

Digital Equity Act: State Capacity Grant Program, Planning Grants, and Competitive Grant

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program (DE), authorized by Section 60304(c) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (November 15, 2021) (Infrastructure Act or Act), also commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides federal funding to ensure that individuals and communities have the skills and tools needed for full participation in society and the economy. The following is the first in a series of FAQ documents intended to provide guidance on information set forth in NTIA’s Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued on May 13, 2022. Following the release of this document, further questions may be submitted to digitalequity@ntia.gov for consideration to include in future FAQ documents.

The below FAQs are for informational purposes only and are intended solely to assist potential applicants in better understanding the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program and the application requirements set forth in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for this program. The FAQs do not and are not intended to supersede, modify, or otherwise alter applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, or the specific application requirements set forth in the NOFO. In all cases, statutory and regulatory mandates, and the requirements set forth in the NOFO, shall prevail over any inconsistent information contained in the below FAQs.

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1 Overview

1.1 What is the Digital Equity Act?

The Digital Equity Act (DEA), passed as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, aims to promote the achievement of digital equity and support digital inclusion activities. The DEA allocates \$2.75 billion to establish three main grant programs: the (1) State Digital Equity Planning Grant, which awards \$60 million to States (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) to develop State Digital Equity plans or similar plans; (2) the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, which will award \$1.44 billion over 5 fiscal years to States, possessions/territories, and Tribal entities for the purpose of implementing their State Digital Equity Plans (or similar plan); and (3) the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program, which makes available \$1.25 billion in grant awards over 5 fiscal years for private sector, public sector, and not-for-profit entities to advance digital equity and engage in digital inclusion activities.

1.2 What is the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program?

The State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program makes \$60 million in planning grants available to States, possessions/territories, and Tribal / Native entities for the purpose of developing a State Digital Equity Plan or similar plan.

1.3 Why does my state have to develop a digital equity plan to be eligible for these funds?

Under the Act, States interested in participating in the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program must first apply for State Digital Equity Planning Grants and complete State Digital Equity Plans. A State Digital Equity Plan is a critical predicate for achievement of digital equity goals as the drafting of such a plan provides states the opportunity to cast a vision for, and think critically about, how they will support the achievement of digital equity in their state. Planning should bring a diverse set of stakeholders to the table, assess data, and more to ensure that capacity funding is used most effectively to close the digital divide in each state.

1.4 When will my state receive funds to implement digital inclusion projects or programs?

The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program must begin no later than two years after the date NTIA begins awarding the State Digital Equity Planning Grants. Upon receipt of the planning funds, States have one year to complete their Digital Equity Plans. Once completed, states will be eligible to apply for funds to implement the plans through the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program.

1.5 When will the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program begin?

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$1.25 billion to NTIA to establish the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. The law requires NTIA to establish the program “not later than 30 days after the date on which the Assistant Secretary begins awarding State Digital Equity Capacity Grants, and not before that date.”

1.6 Does NTIA provide Technical Assistance to program applicants?

NTIA will host Technical Assistance webinars for program applicants and/or administering entities. Program and application guidance will be posted on www.InternetForAll.gov.

1.7 What is considered a “State” under the DEA? Are any other entities eligible for funding? If so, do States and those other entities follow the same process to acquire planning funds?

As defined in the NOFO in Section I.C., the term “State” includes the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Separately, territories and possessions of the United States, other than Puerto Rico, and Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations are eligible to enter into grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts with NTIA to carry out activities under the DEA (see Section III.A. of the NOFO).

Each State must submit an application and develop a State Digital Equity Plan in accordance with Section IV of the NOFO.

A U.S. territory or possession other than Puerto Rico, an Indian Tribe, an Alaska Native entity, or a Native Hawaiian organization have a different process than States. These entities must first submit a Letter of Intent to the NTIA in accordance with Section IV.B. of the NOFO —after which it will receive more information about application submission requirements and timelines via a separate written communication.

While States and many U.S. territories, possessions, Indian tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations will develop digital equity plans, some of the digital equity plan requirements that apply to States may not be applicable or appropriate for other entities. NTIA will work with these entities to agree on budgets and expectations that are reasonable and effective.

2 Deadlines

2.1 When are applications for the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program due?

States must submit applications by July 12, 2022, 11:59pm EDT through the NTIA application portal pursuant to Section IV.A. of the NOFO. States cannot submit their application packages (or any portions thereof) by email, paper, or facsimile.

