



STATE OF VERMONT
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Fiscal Committee members
From: Sorsha Anderson, Senior Staff Associate
Date: January 27, 2025
Subject: Grant Request – JFO #3242

Enclosed please find one (1) item, which the Joint Fiscal Office has received from the Administration. ***This item is being held for the Joint Fiscal Committee meeting scheduled for January 31, 2025.***

JFO #3242: \$5,299,150.00 to the Vermont Department of Public Service, Vermont Community Broadband Board from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Funds will be used to support the target digital equity initiatives required as part of the [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Act](#). [Received 1/24/2025]

Please review the enclosed materials and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Sorsha Anderson, sanderson@leg.state.vt.us) if you have questions before the meeting.

**State of Vermont**

Department of Finance & Management
109 State Street, Pavilion Building
Montpelier, VT 05620-0401

Agency of Administration

[phone] 802-828-2376

STATE OF VERMONT FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REVIEW FORM

Grant Summary:		This grant would support the targeted digital equity initiatives required as part of the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Act.			
Date:		11/25/2024			
Department:		Department of Public Service- Vermont Community Broadband Board			
Legal Title of Grant:		State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program			
Federal Catalog #:		11.032			
Grant/Donor Name and Address:		National Telecommunications and Information Administration 1401 Constitution Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20230			
Grant Period:		From:		To:	
		11/21/24		11/20/2029	
Grant/Donation					
	SFY 1	SFY 2	SFY 3	Total	Comments
Grant Amount:	\$1,709,301	\$1,695,574	\$1,894,275	\$5,299,150	Grant active over five fiscal years.
Position Information:		# Positions	Explanation/Comments		
		5	All positions have been created due to existing BEAD grants. This grant will free that grant funding to be sent directly to municipalities and other eligible subgrantees.		
Additional Comments:					
Department of Finance & Management		Adam Greshin Digitally signed by Adam Greshin DocuSigned by: initial)			
Secretary of Administration		Sarah Clark 04AB832CD55C438... initial)			
Sent To Joint Fiscal Office		Anna Reinold Date			
		<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> APPROVED By Anna Reinold at 4:03 pm, Jan 24, 2025 </div>			





State of Vermont
Vermont Community Broadband Board
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601
publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb

Department of Public Service

[phone] 802-636-7853
[fax] 802-828-2342

TO: Governor Phil Scott and Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

FROM: June E. Tierney, Commissioner and Christine Hallquist, Executive Director

DATE: November 19, 2024

RE: AA-1 Grant Acceptance Form and Request for Expedited Review

The Department of Public Service, Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB), has received notification of a State Digital Equity Capacity Grant award of \$5,299,150.18 from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce. VCBB staff received notification of the Digital Equity Capacity Grant award on November 15, 2024, and NTIA will formally announce the award on November 21, 2024.

- Funding Opportunity Title: State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program
- Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 11.032
- Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN): NTIA-SDECGP-2024

The purpose of this award is to implement Vermont's Digital Equity Plan developed under a previous Digital Equity Planning Grant award (ALN #11.032/FAIN 50-30-DP137/JFO #3130).

VCBB and the Department of Public Service are requesting an expedited review due to the need to begin grant-funded work immediately in order to meet NTIA deadlines, including providing subaward project information no later than nine months from the award start date. Because the Digital Equity Planning Grant ended March 28, 2024, staff have been limited in their ability to continue planned digital equity while waiting for the Capacity Grant award.

The following documents are enclosed:

- Form AA-1, State of Vermont Request for Grant Acceptance
- Notice of grant approval (November 15, 2024)
- Grant application summary
- Approved grant budget
- Letter from Governor Phil Scott designating State of Vermont Public Service Department, Vermont Community Broadband Board, as the recipient of and administering agent for the award.

Implementing the Vermont Digital Equity Plan will improve Vermonters' access and ability to meaningful use the Internet and to fully participate in our society and economy. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Please contact Kristina Sweet at kristina.sweet@vermont.gov / 802-461-7635 with any questions about this award.

Signed by:

June E. Tierney

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DocuSigned by:

Christine Hallquist

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STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

BASIC GRANT INFORMATION				
1. Agency:				
2. Department:		Public Service Department		
3. Program:		Digital Equity Program, Vermont Community Broadband Board		
4. Legal Title of Grant:		State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program		
5. Federal Catalog #:		11.032		
6. Grant/Donor Name and Address: National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce				
7. Grant Period:	From:	11/21/2024 (anticipated)	To:	11/20/2029 (anticipated)
<i>5-year period beginning on the first day of the period of performance identified in the grant agreement</i>				
8. Purpose of Grant: The purpose of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program is to create the conditions where individuals and communities have the information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States. The program provides \$5.3 million to the State of Vermont to implement the Vermont Digital Equity Plan developed under the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program (ALN #11.032/FAIN 50-30-DP137/JFO #3130.				
9. Impact on existing program if grant is not Accepted: If this grant is not accepted, the State of Vermont will not be able to implement the Vermont Digital Equity Plan. Advancing digital equity in Vermont is critical: most Vermonters (95 percent) can identify with one or more of the demographics prioritized under the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for targeted digital equity initiatives. These groups, or "covered populations," have faced significant barriers to their ability to meaningfully use the Internet and benefit from that connection. Implementing the Vermont Digital Equity Plan will improve Vermonters' access and ability to meaningful use the Internet in order to fully participate in our society and economy.				
10. BUDGET INFORMATION				
	SFY 1	SFY 2	SFY 3	Comments
Expenditures:	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	
Personal Services	\$1,150,154	\$1,163,661	\$1,372,030	SFY 3 = FY 27-29
Operating Expenses	\$18,848	\$18,849	\$56,546	
Grants	\$468,789	\$437,979	\$218,990	
Total	\$1,637,791	\$1,620,489	\$1,647,566	
Revenues:				
State Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
Cash	\$	\$	\$	
In-Kind	\$	\$	\$	
Federal Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
(Direct Costs)	\$1,637,791	\$1,620,489	\$1,647,566	
(Statewide Indirect)	\$	\$	\$	
(Departmental Indirect)	\$71,510	\$75,085	\$246,709	
Other Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
Grant (source)	\$	\$	\$	
Total	\$1,709,301	\$1,695,574	\$1,894,275	
Appropriation No: 2240020000 Amount: \$5,299,150				

STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

		Total	\$	\$5,299,150
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PERSONAL SERVICE INFORMATION

11. Will monies from this grant be used to fund one or more Personal Service Contracts? ☒ Yes ☐ No
 If "Yes", appointing authority must initial here to indicate in JET low current competitive bidding process/policy.
 Appointing Authority Name: June Tierney Agreed by: _____ (initial)

12. Limited Service Position Information:	# Positions	Title
Position 360093	1	Digital Equity Officer, 1.0 FTE (filled)
Position 360102/JFO #3187	1	Data and Information Project Manager (Digital Equity Research Specialist), 1.0 FTE (under recruitment)
Position 360096	1	VCBB Director of Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management, 0.10 FTE (filled)
Position 360084	1	Project Director 0.05 FTE (filled)
Position 360087	1	PSD Outreach Program Manager, 0.05 FTE (filled)
Total Positions	5	<i>Please note that we are not seeking approval for new positions. These positions are already established.</i>

12a. Equipment and space for these positions: ☒ Is presently available. ☐ Can be obtained with available funds.

13. AUTHORIZATION AGENCY/DEPARTMENT

I/we certify that no funds beyond basic application preparation and filing costs have been expended or committed in anticipation of Joint Fiscal Committee approval of this grant, unless previous notification was made on Form AA-1PN (if applicable):	Signed by:	
	Signature: June E. Tierney	Date: 11/19/2024
	Title: Commissioner, Department of Public Service	
	DocuSigned by:	
	Signature: Christine Hallquist	Date: 11/19/2024
	Title: Executive Director, Vermont Community Broadband Board	

SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION

SC	Approved:	(Secretary or designee signature) Sarah Clark	Date: 12/5/2024 8:41
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15. ACTION BY GOVERNOR

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Check One Box: Accepted	(Governor's signature) [Signature]	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rejected		Date: 1/24/25

16. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Required GRANT Documentation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. project approval (if applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of Award <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Agreement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Donation (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> Grant (Project) Timeline (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Extension (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Form AA-1PN attached (if applicable)

End Form AA-1

STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

(*) The term “grant” refers to any grant, gift, loan, or any sum of money or thing of value to be accepted by any agency, department, commission, board, or other part of state government (see 32 V.S.A. §5).



[Home](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Approves and Recommends for Award Vermont's Digital Equity Capacity Grant Application for More Than \$5 Million

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2024

News Media Contact

NTIA, Office of Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today has approved and recommended for award an application from Vermont, allowing the state to request access to more than \$5 million to implement its Digital Equity Plan. This funding comes from the \$1.44 billion State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, one of three Digital Equity Act grant programs created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

This funding is part of the “Internet for All” initiative, a key component of President Biden’s “Investing in America” agenda. For a variety of reasons, many Americans struggle to use the Internet connection available to them—for example, some lack the skills to navigate online resources and protect their personal and financial information online; others cannot afford a computer or tablet at home.

Vermont will use this funding to implement its digital equity plan, which outlines how the state will empower individuals and communities with the tools and skills necessary to benefit from meaningful access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service.

“Quality, affordable high-speed Internet allows families and businesses to thrive in our modern economy. Thanks to President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Department of Commerce is connecting everyone in Vermont and across the country to quality, affordable high-speed Internet and providing the resources they need to make the most of that Internet connection,” **said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo**. “We look forward to working with Vermont to ensure residents across the state have the tools and skills to take advantage of quality, affordable high-speed Internet – whether it’s for work, education, health care, or any other essential service.”

