

## CostQuest Licensing FAQs for the Completing Access to Broadband Program

The Tier D and Tier E licenses described below were developed by CostQuest Associates (CostQuest) in consultation with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to address needs for location-level data for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. CostQuest further recognized the need to capture certain data under other Federal Broadband Granting Agency's ("FBGA") broadband programs. Therefore, the licenses include certain allowable uses for broadband serviceable location (BSL) data related to broadband programs funded by the U.S. Department of Treasury with American Rescue Plan Act funding.

We have worked with CostQuest to provide framing for license requirements in relation to the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) program to help broadband providers and counties navigate this space. Discussions around the Tier D and Tier E licenses tend to highlight BEAD-specific purposes and terminology (such as the BEAD "challenge process"). We have developed the clarifications below with CostQuest to provide a general overview to broadband providers and counties. However, specific licensing questions should be submitted directly to CostQuest.

### 1) How is the FCC's Broadband Data Collection process related to the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) program?

For the CAB program, the Broadband Infrastructure Office is using data from the Federal Communication Commission's Broadband Data Collection (BDC) system. In late 2022, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) first released data from its new BDC system to collect and publish data on broadband availability across the country ([fcc.gov/BroadbandData](https://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData)). Broadband providers are required to submit data on broadband availability to the FCC every six months. Availability data is reported for all locations across the country where fixed broadband service is or could be installed. This dataset of locations is referred to as the "Fabric" of locations. The locations are referred to as BSLs. The Fabric, developed by CostQuest in consultation with the FCC, is updated twice a year. Challenges to the Fabric or the availability status of a BSL can be submitted to the FCC. Broadband providers, state governments and local governments that want to utilize the BDC data must have a license from CostQuest to use the Fabric. Further information on the CostQuest Fabric can be found at [costquest.com/broadband-serviceable-location-fabric](https://costquest.com/broadband-serviceable-location-fabric).

### 2) What data license do broadband providers need to participate in the CAB program?

A CostQuest Tier D license is expected to be the most useful type for broadband providers, as it allows a provider to use BSL data to design, propose, build and report on broadband infrastructure projects, as well as interact with data for the protected area and protest processes for the CAB program. The Tier D license supports participation in FBGA broadband grant programs through either a challenge process or by applying for an award of available funds. The CAB program, funded through American Rescue Plan Act through the U.S. Department of Treasury, is considered to be a program receiving funding through an FBGA. While we can answer general questions related to CostQuest licensing, it is up to you to make your own determination on licensing needs and to ensure you have the required licenses for utilizing data for the CAB program.

### 3) Do counties need a data license from CostQuest to participate in the CAB program?

Our understanding from conversations with CostQuest is still that units of local government and nonprofit organizations will need a Tier E license to communicate with us utilizing BSL data for the CAB program (participate in a file-based data interchange with us). However, counties may also coordinate with us using hexagon-level data (0.28 mi<sup>2</sup> in size) provided by the Broadband Infrastructure Office, which is less granular but does not require a license. While we can answer general questions related to CostQuest licensing, it is up to local units of government to make their own determination on licensing needs and to ensure they have the required licenses for utilizing data for the CAB program.

**4) We are a broadband provider or local government and already have access to CostQuest's BSL fabric for our area. Why would we need a Tier D or Tier E license?**

Most broadband providers and some local/county governments executed Tier 2 data licenses with CostQuest for the purpose of challenging or reporting data to the FCC's Broadband Data Collection Program, but a Tier 2 license alone does not allow for uses of the data in other federally funded broadband programs. Tier D and Tier E licenses allow some additional uses of BSL data for specific purposes to support the work of these programs.

**5) How do we obtain a Tier D or Tier E license?**

Please review the following links for information on how to obtain a license:

- Access the Tier D license guide: [costquest.info/3NFW3e](https://costquest.info/3NFW3e)
- Access the Tier E license guide: [costquest.info/3EWIGXJ](https://costquest.info/3EWIGXJ)
- Review the Dec. 7 CostQuest webinar recording: [ncbroadband.gov/CAB](https://ncbroadband.gov/CAB).
- Email [ifasupport@costquest.com](mailto:ifasupport@costquest.com) with any questions about the license request process.

**6) When the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program starts, will we need another license?**

No. The Tier D and E licenses will support participation in the BEAD programs and the BEAD state challenge process.

If you have additional questions, please contact us at [broadbandmapping@nc.gov](mailto:broadbandmapping@nc.gov) or CostQuest at [ifasupport@costquest.com](mailto:ifasupport@costquest.com).