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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Digital Equity Competitive Grant
Program



U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Note

The Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program (Competitive Grant Program), authorized by Section 60305 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (November 15, 2021), also commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides federal funding to equip individuals and communities with the skills and tools needed for full participation in society and the economy. The following is the first in a series of FAQ documents intended to provide guidance on information set forth in NTIA's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued on July 24, 2024. Following the release of this document, further questions may be submitted to digitalequity@ntia.gov to be considered for inclusion in future FAQ documents.

This document does not and is not intended to supersede, modify, or otherwise alter applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, the terms and conditions of the award, or the specific application requirements set forth in the NOFO. In all cases, statutory and regulatory mandates, the terms and conditions of the award, the requirements set forth in the NOFO, and follow-on policies and guidance, shall prevail over any inconsistencies contained in this document.”

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1. General Competitive Grant Program Overview

1.0 What is the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program?

The Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program (Competitive Grant Program) is the third of three digital equity programs authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 and the final component of the Digital Equity Act's framework for addressing digital equity and inclusion. The Competitive Grant Program provides funding to support efforts to achieve digital equity, promote digital inclusion activities, and spur greater adoption and use of broadband among the Covered Populations as defined in the Digital Equity Act. (NOFO Section I.A)

1.1 What programs are in the Digital Equity Act, and what are the differences across the programs?

The Digital Equity Act established three programs:

1. The State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program (Planning Grant Program) is a \$60 million program, which awarded grants to 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and four U.S. Territories (States & Territories), to develop Digital Equity Plans which identify the barriers to digital adoption for each of the eight Covered Populations identified in the statute.
2. The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program (Capacity Grant Program) is a \$1.44 billion program for States & Territories to implement their Digital Equity Plans and carry out digital inclusion activities. Funding was also made available for Native Entities (Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations) via a competitive process to conduct digital equity planning and carry out digital equity and inclusion activities consistent with the Digital Equity Act.
3. The Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program (Competitive Grant Program) is a \$1.25 billion program for grantees to develop and implement digital equity projects. The Competitive Grant Program will provide funding on a competitive basis to Eligible Entities. There are also statutory set-asides for Native Entities and the U.S. Territories.

It's important to be familiar with the [State Digital Equity Plans](#) developed in the Planning Grant Program. The Competitive Grant Program makes available funding for programs and activities that will address the gaps in the implementation of existing State Digital Equity Plans, proposals that will supplement or further advance State Digital Equity Plans, and/or proposals that address barriers to digital equity that the State Digital Equity Plan failed to identify.

**It should be noted that some entities that are Eligible Entities for the Competitive Grant Program are eligible to apply for subgrants through the Capacity Grant Program, so it is important to avoid duplication of funds for activities across both programs.*

1.2 Who is eligible to apply to the Competitive Grant Program?

The following entities are eligible to apply for Competitive Grant Program so long as the entity is not serving, and has not served, as the administering entity for a State under either the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program or the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program:

- (1) A political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of a State, including an agency of a State that is responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities, or for providing public housing, in the State.
- (2) An Indian Tribe, an Alaska Native entity, or a Native Hawaiian organization.
- (3) A foundation, corporation, institution, or association that is –
 - a. A not-for-profit entity; and
 - b. Not a school.
- (4) A community anchor institution.
- (5) A local educational agency.
- (6) An entity that carries out a workforce development program.
- (7) A partnership between any of the entities described in paragraphs (1) through (6).

1.3 Are Native Entities eligible to apply to the Competitive Grant Program?

Yes, Native Entities are included within the definition of an Eligible Entity under the Digital Equity Act. Native Entities include Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or a Native Hawaiian organizations. (NOFO Section III.A)

47 U.S.C. §1724(j)(2) establishes a set-aside of \$37,500,000 exclusively for Native Entities. Accordingly, NTIA has set aside \$37,500,000 for Native Entities and will increase this amount to \$50,000,000 if the fiscal year 2025 funds become available. However, Native Entities are also included within the definition of an Eligible Entity under the Competitive Grant Program. Accordingly, applications from Native Entities will be considered as part of the Competitive Grant Program along with other Eligible Entities. If Native Entities are not funded to at least the amount of the tribal set-aside during the initial award process, lower scoring Native Entity Applications will be considered until either the set-aside has been exhausted, or until there are no further qualifying Native Entity applications. Any remaining funds from the Native Entity set-aside that are not distributed under the NOFO will be made available to Native Entities in future NOFOs. (NOFO Executive Summary Section K)

1.4 Are U.S. Territories eligible to apply for the Competitive Grant Program?

U.S. Territories are eligible to apply for funding under a separate set-aside established exclusively for U.S. Territories. Because U.S. Territories are not considered to be “Eligible Entities” for the Competitive program, their applications will be reviewed separately. U.S. Territories should complete an application as described in Section IV of the NOFO.

