



Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi

Five Year Strategic Plan

FY 2027-2031

164-00

1. Comprehensive Mission Statement:

The Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) is committed to facilitating the deployment of reliable, high-speed internet infrastructure throughout the state. Through strategic planning, public-private collaboration, and responsible stewardship of resources, BEAM works to ensure that broadband service is accessible, efficient, and capable of supporting Mississippi's economic growth, educational advancement, and public services.

2. Philosophy and Core Values:

All Mississippians require access to high-speed internet to engage and thrive in an ever-changing digital age. To make this a reality, BEAM will:

- maintain transparency of funding opportunities and awards of funds to expand broadband in Mississippi.
- prioritize feedback and input from residents in communities that are currently unserved and underserved by broadband speeds.
- gather the most recent data for analysis to determine how to reach universal service in Mississippi.
- adhere to the highest standards of professional and ethical standards while executing the duties as defined in MS Code § 77-19-1 — § 77-19-17 (2024).

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 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 employable skills or to 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 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 tasked with bringing high-speed broadband internet to unserved and underserved communities in Mississippi, as well as providing technological opportunities to residents across the state.

Over the next five years, Mississippi will administer grant funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. Mississippi has been allocated \$1.2 billion in BEAD funding to expand broadband internet to communities that do not have high-speed service. BEAM has mapped current broadband access and speeds and has identified where BEAD funding will be utilized to build new high-speed networks.

The BEAD program required a comprehensive five-year plan to 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 broadband internet access to all the state. Mississippi's 5-year Plan for broadband and all grant documents can be found at www.beam.ms.gov.

5. External/Internal Assessment:

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

- Changes in policy at the federal 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 which 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 the agency. 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. 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 with 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 the agency. 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 the division'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 Program Grant
Outcome: Increase in total number of residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions with access to broadband internet.
 - Goal:* Provide broadband expansion grants for unserved and underserved communities in Mississippi.
 - Strategy:* Work with consultants and grant monitors to award funding to sub-grantees.
Output: Distribute \$32 million in grant funding. BEAM has currently expended approximately \$28 million of this funding and 10 of 14 projects are in grant close-out.
Efficiency: Percentage of residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions with access to broadband internet.

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

- Capital Projects Fund

Outcome: Increase in total number of residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions with access to 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 \$162 million in grant funding. BEAM has currently expended approximately \$669,000, and all 61 projects are in construction or pre-construction.

- Efficiency:* Percentage of residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions with access to broadband internet.

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

- Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment Plan (BEAD)

Outcome: Increase in total number of residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions with access to 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 \$1.2 billion in federal grant funding. BEAM has received all federal approvals and has opened an application to subgrant this funding to internet service providers. Preliminary determinations for this funding are expected by August 8, 2025.

- Efficiency:* Percentage of residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions with access to broadband internet.

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