U.S. territories and possessions other than Puerto Rico, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations must submit their Letters of Intent by July 12, 2022, 11:59pm EDT. As described further in Section IV.B. of the NOFO, these entities must submit their letters of intent (1) electronically through the NTIA application portal, (2) by email, or (3) by mail or courier. Applications submitted by mail or courier must be postmarked by July 12, 2022. Application submission requirements and timelines for any entity that submits a timely Letter of Intent will be provided to such applicant in a separate written communication.

3 Eligibility

3.1 What entities are eligible to apply for planning grants under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program?

Each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (collectively referred to as “States” under this program) are eligible to apply for planning grants under the State Digital

Equity Planning Grant program. The governor or equivalent of each State must designate an Administering Entity for that State to receive and administer a grant.

Territories or possessions of the United States, other than Puerto Rico, that are not defined as “States” for the purposes of this program, as well as Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations are eligible to enter into grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts with NTIA to develop and implement their own digital equity plans.

3.2 What is an Administering Entity?

As defined in Section I.C. of the NOFO, an “Administering Entity” is the entity selected by the governor or equivalent official of each state to administer the Digital Equity Act Planning Grant and Capacity Grant Programs. This means that the Administering Entity will lead the state’s digital equity initiatives under the State Planning and Capacity Grant Programs. The Administering Entity will be responsible for:

- Receiving and administering the State Digital Equity Planning and Capacity grants.
- Developing, implementing, and overseeing the State Digital Equity Plan for the State.
- Making subgrants to any entity in support of the State Digital Equity Plan and any digital inclusion activities in the State.
- Serving as an advocate for digital equity policy and digital inclusion activities and as a repository of best materials.

3.3 Can nonprofit and community-based organizations apply for planning grants under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program?

Nonprofit organizations and community-based organizations are not eligible to apply directly for planning grants under this program. However, nonprofit organizations and community-based organizations may serve as an Administering Entity (if selected by the governor) pursuant to the definition provided in Section I.C. of the NOFO and are eligible to receive subgrants to assist in the development of their State’s Digital Equity Plan as described in Section IV.C.1.a. of the NOFO. These organizations are also eligible to receive subgrants for the implementation of State Digital Equity Plans under the Capacity Grant Program and may apply directly for Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program funding.

3.4 What type of organization can be an Administering Entity?

As defined in Section I.C. of the NOFO, an Administering Entity must have demonstrated a capacity to administer the Program on a statewide level, and be any of the following:

- The State, a political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of the State, an Indian Tribe located in the State, an Alaska Native entity located in the State, or a Native Hawaiian organization located in the State.
- A foundation, corporation, institution, association, or coalition that is a not-for-profit entity; providing services in the State; and not a school.
- A community anchor institution, other than a school, that is located in the State.
- A local educational agency that is located in the State.
- An entity located in the State that carries out a workforce development program.

- An agency of the State that is responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities in the State.
- A public or multi-family housing authority that is located in the State.
- A partnership between any of the previously listed entities.

4 Grant Application and Award Information

4.1 How will funds be distributed, and how much money will my state receive under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program?

The amount of funding States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will receive through the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program will be calculated by applying a formula. The formula is as follows and can also be found in Section II.C.1 of the NOFO:

- 50% of the total grant amount shall be based on the population of each State in proportion of the total population of all eligible States
- 25% of the total grant amount shall be based on the number of individuals in each State who are members of “covered populations” in proportion to the total number of individuals in all eligible States who are members of covered populations
- 25% of the total grant amount shall be based on the comparative lack of availability and adoption of broadband in each State relative to all eligible states (as determined by a combination of federal data).

