

129—22.6(8B) Administration of award.

22.6(1) *Grant agreement required.* The office may require a grantee to enter into a grant agreement with the office in accordance with the terms, conditions, and requirements of the NOFA. Such grant agreement may include, but not be limited to, the total amount of the grant funds awarded to the grantee; a description of the project to be completed by the grantee and specifications related thereto; a description of allowable expenditures; conditions related to the disbursement of grant funds; default and termination procedures; performance, certification, and verification requirements/criteria necessary to confirm project success/completion; and repayment requirements in the event the grantee does not fulfill its obligations under the agreement, these rules, or Iowa Code chapter 8B. In addition to any terms, conditions, or requirements specifically set forth in such agreement, any and all requirements established by Iowa Code chapter 8B, these rules, other applicable law, rule, or regulation, or the NOFA shall be deemed incorporated by reference into such grant agreement as if fully set forth therein.

22.6(2) *Mapping data required.* Upon project completion, a grantee must supply the office with geographic information system (GIS) data in a form acceptable to the office demonstrating specifically where broadband infrastructure for which grant funds have been utilized, in whole or in part, has been installed, regardless of whether such infrastructure actually serves any customers in targeted service area(s) forming a basis of the application at the time such mapping data is supplied to the office. Such GIS data must enable the office to determine which specific broadband units within each targeted service area forming the basis of the project have access to broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in Iowa Code section 8B.11 as a result of the project.

22.6(3) *Reimbursements, record keeping/audits, performance/certification, and repayment.* In the absence of more specific provisions in an agreement executed between a grantee and the office in accordance with these rules establishing conflicting or inconsistent terms and conditions, the following terms and conditions shall apply by default to any award of grant funds made by the office under Iowa Code section 8B.11 and these rules:

a. Reimbursement.

(1) General. A grantee shall only be reimbursed by the office for:

1. Allowable and not disallowed expenditures actually and previously incurred by the grantee. What constitutes allowable or disallowable expenditures shall be further specified in the NOFA or grant agreement;

2. Expenditures for broadband infrastructure solely to the extent such broadband infrastructure facilitates broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in Iowa Code section 8B.11 within targeted service areas forming the basis of the project; and

3. Expenditures for which the grantee is able to supply sufficient and appropriate documentation. What constitutes sufficient or appropriate documentation shall be further specified in the NOFA or grant agreement.

(2) Timing. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to the office in accordance with the terms and conditions in the NOFA or grant agreement.

b. Performance/certification. After the completion of a project and not less than 60 days prior to four years from the date of issuance of the NOFA, or 60 days prior to four years from the appropriation of grant funds, whichever is earlier, a grantee must:

(1) Certify to the office that the project was completed as proposed in the original application, including but not limited to that the final installation facilitates broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in Iowa Code section 8B.11 in each of the applicable targeted service areas identified in the original application, and identify the total number of broadband units actually receiving broadband service in each of the targeted service areas identified in the original application as a result of the project.

(2) Attest that any claimed, allowable expenditures are true and accurate, were directly related to the installation of broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in Iowa Code section 8B.11 in eligible targeted service areas forming the basis of the project, and were properly allocated in accordance with the terms, conditions, and requirements of the NOFA or grant agreement.

(3) Supply the office with updated GIS data in accordance with subrule 22.6(2).

c. Performance testing. The office may, in its discretion, conduct performance tests, on one or multiple occasions, for compliance with the requirements of Iowa Code sections 8B.1 and 8B.11, these rules, and any grant agreement entered into between a grantee and the office pursuant to subrule 22.6(1) for up to five years after broadband service is certified as complete in accordance with paragraph 22.6(3) “b.” The office may exercise this right both before and after reimbursing a grantee for any claimed, allowable expenditures, but if the office elects to do so before reimbursing a grantee for any claimed, allowable expenditures, it will do so within a reasonable time, not to exceed one year, after broadband service is certified as complete in accordance with paragraph 22.6(3) “b.” Such performance tests may include but not be limited to:

(1) Speed tests anywhere between a grantee’s central office and the demarcation at any customer’s location in a targeted service area or broadband block in which the project was to be deployed;

(2) In the case of wireless installations, from any location in a targeted service area or broadband block in which the project was to be deployed; or

(3) In the case where a grantee does not have a customer in a targeted service area being served by the installation, certification obtained by the grantee and supplied to the office from an independent third party who is a properly licensed engineer that the installation facilitates broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in Iowa Code section 8B.11 in applicable targeted service areas identified in the original application. The costs of such certification shall be borne by the grantee.

d. Disbursement/repayments.

(1) A grantee shall not be entitled to the applicable portion of any grant funds or shall be obligated to repay the office the applicable portion of any grant funds previously distributed by the office to the grantee if the office determines that:

1. Claimed expenditures or a prior reimbursement, in whole or in part, was comprised of expenditures that were not allowable or were disallowed, were improperly or incorrectly allocated, or were not supported by sufficient and appropriate documentation;

2. Claimed expenditures or the total amount previously reimbursed by the office exceeds the amount determined by Iowa Code section 8B.11(5) or 8B.11(6) of the grantee’s estimated or final total allowable project costs, whichever is less.

