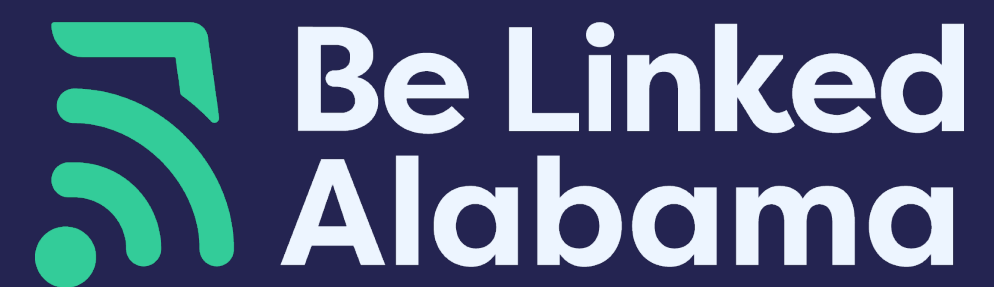


BEAD and Digital Opportunity Planning

October 2023



Agenda

- 1. BEAD and Digital Opportunity planning efforts**
- 2. Community input on BEAD and Digital Opportunity plans**
- 3. Next steps: the Initial Proposal and Challenge Process**



1

BEAD and Digital Opportunity planning efforts



Overview: BEAD and Digital Opportunity planning

ADECA is currently administering the CPF and AIMM, while also developing two sets of plans – one for infrastructure and one for Digital Opportunity – that will unlock additional federal funds.

CPF and AIMM Grant Programs

Using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, ADECA is administering two grant programs:

1. Capital Projects Fund (CPF) for last-mile broadband infrastructure
2. Anchor Institution/Middle Mile (AIMM) for deploying middle-mile and connecting Anchor Institutions

Oct. 13: Application periods close for both programs

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) plans

A series of plans that will be submitted to the federal government to access Infrastructure Act funding for construction of new broadband infrastructure.

Aug. 28: Five Year Action Plan submitted to federal gov't

Nov.: Initial Proposal Volumes I & II public comment periods will open for 30 days

Digital Opportunity Plan

A plan that will be submitted to the federal government to access funding for programs to help Alabama households afford, adopt, and use broadband.

Mid-Oct. to mid-Nov.: Public comment period

Nov. 30: Submit to federal gov't



Overview of the BEAD program

In June, Alabama was allocated \$1.4 billion of federal BEAD funds that will become available following completion of the federal planning cycle.

Funds are prioritized for unserved locations first—those that cannot get internet service of 25/3 Mbps— and underserved second--those that can get internet service between 25/3 and 100/20 Mbps only.

ADECA has submitted to the federal government the first of four BEAD plans, with others currently in preparation.