This approval is from the first funding round of the [Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program](#), which made available more than \$800 million for states, including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and Native Entities to apply for grants to implement their digital equity plans. These plans were developed under the [State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program](#). Awards of funding will require additional review and approval of State-submitted documentation.

“For the first time, every state in the nation has a digital equity plan in place to promote widespread adoption of high-speed Internet services. Vermont now can request access to the funds to put its digital equity plan into action,” **said Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Alan Davidson**. “The Biden-Harris Administration’s Internet for All initiative will ensure everyone can thrive online through access to devices and digital skills.”

“This award will be extremely valuable as we work to expand access to broadband and strengthen our workforce,” **said Governor Phil Scott.** “We know that being able to both access and navigate our online world are essential to giving Vermonters equal opportunity to succeed and thrive. This funding will help us invest in initiatives that bring these skills and tools to more throughout our state.”

“Access to high-speed Internet means nothing if you cannot afford your bill,” **said Senator Bernie Sanders.** “Too many people in our state lack access to high-speed Internet or cannot afford the options available. I am pleased that, with this funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was passed in the Senate in August 2021, we will end these disparities by connecting every household to high-speed internet, regardless of their income, age, zip code, race, or disability.”

“Whether it’s staying connected to work, school, or accessing health care, high-speed, affordable Internet is a necessity in our daily lives. But too many rural communities in Vermont and across the country have been left behind, losing access to essential services and falling into digital darkness,” **said Senator Peter Welch.** “This federal funding, made possible through the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*, is crucial to creating an equitable economy and closing the digital divide. I’ll keep up the fight in Washington to secure more broadband funding and ensure everyone can get and stay connected.”

“Access to broadband is no longer a luxury. Thank you to the Biden-Harris Administration for this grant,” **said Vermont Community Broadband Board Chair Patty Richards.** “It will enable the Vermont Community Broadband Board’s work to ensure all Vermonters, regardless of their income or situation in life, have access to the Internet and the devices and training to take full advantage of the opportunities it provides.”

Vermont will use the \$5,299,150 in funding to implement key digital equity initiatives, including:

- A community-based digital skilling and technical support program with multiple parts to meet the needs of Vermonters;

- Supporting access to devices through a program focused on procurement, refurbishment, and deployment of devices and assistive technology; and
- Expanding workforce development programs to include digital literacy training.

Additional funding opportunities will be available in the future. NTIA will announce State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program awards from this first round of funding on a rolling basis.

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About the National Telecommunications and Information Administration

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the Executive Branch agency that advises the President on telecommunications and information policy issues. NTIA's programs and policymaking focus largely on expanding broadband Internet access and adoption in America, expanding the use of spectrum by all users, advancing public safety communications, and ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for innovation and economic growth.

Office

[Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth \(OICG\)](#)

Program

[High-Speed Internet](#)

Funding Programs

☐ [State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program](#)

☐ [State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program](#)

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National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Contact Us

Website owner: Office of Public Affairs, please contact press@ntia.gov.

For questions or comments about this website, please contact

websitecomments@ntia.gov.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration 1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

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Grant Request Number	GRN-001762
Funding Program Name	State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program (2024)
Funding Request Name	Vermont-DE Capacity 2024-Capacity Application
Applying Organization	STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT
Applicant Name	Britaney Watson

1.1.1 SAM.gov Account

If the provided applicant information is not accurate for the applying organization please contact the NGP helpdesk (ngphelpdesk@ntia.gov) prior to proceeding with the application

Organization Name: STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT, Applicant UEI: FXRGN76HPMF3

Upload an export of your profile on SAM.gov, ensuring the active dates of the account are visible.

Vermont Public Service Department EntityInfor-06-07-2024 11-13-STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTME-GRN-001762.pdf

Enter the expiration date of your SAM.gov account.

12-03-2024

Are your representations and certifications to receive Federal Financial Assistance funds in compliance and up to date?

Yes

1.2.1 Administering Entity (AE) / Administering Organization (AO)

For the purposes of this application, States will designate an Administering Entity and U.S. Territories will designate an Administering Organization. See definitions set forth in Section I.C of the NOFO. What is the name of the Administering Entity/Organization (AE/AO)?

State Of Vermont Public Service Department

Is the administering entity/organization for this State Digital Equity Capacity Grant the same entity that served as the administering entity/organization for the State Digital Equity Planning Grant?

Yes

Describe the entity selected to serve as the administering entity/organization for the State or Territory. (2500 character limit)

The Department of Public Service (PSD) is an agency within the Executive Branch of Vermont state government and is charged with representing the public interest in energy, telecommunications, water and wastewater utility matters.

Provide a letter from the governor (or equivalent official) of the State or U.S. Territory that designates the entity to administer the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program (i.e., the administering entity/organization).

Governor of Vermont Designation Letter-06-24-2024 01-07-STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTME-GRN-001762.pdf

Indicate which of the following options describes the relationship between the Applicant (as noted in the SF 424) and the Administering Entity/Administering Organization.

*An EIN is the Employer Identification Number issued by the IRS. For more information about EIN numbers, please visit Employer ID Numbers | Internal Revenue Service (irs.gov).

**A UEI number is the Unique Entity ID issued through SAM.gov. For more information about UEI numbers, please visit SAM.gov | Duns - Sam UEI.

***Please note that where the Administering Entity/Administering Organization does not share the same EIN and UEI with the Applicant, both entities will serve as co-recipients of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant award made to the Applicant in accord with 47 U.S.C. § 1723(b).

A.) The Applicant and Administering Entity/Administering Organization share the same EIN* and UEI** number.

2.1.1 Digital Equity Plan

Upload the Digital Equity Plan for the State meeting the requirements of 47 U.S.C. §1723(c) or the Digital Equity Plan for the Territory meeting the requirements of the Digital Planning Grant award of the Territory. The uploaded document must be the formal Digital Equity Plan that was reviewed, cured, and accepted by NTIA as part of the State the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program.

VT Digital Equity Plan_01March2024-04-29-2024 11-36-STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTME-GRN-001762.pdf

2.2.1 Amendments to Digital Equity Plan

Has the Digital Equity Plan of the State or Territory been amended since it was previously submitted to and accepted by NTIA?

No

3.1.1 Executive Summary

Provide an executive summary of the project(s) and associated activities, the main purpose, and the intended outcomes, using approximately 500 words. Applicants are advised not to incorporate information that concerns business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information as part of the Executive Summary. See 15 C.F.R. §4.9(b) concerning the designation of business information by the applicant. (2500 character limit)

95 percent of Vermonters identify with one or more of the demographics prioritized under the IIJA for targeted digital equity initiatives.

The Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB), an office under the Public Service Department (PSD), developed Vermont's Digital Equity strategic plan. This plan was designed to be directly aligned and complementary to the BEAD plan, outlining Vermont's vision, goals, objectives, and its high-level implementation plan. VCBB engaged members of the public, stakeholders, and reviewed and conducted research to inform Vermont's strategy to address the barriers causing the digital divide. Vermont is creating a project plan to act on its vision and design for digital equity.

Vermont's plan to address the inequities covered populations face regarding broadband and technology is to address data limitations and expand research to better understand impact of broadband on communities, and to best determine technology needs. VCBB will create a subgrant capacity building program. This program will provide up to 8 grants for local organizations and/or champions that directly represent and serve covered populations. VCBB will utilize the subgrantees in the capacity building program in addition to Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) in its development of a State-wide Digital Navigator Program. VCBB will continue to explore options to collaborate with other states through a regional program to support access to appropriate devices. VCBB will expand its workforce development program to increase digitally inclusive skill building for the workforce as well as providing online skill and career building opportunities.

With the identified activities, VCBB anticipates that covered populations will be empowered and will receive opportunity to participate and help lead the efforts in bridging the digital divide in Vermont. There will be streamlined access to all Vermont residents to receive digital skilling, have local trusted support and transparent communication with the VCBB. There will be a multi-state approach to ensuring device needs are met-maximizing on dollars, efforts, and services. VCBB will build upon efforts of CAIs and local organizations to assist Vermont communities in accessing technology and broadband. With these efforts, communities will be connected, supported, and empowered to navigate the internet safely, meaningfully, and affordably.

3.1.2 Digital Equity Plan Elements to be Implemented

Identify the elements of the Digital Equity Plan to be implemented for this fiscal year's allocation of Capacity funding and whether specific elements of the Plan or specific Covered Populations are being prioritized and the rationale for prioritizing those elements or Covered Populations consistent with the needs assessment within the Digital Equity Plan. (2500 character limit)

Vermont identified four of its five goals to be implemented for this fiscal year's allocation of Capacity funding. Vermont will implement strategies to ensure sustainable, community-driven solutions across the entire state (goal2). This goal will be prioritized as it will serve the needs of all covered populations by establishing a capacity building subgrant program with subgrantees that directly serve and represent covered populations. The hope is for collaboration of the subgrantees to eventually apply for competitive grant funds. Vermont will ensure high-speed broadband services and devices are affordable (Goal 3). Vermont intends to collaborate with other states to address this goal. Such collaboration will need to be established in the first year, and therefore will be prioritized. Vermont will empower Vermont residents, agencies, organizations, and businesses with the ability to use technology to study, work, communicate, and access health and other social services (Goal 4). This goal will be prioritized through the subgrant capacity building program and the larger aspects of the digital navigator through work with community anchor institutions. Vermont will enhance workforce development for the broadband industry and the digital economy (Goal 5). This goal will be achieved through the digital navigator program. There will be close collaboration with Department of Corrections to create programming to improve digital inclusion for incarcerated individuals. Efforts to improve digital inclusion will be in access to technology, digital skilling, and workforce development opportunities. VCBB is prepared to collaborate with education institutions and nonprofits to ensure continuity of learning and access in the

carceral setting and when an individual is released into the community. The work with incarcerated individuals will be separate from the work completed through the digital navigator program. Vermont is approaching the work in carceral settings as a focused programming to the digital navigator program.