As set forth in Section II.C.2. of the NOFO, up to \$53,400,000 in planning grants will be available for entities defined as States and will be tentatively distributed (subject to challenges to the allocation formula and participation levels) as follows:

State	Amount	State	Amount
Alabama	\$981,081.12	Montana	\$601,336.88
Alaska	\$567,884.90	Nebraska	\$598,745.97
Arizona	\$1,116,110.78	Nevada	\$754,458.89
Arkansas	\$843,673.10	New Hampshire	\$525,033.51
California	\$4,001,525.45	New Jersey	\$1,176,741.04
Colorado	\$897,119.04	New Mexico	\$740,534.91
Connecticut	\$736,568.10	New York	\$2,180,034.65
Delaware	\$516,096.05	North Carolina	\$1,415,614.32
District of Columbia	\$463,126.49	North Dakota	\$516,392.82
Florida	\$2,407,223.57	Ohio	\$1,470,550.76
Georgia	\$1,429,212.96	Oklahoma	\$882,087.78
Hawaii	\$570,883.08	Oregon	\$782,193.40

Idaho	\$564,706.40	Pennsylvania	\$1,604,131.73
Illinois	\$1,515,352.64	Puerto Rico	\$781,987.43
Indiana	\$1,039,734.16	Rhode Island	\$506,100.07
Iowa	\$708,924.38	South Carolina	\$953,478.05
Kansas	\$692,664.38	South Dakota	\$527,051.65
Kentucky	\$874,236.13	Tennessee	\$1,092,244.06
Louisiana	\$941,542.28	Texas	\$3,110,148.10
Maine	\$542,222.32	Utah	\$676,684.53
Maryland	\$966,659.11	Vermont	\$518,154.22
Massachusetts	\$1,003,763.61	Virginia	\$1,222,391.75
Michigan	\$1,332,440.72	Washington	\$1,076,248.79
Minnesota	\$881,905.10	West Virginia	\$728,065.62
Mississippi	\$875,585.61	Wisconsin	\$952,197.63
Missouri	\$1,007,143.59	Wyoming	\$530,006.38

NTIA tentatively reserves \$3 million to award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, territories and possessions other than Puerto Rico for the purpose of developing digital equity plans. NTIA tentatively allocates (subject to participation levels) \$150,000 to each of the following:

- the United States Virgin Islands
- Guam
- American Samoa
- the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

The award amounts for U.S. territories and possessions will depend on the number of other U.S. territories and possessions applying. The remainder of the \$3 million will be available for U.S. territories and possessions to use to implement their digital equity plans, similar to the uses contemplated for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grants.

NTIA tentatively reserves \$15 million to award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations for the purpose of creating Tribal / Native digital equity plans and to support Tribal / Native participation in the creation of relevant State Digital Equity Plans. NTIA will announce specific tentative allocation amounts for these entities after receiving letters of intent. Depending on demand, NTIA expects to allocate between \$50,000 and \$150,000 to each participating Indian Tribe, Alaska Native entity, and Native Hawaiian organization and will distribute funds evenly within that range for planning purposes. The remainder of the \$15 million will remain available for these entities to use to implement their digital equity plans,

with permissible uses similar to those contemplated in connection with the State Digital Equity Capacity Grants.

Note: The award amounts of each U.S. territory and possession (other than Puerto Rico), Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations are not subject to the funding formula applicable to the States. Instead, award amounts for these entities will be determined for each agreement and will depend on the total number of applicants.

4.2 Can my State receive funding if we are receiving other sources of Federal or State funding for broadband?

Yes. However, duplication of federal funding must be avoided. Additionally, as explained in the DEA and Section IV.C.2.a. of the NOFO, grants or subgrants awarded under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program must supplement, not supplant (i.e., supersede, replace, or take the place of), funds available to the State to carry out digital equity and inclusion activities.

4.3 Will applicants be required to provide a match in order to receive a planning grant under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program?

No. A match is not required.

5 Definitions

5.1 Who are considered “Covered Populations”?

As defined in Section I.C. of the NOFO, Covered Populations are:

- Individuals who live in covered households (see below).
- Aging individuals (60 and above).
- Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility.
- Veterans.
- Individuals with disabilities.
- Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners; and have low levels of literacy.
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

5.2 What is a Covered Household?

The term “covered household” is defined in Section I.C. of the NOFO and means a household, the income of which for the most recently completed year is not more than 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level, as determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.

5.3 How should a state define “rural” when developing a state digital equity plan?

For the purposes of the DEA, Section I.C. of the NOFO defines a “rural area” as an area other than--

- A city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants
- Any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and
- In the case of a grant or direct loan, a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants.