(2) A grantee shall not be entitled to any grant funds or shall be obligated to repay the office the entire amount of any grant funds previously distributed by the office to the grantee if the office determines that:

1. Claimed expenditures or a prior reimbursement, in whole or in part, was used for the installation of broadband infrastructure that was not in or does not facilitate broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in Iowa Code section 8B.11 in a targeted service area identified in the original application;

2. A grantee fails to complete the project as proposed in the original application; or

3. Any representation or warranty made by a grantee in an application for grant funds, a grant agreement entered into between a grantee and the office pursuant to subrule 22.6(1), or in any other representation or statement made by the grantee to the office proves untrue in any material respect as of the date of the issuance or making thereof.

e. Notice of default. If the office determines a grantee is not entitled to or is otherwise required to repay the office in accordance with paragraph 22.6(3) “d,” the office may issue the grantee a “Notice of Default,” which shall afford the grantee 30 days to cure the default. Whether a grantee has sufficiently cured the default shall be determined in the sole discretion of the office. If a grantee fails to cure the default within 30 days, the office may issue an order requiring the grantee to reimburse the office for the amount specified in the “Notice of Default.”

22.6(4) Remedies for noncompliance. In addition to issuing a “Notice of Default” and subsequent order requiring the grantee to reimburse the office for failing to cure the default pursuant to paragraph 22.6(3) “e” and any other remedies available to the office pursuant to a grant agreement entered into between a grantee and the office pursuant to subrule 22.6(1), the office may, for cause, find that a grantee

is not in compliance with the requirements of Iowa Code section 8B.11, these rules, or a grant agreement entered into by the office and a grantee pursuant to subrule 22.6(1).

a. At the office's sole discretion, remedies for noncompliance may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Issuing a warning letter stating that further failure to comply with program requirements within a stated period of time will result in a more serious action.

(2) Conditioning a future grant on compliance with program requirements within a stated period of time.

(3) Disallowing future reimbursements.

(4) Requiring that some or all previously issued grant funds be reimbursed to the office.

b. Reasons for a finding of noncompliance include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

(1) A violation of any of the terms or conditions of a grant agreement entered into between the office and a grantee pursuant to subrule 22.6(1);

(2) A grantee's failure to complete a project in a timely manner;

(3) A grantee's failure to comply with any applicable state or federal laws, rules, or regulations;

(4) Claimed expenditures or a prior reimbursement, in whole or in part, was comprised of expenditures that were not allowable or were disallowed, were improperly or incorrectly allocated, or were not supported by sufficient and appropriate documentation;

(5) Claimed expenditures or a prior reimbursement, in whole or in part, was used for the installation of broadband infrastructure that does not facilitate broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in Iowa Code section 8B.11 in a targeted service area identified in the original application;

(6) A grantee fails to complete the project as proposed in the original application;

(7) The total claimed exceeds amounts allowed by the grant agreement or statute;

(8) Any representation or warranty made by a grantee in an application for grant funds, an agreement entered into between a grantee and the office pursuant to subrule 22.6(1), or in any other representation or statement made by the grantee to the office proves untrue in any material respect as of the date of the issuance or making thereof.

22.6(5) Office's decision and right to appeal.

a. Any decision of the office entitled "proposed decision," "final decision," or other like caption as relating to any issues described in subparagraphs 22.6(5) "a"(1) through (5) below shall become final unless, within 30 days of the transmission of such decision by the office by email to the email address of the individual identified in paragraph 22.4(2) "b" or to the email address of a person otherwise identified by the grantee in writing prior to the issuance of such decision as the person authorized by the grantee to respond to inquiries regarding the administration of the grant, a grantee which is adversely affected by the decision files a request for a contested case proceeding pursuant to 129—Chapter 6.

(1) The interpretation, construction, or application of any terms or conditions or resolution of a dispute under a grant agreement entered into between the office and a grantee or under these rules;

(2) Whether or in what amount a grantee is entitled to reimbursement pursuant to a grant agreement entered into between the office and a grantee, or under these rules;

(3) Whether or in what amount a grantee must repay the office pursuant to a grant agreement entered into between the office and a grantee or under these rules;

(4) The imposition of any remedies for noncompliance in accordance with subrule 22.6(4); or

(5) Any other decision of the office that relates to the administration of a grant awarded pursuant to Iowa Code section 8B.11, these rules, or a grant agreement entered into between the office and a grantee.

b. Failure to challenge the office's decision under this rule by filing a request for a contested case within the 30-day period shall waive any claims an applicant may have related to the administration of a grant award and otherwise be deemed a failure to exhaust administrative remedies.

[ARC 4098C, IAB 10/24/18, effective 11/28/18; ARC 4606C, IAB 8/14/19, effective 9/18/19; ARC 5173C, IAB 9/9/20, effective 10/14/20; ARC 5658C, IAB 6/2/21, effective 5/7/21]