Vermont's goal is to implement as many programmatic activities through local resources as possible. The intent is to ensure Vermont's ownership and sustainability of this work beyond the period of performance.

3.1.3 Project Plan

Provide an overall Project Plan that includes:

- 1) A description of all major project activities and timelines, including key milestones and when each major project activity will start and end.
- 2) A description of how progress on measurable objectives will be tracked and recorded alongside key milestones.

(2500 character limit)

Vermont's projects will be prioritized by the year, with the first three years being program focused. Year one, Vermont will conduct research to determine baselines, set benchmarks around digital inequities at state level, and measure outcomes. Major milestones for this work include improving quantitative data to understand baseline of digital inequities at the state level (9/2024 - 9/2025) and identify and implement a centralized function to collect and analyze data (10/24 - 4/25). Year two Vermont will focus on developing the digital navigator, capacity building subgrant, and the regional program to support access to appropriate devices. Major milestones for Year two efforts include connecting in-need Vermonters with available digital equity resources and help empower them to use information and communication technology productively and safely (1/2026-9/2029), Ensuring all Vermonters have access to accessible, multi-lingual, community -based digital skilling and technical support resources, supporting local champions and community organizations to help their community members find and use the affordability and skilling resources they need (2/2026-9/2029), identifying and creating a plan for Vermont households that need devices or assistive technology (12/2025-2/2026) and then deploying devices and Assistive technology to Vermont households in need (3/2026-9/2026) and promoting the accessibility and inclusivity of digital public services (3/2027-9/2029). Year three, Vermont will focus on expanding its workforce development program to address digital skills. This work includes increasing capacity and impact of education and training programs to develop the talent pipeline for the broadband industry (9/2026-9/2029) and encouraging the recruitment of a diverse workforce of Vermonters for jobs in the broadband ecosystem and in the broader digital economy (12/2026-9/2029). In Year four Vermont will focus on exploring funding (9/2027-5/2029), policy initiatives (11/2027-1/2028) and key partnerships to sustain the digital equity work (12/2027- 5/2028). In Year 5 (9/2028-9/2029), Vermont will prioritize efforts for measurement, learning and dissolving VCBB support while transferring all work to key partners. Progress on measurable objectives will be tracked through annual reports capturing the progress of the year to include surveys, evaluations, focus groups, interviews and feedback mechanisms, while also informing the year ahead.

3.1.4 Updates to DE Plan

Does the State or Territory intend to use a portion of its allocation (up to 20%) to update its Digital Equity Plan?

Yes

Indicate the activities the State or Territory intends to conduct to update the Plan, and a timeline for updates, including publication for public comment. For any aspects of the Digital Equity Plan that are forthcoming, such as quantitative baseline data, specify how and when those updates will be made. (2500 character limit)

We will implement the project on Research, Data Gathering and Measurement Setting (VT-Capacity Grant Project-01, estimated timeline Fall 2024–Summer 2026) to determine baseline data and revise key performance indicators (KPIs). We will update the Digital Equity Plan with baseline data and revised indicators at the conclusion of this project and publish a draft for public comment (estimated publication date December 2026) before publishing a revised version (estimated publication date March 2027). Concurrently, during the first quarter of calendar year 2025, and annually thereafter for the duration of the grant, we will identify any necessary updates to the Digital Equity Plan based on the prior year's annual digital equity survey (outlined in the Digital Equity Plan Timeline on page 100 of Vermont's Digital Equity Plan). If updates are required, we will publish a draft for public comment in the second quarter of the calendar year and publish a revised version by September 30 of the applicable year.

3.2.1 Ongoing Collaboration Efforts

Describe the ongoing collaboration efforts the State or Territory will conduct with key stakeholders in the State or Territory as listed at 47 U.S.C. 1723 (c)(1)(D) and in alignment with the State Digital Equity Plan. (2500 character limit)

Vermont will establish a capacity building subgrant program for Vermont organizations that currently serve and represent covered populations to increase their capacity to perform digital equity related work, provided they agree to performing the needed tasks to close the digital divide in Vermont. Vermont will continue to convene its digital equity core team. Vermont will provide current core team members with the option to continue to participate provided the core team member is either a participating community anchor institution, planning to apply for a competitive grant or eligible to apply for a capacity building subgrant. This new structure will ensure core team members are focused on implementation strategy in alignment with the digital equity plan. Vermont will convene informational sessions quarterly that are open to all core team members that participating in the planning phase in informing the digital equity plan. The informational session allows Vermont to update on its progress with implementation strategy and receive updates from former and current core team members, and other stakeholders. Vermont has identified key CAIs that have a broad reach to multiple covered populations to partner with in efforts to increase digital inclusion. Vermont will partner with Department of Corrections to ensure specific efforts to increase access to digital services and technology for the incarcerated population. Vermont will explore partnering with neighboring states to increase access to digital devices and technology supports through a regional program. Vermont will continue to engage Vermonters through focus groups, listening sessions, and feedback methods.

3.2.2 Description of Benefit to Covered Populations

A detailed description of how the State or Territory's implementation of the Digital Equity Plan, through Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program funding, will benefit each of the Covered Populations located within that State or Territory. (2500 character limit)

Vermont is establishing a capacity building subgrant program. This program is intended for covered populations-who may not typically apply or be eligible for state funding and gives them an opportunity to receive funding from the state, build key relationships, and receive support to increase their capacity to position themselves best to continue to meet the needs of the covered population(s) they serve. This

program will invest in and allow Vermont based organizations access to opportunities to co-create program implementation design and have flexibility in fund usage provided the core needs of the program are met. This grant is hoped to be awarded specifically to organizations that represent and serve covered populations. Each participating organization will receive supports secured and provided by Vermont to ensure success. The workforce expansion program allows for more relaxed and creative ways to meet Vermonters where they are, which will increase inclusion. Vermont will also require specific commitments to covered populations in its partnerships with CAIs. Vermont anticipates that with the autonomy that will be given in this funding, each organization can allocate funds to address digital needs that may benefit covered populations in ways that include but not be limited to English learning for refugee and immigrant communities, networking and community building, access to services for black, indigenous and other people of color in Vermont, zero cost basic education skills for Vermont's with low English proficiency, resource materials produced to meet all learning styles, access to internet for incarcerated individuals to increase access to telehealth services, health monitoring, and socialization with loved ones, an increase in socialization and digital government servicing for Vermont's aging population and low-income households, increased job opportunities for broadband and digital economies for all covered populations, increase in access to digital services, mental health supports and social community for veterans, increase to access healthcare, remote work, awareness and access to local and state resources for Vermont's rural population, and better management of care and increased independence through assistive technology for Vermonters with disabilities.

3.2.3 Measuring Success Across Digital Equity Outcomes

Describe how the State or Territory plans to collect data in alignment with the measurable objectives in the Digital Equity Plan to effectively measure the project's success across the digital equity outcomes identified at 47 U.S.C. 1723(c)(1)(C):

- a. Economic and workforce development
- b. Education
- c. Health
- d. Civic and social engagement
- e. Delivery of other essential services
- f. Any other digital equity outcomes specified in the Digital Equity Plan
(2500 character limit)

Vermont will complete an annual review that will compile all synthesized data from various sources such as work completed by CAIs and subgrantees, surveys, questionnaires, evaluations, focus groups, interviews and feedback mechanisms to track the progress and effectiveness of programs. Vermont will ensure it has a centralized collection mechanism for gathering and storing data. Vermont is in the process of hiring a data/research contractor to assist with establishing accurate baselines for measurement in the areas of economic and workforce development, education, health, civic and social engagement, and delivery of essential services. This contractor will also assist Vermont with creating annual measurement documents and/or practices to ensure consistent and accurate data gathering and reporting.

3.2.4 Measuring Benefits to Covered Populations

Explain how the benefits delivered to the Covered Populations will be measured to the extent not addressed above and describe any other proposed research activities, as applicable. (2500 character limit)

Vermont will partner with a local university to perform research to understand impact of broadband to Vermonters and how broadband impacts socioeconomic outcomes. This work is anticipated to occur at the beginning of the work alongside the data gathering and research to establish more accurate baselines for measurement. Vermont intends to partner with the university to track the research to identify trends, areas of improvement and areas requiring additional effort and attention.

3.3.1 Evaluation Plan

Describe the overall plan to evaluate how the proposed projects and activities will achieve the goals of the Digital Equity Plan. (2500 character limit)

To evaluate how the proposed projects contribute to Vermont's Digital Equity Plan goals, we will monitor progress toward the measurable objectives outlined in the Specific Projects Form. For subgrantee projects, we will also require quarterly subgrantee reports that outline each subgrantee's progress toward their project's objectives and digital equity goals.

Vermont will collect comparable data to the baseline data Vermont will determine in its first year of implementation and use logic models. Vermont will identify reporting requirements, create platforms for data collection and management that can be shared with subgrantees, and allocate funding for data collection, measurement and evaluation activities to be completed by subgrantees. Vermont will require subgrantees to compensate community members for their expertise, feedback, and input. Vermont will train and support subgrantees on Vermont's chosen data collection and evaluation system. Vermont's system will include a data hub, and a process for collecting local data from local partners, subgrantees and the public. Vermont will create an evaluation plan for subgrantees and CAIs involved in proposed projects and activities that will be provided to key partners and stakeholders for input. There will be generalized and consistent questions in each evaluation for tracking of services and project activities, and questions specific to the covered population as needed. Vermont will host focus groups for covered populations that receive services from the projects, and tracking the number of Vermonters served through the projects. This will allow Vermont to achieve the goals of the digital equity plan by working toward a path to sustainability through understanding and supporting impactful strategies, building education and capacity, and facilitating and identifying research for future needs.

