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PRESS RELEASE

American Samoa's Secures \$37.56 Million in BEAD Funding Following NTIA Approval of Final Proposal

PAGO PAGO, AMERICAN SAMOA — The Office of the Governor is pleased to announce that American Samoa's Final Proposal under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program has been officially approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). This landmark announcement places American Samoa among the first round of states and territories nationwide to receive approval under this crucial federal program, joining 17 other states and territories whose final proposals have been sanctioned.

This approval secures a historic allocation of \$37.56 million in BEAD funding for American Samoa. This federal investment is dedicated to expanding broadband access, improving connectivity in underserved villages, and ensuring residents and businesses have access to fast, reliable, and affordable high-speed internet.

The funds mark a major milestone in strengthening the territory's digital foundation and access to high-speed broadband. The BEAD last-mile projects are projected to help upgrade broadband services to over 6,000 homes and community anchor institutions across the territory. These improvements will build upon the foundation established by the BLAST program, which connected underground fiber to every home.

The approval of the Final Proposal was the culmination of focused federal engagement and advocacy by Governor Pulaali'i and American Samoa Governmental leaders, which began in February 2025 when he attended the National Governors Association (NGA) Winter Meeting to raise the specific needs of remote and island jurisdictions.

Through formal correspondence in March and April, the Governor continued dialogues with federal officials, requesting a special exception to allow American Samoa to use its BEAD funding to support critical middle-mile infrastructure, a necessity due to the territory's geographic isolation. This advocacy progressed in May, when Governor Pulaali'i met with Admiral Samuel J. Paparo of the U.S.

Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) to highlight regional vulnerabilities tied to undersea cable infrastructure and the urgent necessity of strengthening resiliency and securing communications across the Pacific.

The Governor's focus remained steadfast through September, when he returned to Washington, D.C. for a series of high-level meetings, joined by American Samoa Department of Commerce (ASDOC) Deputy Director Uili Leauanae. These included discussions with Deputy Secretary Paul Dabbar, Director Rob McLeod, and NTIA Chief of Staff Brooke Donilon, where he emphasized the importance of maintaining American Samoa's full BEAD allocation for last-mile connectivity and eliminating the territory's existing single point of failure in telecommunications. During that same visit, the Governor also met with Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary William Hague, from the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs as well as Chase Wilson, the Associate Director of the White House Intergovernmental Affairs Office.

Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula reflected on the territory's achievement, which is the culmination of a year of focused federal engagement and advocacy that began in February 2025.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with these leaders and for the productive and meaningful discussions focused on the future of our island home," stated Governor Pulaali'i. "Their support highlights the importance of secure, resilient broadband for American Samoa, and these partnerships will help ensure that our people remain connected, protected, and prepared for the challenges ahead."

The proposal was developed and submitted through the Broadband Coordination, Opportunities, Redevelopment, and Deployment (BCORD) Office within the Department of Commerce. The BCORD Office will now oversee all implementation, compliance, and reporting requirements, continuing to work closely with ASTCA and partner agencies to ensure that broadband infrastructure in American Samoa is resilient, secure, and prepared for the future.

Governor Pulaali'i reaffirmed the commitment to diligent management of the funds and expressed his gratitude: "American Samoa is committed to transparency, accountability, and disciplined execution. Every dollar invested through the BEAD Program will deliver lasting benefits for our people and strengthen the digital foundation of our territory. Thank you to everyone that contributed their efforts to achieve this notable milestone - your hard work does not go unnoticed."

With funding now secured, American Samoa will begin the next phase of broadband deployment. BCORD will continue to provide updates on deployment timelines, project phases, and community engagement opportunities as implementation moves forward.

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OUR CONTACT:

www.americansamoa.gov
comms@go.as.gov

 Office of the Governor
Fagatogo, AS 96799