



DIGITAL EQUITY ACT PROGRAMS

FUNDED BY THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW

ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S NATIONAL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION



DECEMBER 2022

"We'll make sure every single, every single, American has access to high-quality, affordable, high-speed Internet," Biden said during his speech. "When I say affordable, I mean it. Americans pay too much for Internet service. We're going to drive down the price for families who have service now and make it easier for families who don't have affordable service to be able to get it now."

-PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

We're bringing affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet to everyone in America because you need a connection to stay connected

America runs on high-speed Internet.

A strong Internet connection powers our economy and supports education. It fosters better public health. And, it connects loved ones and strengthens social ties.

But not everyone is connected. Too many Americans are cut off from the opportunities that high-speed Internet makes possible.

That's why we're working to bring high-speed Internet to all Americans.



Goal is to build infrastructure that provides reliable high-speed Internet **access** to all Americans **for today and tomorrow...**

...with a focus on making high-speed Internet **affordable** and **reliable** so **everyone** can participate in the economy...

... and providing the resources needed to **equitably** expand the adoption and use of the Internet so **everyone** can experience the benefits.

Defining Digital Equity and Digital Inclusion



A condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.



The activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

High-speed Internet helps individuals and our country

These are some of the ways that high-speed Internet has transformed our world:



Maximizing savings for education

The Internet is not a luxury, it's a necessity. Students are asked to utilize Internet to complete homework assignments, do research, apply to college or trade schools. Students who don't have access in their home are left out and left behind.



Stimulating growth in the economy

By connecting the workplace, we can better connect businesses to consumers. And new markets can increase sales and create jobs. High-speed Internet helps American businesses compete for talent and business in the global marketplace.



Lowering costs for health

Telehealth reduces hospital visits and cuts down hospital stay time. Hospitals with high-speed Internet save money because they have lower administration costs. And by offering telehealth, they save money while improving patient health.



Strengthening ties in our community

High-speed Internet connects us to services we need. It helps first responders save lives. It lets us connect with our elected officials. And it strengthens our ties to our neighbors. One in four Americans get online alerts about local issues. And one in five use digital tools to stay in touch with their community.

Digital Equity is necessary for full participation in society

Illustrative, non-exhaustive



- 1 Increases social connectedness & enables telehealth, improving patient outcomes *For example: Telehealth helps **reduce emergency department visits** ¹*
- 2 Advances employment by facilitating job seeking and improving digital skills *For example: People without high-speed Internet are more likely to have difficulty **finding jobs** in their area²*
- 3 Promotes education access through hybrid/online schooling and adult education *For example: Most U.S. 8th graders use the **Internet every day or almost every day** for their **homework**³*
- 4 Improves access to essential services, like public safety and transportation *For example: Enabling comparisons of cost, time, and distance across **public transport options***
- 5 Enables online civic engagement, like connecting with state/local representatives *For example: Virtual townhalls connected **elected officials and constituents** during COVID⁴*

1. Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas / Broadband USA, 2. Pew Research, 3. Pew Research, 4. Democracy in a Pandemic

This presentation focuses on the Digital Equity Act, which seeks to promote digital equity and inclusion

BEAD

\$42.45B

Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment Program

A program to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it to and increase adoption of high-speed Internet.

Presentation focus

DIGITAL EQUITY

\$2.75B

Digital Equity Act

Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed Internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

TRIBAL

\$2.00B

Tribal Connectivity Technical Amendments

A program to help tribal communities expand high-speed Internet access and adoption on tribal lands.

MIDDLE MILE

\$1.00B

Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure

A program to expand middle mile infrastructure, to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas.

