

NGPC Conservation and Environmental Review Tool

Biological Resources / Threatened and Endangered Species

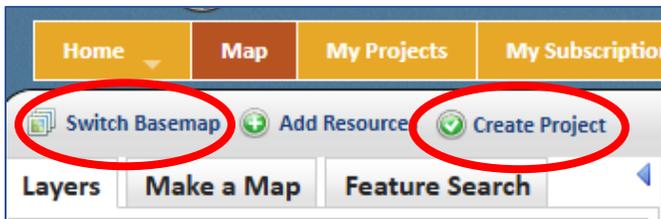
[CERT Website](https://cert.outdoornebraska.gov/) - <https://cert.outdoornebraska.gov/>

Account & Project Creation

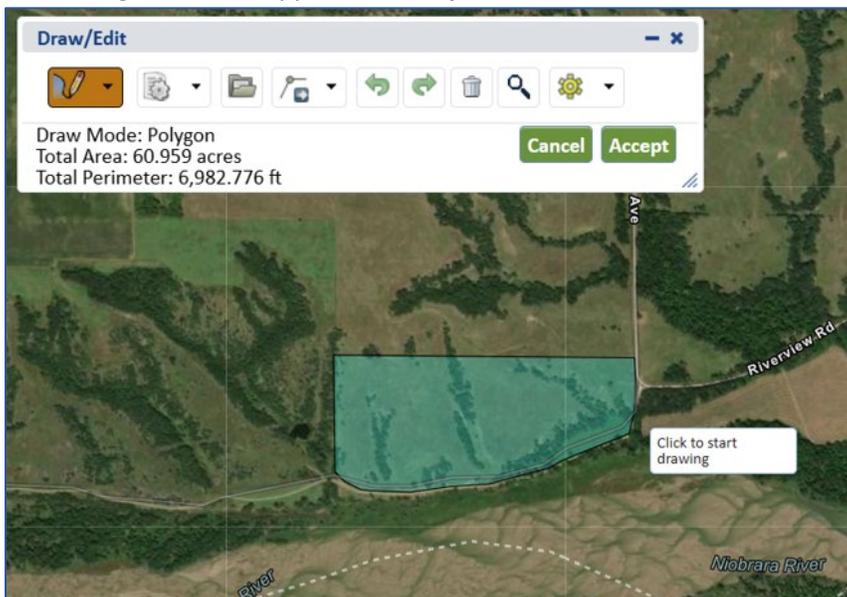
- Open the **Conservation and Environmental Review Tool (CERT)** by clicking the hyperlink or copy/paste the URL in your web browser. Select the **Create New Account** option and follow the instructions to set up your account. If you already have an existing account, select **Log in**.
- Once your account is set up, log in to CERT and select the **Map** tab at the top.



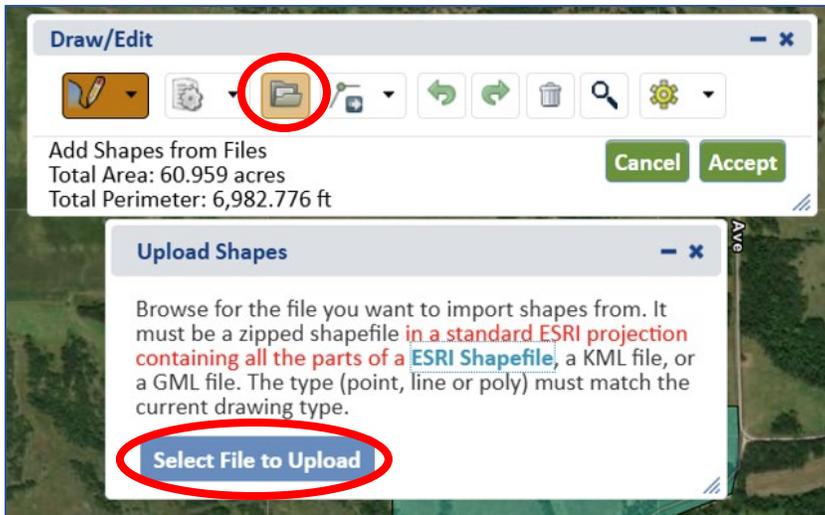
- Once in the map, select **Create Project**. To switch the imagery, select **Switch Basemap**.