6 Application Requirements

6.1 What must be included in a State’s application for a State Digital Equity Planning Grant?

Any State applying for planning grants must submit an application that includes the following information, which is described in more detail in Section IV.B.1. of the NOFO:

- Description of the Administering Entity.
- Certification that the plan will be completed in one year.
- The assurances required under Section 60304(e) of the Infrastructure Act with respect to the State’s Administering Entity.
- Grant application narrative.
- Detailed budget justification and budget narrative.
- Standard federal grant forms and documents.

6.2 What should be included in the grant application narrative?

As noted in Section IV.B.1. of the NOFO, the grant application narrative should describe the grant project and activities to be funded by the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program and how these activities will support the development of a State Digital Equity Plan that includes the required elements outlined in the NOFO.

6.3 What should U.S. territories and possessions submit to obtain planning grants?

Section IV.B.2. of the NOFO explains that U.S. territories and possessions (other than Puerto Rico) that wish to develop their own digital equity plans shall each submit a Letter of Intent to the Assistant Secretary signed by the territory or possession’s governor or equivalent official. The letter should describe the entity that would administer digital equity activities under this program, as well as specific activities the territory or possession intends to pursue in support of digital equity plan development.

Any U.S. territory or possession of the United States (other than Puerto Rico) that submits a Letter of Intent with the required information will be deemed eligible to receive planning grant funds from the set-aside funds for territories and possessions.

6.4 What should Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations submit to obtain planning grants?

Section IV.B.3. of the NOFO describes the process for Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations. Any Indian Tribe, Alaska Native entity, or Native Hawaiian organization that wishes to develop its own digital equity plan and/or participate in the development of relevant State Digital Equity Plans shall submit a Letter of Intent to the Assistant Secretary signed by its governing body. The letter should describe the entity that would administer digital equity activities under this program, as well as specific activities the Tribal organization intends to pursue in support of digital equity plan development (including development of the entity's own plan and, optionally, development of relevant State Digital Equity Plans).

An Indian Tribe, Alaska Native entity, or Native Hawaiian organization that submits a Letter of Intent with the required information will be deemed eligible to receive planning grant funds from the set-aside funds for Tribal organizations.

7 Application Portal and Submission

7.1 Where are application forms available?

For States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, application forms and instructions are available on the NTIA application portal at <https://grants.ntia.gov/>.

8 Allowable and Unallowable Uses of Planning Grants

8.1 What costs can planning grants be used for?

As described in Section IV.C.1. of the NOFO, States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, must use the planning grant funds ONLY for the following purposes:

- To develop the State Digital Equity Plan.
- To make subgrants to any of the following entities to assist in the development of the State Digital Equity Plan:
 - Community anchor institutions.
 - County and municipal governments.
 - Local educational agencies.
 - Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or Native Hawaiian organizations.
 - Nonprofit organizations.
 - Organizations that represent (i) individuals with disabilities; (ii) aging individuals; (iii) individuals with language barriers, including English language learners and those with low levels of literacy; (iv) veterans; and (v) individuals who are incarcerated in the State in non-federal facilities.
 - Civil rights organizations.
 - Entities that carry out workforce development programs.

- State agencies responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities.
- Public housing authorities in the State.
- Partnerships of any of the entities listed above.

U.S. territories and possessions, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations may use funds for digital equity plan development and related activities authorized by the DEA and described in the entity's approved project budget.

Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations may use award funds to further their participation and equity interests in the development of relevant State Digital Equity Plans under this program.

8.2 What costs can planning grants NOT be used for?

Section IV.C.2. of the NOFO explains that planning grants may NOT be used to:

- Supplant or replace other federal or state funds that have been made available to develop a State Digital Equity Plan.
- Pay for a profit, fee, or other incremental charge above the actual cost is not an allowable cost under this program.
- Oppose or support collective bargaining.

8.3 Can the planning grants be used to implement digital inclusion programs that are led by a State (or any of its political subdivisions), community-based organizations, community anchor institutions, or local governments?

No. The implementation of digital inclusion programs can be funded generally through State Digital Equity Capacity Grants, for which the State Digital Equity Plan is a prerequisite, or through the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. States may, however, conduct digital inclusion activities (e.g., assess digital equity needs of the State, collaborate with key stakeholders, and compile an asset inventory of current resources and programs) in service of development of the State Digital Equity Plan. States also remain free to expend separate state funds to pursue digital inclusion and digital equity activities while drafting the State Digital Equity Plans and awaiting State Digital Equity Capacity Grant funds.