BEAD planning

Challenge Process and provisional grant program

Deployment

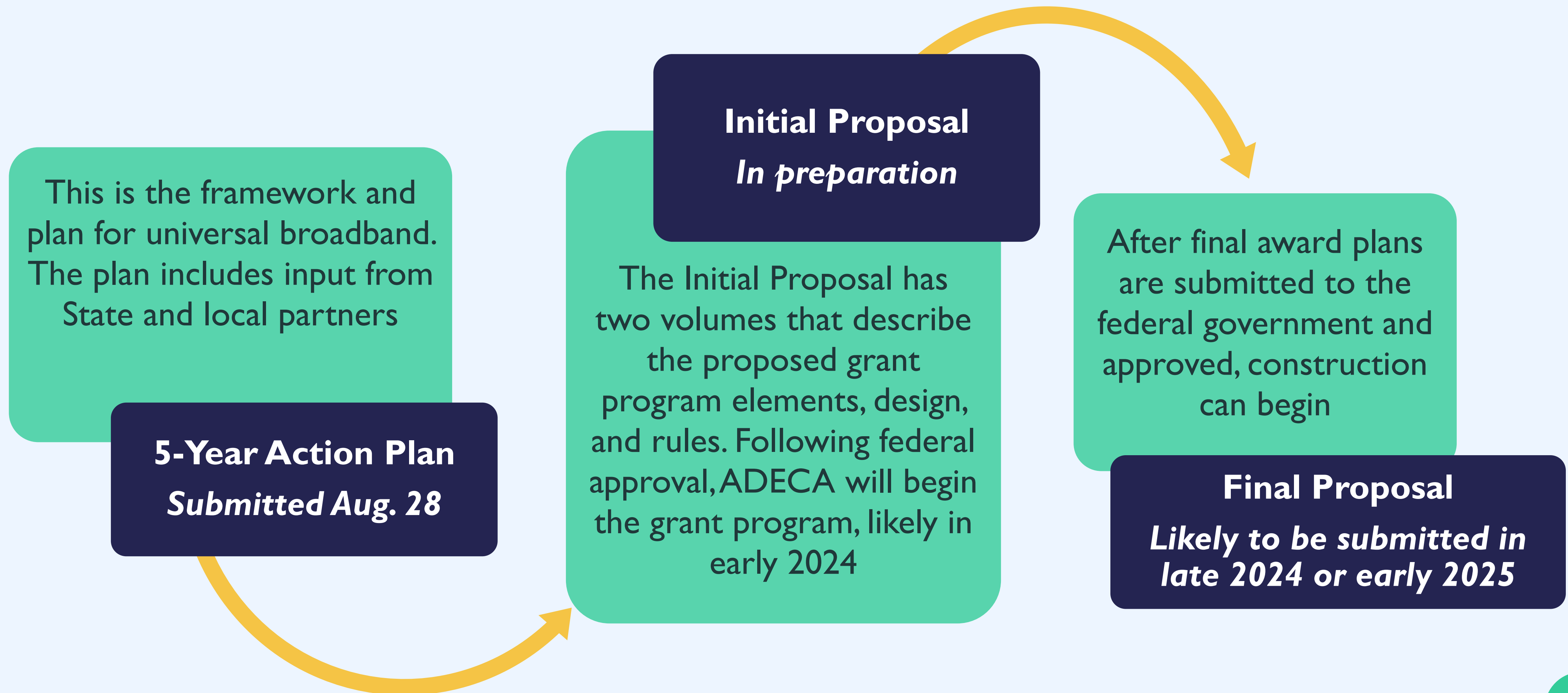
2023

2024

2025



BEAD plan status



Digital Opportunity plan status

ADECA conducted extensive outreach to communities, Tribes, nonprofits, institutions, and the public.

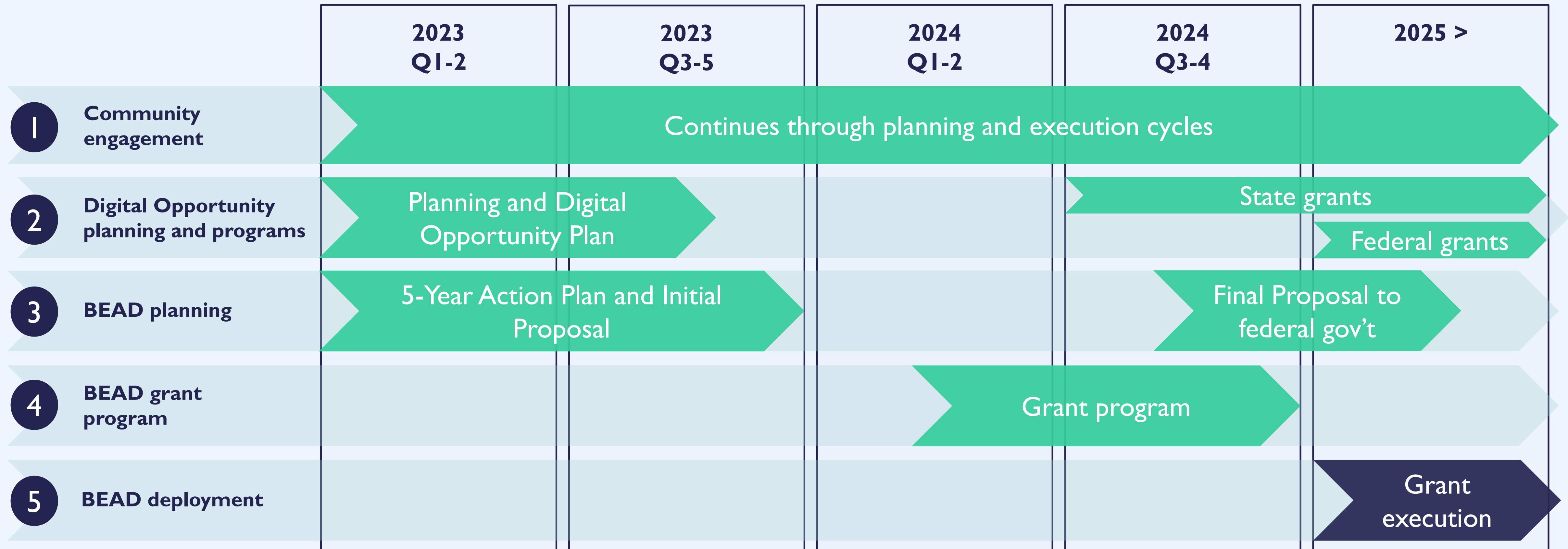
The draft plan will open for public comment later this month and will be submitted to the federal government by Nov. 30.