- Once the project has been created, you must define the project boundary. To do this, you can use the drawing tool to create a polygon, line, or point directly OR you can upload a **KMZ** file from Google Earth or zipped **ESRI Shapefile**.



- In order to upload a **KMZ** file or zipped **ESRI shapefile**, click on the **Upload Shapes** option then **Select File to Upload**. Your file explorer will pop up, and you will have to find the location where you saved the KMZ file or zipped ESRI Shapefile.



- Click **Accept**, and your project boundary will be validated. Once it has been validated, you can now fill in more information about your project.
- Enter the project title and associated project numbers. In this case, it could be the NBEAD grant application number or an internal tracking number from the consultant or ISP.

Project Title *
Enter a brief title for this project.

User Project Number(s) *
Include any number(s) associated with the project (e.g., Construction Storm Water Permit Number).

- Select the state nexus. In this case, use the dropdown menu and select **Other**.

State Nexus *
Enter the Nebraska state agency that is funding, permitting, or carrying out your project. (e.g., If you are applying for a Construction Storm Water/Industrial Stormwater Water permit, select "NDEE - Department of Environment & Energy")

- Select a value -

- This project will be funded as part of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, which is funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Select **Both state and federal permit or funding**.

Funding Source or Permit Requirements *

State permit or funding ONLY

Both state and federal permit or funding

Federal permit or funding ONLY; select Conservation Planning Report for your Project Type below.

None of the above

- Select the project type. Selecting the appropriate project type and associated activities is important for determining the proper conservation measures. Select the most applicable project type under the **Communications** dropdown for the activities taking place.



Communications

- Communication Towers
- Fiber Optic Cable
- Satellite Dishes/Parabolic Antennas, Routers, Modems (No Ground Disturbance)

- As part of these project types, you may be required to then select the specific project activities taking place. Select all that apply.

- **Communications Towers**

Project Type Activities *

Select all activities that may potentially occur during this project.

- Access Road
- Antenna and/or communication dish installation on existing tower or building
- Modification to existing towers
- New structures or towers outside existing municipality
- New structures or towers within, or immediately adjacent to, existing municipality

- **Fiber Optic Cable**

Project Type Activities *

Select all activities that may potentially occur during this project.

- Fiber Optic Cable (Above Ground)
- Fiber Optic Cable (Below Ground)
- Fiber Optic Cable Storage Building

- Enter the project description to the best of your knowledge. ***Include the block of text below before filling in the rest of your description.*** Make sure to include all activities taking place, staging areas, major phases of construction, etc.

Project Description *

Describe the project including project activities and disturbance, construction methods, infrastructure needs, or processes that will generate waste. Limited to 300 words.

Internet Service Provider NAME is completing an environmental review with NGPC on behalf of the Nebraska Broadband Office (NBO) for the NBEAD funding. If applicable, Internet Service Provider NAME has hired Consultant Company NAME to complete this environmental review process.

- Enter the project duration to the best of your knowledge.

Project Duration *

What is the timing and duration of construction activities (e.g., estimated start and end date). Limited to 300 words.

- Enter the existing land use to the best of your knowledge. You can reference Google Earth for historical imagery if you don't have extensive site information.

Existing Land Use *

Describe the existing land use of the project site (i.e., native prairie, pasture, row crop agriculture, urban/suburban residential, etc.). Limited to 300 words.

- Enter any nearby waterbodies that will be affected by the project. You can reference the USGS National Hydrology Dataset map at <https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/>.

Waterbodies *

List any waterbodies (e.g., rivers, intermittent streams, lakes, wetlands) that may be affected by the proposed project, and discuss how they may be impacted (e.g. dewatering, depletions, discharge, riverbed disturbance). Limited to 300 words.

- This project will not have likely undergone previous environmental review. Select **No**.

To your knowledge, has the project undergone a previous environmental review? *

No

Yes

- This project will be submitted on behalf of Nebraska Broadband Office (NBO).

On Behalf Of

(optional) Enter a brief name or acronym if submitting for another organization.

- Fill in the contact information. This information should be automatically filled in if you have an account created.

Contact Name *

Organization *

Email *

Phone number *

Address *

- For now, you can just skip this option. Once all necessary consultation with NGPC has been completed, the **Final** document will be need to be uploaded here in order to satisfy Nebraska Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act (NESCA) requirements. This will be covered later in the guide.

