessibility Plan and distribute the digital equity grant funding in accordance with the state plan when funding becomes available.
Efficiency: Average cost by community for broadband services.
Explanatory: Sub-grantee compliance will impact efficiency and outcome.
- Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment Plan (BEAD)
Outcome: Increase in total number of residents with access to affordable broadband internet.
 - i. *Goal:* Provide broadband expansion grants for unserved and underserved communities in Mississippi.
 - 1. *Strategy:* Work with consultants and grant monitors to award funding to sub-grantees.
Output: Develop state 5-year action plan and distribute \$1.2 billion (plus additional funds to be determined) in federal grant funding.
Efficiency: Percentage of residents with access to affordable broadband internet.
Explanatory: Sub-grantee compliance will impact efficiency and outcome.