

Bond Case Briefs

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States Have Broadband Money. Now They Just Have to Figure Out How to Spend It.

States have less than six months to submit their plans to the federal government on how they will spend their allotment of the \$42.5 billion to build out the nation's broadband.

An intense sprint started two weeks ago when states learned how much they are each getting from the nearly \$42.5 billion investment in broadband under the bipartisan infrastructure act. In less than six months, each state has to tell the federal government how they plan to spend their allotment.

That's not an easy task when talking about hundreds of millions of dollars, or in the case of 20 states more than a billion dollars. Finding out his state will be getting \$551.5 million "triggers a lot of other things," said Jim Stritzinger, director of the South Carolina Broadband Office. "It's going to be a very complicated set of steps between now and the end of the year. Very detailed, and a heavy lift."

First up in the arduous process that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA, set up in a 98-page document in May of last year is for states to begin answering a wide range of questions in a five-year action plan. The questions ask how states will prioritize what to do with the money, how they'll find enough workers to get the infrastructure built, how they'll go about awarding contracts for the work, what they will be doing to make sure it gets done and how they will keep the broadband affordable for low-income people.

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Route Fifty

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