

Hawaii BEAD Planning Project (HI-BEAD-PLANNING)

Project Summary/Narrative (1000 words maximum):

“We’re calling it ‘Apakau ka lā, ‘spreading of the sun’s rays’ — and it will support critical infrastructure for the future, connecting all of the main Hawaiian Islands. This initiative will not only close the digital divide between the haves and the have-nots, but it will also strengthen us as a community.”

– Gov. David Ige, State of the State 2022

Hawaii will utilize the BEAD Planning Funds (\$5,000,000 requested) to support broad expansion of its capacity to support statewide broadband implementation efforts funded by the multiple Federal programs authorized under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Our proposed overarching project, ‘Apakau ka lā, will support critical human and technology infrastructure for the future, connecting all of our communities across all of the Hawaiian Islands. The effort funded by the BEAD Planning Funds will increase internal capacity within Hawaii’s broadband office, located within the University of Hawaii, to ensure we maximize the effective application of the range of Federal programs supporting broadband, including the Tribal Broadband Connectivity program. The project will support broad community engagement, outreach and communications to ensure everyone in Hawaii is aware of the benefits possible from this once-in-a-lifetime public investment in broadband. Supporting these efforts will be data collection, research and visualization support of the unserved, underserved, and under-supported populations throughout Hawaii. This includes identification of the hurdles faced by various populations that hinder their access to the benefits of robust, resilient and affordable broadband access. The project intends to utilize the following activities, supported by BEAD Planning Funds.

Activity 1: The addition of five (5) FTEs to supplement existing internal capacity will serve to greatly expand the capacity of the state to oversee, manage and execute the range of impactful broadband efforts over the next five (5) years. This staff capacity will support the range of activities including coordination, community engagement, outreach, communications, and visualization of broadband adoption. This activity broadly supports the implementation of all of the remaining activities.

The coordination role extends across the range of Federal broadband funding programs, including, the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (US Treasury), BEAD, the set of Digital Equity programs (plan, capacity, competitive), the Tribal Broadband Connectivity program, and the Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant program, to maximize the benefits to Hawaii’s broadband infrastructure. This capacity will also serve to increase the capacity of the Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL) to both increase oversight and management of the department’s efforts under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity program, and to ensure cooperative and effective cross-benefits among the statewide efforts directly overseen by the state’s broadband

office. This office will directly supplement the capabilities of DHHL to ensure its effective use of funds and successful implementation of project efforts. (\$2,900,000 inclusive of direct hire salary and fringe costs, direct expenses supporting staff, plus limited use of temporary contracted staff services)

Activity 2: Gather data, and conduct and disseminate research activities to fully determine the population of direct unserved/underserved, as well as those facing a range of hurdles to full adoption and realization of benefits available from robust, resilient and affordable broadband services. The services will be performed by a range of contractors, community organizations and state/county entities; these will be secured via standard procurement methods and will maximize the participation by diverse members of the community to ensure we can maximize the effectiveness of our broadband data. Efforts will be coordinated by staff of the state broadband office (Activity 1). (\$900,000 invitation for proposals from government, non-profit and for-profit entities to do the work, limited expenses for software licenses and hosting services)

Activity 3: Provide training and technical assistance to broadband office staff, contractors, community organizations and state/county entities. Coordinated by staff (under Activity 1), services will be secured via standard procurement methods to provide the required services, and will maximize the participation by diverse members of the community. The services provided over the term of the project will also build sustainable capacity internal to the range of community and state/county entities engaged with the statewide population. (\$300,000 contracted services by non-profit and for-profit entities to do the work, limited expenses for travel and related costs)

Activity 4: Provide support for broad community engagement through providing support to a diverse range of community organizations, contractors, and state/county entities. These will include outreach, project communications, and community engagement events that will fully inform the statewide population of our broadband efforts, and to ensure that the project has broad and diverse community inputs that will inform the design and implementation of efforts supported by the public funds. (\$800,000 contracted services for outreach, communications, meeting convenings, surveys and publications)

Administrative & Legal costs: Direct administrative costs incurred in grant management activities reporting over the five year period of the effort. (\$100,000)