File attachments

Add a new file
Attach supporting documentation here. Please note: Files added to the project are not permanent until you save or submit this page. For multiple attachments, this is a two-step process; first Choose the File and then Upload it to be able to select another file.

Choose File No file chosen

Upload

Files must be less than 10 MB each.
 Allowed file types: doc jpg jpeg gif png txt doc xls pdf ppt pps odt ods odp docx xlsx zip kml kmz.

- The project should be left as **Draft** for now. The status can be updated to **Final** once all necessary consultation with NGPC has been completed. This will be covered later in the guide.

Project Edit Status *

For initial project creation, leave your project in Draft. This allows the project shape and project activities to be edited, if needed. Draft reports do not satisfy the requirements for informal consultation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Once the report has been generated, review the Overall Results section for next steps.

Final should only be selected once you have reviewed the environmental review report, signed and dated under the applicable sections, and are ready to upload the report as complete to finalize informal consultation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Conservation planning reports do not require signatures and are for planning purposes only.

Draft
 Final

- Once all necessary information has been inputted, click **Submit**. Once submitted, the information will be processed and a report will be generated. Once the report has been generated, you will receive an email notification saying your report is ready to be viewed.

Submit

- Once you have received an email confirmation from NGPC, navigate back to the CERT website. Select **My Projects** to view your report.

[Home](#) |
 [Map](#) |
 [My Projects](#) |
 [My Subscription](#)

- Find your report, and click on your project name under **Title**.

Title	System Project ID	User Project Number(s)	Project Description	Edit Status	Project Status
NBO CERT Guide	NE-CERT-014120	To be filled in	Internet Service Provider NAME is completing an environmental review with NGPC on behalf of the...	Draft	Saved

- From this page, you can edit any information you inputted or redraw the project boundary if needed. If you make any edits, click **Save** at the bottom of the page and a new report will be generated.

NBO CERT Guide

View
Edit Details
Edit/View Shape
Generate Report

Project Review Results

Revision date	Report Status	Report File	Boundary Shapefile	KMZ File
2/26/2025 11:22:56 AM	Generated	Project Report (PDF)	Shapefile (ZIP)	Generate KMZ

File Attachments

No files have been attached to this project.

- To open up your report, select **Project Report (PDF)** under **Report File**.

NBO CERT Guide

View
Edit Details
Edit/View Shape
Generate Report

Project Review Results

Revision date	Report Status	Report File	Boundary Shapefile	KMZ File
2/26/2025 11:22:56 AM	Generated	Project Report (PDF)	Shapefile (ZIP)	Generate KMZ

File Attachments

No files have been attached to this project.

- Your report will look something like this.



Environmental Review Report

Project Information

Report Generation Date:	2/27/2025 10:39:51 AM
Project Title:	NBO CERT Guide
User Project Number(s):	
System Project ID:	NE-CERT-014120
Project Type:	Communications, Fiber Optic Cable (below ground)
Project Activities:	None Selected

➤ To save the report and view it in your PDF viewer of choice, navigate to the top right of your screen and click Save/Download.

○ Google Chrome: 

○ Microsoft Edge: 

○ Mozilla Firefox: 

Report & Data Interpretation

- Navigate to the **Overall Results** section of your report. Review the results of your report carefully. One of three determinations will be listed under the results section:

- **Result 1:** “It is unlikely this project will negatively impact listed species or their designated critical habitat.”

Overall Results

- It is unlikely this project will negatively impact listed species or their designated critical habitat. Read all the information in this document; then, sign and date the Certification section. Upload a signed and dated report into your project in CERT. Once your report is uploaded, no additional correspondence with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is required. If you need assistance, visit our Help Page at <https://cert.outdoornebraska.gov/help-documents>.

- **Result 2:** “Potential impacts on listed species may occur as a result of this project; proceed to the Questions and Conservation Measures section below.”

Overall Results

- Potential impacts on listed species may occur as a result of this project; proceed to the Questions and Conservation Measures section below.

- **Result 3:** “Potential impacts on listed species may occur as a result of this project; further review is required.”

Overall Results

- Potential impacts on listed species may occur as a result of this project; further review is required. Sign and date the Certification section below and fill out the CERT Further Review Form located at <https://outdoornebraska.gov/conservation/environmental-review/cert-further-review-form/>.