Federal approval of the plan will be part of how Alabama accesses related federal funds next year.

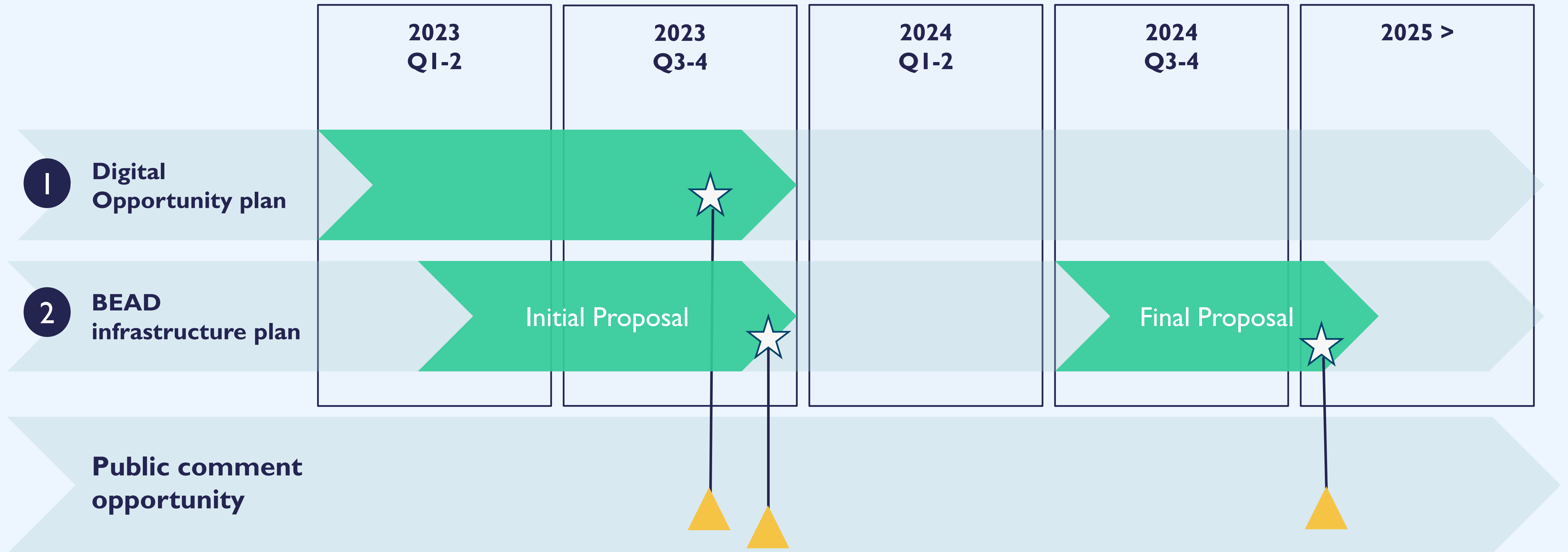
Elements of Digital Opportunity



BEAD and Digital Opportunity overall timeline



Public comment timeline



2

Community input and perspectives



Local and partner input

2022 and '23 interactions to ensure local and partner input...

- In-person meetings in every county
- Publication of 67 detailed county broadband profiles and 67 online presentations to local officials in all counties
- Phone survey of thousands of Alabama households
- Facilitated sessions or one-on-one meetings with ISPs, agencies, nonprofits, and other partners
- Partner program questionnaires and inventories
- Public comments on Digital Opportunity Plan and Initial Proposal Volume 1 (coming up)

...continues into '24 and '25 grant cycle

- One-on-one responsive meetings
- Targeted outreach
- Challenge process information and opportunity
- Conferences and presentations
- Statewide information sessions
- Public comment opportunities



Findings and themes

Deployment

- Lack of reliable broadband access creates barriers for communities to achieve economic development goals
- In rural areas of Alabama, low density of homes creates an obstacle to deployment that means many locations are unserved or underserved
- Workforce opportunities abound, as the new State and federal funds will create new jobs in broadband construction and maintenance

