



# BroadbandUSA

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

## The NTIA's Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program (DECGP)

*The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released.*

*NATOA invites member communities and PEG operations to join our coalition (partnership) as "Eligible Entities"*

- *What is the DECGP?*
- *How can you participate*
- *Q&A*





Federal Government



States & Territories



Organizations Eligible for DEA Grants and Subgrants



Native Entities

**Nov. 2021:**

IIJA passed with Digital Equity Act

**March 29, 2024:**

NTIA opens Capacity Grants for states

**June 26, 2024:**

First State Capacity Award (remaining on rolling basis)

**July 31, 2024:**

US Territories Capacity Grant Applications Due

**September 25, 2024:**

Native Entities' Capacity Program application opens

**Winter 2024/2025:**

Organizations may receive Capacity sub-awards and Competitive Grants



**Spring 2024:** State Digital Equity Plans published

**May 28, 2024:**

State Capacity Program Applications Due

**July 24, 2024:**

NTIA opens Competitive Grants

**September 23, 2024:**

Eligible Entities Competitive Grant Applications Due

**October 22, 2024:**

US Territories Competitive Grant Applications Due

**February 7, 2025:**

Native Entities' Capacity Program Applications due

*Thank you to NDIA, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, for this great timeline graphic!*



NATOA & NTIA's Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program (DECGP)



# NTIA's Digital Equity (DECGP) Competitive Grant Program

## DECGP Competitive Grants

- The Competitive Grant NOFO released July 24, 2024
- \$750 Million Available
- An additional \$250M may become available in October 2024.\*

## DECGP Awards & Amounts

- Award Amounts will range between \$5-12 million by Winter, 2024 (before April 20, 2025.)
- NTIA anticipates 150-200 total awards
- Partnerships are actively encouraged for larger award amounts

# Eligible Organizations to apply...

- Political subdivisions, agencies or ‘instrumentalities of the State
- Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or a Native Hawaiian entities
- Foundations/corporations/institutions/associations (Non-profits)
- Community Anchor Institutions
- Local Educational Agencies
- Workforce development programs
- Partnerships between any of the above

# Who are considered “Covered Populations”?

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

1. Individuals who live in covered households ( $\leq 150\%$  of poverty).
2. Aging individuals (60 and above).
3. Incarcerated individuals, though not in a Federal correctional facility.
4. Veterans.
5. Individuals with disabilities.
6. Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners; and have low levels of literacy.
7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.
8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

# DECGP Eligible Uses for funding:

- Digital inclusion activities that benefit covered populations
- Broadband adoption for covered populations for education & employment opportunities
- Training programs for basic, advanced and applied skills
- Other digital inclusion workforce development programs
- “Equipment, instrumentation, networking capability, hardware and software, or digital network technology for broadband services to covered populations at low or no cost.”
- Create new or operate existing public access computing centers for covered populations through community anchor institutions
- (Any other project or activity the Assistant Secretary approval)

## What NATOA's member community could offer as part of a proposal:

- 1) Training programs like OATS or TGH in participating communities.
- 2) Video-delivered trainings on cable.
- 3) Gov channel programming for outreach, assistance, etc.
- 4) All PEG channels – creation of video content
- 5) Grassroots outreach & Covered populations outreach
- 6) Local gov staff training as digital navigators.
- 7) PEG centers for training digital navigators.
- 8) PEG centers as community (digital) access centers.
- 9) Target smaller communities for DE outreach, Local solutions are the best solutions.

# DECGP Partnerships are urged by NTIA

- Partnerships between multiple eligible entities are encouraged
- Only eligible entities are eligible members of any partnership
  - Each partnership will require -
    - An Authorized Representative
    - A Letter of Commitment from each member organization.



# Match Commitment for Applicants

There is a minimum 10% match for all applications

- This may be waived with a waiver request to NTIA but is not guaranteed or likely.
- The match may be any combination of cash or in-kind contributions

# Expense Caps and Ineligible Uses

## Expense Caps

- 10% cap on evaluation
- 10% cap on administration, which includes both direct and indirect funds

## Ineligible Uses

- Previously awarded federal or state grant funds to create a digital equity plan or implement digital inclusion activities must be used before using Competitive Grant Program funds.
- Profit, fee, or other incremental charges above the actual cost
- Funds may not be used for general research or academic studies of digital equity

# Performance Measurement and Evaluation

## Requirements

Program measurement and evaluations is required as part of program design and implementation