3.3.2 Preventing Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

Describe the safeguards the applicant will put in place to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse in the implementation of the program. (2500 character limit)

To prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of public funds, the Public Service Department follows Vermont laws and policies for contracting and granting as outlined in State of Vermont Administrative Bulletin 3.5, Procurement and Contracting Procedures and Bulletin 5, Policy for Grant Issuance and Monitoring. Prior to awarding subgrants, the Public Service Department completes a risk assessment for subgrantees that assesses their ability to comply with the terms of the subgrant and effectively manage federal funds. Staff impose additional monitoring procedures when required for subgrantees designated high risk.. All federal subgrant agreements specify that subgrantees must meet the terms and conditions of the federal award as well as Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) requirements for subrecipients. Subgrantees must submit performance reports and expenditure reports prior to requesting payments and request prior approval for significant scope or budget changes. Staff regularly review federal grant expenditures to ensure spending is accurately tracked and expenses are charged appropriately.

3.3.3 Subgrantee Selection Process

Do you plan to use subgrantees to implement grant projects and activities?

Yes

To the extent the applicant intends to use subgrantees to implement grant projects and activities, describe the process by which subgrantees will be selected and the safeguards in place to ensure the selection process fosters a sense of fairness and accountability by being open, transparent, and equitable; and is in compliance with 2 C.F.R. part 200. (2500 character limit)

Vermont will use a combination of competitive grant process and MOUs to other state agencies. Vermont community Broadband Board (VCBB) Attorney will advise on structure to form the MOUs VCBB will sign and the subcontracts VCBB will award. VCBB will use a hybrid model of activity based and eligibility-based criteria to make funding decisions. Within this model, VCBB will determine who is eligible for funding, what activities are eligible for funding, what award ranges VCBB will award, identifying scoring criteria and grant application timelines. VCBB will not allow subgrantees to subaward and will encourage partnerships. There will be a teamed selection process with an invitation to participate from an outside stakeholder that is not otherwise involved in the application process. Applicants will be required to provide documents to confirm their presentation in their application. In compliance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, VCBB will ensure that every subaward is clearly identified to the subrecipient as a subaward and includes the known information at the time of the subaward and if any of the data elements change, include the changes in subsequent subaward modification. VCBB will avoid unnecessarily restricting competition by only placing reasonable requirements on subgrantee applicants, VCBB will require only necessary experience, will incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the service required, and will identify all requirements which the subrecipients must fulfil and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals. VCBB will take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority and women organizations, individuals and businesses are used when possible. VCBB will place qualified small and minority individuals, organizations and businesses on an outreach list, and assure that small and minority individuals, organizations and businesses are notified whenever there are potential funding opportunities. When possible, VCBB will divide total requirements when economically feasible into smaller tasks/activities or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority individuals, organizations, and businesses. VCBB will use the services and assistance, as appropriate of such organizations as the Small Business Administration and local minority led organizations for outreach efforts.

3.4.1 Description of Projects and Activities

Describe the specific projects and activities proposed to be funded by the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program.

Complete the form provided, filling out all fields as applicable, and upload it.

Specific_Projects_Form_DE_Capacity_Vermont-RE-09-04-2024 05-16-STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTME-GRN-001762.xlsx

3.4.3 Intention to Submit Additional Projects and/or Project Details

Do you plan to submit additional projects and/or project details via an updated Specific Projects Form within 9 months from the award start date?

Yes

4.1.1 Description of Other Funding

Does the State or Territory intend to use other funding sources to implement its Digital Equity Plan?

No

5.1.1 Consolidated Budget Form

In the field provided, upload the Consolidated Budget Form and (optionally) a budget addendum that provides a detailed explanation of: (a) project expenses for Digital Equity Plan updates and/or maintenance; and (b) project expenses for subsidies for the provision of broadband services through affordable broadband programs. The budget addendum should demonstrate that expenses for Digital Equity Plan updates or maintenance do not exceed 20% of the amount of the grant and that expenses for affordable broadband programs do not exceed 10% of the amount of the grant.

All budget amounts must exactly match or reflect across all budget documentation. For example, do not provide estimates or approximate amounts in the Consolidated Budget Form that do not exactly match amounts in the SF-424 and all relevant sections in the application.

Download the linked

Consolidated Budget Form to fill out and upload; template use is required. See available examples for the budget addendum linked here; example use is not required. Note: the budget addendum is a supporting document for the project, required via Field 15 of the SF-424 (OMB Control No. 4040-0004, Expiration Date: 11/30/2025).

5.1 Final_Consolidated Budget Form_DE Capacit-09-05-2024 02-59-STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTME-GRN-001762.xlsm

5.2.1 Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

Are indirect costs included in the proposed budget?

Yes

If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, the applicant must upload a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant federal audit agency. If the rate was not established by a cognizant agency, provide a statement to this effect (2500 character limit). If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with Section B.06 of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Dated November 12, 2020.

Alternatively, consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that do not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge indirect costs to an award pursuant to a de minimis rate, in which case a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is not required. Applicants proposing a de minimis rate pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.

7.1.1 CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants must upload a completed Form CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying that certifies that Federal funds have not been used and will not be used for lobbying in connection with this request for Federal financial assistance.

CD-511_Vermont_Signed-06-12-2024 10-31-STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE
DEPARTME-GRN-001762.pdf

8.1.1 Digital Equity Plan Implementation Certification

Certification that the State or Territory, acting through the administering entity/organization for the State or Territory, shall not later than five (5) years after the date on which the Assistant Secretary awards the Capacity Grant to the State or Territory implement the Digital Equity Plan of the State or Territory and make subgrants in a manner that is consistent with the aims of such Digital Equity Plan.

Yes

8.1.2 Supplemental Funds Certification

Certification that Capacity Grant funds will be used to supplement, not supplant, other Federal or State funds that have been made available to carry out the activities in Digital Equity Plan and the NOFO.

Yes

8.1.3 Build America Buy America (BABA) Act Certification

Certification that the State or Territory, if using Capacity Grant funds for an "infrastructure project" (as defined in 2 C.F.R. 184.3), will abide by the requirements of the Build America Buy America Act (Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52) and by the regulations promulgated thereunder at 2 C.F.R. part 184).

Yes

8.2.1 Assurances

Do you attest to the following assurances? Note that "AE/AO" refers to "Administering Entity / Administering Organization," with "Administering Entity" being applicable for States and "Administering Organization" being applicable for U.S. Territories.

I hereby provide the following assurances required under 47 U.S.C. §1723(e):

1. If an entity described in section 1724(b) is awarded grant funds under this section (referred to in this subsection as a "covered recipient"), provide that-

A. the covered recipient shall use the grant funds in accordance with any applicable statute, regulation, and application procedure;

B. the AE/AO for that State or U.S. Territory shall adopt and use proper methods of administering any grant that the covered recipient is awarded, including by

i. enforcing any obligation imposed under law on any agency, institution, organization, or other entity that is responsible for carrying out the program to which the grant relates;

ii. correcting any deficiency in the operation of a program to which the grant relates, as identified through an audit or another monitoring or evaluation procedure; and

iii. adopting written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging a violation of law with respect to a program to which the grant relates; and

C. the AE/AO for that State or U.S. Territory shall cooperate in carrying out any evaluation—

i. of any program that relates to a grant awarded to the covered recipient; and

ii. that is carried out by or for the Assistant Secretary or another Federal official;

Yes

2. The AE/AO for that State or U.S. Territory shall—

A. use fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, any Federal funds that the State is awarded under this section;

B. submit to the Assistant Secretary any reports that may be necessary to enable the Assistant Secretary to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary under this section;

C. maintain any records and provide any information to the Assistant Secretary, including those records, that the Assistant Secretary determines is necessary to enable the Assistant Secretary to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary under this section; and

D. with respect to any significant proposed change or amendment to the State Digital Equity Plan for the State, make the change or amendment available for public comment in accordance with subsection (c)(2); and

Yes

3. the State, before submitting to the Assistant Secretary the State Digital Equity Plan of the State, has complied with the requirements of subsection (c)(2).

