Tennessee BEAD Environmental Readiness – One-Pager Reference

Purpose

This one-pager summarizes the key environmental readiness items awardees should confirm before initiating construction and highlights common issues that can delay environmental clearance.

Environmental Readiness Checklist (High-Level)

Awardees should confirm the following **before construction begins**:

NEPA Pathway Confirmed

- [ ] Appropriate NEPA determination identified and documented.

Environmental Screening Completed

- [ ] ESA, wetlands, floodplains, and cultural/historic considerations reviewed, as applicable.

Required Permits Identified Your paragraph text

- [ ] Federal, state, local, and private approvals assessed along the full project route.

Agency & Landowner Coordination Initiated

- [ ] Early outreach completed where permits, approvals, or consultations are required.

Environmental Documentation Prepared

- [ ] Screening results, correspondence, and determinations retained and ready for submission.

Key Reminder: Environmental readiness confirms a project is cleared to build; construction should not begin until these items are addressed.

Common Environmental Readiness Gaps That Cause Delays

The following issues frequently slow environmental review or postpone construction:

1. **Starting construction before environmental clearance**
2. Ground disturbance or installation begins before NEPA or permit approvals are complete.
3. **Late identification of required permits**
4. Federal, state, local, or private approvals identified too late in the process.
5. **Incomplete environmental submissions**
6. Missing documentation, outdated screenings, or inconsistent project information.
7. **Delayed agency or landowner coordination**
8. Outreach initiated only after designs are finalized or construction is scheduled.
9. **Underestimating review timelines**
10. Assuming approvals will be quick without confirming agency timelines.

Key Reminder: Most environmental delays are preventable with early screening, coordination, and complete documentation.

Environmental Screening & Permitting Tools

Common tools awardees may use to support environmental compliance:

- NEPA for BEAD Frequently Asked Questions
  Guidance on key environmental questions and BEAD-specific requirements.
- NTIA Permitting Resources
  Federal guidance and mapping tools related to infrastructure permitting.
- USFWS IPaC Tool
  Used to identify potential impacts to sensitive species and habitats.
- FEMA Flood Map Service Center
  Identifies floodplain considerations.
- USFWS Wetlands Mapper
  Screens for potential wetlands and Clean Water Act triggers.
- Sample Project Descriptions and Maps
  Official NTIA letter- for BEAD Environmental & Historic Preservation (EHP) Review.
- Section 106 Review
  Steps to complete Section 106 Review for SHPO.

Key TNECD Resources & Links

Helpful references for Tennessee BEAD awardees:

- TNECD BEAD Program Resources
  Central program guidance and foundational documents.
- Tennessee BEAD Application Guidebook (Version 2.1)
  State-specific application and program requirements.
- NTIA BEAD Federal Program Resources
  Federal policy notices, NEPA guidance, and technical assistance tools.
- NEPA & Environmental Resources
  National tools and background supporting environmental review expectations.
- Tennessee BEAD Subgrantee Selection Map
  Interactive reference for Project Area Units and eligibility locations.