- **Result 1:** This project is unlikely to have an impact on listed species or their critical habitat.

- Verify all the information is correct. Simply sign and date under the **Certification** section, and upload as **Final** on CERT (see **Uploading as Final**).

Certification

I certify that ALL the project information in this report (including project location, project size/configuration, project type, project activities, answers to questions) is true, accurate and complete. If the project type, activities, location, size, or configuration of the project change; if a species listing status is reclassified; if a new species is listed; or if any of the answers to any questions asked in this report change, then this document is no longer valid, and re-consultation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is required.

Applicant/project proponent signature

Date

- Your project is now in compliance with NESCA. No further consultation with NGPC is required. Keep in mind, this review only satisfies state requirements and may not satisfy any federal requirements if there is an associated federal nexus (i.e. USACE 404 permit).

- **Result 2:** This project may have the potential to impact listed species and their critical habitat. More information from the applicant is needed.

- Read through the **Questions and Conservation Measures**. Answer all habitat questions truthfully and to the best of your knowledge by placing an **X** next to the appropriate answer. If you are unsure whether suitable habitat is within your project area or have any questions, please contact NGPC (see **Contact Information**). Below are some examples of **Habitat Questions** and **Conservation Measures** you may encounter:

- **Small White Lady's Slipper**

Small White Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*)
Is the Action Area or the area of potential effect within or adjacent to wet meadows, sub-irrigated prairies, or natively vegetated grasslands, that do not have a history of cropping?

Is the Action Area or the area of potential effect within a drainage (ditch, waterway, or other moist soil sites) that contains grasses and flowering plants AND is associated with a wet meadow, sub-irrigated prairie, or natively vegetated grassland with no history of cropping?

Unknown for ANY question.
 No for BOTH questions. Conservation measures are not needed for this species unless otherwise indicated.
 Yes for EITHER question. The following conservation measures must be implemented in order to avoid adverse impacts on Small White Lady's Slipper:

SWLS CM-1: Prior to any construction or project activities a field survey for small white lady's slipper will be conducted within your project area by a qualified biologist. The survey shall be completed during the flowering period (May 15 - June 7) when the plant is easily visible. NOTE: The flowering period is subject to change year to year, contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) Environmental Review Team (ERT) at ngpc.envreview@nebraska.gov about suitable survey dates.

A wetland delineation does NOT count as a rare plant field survey, even if it is conducted during the small white lady's slipper flowering period.

If the species is found during the field survey, further consultation with NGPC is required prior to commencement of project activities. Submit a field survey report to the NGPC ERT at ngpc.envreview@nebraska.gov with a request to initiate further consultation.

NGPC's Rare Plant Field Survey protocol can be found at [here](#).

- **Western Prairie Fringed Orchid**

Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*)
Is the Action Area or area of potential effect within or adjacent to wet meadows, sub-irrigated prairies, or natively vegetated grasslands, that do not have a history of cropping?

Is the Action Area or area of potential effect within a drainage (ditch, waterway, or other moist soil sites) that contains grasses and flowering plants AND is associated with a wet meadow, sub-irrigated prairie, or natively vegetated grassland with no history of cropping?

Unknown for one or more questions.
 No for BOTH questions. Conservation measures are not needed for this species unless otherwise indicated.
 Yes for EITHER question. The following conservation conditions must be implemented in order to avoid adverse impacts on Western Prairie Fringed Orchid:

WPFO CM-1: Prior to any construction or project activities a field survey for western prairie fringed orchid will be conducted within your project area by a qualified biologist. The survey shall be completed during the flowering period (June 15 - July 15) when the plant is easily visible. NOTE: The flowering period is subject to change year to year, contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) Environmental Review Team (ERT) at ngpc.envreview@nebraska.gov about suitable survey dates.

A wetland delineation does NOT count as a rare plant field survey, even if it is conducted during the western prairie fringed orchid flowering period.

If the species is found during the field survey, further consultation with NGPC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required prior to commencement of project activities. Submit a field survey report to the NGPC ERT at ngpc.envreview@nebraska.gov with a request to initiate further consultation.

NGPC's Rare Plant Field Survey protocol can be found at [here](#).