Complete applications from U.S. Territories must be received through the NTIA Grants Portal (<https://grants.ntia.gov>) no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on October 22, 2024.

1.5 Are partnerships eligible to apply to the Competitive Grant Program?

Yes, NTIA recognizes that partnerships will be an effective means of serving the Covered Populations and they are encouraged. A partnership may be between any of the eligible entities described in the NOFO Section III.A.

An Eligible Entity may submit only one application for Competitive Grant Program funding, either as an Authorized Representative of a partnership or as an individual applicant. However, an Eligible Entity may participate as a member of more than one partnership so long as it is not the Authorized Representative for more than one partnership. Only Eligible Entities may be members of a partnership.

1.6 Are schools eligible to apply to the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program?

Yes, a school is eligible to apply *if it is serving as a community anchor institution (CAI)*. As CAIs are defined to include, “a public school, a public or multi-family housing authority, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a State or Territory library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization” (NOFO I.B).

1.7 How do partnerships apply to the Competitive Grant Program?

The Authorized Representative of a partnership must submit a binding Letter of Commitment (“LOC”) from each member of the partnership demonstrating authority to file on behalf of the partners. The LOC must set forth the role or scope of work of the participating partner, a commitment from the partner to serve in that role, identification of any funding the partner will receive from the Authorized Representative (either as a subrecipient or otherwise, as applicable), and a commitment from the Authorized Representative to keep each partner informed of progress on the project or activity. The LOC must be executed by both the partner member and the Authorized Representative.

A Native Entity making an application for Competitive Grant Program funds, whether on its own behalf, as an Authorized Representative of a partnership, or as a participant in a partnership, must submit a Tribal Government Resolution or equivalent formal authorization from the governing body of the Native Entity providing express authority to apply for Competitive Grant Funds or to participate in a partnership making application for grant funds.

To qualify for participation in the Native Entity set aside amount identified by 47 U.S.C. §1724(j)(2), the applicant must be a Native Entity and the intended beneficiaries of the proposed programs (i.e., the recipients of the proposed outputs) must be Covered Populations that are members of a Native Entity. A Native Entity partnership may have non-Native Entity partners so long as the Authorized Representative is a Native Entity, and all intended beneficiaries of the proposed programs are members of a Native Entity. (NOFO Section III.A)

1.8 Is there a Cost Sharing or Match requirement?

Yes, there is a minimum 10% match required. As required by the Digital Equity Act, the amount of a Competitive Grant awarded to an Eligible Entity through this program may not exceed 90 percent of the total project cost. The Assistant Secretary may grant a waiver of this matching limitation if an applicant petitions the Assistant Secretary for a waiver and the Assistant Secretary determines that the petition demonstrates financial need.

To maximize the reach of available funding, NTIA will give additional consideration to applications that exceed the minimum matching requirement during the review process as outlined in Section V.D of the NOFO.

Matching funds may be in the form of either cash or in-kind contributions consistent with the requirements outlined in 2 C.F.R. 200.306. In-kind contributions, which include third-party in-kind contributions, are non-cash donations of property, goods, or services, which benefit a federally assisted project, and which may count toward satisfying the non-federal matching requirement of a project’s total budgeted costs when such contributions meet certain criteria. In-kind contributions must be allowable and allocable project expenses.

U.S. Territories are exempt from the cost match requirement. (NOFO Section III.B)

**It should be noted that the [updated 2 C.F.R. 200 requirements](#) will apply to the Competitive Grant Program.*

1.9 How will applications be evaluated during Initial Eligibility and Administrative Review?

NTIA will conduct an initial review of all submitted applications to ensure they contain the information and documentation required under Section IV.B of the NOFO and that the information was submitted in a timely manner as required by Section IV.F.

