Digital Equity Act Grants

Agency

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

Category

Broadband

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for competitive grants are:

- A political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of a State, including an agency of a State that is responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities, or for providing public housing, in the State
- An Indian Tribe, an Alaska Native entity, or a Native Hawaiian organization
- A foundation, corporation, institution, or association that is (A) a not-for-profit entity; and (B) not a school
- A community anchor institution
- A local educational agency
- An entity that carries out a workforce development program
- A partnership between any of the entities described in the preceding list
- A partnership between — (A) an entity described in any of the preceding list and (B) an entity that — (i) the Assistant Secretary, by rule, determines to be in the public interest; and (ii) is not a school

Total IIJA Funding

$2.75 billion:

- $60 million for State Planning Program Grants (formula)
- $1.44 billion for State Capacity Program Grants (formula)
- $1.25 billion for Competitive Program Grants

Key Dates

- Spring 2022 – NTIA releases Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for State Planning Grants
- Summer 2022 – State planning applications are due to NTIA
- Summer/Fall 2023 (anticipated) – NTIA releases State Capacity Grants to states, releases NOFO for Competitive Grants

Match Requirements

A match requirement is not included in the IIJA for Digital Equity Act programs. No match requirement has been announced yet by NTIA.

Overview

Too many communities lack access to high-speed internet. Many more can't afford it or don't know how to use it. The divide between those who have internet access and those who don't is stark. To create an equitable economy, we all need access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet.

The Digital Equity Act provides $2.75 billion to establish three grant programs that promote digital equity and inclusion. They aim to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities are intended to prioritize covered populations. These activities include:

- Develop, implement, and oversee digital equity plans
- Make awards to other entities to help in developing digital equity plans
- Improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources
- Implement digital equity plans and digital inclusion activities
- Provide digital literacy and skills education to covered populations
- Facilitate the adoption of high-speed Internet by covered populations

The covered populations prioritized by the program are:

- Individuals who live in with incomes no more than 150% of the poverty level
- 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

Preparatory Activities

- Determine if your state has published its digital equity plan and provide feedback.
- Contact your State Broadband Office and share any local digital equity needs assessments or plans your state should consider as part of its planning process.
- Review your local digital equity plan for inclusion of covered populations under the Digital Equity Act.
- Identify local partner organizations and build or strengthen your local digital inclusion coalitions for potential grant application partnerships.

Technical Assistance

Information about the program and technical assistance resources may be found on NTIA's Digital Equity Act page.