Digital Equity Act created three programs to promote digital equity and inclusion

Funding pool
\$2.75B

Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed Internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

The Digital Equity Act created three programs:

State Planning

- \$60M formula funding program to develop digital equity plans

State Capacity

- \$1.44B formula funding program to implement plans & promote digital inclusion

Competitive

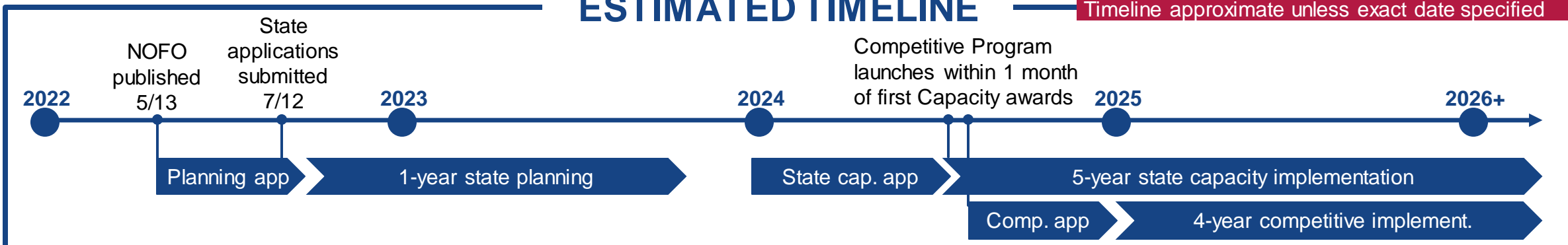
- \$1.25B to implement digital equity and inclusion activities

Example eligible uses of funds across three programs include:

- ☆ Developing digital equity plans; states must develop a plan to be eligible for state capacity grants
- ☆ Making awards to other entities to help make digital equity plans
- ☆ Improving accessibility and inclusivity of public resources
- ☆ Implementing digital equity plans and related activities
- ☆ Providing digital literacy and digital skills education
- ☆ Facilitating the adoption of high-speed Internet

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Timeline approximate unless exact date specified



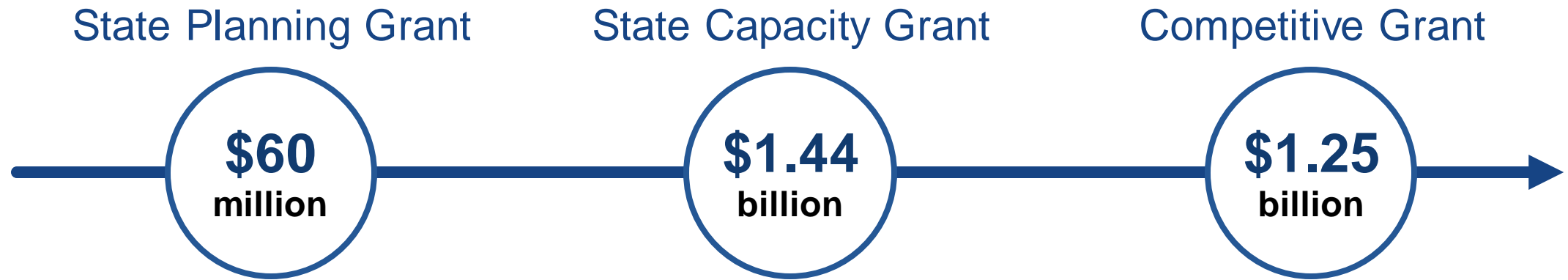
Digital Equity Act Grant Program Updates



All 50 States, U.S. Territories, the District of Columbia, and over 470 Tribal Entities confirmed their intention to participate in the State Digital Equity Act Planning Grant Program through the submission of Letters of Intent or Planning Grant Applications.



The programs are sequential and participation in planning is essential to receive capacity (i.e., implementation) funds



	State Planning Grant	State Capacity Grant	Competitive Grant
Who	Open to U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico	Open to U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, that completed the State Planning Program	Open to certain entities , such as political subdivisions, Tribal entities, nonprofits, community anchor institutions, local educational agencies, and workforce development orgs
What	Grants will be used to develop a State Digital Equity Plan	Grants will be used to implement State Digital Equity Plans	Grants will be used to develop and implement digital inclusion activities

Other U.S. territories, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian orgs have a separate statutory set-aside and separate program requirements under the State Planning and Capacity Programs, as detailed on the next page

Other U.S. Territories and Tribal / Native entities are also eligible for funding, but must follow a different process

Funding set asides

- \$3M in funds set aside for planning grants to U.S. territories (other than Puerto Rico) and \$15M for planning grants to Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations
- Funding has been reserved proportionally for the Planning and Capacity Programs
- Award amounts for participating U.S. territories and possessions, and for Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations are not subject to the funding formula applicable to the States.