The following applicants will be eliminated from review:

- An entity that does not meet the definition of an Eligible Entity or is not a Territory;
- A partnership that fails to submit the required Letters of Commitment from each member of the partnership as described in Section IV.B of the NOFO; or
- A Native Entity applicant that does not submit an authorization to support an application from its governing body.

In addition, NTIA will remove applications from consideration if submitted materials are incomplete or untimely.

In its discretion, NTIA may provide an applicant with an incomplete application one opportunity to cure its application, in which case NTIA will provide the applicant seven (7) calendar days to submit information responsive to the feedback provided by NTIA, unless this time period is extended by NTIA.

(NOFO Section V.B)

1.10 How will applications be evaluated during Merit Review?

All applications that reach Merit Review will be reviewed by at least two merit reviewers, which may be Federal personnel or non-Federal personnel, who have demonstrated expertise in the programmatic aspects of digital equity and inclusion. In accordance with the criteria in Section V.C of the NOFO, the Merit Reviewers will review applications for Competitive Grant Program awards to ensure conformity with the Program objectives, eligible activities, and related costs/budget.

The evaluation criteria that will be used by the Merit Reviewers to review and analyze applications for Competitive Grant funds are grouped into four categories as outlined below. Reviewers will evaluate applications according to these evaluation criteria and independently score each application based on a scale of 0-100 points. Based on an average of the reviewers' scores, applications that score 70 or more will be considered "Qualified for Programmatic Review" under the prioritization process outlined below. Applications with a score below 70 will not proceed to Programmatic Review and will not be considered for funding.

Evaluation Criteria for Merit Review:

- A. Project Need, Purpose, and Benefits (40 points)
- B. Strength of Applicant's Organizational Capability (25 points)
- C. Strength of Project Implementation Plan and Budget (25 points)

D. Project Results and Evaluation (10 points)
(NOFO Section V.C)

1.11 How will applications be evaluated during Programmatic Review?

Only applications which pass the Initial Eligibility and Administrative Review, and score at least 70 points during the Merit Review, will be eligible for consideration under Programmatic Review using the prioritization process outlined in Section V.D.1 of the NOFO (NOFO Section V.D) and described below.

NTIA will assess applications that reach Programmatic Review based upon the criteria listed below and will calculate weighted Programmatic Review scores accordingly. Scores will be multiplied by 0.1 for each of the six (6) factors outlined below that the application meets:

1. The Digital Equity Project addresses an aspect of the digital divide without a current solution or supplements an existing solution in an innovative manner and uses a unique, novel, and/or creative approach tailored to the unique needs and challenges faced by the Covered Populations.
2. The application includes matching funds of twenty (20) percent or greater.
3. The application includes matching funds of thirty (30) percent or greater.
4. The proposed Digital Equity Project facilitates the purpose of the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program, specifically by promoting two or more of the following: (1) Economic stability, including workforce development and employment opportunities; (2) Access to quality education; (3) Access to healthcare; (4) Social and civic engagement; or (5) Community access to the benefits of Internet technology.
5. The proposed project focuses services on one or more Covered Populations in geographic areas in which more than 50% of households are “covered households” within the meaning of the Digital Equity Act.
6. The proposed project will create a sustainable long-term impact on digital equity and inclusion (e.g., by demonstrating ongoing funding sources, a broad range of appropriate partners or other indicators of an ability to continue the project(s) past the period of performance) or will lead to the permanent elimination of a barrier to digital equity.

Rolling Awards: Applications will be organized into prioritized groupings based on their Merit Review scores and proceed through Programmatic Review together. Applications will remain in these groupings for consideration by the Selecting Official, who will develop a slate of awards for submission to the Grants Officer on a rolling basis. Within each prioritized grouping, the OICG Associate Administrator will consider each application’s Merit Review and Programmatic Review Score and will take into account the selection factors listed in Section V.E of the NOFO when recommending awards for final review and approval by the Assistant Secretary. Any application that is not selected for an award within a prioritized grouping will be considered for funding within the next highest scoring prioritized group. (NOFO Section V.D.5)

2. Application

2.0 When are applications for the Competitive Grant Program due?

Applications for the Competitive Grant Program must be complete and must adhere to the instructions provided in the NOFO and be submitted in the format required by the NTIA Grants Portal (www.grants.ntia.gov). When developing the submission timeline, each applicant should keep in mind that: (a) all applicants are required to have current registrations in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and (b) the free annual registration process in SAM.gov generally takes between three (3) and five (5) business days but can take more than three weeks.