Affordability

- Many low-income households struggle to afford broadband services
- Affordable Connectivity Program use helps many households afford and maintain broadband connectivity
- Growing and expanding successful device lending programs would support affordability

Digital Skills

- Multiple organizations across the state offer digital skills training and there exists opportunity to expand those programs
- A wide range of partner organizations is engaged in supporting development of digital skills
- Digital skills challenges are frequently experienced by lower-income individuals and seniors



3

Next steps: The Initial Proposal and Challenge Process



Initial Proposal

The Initial Proposal describes how ADECA plans to administer the BEAD grant program

Initial Proposal Volume I

Is currently in preparation and will be available for public comment in coming weeks

- Describes how ADECA will run its Challenge Process in 2024 to finalize the list of locations eligible for funding
- Describes how ADECA has defined “Community Anchor Institution” and lists those that lack service

Initial Proposal Volume II

Is currently in preparation and will be available for public comment later in the fall

- Describes how ADECA will structure the grant application and process, as well as the scoring criteria and rules for participation



Initial Proposal Volume I: 4 key sections

Will be available for public comment in November

Existing Broadband Funding

- Current sources of federal and state funding to deploy broadband and close the digital divide in Alabama

Unserved and Underserved Locations

- How ADECA developed lists of the locations that are unserved or underserved and thus eligible for BEAD-funded deployment

Community Anchor Institutions

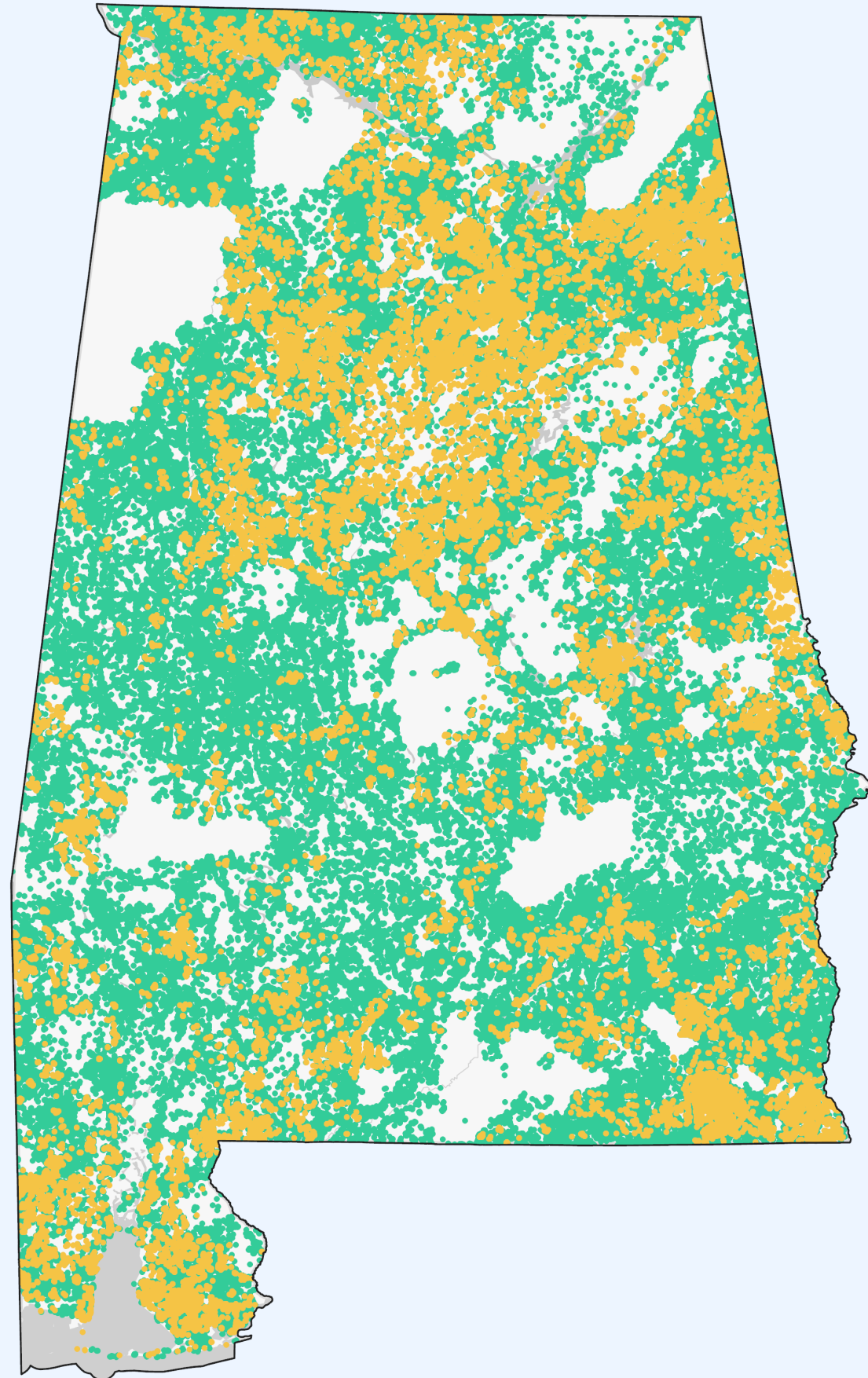
- Discussion of criteria used to identify CAIs that lack access to 1Gbps symmetrical services and a preliminary list of qualifying CAIs