Yes

Personnel & Fringe						
Year	Category	Name	Title	Amount	% FTE	Total
Year 1	Personnel	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 74,797.00	100%	\$ 74,797.00
Year 1	Personnel	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 72,079.64	100%	\$ 72,079.64
Year 1	Fringe	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 51,185.00	100%	\$ 51,185.00
Year 1	Fringe	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 46,806.00	100%	\$ 46,806.00
Year 1	Personnel	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 77,730.00	5%	\$ 3,886.50
Year 1	Personnel	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 78,062.00	5%	\$ 3,903.10
Year 1	Fringe	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 40,376.40	5%	\$ 2,018.82
Year 1	Fringe	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 28,641.77	5%	\$ 1,432.09
Year 1	Personnel	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 95,638.40	10%	\$ 9,563.84
Year 1	Fringe	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 44,818.00	10%	\$ 4,481.80
Year 2	Personnel	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 78,536.85	100%	\$ 78,536.85
Year 2	Personnel	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 75,683.62	100%	\$ 75,683.62
Year 2	Fringe	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 53,744.25	100%	\$ 53,744.25
Year 2	Fringe	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 49,146.30	100%	\$ 49,146.30
Year 2	Personnel	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 81,616.50	5%	\$ 4,080.83
Year 2	Personnel	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 81,965.10	5%	\$ 4,098.26
Year 2	Fringe	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 42,395.22	5%	\$ 2,119.76
Year 2	Fringe	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 30,073.86	5%	\$ 1,503.69
Year 2	Personnel	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 100,420.32	10%	\$ 10,042.03
Year 2	Fringe	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 47,058.90	10%	\$ 4,705.89
Year 3	Personnel	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 82,276.70	100%	\$ 82,276.70
Year 3	Personnel	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 79,287.60	100%	\$ 79,287.60
Year 3	Fringe	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 56,303.50	100%	\$ 56,303.50
Year 3	Fringe	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 51,486.60	100%	\$ 51,486.60
Year 3	Personnel	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 85,503.00	5%	\$ 4,275.15
Year 3	Personnel	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 85,868.20	5%	\$ 4,293.41
Year 3	Fringe	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 44,414.04	5%	\$ 2,220.70
Year 3	Fringe	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 31,505.94	5%	\$ 1,575.30
Year 3	Personnel	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 105,202.24	10%	\$ 10,520.22
Year 3	Fringe	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 49,299.80	10%	\$ 4,929.98
Year 4	Personnel	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 86,016.55	100%	\$ 86,016.55
Year 4	Personnel	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 82,891.59	100%	\$ 82,891.59
Year 4	Fringe	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 58,862.75	100%	\$ 58,862.75
Year 4	Fringe	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 53,826.90	100%	\$ 53,826.90
Year 4	Personnel	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 89,389.50	5%	\$ 4,469.48
Year 4	Personnel	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 89,771.30	5%	\$ 4,488.57
Year 4	Fringe	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 46,432.86	5%	\$ 2,321.64
Year 4	Fringe	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 32,938.02	5%	\$ 1,646.90
Year 4	Personnel	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 109,984.16	10%	\$ 10,998.42
Year 4	Fringe	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 51,540.70	10%	\$ 5,154.07
Year 5	Personnel	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 89,756.40	100%	\$ 89,756.40
Year 5	Personnel	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 86,495.56	100%	\$ 86,495.56
Year 5	Fringe	Britaney Watson	073675 - Digital Equity Officer	\$ 61,422.00	100%	\$ 61,422.00
Year 5	Fringe	New Employee	Digital Equity Research Specialis (530	\$ 56,167.20	100%	\$ 56,167.20
Year 5	Personnel	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 93,276.00	5%	\$ 4,663.80
Year 5	Personnel	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 93,674.40	5%	\$ 4,683.72
Year 5	Fringe	Alicsa Matthews	Special Projects Director (008900 - Pr	\$ 48,451.20	5%	\$ 2,422.56
Year 5	Fringe	Herryn Herzog	Communications Director (073660 - P	\$ 34,370.11	5%	\$ 1,718.51
Year 5	Personnel	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 114,766.08	10%	\$ 11,476.61
Year 5	Fringe	Kristina Sweet	Compliance Director (544215 - VCBB	\$ 53,781.60	10%	\$ 5,378.16
Total				\$ 3,355,737.63		\$ 1,485,845.80

Other Direct Costs						
Year	Category	Item	Type	Amount	Quantity	Total
Years 1-5	Travel	Travel	Out-of-state trips	\$ 1,801.78	27.00	\$ 48,648.00
Years 1-5	Travel	Meetings and site visits	Mileage	\$ 0.67	36000.00	\$ 24,120.00
Years 1-5	Other	Conference Registration & Traini	Total	\$ 11,975.00	1.00	\$ 11,975.00
Years 1-5	Other	Employee cell phones	Annual cost	\$ 600.00	10.00	\$ 6,000.00
Years 1-5	Supplies	Laptop	Laptop and accessories package for r	\$ 1,500.00	1.00	\$ 1,500.00
Years 1-5	Supplies	Laptop	Replacement laptop for Britaney Wats	\$ 1,200.00	1.00	\$ 1,200.00
Years 1-5	Other	Printing	Total cost	\$ 500.00	1.00	\$ 500.00
Years 1-5	Supplies	Office suplies	Annual cost	\$ 60.00	5.00	\$ 300.00
Years 1-5	Contractual/	Competitive Subaward Program	Subawards	\$ 1,094,948.00	1.00	\$ 1,094,948.00
Years 1-5	Contractual/	UVM Subaward	Subawards	\$ 30,810.00	1.00	\$ 30,810.00
Years 1-5	Contractual/	Contractual	Contracts	\$ 2,200,000.00	1.00	\$ 2,200,000.00
Total						\$ 3,420,001.00

Total Grant	\$5,299,150.18
Total Personnel	\$1,485,845.80
Indirect	\$393,303.38
Other Direct Costs	\$3,420,001.00
Remaining	\$0.00

FORM CD-450 (REV. 10/18)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE		X GRANT		COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT	
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AWARD				FEDERAL AWARD ID NUMBER			
				50-31-DS762			
RECIPIENT NAME				PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE			
State of Vermont Public Service Department				01/01/2025 - 12/31/2029			
STREET ADDRESS				FEDERAL SHARE OF COST			
112 STATE ST FL 3				\$5,299,150.18			
CITY, STATE ZIP				RECIPIENT SHARE OF COST			
MONTPELIER, VT 05602-2710				\$0.00			
AUTHORITY				TOTAL ESTIMATED COST			
47 U.S.C. 1723				\$5,299,150.18			
CFDA NO. AND NAME							
11.032 State Digital Equity Planning and Capacity Grant							
PROJECT TITLE:							
Vermont Digital Equity Plan Implementation							
<p>This Award Document (Form CD-450) signed by the Grants Officer constitutes an obligation of Federal funding. By signing this Form CD-450, the Recipient agrees to comply with the Award provisions checked below and attached. Upon acceptance by the Recipient, the Form CD-450 must be signed by an authorized representative of the Recipient and returned to the Grants Officer. If not signed and returned without modifications by the Recipient within 30 days of receipt, the Grants Officer may unilaterally withdraw this Award offer and de-obligate the funds.</p> <p>X DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS</p> <p>R & D AWARD</p> <p>FEDERAL-WIDE RESEARCH TERMS AND CONDITIONS, AS ADOPTED BY THE DEPT. OF COMMERCE</p> <p>X SPECIFIC AWARD CONDITIONS</p> <p>X LINE ITEM BUDGET</p> <p>X 2 CFR PART 200, UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS, AS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO 2 CFR § 1327.101</p> <p>48 CFR PART 31, CONTRACT COST PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES</p> <p>MULTI-YEAR AWARD. PLEASE SEE THE MULTI-YEAR SPECIFIC AWARD CONDITION.</p> <p>OTHER(S):</p>							
SIGNATURE OF DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE GRANTS OFFICER						DATE	
Mercedes Martinez-Crowe						Mercedes Martinez-Crowe	
PRINTED NAME, PRINTED TITLE, AND SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED RECIPIENT OFFICIAL						DATE 12/23/2024 12:12:09 PM	
Christine Hallquist, Executive Director							

Digitally signed by Mercedes Martinez-Crowe
Date: 2024.12.23 07:25:47 -05'00'

Award Number: 50-31-DS762, Amendment Number 0
Federal Program Officer: Brett Litzler
Requisition Number: DE762
Employer Identification Number: 036000264
UEI Number: FXRGN76HPMF3
Recipient ID: 1151076
Requestor ID: 1151076

Award ACCS Information

Bureau	FCFY	Project-Task	Organization	Object Class	Obligation Amount
61	2025	4720400-000	06-00-0000-00-00-00-00	41-19-00-00	\$5,299,150.18

Award Contact Information

Contact Type	Contact Name	Email	Phone
Administrative	Britaney Watson	britaney.watson@vermont.gov	802-522-8426

NIST Grants Officer:
Mercedes Martinez-Crowe
100 Bureau Drive, MS 1650
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-1650
(301) 975-8561

NIST Grants Specialist:
Andrea Greene
100 Bureau Drive, MS 1650
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-1650
(301) 975-2090

NIST Financial Assistance Award Number: 50-31-DS762

Amendment: NEW

Recipient: State of Vermont Public Service Department

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY
STATE DIGITAL EQUITY CAPACITY GRANT PROGRAM
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
SPECIFIC AWARD CONDITIONS**

1. Introduction

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), servicing for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), hereby enters into this Grant, number 50-31-DS762 with State of Vermont Public Service Department to support the work described in the proposal entitled “Vermont Digital Equity Plan Implementation” dated 05/23/2024 and any revisions received during the application review, which is hereby incorporated into this award by reference. Where the terms of this award and the proposal differ, the terms of this award shall prevail.

2. Recipient Contact Information

Administrative:

Britaney Watson
Digital Equity Officer
State of Vermont Public Service Department
112 State Street
Floor 3
Montpeiler, VT 05602-2710
Telephone: 802-522-8426
Email: britaney.watson@vermont.gov

3. NTIA Contact Information

Federal Program Officer:

Brett Litzler
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230
Telephone: (202) 993-4587
Email: blitzler@ntia.gov

4. NIST Award Contact Information

Grants Officer:

Mercedes Martinez-Crowe
National Institute of Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive, Mail Stop 1650
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-1650
Email: mercedes.martinez-crowe@nist.gov

Grants Specialist:

Andrea Greene
National Institute of Standards and Technology

NIST Financial Assistance Award Number: 50-31-DS762

Amendment: NEW

Recipient: State of Vermont Public Service Department

100 Bureau Drive, Mail Stop 1650

Gaithersburg, MD 20899-1650

Email: andrea.greene@nist.gov

5. Award Payments

This award is hereby funded through advanced payments using the Department of Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system. Payments will be issued in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.305 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions, B.02, dated October 1, 2024.

Payments for allowable costs may be drawn down as needed by the Recipient enrolled in ASAP. Funds may be requested through ASAP by the authorized *Payment Requestor* who is the individual designated by the Recipient to access Federal funds.