Submissions process

- Tribal/Native entities submitted Letters of Intent (LOI) to participate in the Program
- NTIA is currently reviewing LOIs, and Tribal/Native entities will then receive a separate communication from NTIA about requirements and timelines
- Entities will work closely with NTIA to set budgets and expectations that are reasonable and effective

Uses of funds

- U.S. territories (other than Puerto Rico) and Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian orgs may use planning funds to develop digital equity plans as well as on related activities described in the entity's approved project budget
- Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations may use planning funds to further their participation and equity interests in the development of relevant State Digital Equity Plans

The Digital Equity Act focuses on addressing the needs of "covered populations" as defined by the statute

Covered Populations

Identity groups and communities disproportionately impacted by digital inequity



Low-income households



People with disabilities



Aging populations



People with language barriers



Incarcerated individuals



Racial and ethnic minorities



Veterans



Rural inhabitants

Programs' funds can be used for different purposes



Uses of State Planning Grant funds

- **Developing State Digital Equity Plans**
- **Making subgrants** to other entities, such as community anchor institutions, municipalities, Indian Tribes, nonprofits, and other organizations, that help develop the Digital Equity Plan



Uses of State Capacity and Competitive Grant funds

- **Updating and implementing State Digital Equity Plans (Capacity)**
- Pursuing **digital inclusion activities**
- Facilitating **adoption** of high-speed Internet
- Implementing **training and workforce development programs**
- Making **equipment and software** for high-speed Internet services available
- Constructing or upgrading **public access computer centers**

State Planning and Capacity funds will be allocated proportionally based on the State's population, share of members of covered populations, and relative lack of availability and adoption among residents

NTIA and the U.S. Census Bureau have collaborated to create the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, which shows covered population totals for each state and other inputs into the funding formula

Planning funds will be used to develop State Digital Equity Plans, which must contain several components



Vision

- Stated **vision** for digital equity



Coordination and Outreach Strategy

- **Description of plan to collaborate** with key stakeholders to achieve its digital equity goals
- **List of organizations** that collaborated on and contributed to digital equity plans



Objectives

- **Measurable objectives**
- Assessment of how those objectives will **impact the State's plans and outcomes**



Implementation

- Implementation **strategy**
- **Timeline**



Barriers to Digital Equity

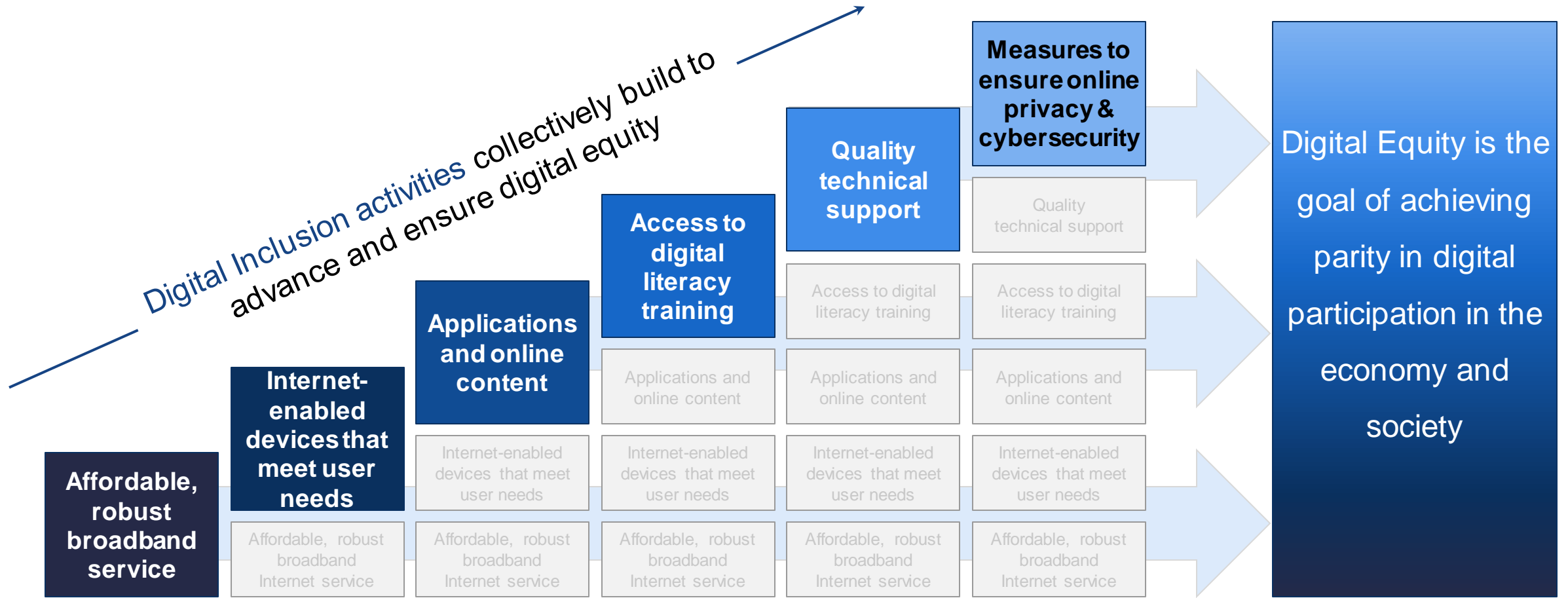
- **Identify barriers** to digital equity
- Include a **digital needs assessment**