Challenge Process

- Rules to define a transparent and fair Challenge Process to meet the goals of the BEAD program



Preliminary map of eligible locations



Alabama has **190,157 unserved** and **76,338 underserved** Broadband Serviceable Locations.

Under federal rules, the FCC map will be the basis of determinations of what locations are eligible for BEAD funding.

ADECA's challenge process will happen in early 2024.

In the meantime, communities and the public can file challenges with the FCC to inaccurate map data; if filed soon, this will help improve the map for 2024 grant decisions.

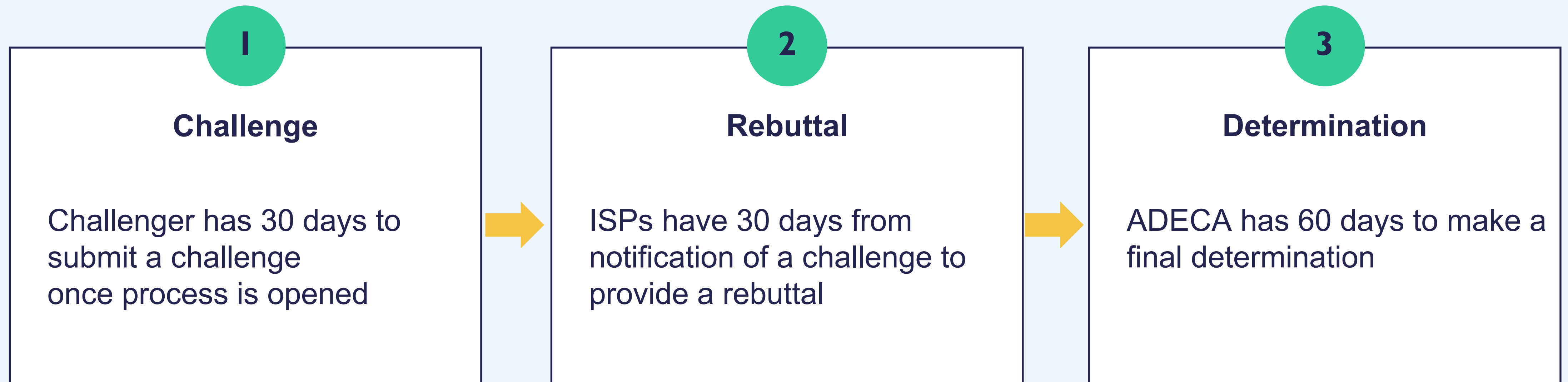
<https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home>

● **Unserved locations** ● **Underserved locations**



ADECA challenge process timeline

The Challenge Process is expected to begin in January or February 2024, using an online portal.



NTIA must approve the completed Challenge Process in Initial Proposal Volume I before the grant program can begin.



Initial Proposal Volume II: key sections

Will be available for public comment in November

Subgrantee Selection Process

- How the grant program will be structured and administered, including proposed scoring for grant evaluation

Low-cost Service Offering

- How ADECA will require grantees to provide an affordable option for lower-income consumers served over grant-funded infrastructure

Barriers and Obstacles

- How the state will address any potential obstacles to deployment related to utility pole access, rights-of-way, and permitting

Grant Oversight

- How ADECA will monitor grantees, verify compliance with grant contract requirements, and enforce grant obligations