- Required annual and semi-annual reports
- An overall assessment of the effectiveness of the grantees' program(s)
- Participation in NTIA's evaluation of the entire Competitive grant program (if completed)

# Application Details:

## Align your Proposal with State's Digital Equity Plans

### Projects should:

1. Address gaps in the implementation of your State's Digital Equity Plans, and/or
2. Supplement or further advance your State's Digital Equity Plans, and/or
3. Address barriers to digital equity that your State Digital Equity Plans failed to identify

See your State Digital Equity Plans at:

<https://www.benton.org/blog/whats-your-states-digital-equity-plan>

# DECGP Application Requirements

1. A detailed explanation of the submitted project activities and interventions, barriers addressed, and covered populations served
2. A project timeline that demonstrates the use of funds in the allotted timeframe and implementation plan
3. A detailed budget and funding request justification, including identification of subgrantees
4. Demonstrate applicants can perform all grant administration and implementation duties
5. Strategies to create sustainable long-term impact

# Application Requirements (continued)

6. Disclosure of all other funds related to the grant proposal
7. Measurement and evaluation strategy
8. Geographies to be served or stating if the service area is state or territory-wide
9. Alignment with the state Digital Equity Plan
10. Consolidated Budget Form

# Partnership Application Requirements

- Statement of the Authorized Representative
- Evidence of the Authorized Representative's experience managing similar partnerships or coalitions
- Table listing all members of the partnership
- Letter of Commitment from each partner
- All applicants (including partners and subgrantees) must have a federal **Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** and register with SAM before applying.
  - Start this process now.
  - We'll send instructions.
  - Local governments probably already have this.
  - PEG center may not have this, but can apply via <https://sam.gov/content/home>

# What key strategies will NTIA seek in the applications?

- ✓ Will the proposal increase broadband internet & adoption of the Covered Populations
- ✓ Is this a geographically diverse application?
- ✓ Does it compliment existing programs or is it duplicative or conflicting?
- ✓ Are the proposals in line with the Digital Equity Act Competitive Grant Purpose? Let's look at the next slide to find out!



# Are proposals in line with the Digital Equity Act Competitive Grant Purpose?

- Economic stability, including workforce development and employment opportunities
- Access to quality education
- Access to healthcare
- Social and civic engagement; and
- Community access to the benefits of internet technology

# How Will NTIA Determine Awards?

## Initial Eligibility & Administrative Review

Are the applicant and sub-applicants eligible entities?

Are the application materials complete and submitted on time?

## Merit Review

Project need, purpose, and benefits (40 points)

Strength of applicant's organizational capability (25 points)

Strength of project implementation plan and budget (25 points)

Project results and evaluation (10 points)

## Programmatic Review

NTIA will group proposals in 5-10 points range

Starting at the highest and funding downward until funds depleted.

# What To Do Now?

Register with **SAM.gov** and get your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) .....

<https://sam.gov/content/home>



Read the NOFO & check NTIA's website for updates –

[https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/DE\\_Competitive\\_FAQs\\_Round\\_1.pdf](https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/DE_Competitive_FAQs_Round_1.pdf)

Sign up for NTIA's BroadbandUSA newsletters

<https://ntiacrmgrants.my.site.com/broadbandusanewsletter/s/>



Check out the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Frequently Asked Questions

[https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/technical-assistance/DE\\_Competitive\\_FAQs](https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/technical-assistance/DE_Competitive_FAQs)



Read your State Digital Equity Plan

<https://www.benton.org/blog/whats-your-states-digital-equity-plan>



# What To Do Now?



Register with [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) and get your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

What is SAM.gov?

*SAM stands for the System for Award Management.*

*SAM.gov is the federal government's database for getting money from federal grants & contracts.*

What is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)?

*A UEI is a 12-digit number assigned to an organization. To receive a UEI, you must first be verified by providing documentation and complete a registration in SAM.gov*

Why do I need a UEI?

*Once verified and registered, the federal government can then disburse federal award money to organizations with a UEI.*



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## The NTIA's Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program (DECGP)

- *How can you participate?*
  - ✓ *Please review the materials presented here.*
  - ✓ *Join our NATOA Members NTIA Grant Application!*
  - ✓ *Email any questions to [MLynch@NATOA.org](mailto:MLynch@NATOA.org)*
  - ✓ ***Better yet, Email [MLynch@NATOA.org](mailto:MLynch@NATOA.org) that you want in!***
- ✓ *Q&A*
- ✓ *Thank you!*