This award has the following control or withdrawal limits set in ASAP:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Agency Review required for all withdrawals (see explanation below)
- ☐ Agency Review required for all withdrawal requests over \$ _____
- ☒ Maximum Draw Amount controls (see explanation below)
 - \$ _____ each month
 - \$ _____ each quarter
 - \$1,883,965.99 Max drawdown amount

Explanation:

The grantee has requested \$3,415,184.19 in funding that does not yet include the associated complete details in the Specific Projects Form as required in Section II.C.2 of the NOFO and for subgrantee evaluation. The funding amount is hereby withheld until the terms identified in Specific Award Condition #30 Specific Projects Form Requirements, below, are satisfied.

6. Return Payments for Funds Withdrawn through ASAP

Funds that have been withdrawn through ASAP may be returned to ASAP via the Automated Clearing House (ACH) or via FEDWIRE. The ACH or FEDWIRE transaction may only be completed by the Recipient's financial institution. Full or partial amounts of payments received by a Payment Requestor/Recipient Organization may be returned to ASAP. All funds returned to the ASAP system will be credited to the ASAP Suspense Account. The Suspense Account allows the Regional Financial Center to monitor returned items and ensure that funds are properly credited to the correct ASAP account. Returned funds that cannot be identified and classified to an ASAP account will be dishonored and returned to the originating depository financial institution (ODFI). The Payment Requestor/Recipient Organization should notify the NIST Grants Office and provide a reason whenever return payments are made.

It is essential that the Payment Requestor/Recipient Organization provide its financial institution with ASAP account information (ALC, Recipient ID and Account ID) to which the return is to be credited. Additional detailed information is accessible at:

NIST Financial Assistance Award Number: 50-31-DS762

Amendment: NEW

Recipient: State of Vermont Public Service Department

<https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/asap/>.

7. Administering Entity/Administering Organization

By accepting this award, the State of Vermont Public Service Department agrees that State of Vermont Public Service Department will serve as the Administering Entity and as Recipient of this award in accordance with 47 U.S.C. § 1723(b). Incorporated by reference into this award are the written assurances pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 1723(e), which were provided to NTIA by the State of Vermont Public Service Department as part of its application and which assure State of Vermont Public Service Department's programmatic and fiscal performance under this award.

Any change to the Administering Entity designated by State of Vermont Public Service Department in its application and approved under this award requires prior written approval by the Grants Officer.

8. Period of Performance and Funding Limitations

The period of performance and budget incorporated into this award cover a five-year period of performance and provide for a maximum total amount of \$5,299,150.18 in Federal funding. Further, no-cost-extensions are not permitted past the five-year period of performance. This award is being fully obligated via this award action, however per SAC #5, all award funds may not be available for draw down at the time of award.

The maximum amount of funding in support of this award will not exceed the amount specified in the award documents, unless otherwise amended in writing by the NIST Grants Officer. The Department of Commerce is not liable for any obligations, expenditures, or commitments which involve any amount in excess of the Federal funds being made available pursuant to this award.

9. Notice of Funding Opportunity – State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program

The Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No. NTIA-SDECGP-2024 dated March 29, 2024, is incorporated by reference into this award.

It is accessible at: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/353292> under "Related Documents." If the application period is closed, select "Closed" or "Archived" Opportunity Status to view the NOFO.

10. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The recipient must comply with the requirements of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (November 15, 2021), including §60304, codified at 47 U.S.C. § 1723, which establishes the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program.

11. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements

As indicated on the Form CD-450 for this award, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R.

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Part 200 are incorporated by reference into this award. Updates to these requirements were recently published by the Office of Management and Budget with an effective date of October 1, 2024, and apply to this award. Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to <https://www.ecfr.gov/on/2024-10-01/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200> and <https://www.ecfr.gov/on/2024-10-01/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-XIII/part-1327>. Awards issued pursuant to this program may be subject to specific award conditions as authorized by 2 C.F.R. § 200.208.

12. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements as published in the *Federal Register* on December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) is incorporated by reference into this award. It is accessible at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

13. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions

As indicated on the Form CD-450 for this award, the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions (GT&C) issued October 1, 2024 are incorporated by reference into this award. The Department's GT&C, as well as a link to 2 CFR Part 200, are accessible at: <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

14. Allowable Uses of State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Funds

Grant funds must be used only for allowable uses of funds, which can be found in the Section II.C.3.a. of the NOFO. The grantee must be aware that there may be information regarding allowability in other sections of the NOFO and the grantee shall follow all NOFO requirements.

15. Prohibited Uses of State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Funds

Section II.C.3.c. of the NOFO details prohibitions and restrictions on the use of grant funds. The grantee must be aware that there may be information regarding restrictions in other sections of the NOFO, and the grantee shall follow all NOFO requirements.

16. A. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions, Section A.01 "Reporting Requirements"

The Recipient must submit a Federal Financial Report (SF-425) and Performance (Technical) Report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30, or any portion thereof.

Reports are due no later than 30 calendar days following the end of each reporting period. Should the due date fall on a weekend or a federal holiday, the report can be submitted the next business day.

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All SF-425 and Performance (Technical) Reports must be submitted in the NTIA Grants Portal, or by the means specified by NTIA. A final SF-425 must be submitted within 120 days after the expiration of the period of performance.

Reports must not be sent directly to NIST or NTIA personnel (*e.g.* Grants Specialist, Grants Officer, Administrative Assistant, FAAMO Chief, Federal Program Officer, etc.). Any Reports sent directly to grant personnel will be returned to the sender with instructions on how to properly submit the report.

16. B. Programmatic Reporting Requirements

Annual Report Requirements – For each year during the period of performance, any entity to which a grant, including a subgrant, is awarded under this program shall be required to publicly report, in a format to be specified by the Assistant Secretary, on:

1. The use of State Digital Equity Capacity grant by the entity;
2. The progress of the entity toward fulfilling the objectives for which the grant was awarded; and
3. The implementation of the State Digital Equity Plan of the State.

Each year of the period of performance, an Annual Report must be submitted in the NTIA Grants Portal for the 12-month reporting period ending March 31. Reports are due no later than 30 calendar days following the end of the reporting period. Should the due date fall on a weekend or a federal holiday, the report can be submitted the next business day.

The final Annual Report must include an assessment of the effectiveness of the programs along with the results, protocols, and instruments used to collect the data as specified in Section II.A.3. of the NOFO. The final Annual Report must be submitted no later than 120 days after the end of the period of performance.

The Annual Report must be submitted in the [NTIA Grants Portal](#) within the prescribed timeframes identified in the terms and conditions of the award. Reports will be subject to curing and posted publicly. Reporting forms for the Annual Report will be available in the [NTIA Grants Portal](#).

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

17. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions Section B.06 Indirect or Facilities and Administrative Costs

NIST will reimburse the Recipient for indirect or “F&A” costs in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414 and Section B.06. of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions, dated October 1, 2024. In all cases, total indirect and direct administrative costs charged to the award must be less than or equal to 3% of the amount of the grant, per 47 U.S.C. 1723(d)(3)(D)(v)(II).

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Any governmental department or agency unit that receives more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding must submit an indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant agency for indirect costs and may not use the de minimis indirect cost rate.

If an indirect cost rate has not been established, and NIST is identified as the cognizant agency for indirect costs in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, “Cognizant agency for indirect costs,” within 90 calendar days of the award start date, the Recipient must electronically submit to gmdaudit@nist.gov the documentation (indirect cost rate proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to allow NIST to perform an indirect cost rate proposal review. Organizations that have previously established indirect cost rates with NIST must submit a new indirect cost rate proposal for indirect costs within six months after the end of the organization’s fiscal year.

If your submission includes Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or Business Identifiable Information (BII), please send an email to gmdaudit@nist.gov to request a secure link.

The requirements for determining the relevant cognizant agency and for developing and submitting indirect (F&A) cost rate proposals and cost allocation plans are contained in 2 C.F.R. § 200.414 and in Appendices III-VII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200. For additional guidance on preparing indirect cost proposals, please review the Department of Labor’s Guide for Indirect Cost Determination at: <https://www.dol.gov/oasam/boc/dcd/np-comm-guide.htm>. Section I.B and I.C lists the various types of indirect cost rates and the circumstances under which such rates would apply. The guide also addresses common indirect cost problems and contains useful FAQs.

18. Unfunded Grant Actions Mailbox (UGAM)

Requests for unfunded award actions, which include, but are not limited to, change in key personnel, change in scope of work, budget revisions, payment requests, award transfer, and novation, must be submitted to: UGAM@nist.gov, within the prescribed timeframes identified in the terms and conditions of the award.

Unfunded award action requests and related correspondence, including justification to support the request, sent to the mailbox **must** contain the following information in the email subject line: (1) Recipient name; (2) NIST award number; (3) Principal Investigator/Project Director; and (4) Action being requested (e.g., change in key personnel, etc.).

Unfunded award action requests must not be sent directly to NIST personnel (e.g. Grants Specialist, Grants Officer, Administrative Assistant, FAAMO Chief, Federal Program Officer, etc.).

Any requests sent directly to NIST personnel will be returned to the sender with instructions on how to submit through the UGAM@nist.gov mailbox.

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No other correspondence may be sent through this mailbox; timely responses to any other inquiries received in this mailbox are not guaranteed. The mailbox will not be used for any other purpose except for purposes identified above.

Requests that are processed will be authorized via a Form CD-451 Amendment to the Financial Assistance Award or a Non-Funded Administrative Change Letter.

19. Domestic Preference for Procurements (Buy American)

Pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.322, as appropriate and to the extent consistent with law, the Recipient should, to the greatest extent practicable under the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, provide a preference for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States (including, but not limited to, iron, aluminum, steel, cement, and other manufactured products). The requirements of this Section must be included in all subawards, including all contracts and purchase orders for work or products pursuant to this program.

20. Contracting with Small and Minority Businesses, Women's Business Enterprises, and Labor Surplus Area Firms

Pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.321, the Recipient and its subrecipients must take all necessary affirmative steps (as described in 2 CFR § 200.321) to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.

