

NTIA REPORTS CONFIRM APPLICATION TIMELINE, SHED LIGHT ON CRITERIA

MAY 22, 2009

Two items this week from National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) shed some light on the process for NTIA's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). NTIA's first quarterly BTOP report to Congress, together with NTIA's updated BTOP program plan on Recovery.gov (the ARRA accountability website), confirm that NTIA plans to accept applications for the first round of BTOP grants between July-September 2009. Further, these items provide some small insight on possible application evaluation (based on outcome metrics) and two key definitions.

Confirmation of First Round Application Timetable. Both items list broad schedules for the acceptance of BTOP applications; viewed together, however, they suggest the following timeline for first round BTOP grant applications:

- *Release of first BTOP Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA)* – Late June or early July
- *Acceptance of Grant Applications* – Early-to-mid July through mid-to-late September
- *NTIA Review of Grant Applications* – Late September through mid-to-late December
- *Announcement of First Round Grant Awards* – Late December

These items also indicate that NTIA will accept second round applications during the fourth quarter of 2009 and third round applications in the second quarter of 2010.

List of Measures for Evaluating ARRA Outcomes. The Recovery.gov page lists five measures NTIA will use to evaluate ARRA-funded projects:

- *Job Creation*
- *Expanded Broadband Access*
- *Stimulated Private Investment*
- *High-speed access to "strategic institutions"*
- *Encouraged Broadband Demand*

It is not clear how these measures might relate to BTOP's application review criteria, but we suggest that you take them into consideration in planning your application strategy.

Limited Insight on Key Eligibility Criteria. Finally, wording on the Recovery.gov webpage may shed some light on two key definitions.

First, the webpage says NTIA will award grants for the construction of both wireline and wireless broadband networks, which implies that wireless projects will be included in the definition of "broadband."

Second, the webpage says that NTIA will only fund networks "in areas of the country with limited or no broadband access," which seems to conform to comments by House Communications, Technology, and the Internet Subcommittee Chairman Rick Boucher (D-VA) last week, who suggested that, in addition to totally unserved areas, NTIA focus on creating competition and choice in areas where access was either slow or prohibitively expensive.

For more information on the services or expertise offered by Dow Lohnes for BTOP grant application preparation, please see our Broadband Stimulus website (<http://www.dowlohnesh.com/stimulus/dl/>) or contact one of the following:

- J.G. Harrington – jharrington@dowlohnesh.com – 202-776-2818
- Margaret L. Miller – mmiller@dowlohnesh.com – 202-776-2914
- Kenneth D. Salomon – ksalomon@dowlohnesh.com – 202-776-2566