○ **Whooping Crane**

Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) and Whooping Crane Critical Habitat
Is the Action Area or the area of potential effect outside of densely populated residential, commercial, or industrial areas?
AND
Does the Action Area or the area of potential effect within 1/2 mile of suitable habitat, which includes but is not limited to, sub-irrigated grasslands, meadows, shallow wetland habitat, farm ponds, or major rivers?

Unknown for EITHER question.
 No for EITHER question. Conservation measures are not needed for this species unless otherwise indicated.
 Yes for BOTH questions. The following conservation measures must be implemented in order to avoid adverse impacts on Whooping Crane and/or critical habitat for Whooping Crane:

Unless otherwise indicated, conservation measure **WC CM-2** or **WC CM-3** is required (not both), in addition to any other conservation measures listed for this species:
WC CM-2: If project or management actions/activities must occur during the spring (March 6 - April 29) or fall (October 9 - November 15) migration periods, then a survey must be conducted according to the standard protocol.
OR
WC CM-3: Project or management actions/activities will not be implemented during the spring (March 6 - April 29) or fall (October 9 - November 15) whooping crane migration periods.

○ **Northern Long-Eared Bat**

Is suitable summer habitat, as defined above, located within 1000-feet of the Action Area or the area of potential effect?

Unknown
 No. Conservation measures are not needed for this species unless otherwise indicated. **SKIP any remaining questions for this species.**
 Yes. The following conservation measures must be implemented in order to avoid adverse impacts on Northern Long-eared Bat.

NLEB CM-2: No removal of suitable trees or roosting structures between May 15 and July 31 (maternity roosting season).

- Listed species, Habitat Questions, and Conservation Measures will vary based on the project type and location, which is why it's important to input the information as accurately as possible.
- Once you have read through and answered all the Habitat Questions, navigate to the **Conservation Measures Agreement** section. Based on the information in the report, refer to Sections A, B, and C.
- **Section A:** If you answered one or more of the Habitat Questions with **Yes**, insert an **X** for one of the two options:
- **Option 1:** If you answered **Yes** to any of the Habitat Questions above, you agree to implement the associated Conservation Measures for those species (i.e. **NLEB CM-2** or **WPFO CM-2** as shown above).
 - If the applicant can agree to implement the Conservation Measures, sign and date under Option 1, and also sign and date under the **Certification** section. Upload as **Final** on CERT (see **Uploading as Final**).
 - **Option 2:** If you answered **Yes** to any of the Habitat Questions above but have concerns about how said Conservation Measures would be implemented, sign and date under the **Certification** section, upload as **Final** on CERT (see **Uploading as Final**), and fill out the **CERT Further Review Form** (see **Result 3** for help with the next steps).

- **Section B:** If you answered one or more of the Habitat Questions with **Unknown**, leave your project as **Draft** and contact NGPC (see **Contact Information**) with your questions and concerns. Once questions and concerns have been addressed, adjust your answers to the Habitat Questions accordingly, sign and date under the **Certification** section, and upload as **Final** on CERT (see **Uploading as Final**).
 - **Section C:** If you answered ALL habitat questions as **No**, sign and date under the **Certification** section, and upload as **Final** on CERT (see **Uploading as Final**).
 - If you agreed to implement a conservation measure, keep the listed dates in mind (i.e. **June 15 – July 15 for WPFO CM-1**).
- **Result 3:** This project may have the potential to impact listed species and their critical habitat. Further review is required.

- Sign and date under the **Certification** section, and upload as **Final** on CERT (see **Uploading as Final**).
- To request further review, click on the following [link](#) and fill out the **CERT Further Review Form**. Much of the information required in the form is information already filled out in the CERT Report. Enter the rest of the information to the best of your knowledge.

Further review form

Project Title *

CERT # *

Name *

First Name	Last Name

- If you answer **Yes** to any of the questions, you may be prompted to enter additional information and provide a map showing the extent of the activities taking place.

Will any trees be removed as part of this project? *

Yes

No

How many acres of trees will be removed?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the disturbance/impact questions, please upload an image of a map with the areas of these activities marked. See the example map above.

Drop a file here or click to upload

Maximum file size: 10MB

- Once you have entered all information to the best of your knowledge and uploaded any required maps, click **Submit**.