21. Cybersecurity Best Practices

Recipients and subrecipients must ensure that the planning, design, and project oversight phases of the programs and activities funded through the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program are consistent with current industry best practices for cybersecurity, such as the NIST Cybersecurity Framework and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Cybersecurity Performance Goals (CPGs). These performance goals provide a baseline set of cybersecurity practices that are broadly applicable, with known risk-reduction value. NTIA reserves the right to review a recipient's cybersecurity framework and recipients must review the cybersecurity framework of its subrecipients.

22. Protection of Whistleblowers

Section F.05 of the DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions states that each award is subject to the whistleblower protections afforded by 41 U.S.C. § 4712 (Enhancement of contractor protection from reprisal for disclosure of certain information).

Generally, this law provides that an employee or contractor (including subcontractors and personal services contractors) of a non-Federal entity may not be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against as a reprisal for disclosing to a person or body information that the employee reasonably believes is evidence of gross mismanagement of a Federal award, subaward, or a contract under a Federal award or subaward, a gross waste of Federal funds, an abuse of authority relating to a Federal award or subaward or contract under a Federal award or subaward, a substantial and specific danger to public

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health or safety, or a violation of law, rule, or regulation related to a Federal award, subaward, or contract under a Federal award or subaward.

Non-Federal entities and contractors under Federal awards and subawards must inform their employees in writing of the rights and remedies provided under 41 U.S.C. § 4712, in the predominant native language of the workforce.

A person that believes they have been the subject of retaliation for protected whistleblowing can contact the Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General Hotline, as indicated at <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Hotline.aspx>, or the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, toll free at 1-800-872-9855.

23. Build America, Buy America Act

Pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-53 and OMB M-24-02, 2 C.F.R. Part 184, and 2 C.F.R. § 200.322, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless:

- 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States - this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States;
- 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States - this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard that meets or exceeds this standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and
- 3) all construction materials are manufactured in the United States - this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States.

The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

24. Monitoring and Compliance

Awarded projects are subject to project monitoring, the purpose of which is to ensure recipients fulfill the terms and conditions of their awards. The Grantee must comply with

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all monitoring and information requests from NTIA within the timeframe specified by NTIA. If the Grantee fails to comply with monitoring and information requests, NTIA may determine that the Grantee is non-compliant with award terms and conditions.

25. Signage and Public Acknowledgements

The Recipient is encouraged to post project signage and to include public acknowledgments in published and other collateral materials (e.g., press releases, marketing materials, webpages, plaques) satisfactory in form and substance to NTIA, that identifies the nature of the project and indicates that “the project is funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.” If the Recipient employs project signage, they are required to use the official Investing in America emblem in accordance with the Official Investing in America Emblem Style Guide: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Investing-in-America-Brand-Guide.pdf>. The Recipient must work with their FPO and sign a licensing agreement to use the official logo. Costs associated with signage and public acknowledgments must be reasonable and limited. Signs or public acknowledgments should not be produced, displayed or published if doing so results in unreasonable cost, expense, or recipient burden. The Recipient is encouraged to use recycled or recovered materials when procuring signs. Any construction site signage should be displayed throughout the construction phase of the project in an easily visible location directly linked to the work taking place. The Recipient is responsible to maintain the signage in good condition throughout the construction period.

26. Restriction on Human Subjects Research Work and Costs Incurred

The Recipient must comply with Department of Commerce (DOC) regulations relating to the protection of human subjects for all research conducted or supported pursuant to an NTIA grant award. The DOC regulations related to the protection of human subjects are found in 15 C.F.R. Part 27. The Recipient is responsible for ensuring that any of its subrecipients are also in compliance with the regulations related to protecting human subjects in 15 C.F.R. Part 27 and in these award conditions.

The [Human Subjects Research Guidance \(posted August 29, 2022\) \(HSR\)](#) for Digital Equity (DE) is incorporated by reference into this specific award condition and identifies three HSR classification categories: Category 1 – Not Conducting Human Subjects Research Category 2 – Exemption Request, and Category 3 – Human Subject Research Non-Exempt.

To satisfy the DE HSR requirements, the Recipient must submit, no later than 45 calendar days after finalizing all projects (both those implemented directly and those implemented by subgrantees) with an approved Specific Projects Form, via email to UGAM@nist.gov with a copy to their DE FPO, a letter or memorandum addressed to the Grants Officer that provides the following information:

- a. Which HSR classification category is applicable; and
- b. Examples of planned DE project activities that justify inclusion in that category

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If a project requires a human subjects research exemption request (Category 2) or requires IRB review as non-exempt human subjects research (Category 3), research activities involving human subjects are not authorized to start under this award until the appropriate documentation, as set forth by the DOC General Terms & Conditions (dated October 1, 2024) Section G.05.i.3, is approved in writing by the Grants Officer.

If a recipient conducts human subjects research before receiving NTIA approval of an exemption or before receiving IRB approval for non-exempt research, recipients will be considered in material non-compliance with award terms and conditions, and any costs incurred to conduct the research may be disallowed and subject to recovery by NTIA (*see* 2 C.F.R. 200.346).

Notwithstanding the above prohibition on starting human subjects research, work may be initiated, or costs incurred and/or charged to the project for protocol or instrument development related to human subjects research.

Sample HSR memos are available in the Human Subjects Research Guidance (posted November 15, 2021), *Guidance for Human Subjects Research Protection*. (<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/CMC%20Pilot%20Program%20HSR%20Guidance%20%2811-22-2021%29.pdf>)

27. Outstanding Baseline Data in DE Plans

The Recipient is required to prioritize the use of its Capacity grant funding to complete any gaps in its Digital Equity Plan (e.g., identify and/or obtain baseline data), as applicable. The Recipient must submit an updated Digital Equity Plan that fills those gaps with its second Annual Report. See SAC #16.b. for details about the Annual Report. No specific projects will be funded if they are associated with baseline data that is still outstanding.

28. Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance Requirements

The Recipient must comply with all applicable requirements, environmental and historic preservation laws, Executive Orders, regulations, standards, and guidance, and identify to NTIA any impact a proposed State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program project may have on the environment or historic resources.

Project implementation (installation activities, modification to buildings, site preparation, or similar activities) may not begin for all Recipients prior to the completion of an assessment of potential environmental impacts, per the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, et. seq.) (NEPA). The completion of NEPA compliance activities will be documented by NTIA in one of the following decision documents: a Categorical Exclusion (CE) Memo, a Record of Environmental Consideration (REC), a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or a Record of Decision (ROD) (hereinafter “decision documents”). Decision documents cannot be issued until all required consultations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. § 470, et. seq.) (NHPA) and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C.

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§1531, et. seq.), and any other relevant laws are complete. The Recipient must also demonstrate compliance with all other applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations.

If the Recipient has an affiliation with (or is a part of) a State Broadband Office which NTIA has appointed Joint Lead Agency for BEAD NEPA reviews, the Recipient may request appointment as Joint Lead Agency with respect to NEPA reviews for this grant program. Upon receiving such request, NTIA will provide guidance and technical assistance to the Recipient regarding the role of a Joint Lead Agency.

Historic Preservation. Under Section 106 of the NHPA, federal agencies, and by extension recipients of federal grant funds, must evaluate the potential effects of any proposed projects (“undertakings”) on properties listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. Grant recipients are encouraged to initiate Section 106 consultation with relevant State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), or Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHOs) as directed by NTIA. NTIA will provide guidance and technical assistance as needed, or in the event of an adverse effect determination.

Limits on Expenditure of Grant Funds. As per law and regulation, the Recipient may not expend grant funds during the pendency of the EHP reviews except as specifically authorized by the Grants Officer and which may not include the installation of fixed equipment on buildings, modification of buildings, or other activities that may cause ground disturbance or cause impact to the environment or historic properties. *See* 40 CFR §1506.1(a) and (b).

Deadline. Completion of a draft environmental analysis and initiation of any required consultations under Section 106 of the NHPA, Section 7 of the ESA, and other laws, as applicable, must be completed no later than six months after the award date unless a formal request for extension is submitted and approved by the Grants Officer. The Recipient must comply with all conditions placed on the project as the result of the consultation processes.

Project Information Required. The Recipient is required to provide the following information that will enable NTIA to make a preliminary determination regarding the potential impact of the proposed project on environmental and historic resources:

1. A thorough description of all proposed project activities, particularly broadband installation, broadband upgrades, and/or capital improvement activities that will be conducted. These activities may include, but are not limited to, installation of access points and other network components, other fixed equipment, new or replacement cable, and more. Please provide a list of all locations/buildings where infrastructure upgrades/capital improvements are proposed, and a detailed description of how installation or renovation activities would take place, a description of the type of equipment that would be installed, how it would be installed, and a description of exactly where it would be located.

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2. If any ground disturbing activities are proposed, include a description of the physical project location(s) and surroundings, and the total extent and method(s) of ground disturbance proposed.
3. Maps of the project area and ground-level and aerial photographs with installation/renovation locations clearly marked on the buildings impacted. Free online resources, such as Google maps or similar images, are acceptable.
4. For the list of buildings, referenced in Item #1, state the year those buildings were first constructed as well as the dates of any subsequent major renovations. For buildings that are 50 years old or older, provide photos of installation sites, as well as exterior and interior photos of the building.

***Project Information Deadline.* The Recipient must submit all initial required project information listed above in Items #1 – #4 to NTIA by emailing their assigned FPO no later than 60 calendar days after specific projects are approved by NTIA and NIST, unless an extension has been requested in writing by the Recipient and approved by the Grants Officer.**

Additional Information May be Required. Follow-on information may be required for NTIA to determine the level of impacts of the project on environmental and historic resources. If consultation is required, grantees are encouraged to initiate consultation as referenced above and must provide NTIA with relevant documentation of the consultation process. Once appropriate and applicable consultations have been completed, and environmental review documentation has been completed, NTIA will review all documentation and determine whether the review sufficiently addresses all resource areas and whether the project may qualify for an approval decision. Projects found to have significant impacts to environmental or historic resources may face de-obligation of funding if impacts cannot be mitigated.

