ARIZONA DIGITAL EQUITY GENERAL CAPACITY SUBGRANT PROGRAM

Program Overview

Arizona's Digital Equity Program is an initiative to promote digital equity and inclusion to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of a digital economy. The state is committed to ensuring universal broadband availability through infrastructure investments, supporting affordable broadband plans for all Arizonans, ensuring access to affordable, internet enabled devices and providing inclusive digital skills training.

Projects and programs that help achieve the Goals and/or Objectives laid out in the Digital Equity Plan will be considered for subgrants.

Arizona's Digital Equity General Capacity Subgrant Program is meant to partially fulfill the Digital Equity Capacity Grant requirements, as administered by NTIA.

Please refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) found here: https://www.ntia.gov/federal-register-notice/2024/notice-funding-opportunity-state-digital-equity-capacity-grant-program

Subgrantees are required to familiarize themselves with the NOFO and the requirements of subgrantees in this federal program found therein.

Arizona's approved Digital Equity Plan can be found online: https://www.azcommerce.com/broadband/initiatives/digital-equity-program

The submission window for this grant will be open May 1 – June 30, 2025. Submissions responding to the requirements herein may be submitted as a PDF attachment.

Send submissions via email: DigitalEquity@azcommerce.com

An automated response acknowledging receipt will be provided.

Submissions will be reviewed after the submission window closes.

Final determinations and actual fund availability will be subject to federal approvals.

Solicitation Overview

1. Eligible entities include:
    a. Municipal, county, and regional governments and their anchor institutions (CAIs)
    b. Tribal governments and Tribal-led entities
    c. Community-based organizations, non-profits and foundations
    d. Institutions of Higher Education
    e. State agencies and institutions

*Note: Applicants will be compared to applicants in their category only, within each activity or category. Activities or categories are defined by the Goals and/or Objectives addressed in the application.

Subgrantees must be based in Arizona (or registered to do business in Arizona)

Partnerships that extend the reach of services will be given funding priority.

2. **Funded Projects and Programs Should:**

    a. Focus on Covered Populations: The project should align with the Digital Equity Plan's goals and objectives, and the priorities of the Covered Populations being served, including subgroups within each Covered Population. Priority should be given to projects with the greatest potential impact, such as targeting Covered Households (i.e., low-income individuals) within other Covered Populations.

    b. Foster Long-lasting and Meaningful Change: Digital Equity Plans are intended to address the systemic barriers and gaps to digital access. Projects/activities should reflect this goal and consider the sustainability of initiatives created through this funding.

    c. Include Measurable Implementation Strategies: Proposed programs and activities should be based on objectives that are measurable, achievable, sustainable, timebound, and are designed to address identified disparities directly and logically.

    d. Ensure Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholders who are directly affected by the proposed strategies and interventions should be involved to encourage ongoing feedback regarding the effectiveness of the interventions and to seek input on potential solutions and improvements.

*Subgrants will be made in accordance with the application, but most will likely be in a range of **$25,000 to $250,000,** to ensure equity and spread the award's impact throughout the state.*

Exact range will be defined by the number of applications received. Additional funding may be made available with subsequent NOFOs and other funding opportunities that are identified throughout the implementation period.

Subgrant Application Requirements

Subgrant Application must include the items listed below. Failure to provide all the required documents and sections may result in rejection of Subgrant Application.

1. Applicant Name and Entity Category

2. Project Name

3. Primary Digital Equity Outcomes (select one)
   - Economic and Workforce Development
   - Education
   - Health
   - Civic and Social Engagement
   - Delivery of Other Essential Services
   - Other
     - Define

4. Select the Secondary Digital Equity Outcome
   - Economic and Workforce Development
   - Education
   - Health
   - Civic and Social Engagement
   - Delivery of Other Essential Services
   - Other
     - Define

5. In 2-3 sentences, provide a summary of the specific activity or set of activities this project intends to complete or implement, where the project will be carried out, and the expected beneficiaries of the project.

6. List the specific activity or set of activities the project intends to complete or implement.

7. List the barrier(s) to digital equity the project will address.

8. List the measurable objectives to be pursued and the data to be collected to demonstrate success in meeting these objectives, including quantitative baseline data.
   a. Please refer to the baseline data in the DE Plan and identify how your application may help fill in any baselines that are currently "To Be Determined"
      i. If awarded, are you able to collect or provide any TBD baseline data BEFORE award of funds?

9. Provide the estimated number of individuals to be served for each Covered Population, without duplicating individuals. If a person belongs to more than one covered population, include them only once under the population that aligns most closely with your program's primary focus. Definitions of Covered Populations can be found in the Digital Equity Plan.

    a. Covered Households (low income)
    b. Aging Individuals
    c. Incarcerated Individuals
    d. Veterans
    e. Individuals with disabilities
    f. Individuals with language barriers, including individuals who are English learners and have low levels of literacy
    g. Individuals who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups
        i. Members of Tribal Communities
    h. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

10. List the specific geographies to be served
    a. Ex: What counties, groups of counties, cities/towns, etc. will this project or program serve? Or, indicate statewide impact.

11. Please describe how the proposed project or activity will align with Arizona's Digital Equity Plan. Indicate which Goal/Objective the project/program responds to. Please refer to the Digital Equity Plan for established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and baseline data, if applicable.

    (Goal 1: Not applicable under this program)

    Goal 2: Increase Inclusivity and Accessibility of Public Resources and Services
    Goal two addresses the inclusivity and accessibility of public resources and services. Recognizing that digital equity is not only about access but also about ensuring that digital tools and resources are inclusive and accessible to members of covered populations. The plan advocates for supporting nonprofits and Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) in delivering tailored digital literacy and skills programs. It emphasizes the importance of accessible devices and technologies, partnering with workforce agencies to make job application processes more accessible, and investing in library resources. A novel aspect of this goal is understanding and integrating the perspectives of Tribes in viewing language and cultural preservation through a digital equity lens, thereby respecting and embracing Arizona's rich cultural diversity.

