Benjamin J. Fineman

Technology Infrastructure & AI Governance Leader

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior technology and policy leader with 20+ years of experience spanning federal infrastructure programs, research and education networking, and public-private partnership development. Currently managing $2.8 billion in federal broadband deployment across two states at NTIA. Track record of delivering large-scale programs on time and under budget, building cross-sector coalitions, and translating complex technical and regulatory landscapes into actionable strategy. Increasingly focused on AI governance, risk management, and the policy frameworks needed to ensure emerging technologies serve the public interest.

EXPERIENCE

Federal Program Officer, Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce
August 2022 – Present | GS-15

- Lead strategic oversight of $2.8B in federal broadband funding for Michigan and West Virginia, managing the full lifecycle from state plan approval through subgrantee selection and deployment.
- Drove Michigan BEAD approval: $920M federal investment leveraging $550M in private matching for $1.47B total — the largest broadband infrastructure investment in the state's history, connecting approximately 200,000 locations.
- Guided West Virginia to successful approval of $546M across 142 projects reaching 73,000+ unserved and underserved locations.
- Spearheaded competitive bidding negotiations during subgrantee selection, delivering significant cost savings through "Benefit of the Bargain" approach across both state programs.
- Structured grant programs to maximize private capital leverage, ensuring federal dollars catalyze rather than replace private investment.
- Serve as primary federal liaison to state broadband offices, ISPs, community organizations, and elected officials across both states.

Principal Consultant & Founder

Brightlink Solutions | Chelsea, Michigan
April 2019 – August 2022

- Founded broadband consulting practice serving ISPs, municipalities, and community organizations across Michigan.
- Developed broadband strategy, public-private partnership frameworks, and federal/state funding applications for clients seeking to expand connectivity in underserved areas.
- Structured infrastructure investment strategies for private ISPs entering new markets, optimizing capital expenditure models to reduce deployment risk.

Director, Industry Engagement

Internet2 | Ann Arbor, Michigan
April 2020 – August 2022

- Led industry engagement strategy for the nation's largest research and education network, managing relationships with technology vendors and service providers.
- Achieved record-breaking membership renewal rates during COVID-19 economic volatility while driving net positive membership growth.
- Reduced outstanding accounts receivable to under 1% — best performance in recent organizational history.
- Restructured department from external consultants to lean internal team, reducing overhead while increasing output and program quality.

Senior Program Manager / Program Manager, Cloud & Collaboration Services

Internet2 | Ann Arbor, Michigan

2004 – 2020 (16 years, multiple roles)

- Managed NET+ portfolio of cloud video, voice, and collaboration services for 300+ member institutions across higher education, government, and nonprofit sectors.
- Represented North America on NRENUM global telecommunications governance committee; delivered presentations at international symposiums across Europe and Asia.
- Founded Metaverse Working Group (2014) to evaluate policy implications of AR/VR technologies — early governance work directly relevant to current AI policy landscape.
- Partnered with major cloud providers on datacenter infrastructure buildout and large-scale computing facility management.

Computer Consultant II, College of Engineering

University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, Michigan

1998 – 2004

- Systems administration (Active Directory, MSSQL, IIS) and security operations including penetration testing, incident response, and patch management for College of Engineering infrastructure.

EDUCATION

MBA, Master of Business Administration

Eastern Michigan University | ISACA Detroit Scholarship Winner

BS, Computer Science

University of Michigan | Dean's Merit Scholar (full tuition)

CERTIFICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- AI Governance and Compliance Certificate — Georgetown University (2024)
- AI Risk Manager Professional Certification (AIRMPC) — CertiProf (in progress)
- Grants Management Certificate Program (GMCP), Federal Track — Management Concepts (2024)
- ISO/IEC 20000: IT Service Management (2014)

CORE COMPETENCIES

Program & Portfolio Management: Federal grants management, large-scale infrastructure deployment, cross-state program coordination, budget oversight ($2.8B+), subgrantee management

Technology & Policy: AI governance & risk management, broadband policy, telecommunications regulation, digital equity, public-private partnerships, R&E networking

Leadership & Engagement: Cross-sector coalition building, state/federal/industry stakeholder management, strategic communications, conference speaking, executive relationship management

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

President & Co-Founder, Michigan Broadband Alliance (2019–2022) — Statewide coalition advancing equitable, affordable broadband for Michigan communities

FIRST Tech Challenge Referee & Robot Inspector (2023–Present) — Supporting youth robotics competition and STEM education

Founder, Firefly Hollow Enterprises LLC (2024) — Software development; launched ShotPal, a pediatric wellness application