9 State Digital Equity Plans

9.1 How long do States have to create a State Digital Equity Plan?

One year, beginning on the date on which the State is awarded planning grant funds. Extensions of up to 180 days are possible (see Section II.B. of the NOFO).

9.2 How are the planning processes for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) linked?

NTIA strongly encourages States and territories to concurrently participate in the BEAD Program and Digital Equity Act Programs.

States and territories should view the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO and the BEAD NOFO holistically under a singular, unified objective of closing the digital divide. Section I.B. of the NOFO specifically notes that NTIA expects that a State or territory's 5-Year Action Plan developed for the BEAD Program will fully incorporate the State or territory's Digital Equity Plan. Moreover, Initial Proposals and Final Proposals developed for the BEAD Program should be informed by and be complementary, sequenced, integrated, and intentionally linked with both BEAD 5-Year Action Plans and State Digital Equity Plans to address the goal of universal broadband access and adoption.

9.3 How can my state link our BEAD 5-Year Plan and the DEA Plan?

States should:

- Ensure continuity between staff tasked with developing both plans.
- Create overlap between State DEA and BEAD planning teams.
- Establish formal and direct communication and collaboration pathways between DEA and BEAD planning teams.
- Note that funding awarded pursuant to the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program and BEAD awards cannot overlap.

9.4 What must be included in State Digital Equity Plans?

Section IV.C.2.b. of the NOFO lays out requirements for State Digital Equity Plans.

Statutory Requirements

Under the DEA, any State Digital Equity Plan developed with planning grant funds must include the following:

- Identification of barriers to digital equity faced by Covered Populations in the State.
- Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting, among each Covered Population located in that State, the availability and affordability of broadband technology; online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources; digital literacy; awareness of, and the use of, cybersecurity measures; and availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support.
- An assessment of how the measurable objectives will impact and interact with the State's economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes; educational outcomes; health outcomes; civic and social engagement; and delivery of essential services.
- Description of how the State plans to collaborate with key stakeholders in the State.
- A list of organizations with which the Administering Entity for the State collaborated in developing and implementing the Plan.

Additional Requirements

In addition to the above statutory requirements, the State Digital Equity Plan developed with planning grant funds shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- A stated vision for digital equity.

- A digital equity needs assessment, including a comprehensive assessment of the baseline from which the State is working and the State's identification of the barriers to digital equity faced generally and by each of the covered populations in the State.
- An asset inventory, including current resources, programs, and strategies that promote digital equity for each of the covered populations, as well as existing digital equity plans and programs already in place among municipal, regional, and Tribal governments.
- A coordination and outreach strategy, including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement representatives of each category of covered populations within the State and with the full range of stakeholders within the State.
- A description of how municipal, regional, and/or Tribal digital equity plans will be incorporated into the State Digital Equity Plan.
- An implementation strategy that is holistic and addresses the barriers to participation in the digital world, including affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation. The strategy should (a) establish measurable goals, objectives, and proposed core activities to address the needs of covered populations, (b) set out measures ensuring the plan's sustainability and effectiveness across State communities, and (c) adopt mechanisms to ensure that the plan is regularly evaluated and updated.
- An explanation of how the implementation strategy addresses gaps in existing state, local, and private efforts to address the barriers identified pursuant to Section IV.C.1.b.i of the NOFO.
- A description of how the State intends to accomplish the implementation strategy described above by engaging or partnership with relevant agencies, organizations, and institutions of higher learning.
- A timeline for implementation of the plan.
- A description of how the State will coordinate its use of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding and its use of any funds it receives in connection with the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program.

Some of the digital equity plan requirements that apply to States may not be applicable or appropriate for territories or Tribal organizations. NTIA will work with these entities to agree on budgets and expectations that are reasonable and effective for individual territories and Tribal organizations.

9.5 Who should States, U.S. territories and possessions, and Tribal organizations collaborate and consult with when developing their digital equity plans?

States should collaborate with entities that serve covered populations or, through their ties to the community, are able to provide valuable insight into how best to advance digital equity, broadband adoption, device access, and digital literacy among all populations in the State. This may include, as identified in the Infrastructure Act and Section IV.C.1.b. of the NOFO:

- Community anchor institutions.