    Objective 1: Make online spaces and content more accessible to a wider range of persons.

    (Objective 2: Not applicable under this program)

(Objective 3: Not applicable under this program)

Objective 4: Increase Telehealth Access Points and Support Health Navigator Services

Goal 3: Provide Relevant Digital Literacy and Skills Training Tailored to the Needs of Covered Populations

Goal three is dedicated to providing relevant digital literacy and skills training tailored to the needs of covered populations. It acknowledges the critical role of digital literacy in empowering individuals to navigate and leverage digital technologies effectively. This goal is operationalized through increasing awareness and capacity of Digital Navigator programs, incorporating monitoring into intake forms, and enhancing support for organizations that offer digital skills training. The plan also emphasizes the availability of digital skills learning platforms in multiple languages and formats, reflecting the diversity of Arizona's population. Collaborations with Arizona@Work, BuilditAZ Apprenticeship initiative, local workforce boards, and the Workforce Arizona Council are pivotal to this goal.

Objective 1: Increase Digital Literacy and Skills Training Opportunities

Objective 2: Strengthen Community Support Through Digital Navigation Service Utilization

Objective 3: Ensure Workforce Development opportunities for people within the covered populations to prepare for jobs created by the BEAD program

(Objective 4: Not applicable under this program)

Goal 4: Enhance the Safety and Security of Arizona's Digital Spaces

The fourth goal focuses on enhancing the safety and security of Arizona's digital spaces. In an era where cyber threats are prevalent, this goal underscores the importance of cybersecurity awareness and training. Partnering with the Arizona Department of Homeland Security, higher education, and other stakeholders, the plan envisions a robust framework to increase cyber preparedness, especially for businesses, community anchor institutions, and among covered populations. This goal also involves enhancing information sharing among stakeholders to reduce risk.

Objective 1: Develop a statewide online safety campaign for individuals of all ages

Goal 5: Ensure Arizonans Have an Affordable Device That Meets Their Unique Needs

Goal five is centered around ensuring that Arizonans have affordable devices that meet their unique needs. This goal addresses the often-overlooked aspect of device affordability and appropriateness. It involves launching public awareness campaigns, setting up community distribution centers, identifying successful device distribution

programs and forming partnerships for device donations and subsidies. The plan also focuses on establishing state benchmarks and best practices for device affordability and accessibility, emphasizing the importance of device refurbishment as a sustainable and cost-effective solution.

> Objective 1: Increase the availability and affordability of internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user

12. Please describe applicants' capacity to manage the project/program that will receive a subgrant. Please describe past experiences with project management and discuss any relevant prior involvement in state or federal grants.

Budget Narrative and Plan

1. Applicant is required to submit a 1) budget narrative and a 2) budget plan.
   a. The budget narrative must demonstrate a clear and strong relationship between the program's expenses and the program's goals and activities. The budget narrative should be detailed, reasonable and adequate, cost efficient, and should align with the proposed work plan. From the budget narrative, the reviewer should be able to assess how the budget expenditures relate directly to the goals of the program.
   b. The budget plan should specific and include as much line-item detail as is possible.

Anticipated Outputs

1. Provide estimates of the anticipated outputs of the activity or project (For example, the number of hours of training to be provided, the number of curricula to be developed, or the number of devices to be provided).

Sustainability Plan

1. Project the annual, ongoing program costs after grant funds are exhausted.
2. The total annual ongoing cost of the program per participant.
3. Indicate how the applicant will fund ongoing costs associated with the program. Provide a detailed plan for obtaining replacement/sustainment funds.
4. Provide an articulation of long-term institutional commitment to the program and the applicant's ability to support ongoing program costs following startup phase.

Letters of Commitment

1. The Applicant must submit letters of commitment from each partner if they are listed in the application.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to submit regular written reports to the Digital Equity Program Manager. Cadence will be established by the applicant and the Digital Equity Program Manager and will depend in part on the length of the proposed project/program. Reporting will be required no less than quarterly, through the program or project's period of performance.

Entities will be asked to provide the following information in these written reports:

1. Awardee Name and Point of Contact
2. Program/Project Name
3. Select the Goal/Objective alignment with DE Plan
4. Number of programs offered - #
   a. Please describe the program goals, and delivery methods. Has anything changed? Please share any learnings you have had.
5. Please provide the number of individuals to be served for each Covered Population, without duplicating individuals. If a person belongs to more than one covered population, include them only in the total for the population the individual most identifies with.

Covered Population	Number Served by Program
Individuals who live in low-income households	
Aging individuals	
Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility	
Veterans	
Individuals with disabilities	
Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners and have low levels of literacy	
Racial and ethnic minorities	
Rural inhabitants	

6. Describe outreach efforts to share this program with members of those Covered Populations during this reporting period. Have you brought in any partners?

7. Financial reporting
    a. Total amount awarded
    b. Amount drawn down to date
    c. Narrative describing use of funds
    d. Remaining amount in award

Additional Information for Selected Subgrantees

1. If selected, applicants will be required to participate in regular check-ins with the Digital Equity Program Manager. The cadence and format of these check-ins will be established based on the needs of both the Digital Equity Program Manager and the successful applicant. They may be in person or virtual and will occur no less than once per quarter throughout the program or project's period of performance.

2. Working with the Digital Equity Program Manager, successful applicants may be asked to be spotlighted in public roundtables, via social media posts, written articles, video content, etc. to amplify and elevate the work happening throughout Arizona's Digital Equity ecosystem.