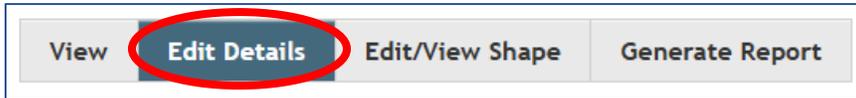
- Once you click Submit, you will receive a notification via email confirming your form has been received by NGPC. NGPC will reach out after the form has been reviewed with any additional questions or requirements.

Uploading as Final

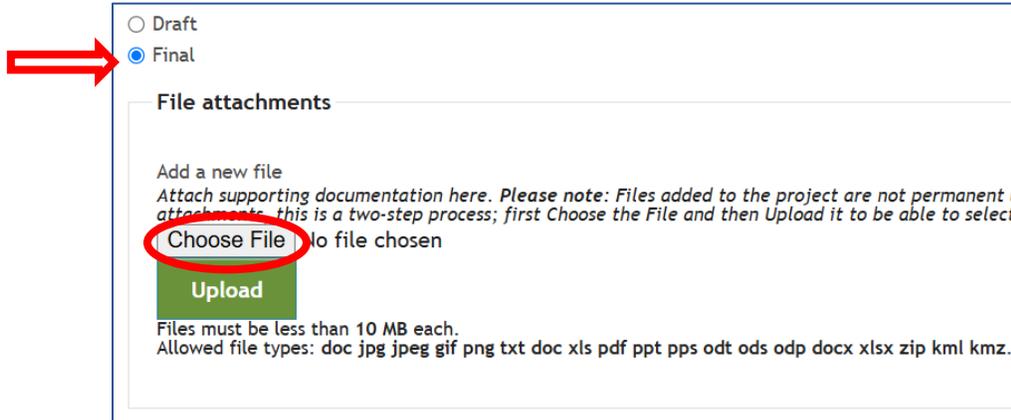
- Once you have signed, dated, and saved your report, navigate back to **My Projects**.



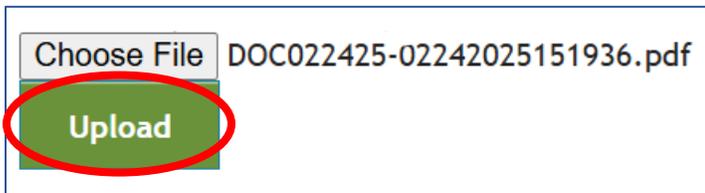
- Click on **Edit Details**.



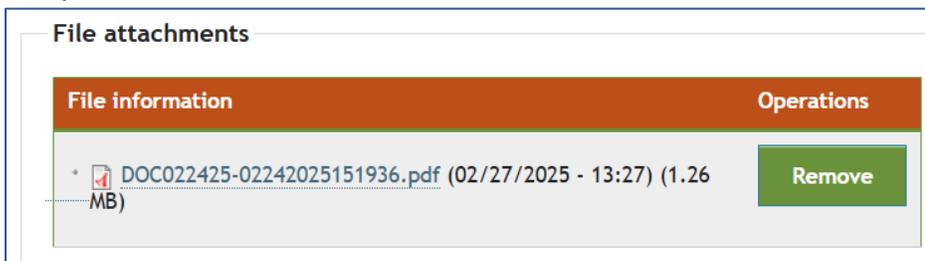
- From here, navigate to the bottom of the page. Select **Final** then click **Choose File**. Select the report containing your signature and date.



- Click **Upload**.



- You will know the file was uploaded correctly if you see this box pop up under **File Attachments**. Verify the file is correct.



- Click **Save** at the bottom of the page.

Contact Information & Resources

Contact the Environmental Review Team at:

ngpc.envreview@nebraska.gov

(402) 471-5423

CERT Further Review Form can be found [here](#).

Rare Plant Field Survey protocol can be found [here](#).

For additional information regarding CERT, visit the [Help](#) tab on the [CERT Website](#).



Please note that links were current as of the date of public posting of this document but may have changed.

Neither the State of Nebraska, the Nebraska Broadband Office, any employee or officer of either entity, nor any consultants working on their behalf, makes any representation or warranty regarding the accuracy or completeness of the information contained herein. It is the sole responsibility of applicant to comply with all requirements of the Nebraska Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (NBEAD) Program, including, but not limited to, compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Any applicant or party relying on this guidance should conduct their own research and hire their own professional consultants, advisers, and attorneys.