- County and municipal governments.
- Local educational agencies.
- Where applicable, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or Native Hawaiian organizations.
- Nonprofit organizations.
- Organizations that represent individuals with disabilities, including organizations that represent children with disabilities; aging individuals; Individuals with language barriers; Veterans; and Individuals in that State who are incarcerated in facilities other than federal correctional facilities.
- Civil rights organizations.
- Entities that carry out workforce development programs.
- Agencies of the State that are responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities in the State.
- Public housing authorities in the State.
- A partnership between any of the entities described above.

In addition, NTIA and NDIA encourage States to collaborate with entities not named in the statute, including:

- Members of Covered Populations who have direct lived experience with being disconnected.
- State agencies.
- Labor unions and other organizations that represent workers.
- Digital inclusion coalitions located in the State.
- Chambers of commerce and industry associations.
- Public housing resident associations.
- Healthcare systems and networks.
- Homeless continuum of care providers.
- Multi-family housing developers and owners.
- Faith-based institutions.
- Business owners, state and local foundations and funders.
- Early childhood and early intervention coordinators.
- Re-entry organizations.

- Internet service providers.

Note: During stakeholder engagement, States must utilize a variety of communications media (e.g., online, print, radio) and provide information in languages other than English when warranted based on the demographics of the stakeholder communities.

9.6 What if a State already has a digital equity plan? Can that State use its previously developed digital equity plan to fulfill the State Digital Equity Plan requirement of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program?

If a State has previously conducted a statewide digital equity planning effort, it must demonstrate to NTIA that the plan includes all minimum required elements as listed above (both statutory and additional requirements) and that the plan fully complies with the program's authorizing statute and with the NOFO.

9.7 How can local organizations get involved in the planning and development of their State's Digital Equity Plan?

Contact your state's Administering Entity and request to be involved in the stakeholder engagement process. NTIA is collecting and will publish a list of Administering Entities on its website once all information is collected. Provide your state's Administering Entity with data, research, and resources from your community that could help inform the plan. Question 3.3 above contains additional information about other ways to get involved, including by receiving subgrants for planning and implementation and applying directly for Competitive Grant Program funding.

10 Reporting Requirements

10.1 What are the reporting requirements for grantees under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program that align with the requirements established in the Infrastructure Act?

Grantees will be required to comply with federal reporting requirements. In addition to the reporting requirements found in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, NTIA will provide additional reporting instructions.

In particular, the Infrastructure Act sets out reporting requirements, which require entities receiving grants or subgrants under the Act to public report, for each year during the period of performance, on: (i) the entity's use of the grant; (ii) the entity's progress toward fulfilling the objectives for which the grant was awarded; and (iii) the implementation of the State Digital Equity Plan of the State.

Additional information about reporting can be found in Section VI.E. of the NOFO.

Note: The Assistant Secretary may establish additional reporting and information requirements for any recipient of a grant as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Infrastructure Act.

11 Application Review Process

11.1 How does the application review process work?

Initial Eligibility and Administrative Review: NTIA will conduct an initial review to ensure that the applicant is eligible to receive planning funds and has submitted a complete and timely application.

Merit Review: NTIA will evaluate how well an application aligns with the objectives, eligible activities, and related costs/budget of the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program.

Selection Process: NTIA will recommend approval of applications selected for funding based on the results of the Initial Eligibility and Administrative Review and the Merit Review.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants: After applications are proposed for funding by NTIA, the NIST Grants Management Division (GMD) will perform pre-award risk assessments.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates: NTIA expects to begin awarding planning grants September 29, 2022, at the earliest. Grants will be awarded and announced on a rolling basis.

More information about the review process can be found in Section V of the NOFO.

11.2 How will applicants know whether they will receive a planning grant?

As noted in Section VI of the NOFO, applicants will be notified in writing by the NIST Grants Officer if their application is selected for an award.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email (or, in the case of entities that permissibly submitted material via mail or courier, in a similar fashion) and will have the opportunity to receive a debriefing. Applicants must make a request within 10 business days of the email notification to receive a debrief from NTIA. NTIA will then work with the unsuccessful applicant to arrange a date and time for the debrief.

12 Support and Resources

12.1 Who can I contact for more information?

Please send program questions to digitalequity@ntia.gov. For any questions or technical support related to the NTIA Grants Portal (application portal), email ngphelpdesk@ntia.gov.