Eligible entities are required to engage with key stakeholders as a part of developing digital equity plans

Key stakeholder groups may include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ➤ Community anchor institutions | ➤ Organizations that represent covered populations |
| ➤ County and municipal governments | ➤ Civil rights organizations |
| ➤ Local educational agencies | ➤ Entities that carry out workforce development programs |
| ➤ Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or Native Hawaiian organizations, where applicable | ➤ State agencies that administer or supervise adult education or literacy activities |
| ➤ Nonprofit organizations | ➤ Public housing authorities |

The digital inclusion activities planned and implemented under these Programs build towards achieving digital equity



The Programs also support the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's broader goals of improving access, affordability, and adoption



Access



Promotes the **availability of reliable, high-speed Internet technology** through stakeholder outreach and engagement



Advances the **online accessibility of public resources** and services



Affordability



Promotes **awareness of existing programs** (e.g., Affordable Connectivity Program) that **help low-income households afford** high-speed Internet service



Offers **Internet equipment and software at low or no cost**



Adoption and equity



Narrows adoption disparities across covered populations by engaging with diverse stakeholders



Implements **digital inclusion programs** that include digital skills and literacy training, technical support, and workforce development

Every stakeholder plays a role in the Digital Equity programs

Illustrative, non-exhaustive

Telecom provider

- Provide States, other territories, and Tribal / Native entities with background data on their baseline and digital equity needs



Community anchor institution

- Partner with States, other territories, and Tribal / Native entities to develop State Digital Equity Plans
- Advocate for community interests and needs



Community orgs

- Serve as a thought partner as States, other territories, and Tribal / Native entities design their outreach strategies
- Advocate for community interests and needs



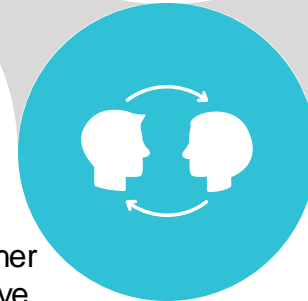
Tribal government

- Participate in the Planning Grant Program
- Coordinate with relevant State(s) to develop state-wide Plans



Local government

- Collaborate with States, other territories, and Tribal / Native to develop State Digital Equity Plans



Individual

- Participate in the planning process of your local jurisdiction

Additional resources about the Digital Equity Programs

- 1 Visit the InternetForAll.gov for additional information on federal funding programs
- 2 Engage with your State or territory regarding their plans to improve high-speed Internet access and achieve digital equity
- 3 Submit questions to digitalequity@ntia.gov
- 4 Attend future NTIA webinars and events