Next Steps. Once the above information is provided, NTIA will review and provide guidance on the next steps that the recipient should take regarding remaining required consultations and/or environmental and historic preservation documentation required to make environmental determinations. Next steps may include, but are not limited to, the submittal and completion of the following:

1. The completion of any required consultations as described above where applicable and directed by NTIA, to include consultations with the SHPO and the appropriate federally recognized Native American tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations (if applicable), under Section 106 of the NHPA, and/or consultations with the USFWS under Section 7 of the ESA;
2. The completion of environmental review and issuance by NTIA of a decision document, as described above, that meets the requirements of NEPA; and
3. Demonstration of compliance with all other applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations.

General EHP Requirements. The Recipient is required to provide any information requested by NTIA in a timely and effective manner to ensure both initial and ongoing compliance with environmental and historic preservation laws, regulations, and best practices. All such information must be sent to the FPO.

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The Recipient shall notify NTIA within 24 hours upon receipt of any notices of foreclosure; notices for continuing consultation received from the SHPO, THPO, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), or other consulting party; or notices of noncompliance received from consulting authorities or regulatory agencies. These notices shall be sent to the FPO. Projects which, after consultation with appropriate agencies, are determined to be ineligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) will require the development of an Environmental Assessment (EA), which must be completed 12 months from the date of that determination. The Recipient may wish to coordinate with NTIA to rescope or descope the proposed project to avoid or minimize impacts to environmental and historic resources.

Any change to the approved project scope, resulting from consultations or for other reasons, that have the potential for altering the nature or extent of environmental or cultural resources impacts must immediately be brought to the attention of NTIA and will be re-evaluated for compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.

For all ground disturbing activities that occur during project implementation in the vicinity of known archaeological sites or suspected or known burials, the Recipient must ensure that an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards monitors ground disturbance, and if any potential archeological resources or buried human remains are discovered, then the Recipient must immediately cease construction in that area and notify NTIA and the interested SHPO, THPO, and tribes. Such construction activities may then only continue with the written approval of NTIA.

29. Equipment/Supplies

Equipment costs and/or supplies have been identified and budgeted in the grant application. The Recipient must report such costs to NIST. The SF-428, SF-428-B (final report), and as needed, the SF-428-S (inventory list) must be submitted no later than 120 days after the project end date. The SF-428-C (the disposition report) must be submitted when the property is no longer required for the purpose of the project and in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200.311-314.

These forms can be accessed at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/post-award-reporting-forms>

30. Specific Projects Form Requirements

The grantee currently lacks sufficient details for projects to be implemented with \$3,415,184.19 of its award. The grantee must submit the following documentation for the remaining funding to be released for project implementation:

- a. Project-specific data in the format requested by NTIA (e.g., updated Specific Projects Form); and
- b. Other documentation as requested by NTIA

Requests for the release of funds must be submitted to UGAM@nist.gov and must copy the FPO and digitalequity@ntia.gov. Requests and related correspondence sent to the

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mailbox must contain the following information in the email subject line: (1) Grantee name; (2) NIST award number; (3) AOR name; and (4) Action being requested (i.e., Release of Funds for Specific Projects).

Any requests sent directly to NIST personnel will be returned to sender with instructions on how to submit through the ugam@nist.gov mailbox.

No other correspondence may be sent through this mailbox; timely responses to any other inquiries received in this mailbox are not guaranteed. The mailbox will not be used for any other purposes unless identified otherwise.

Requests that are processed will be authorized via an administrative letter or Form CD-451 Amendment to the Financial Assistance Award. Recipient must not begin work or incur costs prior to the above review and approval. Costs lacking sufficient project detail have been placed under a Max Draw control in ASAP and will only be made available upon the above review and approval.

End of Specific Award Conditions

State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program
Consolidated Budget Form

This form will serve as a tool to capture budget information required for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program application.

Per Section II.C.2. of the NOFO, any State or Territory applying for Capacity Grant funds must submit the Consolidated Budget Form as part of their application. Applications from States must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on May 28, 2024, 60 days after the issuance the NOFO. Applications from U.S. Territories must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on July 31, 2024.

If you have any further questions, or require technical assistance, please reach out to your assigned Federal Program Officer.

Read the instructions on each worksheet tab before starting. Do not modify this template or any cells or formulas.

1. First fill out the blank white cells in workbook tabs a. through i. with costs only for the current phase being submitted. Enter the project costs identified for each Category line item within each worksheet tab to auto-populate column B of this summary tab.

2. Blue colored cells contain instructions, headers, or summary calculations and should not be modified. Only blank white cells should be populated.

3. All costs incurred by the grantee's sub-recipients and contractors, should be entered only in section e. Contractual/Subawards. All other sections are for the costs of the grantee only.

4. Indirect costs are allowable, but not allocable, under the administrative requirements of the grant. Indirect costs should be entered in 2.C.F.R. 200.403.

5. Allocable refers to costs that can be directly charged to the grant award based on the benefit provided. See 2.C.F.R. 200.405.

6. Reasonable refers to actions a prudent business person would employ and are necessary to the execution of the award. See 2.C.F.R. 200.404.

7. Add rows as needed throughout tabs a. through i. If rows are added, formulas/calculations may need to be adjusted by the preparer. Do not add rows to the Instructions and Summary tab.

8. The budget should account for the State or Territory's a) administrative costs, capped at 3% of the grant amount, b) program evaluation costs, capped at 5% of the grant amount, and c) Digital Equity Plan updates and maintenance, capped at 20% of the grant amount; and d) affordable broadband program costs, capped at 10% (see Section II.C.3. of the NOFO regarding these funding restrictions).

9. Expenses relating to the administration of the grant: A grantee may not use more than three percent (3%) of the grant amount received for expenses relating to administration of the grant (see 47 U.S.C. § 1723(d)(3)(D)(vi)). The 3% limitation on administrative costs includes the combined total of indirect costs and direct administrative costs charged to an award. To identify if any expenses relating to the administration of the grant are included, please fill out columns C through E for each cost category in this summary page. Expenses related to the administration of the grant, both direct and indirect, should not be added to or subtracted from the total cost category in column B. The applicant must clearly describe in the budget narrative how it applied or calculated the 3% limitation on administrative costs.

10. Expenses relating to subgrant evaluation: A grantee may not use more than 5 percent of the grant amounts received for expenses relating (directly or indirectly) to evaluate the efficacy of the efforts funded by subgrants (see 47 U.S.C. § 1723(d)(3)(D)(vi)). To identify if any expenses relating the evaluation of subgrant are included, please fill out columns F through H for each cost category in this summary page. Expenses related to the evaluation of subgrants, both direct and indirect, should not be added to or subtracted from the total cost category in column B.

11. Indirect costs are included in the proposed budget. The applicant must provide a copy of the approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant federal agency or otherwise document those indirect costs consistent with 2 C.F.R., 200.414.

12. The totals of ALL cost categories are rounded to the nearest dollar.

SUMMARY OF BUDGET CATEGORY COSTS PROPOSED								
The values in this summary table are from entries made in subsequent tabs; only blank white cells require data entry								
Category	Cost	Includes expenses relating to the administration of the grant? (Y/N)	Expenses (\$) relating to the administration of the grant (DIRECT COSTS)	Expenses (\$) relating to the administration of the grant (INDIRECT COSTS)	Includes expenses relating to subgrant evaluation? (Y/N)	Expenses (\$) relating to subgrant evaluation (DIRECT COSTS)	Expenses (\$) relating to subgrant evaluation (INDIRECT COSTS)	Comments (as needed)
a. Total Personnel	\$1,485,845.80							
Salary	\$903,265.42	Yes	\$43,768.41	\$11,585.50	Yes	\$41,138.35	\$10,889.32	\$43,738 represents 10% of Digital Equity Officer's time and 5% of Director of Regulatory Compliance's time over the period of performance, \$41,138 represents 10% of Digital Equity Officer's time over the period of performance, \$41,138 represents 10% of Director of Regulatory Compliance's time over the period of performance, \$28,152 represents 10% of the Digital
Fringe	\$892,580.38	Yes	\$29,384.25	\$7,778.01	Yes	\$28,151.75	\$7,451.77	See Travel tab.
b. Travel	\$72,768.00	No	\$46,648.00	\$0.00	Yes	\$1,675.00	\$0.00	
c. Equipment	\$0.00	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	
d. Supplies	\$3,000.00	Yes	\$120.00	\$0.00	No	\$120.00	\$0.00	\$120 represents the proportional cost of the Digital Equity Officer's laptop to be used for grant administration and subgrant evaluation, respectively.
e. Contractual/Subawards	\$3,325,758.00	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	
f. Construction	\$0.00	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	
g. Other Direct Costs	\$18,475.00	Yes	\$9,080.00	\$0.00	No	\$0.00	\$0.00	See Other tab.
Total Direct Costs	\$4,905,846.80		\$131,000.65			\$71,085.10		
h. Total Indirect Charges	\$393,303.38			\$19,383.51			\$18,341.09	
Federal Funds	\$393,303.38							
Non-Federal Funds	\$0.00							
Total Federal Costs	\$5,299,150.18		\$131,000.65	\$19,383.51		\$71,085.10	\$18,341.09	
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS		\$5,299,150.18	\$150,384.16		Total expenses relating to subgrant evaluation (\$)	\$89,426.19		
		Percent of expenses relating to the administration of the grant (\$)	2.84%		Percent of expenses relating to subgrant evaluation (\$)	1.69%		

Additional Explanation (as needed)