Complete applications from Eligible Entities must be received by the NTIA Grants Portal no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on September 23, 2024.

Complete applications from U.S. Territories must be received through the NTIA Grants Portal (<https://grants.ntia.gov>) no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on October 22, 2024.

Please direct programmatic inquiries to digitalequity@ntia.gov

Application materials are available at <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov>.

(NOFO Section IV.F)

2.2 What must be included in an application for the Competitive Grant Program?

Applications for Grants under the Competitive Grant Program must be complete, must adhere to the instructions provided in Section IV.B of the NOFO, and must be submitted in the format requested in the NTIA Grants Portal (<https://grants.ntia.gov>). NTIA will not consider applications that fail to comply with these requirements or that are untimely submitted. Any Eligible Entity or U.S. Territory applying for a Competitive Grant must submit an application that includes the information listed in the NOFO, which is inclusive of the elements required by the Digital Equity Act.

2.3 What should Eligible Entities include in the Competitive Grant application Project Narrative?

The Project Narrative must include the following information:

- a. **An Executive Summary.** The executive summary should include the information listed in NOFO Section IV.B(7)a.
- b. **Activities and Interventions.** For each specific implementation activity and/or intervention that will be part of the Digital Equity Project, and which will use Competitive Grant Program funding, include the elements in NOFO Section IV.B(7)b.
- c. **A project plan:** A description of all major project activities and timelines, including the timing of planning and implementation stages, key milestones and when each major project activity will start and end, and potential risks to the timeline and proposed mitigation strategies.

(NOFO Section IV.B(7))

2.4 What should Eligible Entities include in a Consolidated Budget Form?

All budget information in the Consolidated Budget Form must support the dollar amounts identified in the SF-424 and demonstrate that the project or activity meets the eligible use requirements in the Digital Equity Act and the NOFO. The Consolidated Budget Form is an Excel spreadsheet that includes budget details for all costs as well as a narrative explanation of those costs. The budget details must reflect the cost categories that appear on the SF-424 and include itemized calculations for each cost placed under those categories. Each cost must include a narrative that explains the necessity and basis for the cost and reflect only allowable costs that are consistent with the project(s)' scope. Allowable costs are determined in accordance with the cost principles identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including Subpart E of such regulations and the Digital Equity Act. Consolidated Budget Form entries must reflect costs in the appropriate cost categories listed in the form and include itemized calculations for each cost placed in those categories.

The budget must account for the recipient's administrative costs, capped at 10% of the grant amount, and program evaluation costs, capped at 10% of the grant amount. For this purpose, the 10% limitation on administrative costs includes the combined total of indirect and direct administrative costs charged to the award. If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, the applicant must either provide a copy of their approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement or include a statement that they are electing to charge the *de minimis* rate, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.414. The applicant must clearly describe in the budget narrative how it applied or calculated its administrative costs and demonstrate that its combined direct and indirect administrative costs are both at or under the 10% statutory limit and consistent with their negotiated indirect cost rate agreement or the *de minimis* rate, as applicable.

(NOFO Section IV.B(8))

2.5 What activities are subject to caps under the Competitive Grant Program NOFO?

a. 10 Percent Cap on Evaluation

A recipient shall use no more than 10 percent of the grant amount to measure and evaluate the activities supported with the grant amounts.

b. 10 Percent Cap on Administrative Costs

A recipient shall use no more than 10 percent of the grant amount for administrative costs in carrying out any of the activities described in Section IV.C.1 of the NOFO. The 10% limitation on administrative costs includes the combined total of indirect and direct administrative costs charged to the award.

(NOFO Section IV.C.4)

3. Awards and Funds/Allowable Uses

3.0 How much funding is available through this Competitive Grant Program NOFO?

Congress appropriated \$750,000,000 (minus administrative expenses) to fund grants under the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program through fiscal year 2024. NTIA anticipates that an additional \$250,000,000 (minus administrative expenses) will become available for FY25 in October of 2024. If these funds become available, NTIA will add these funds to this NOFO.

(NOFO Section II.A)

3.1 How much funding is available to Native Entities through the Competitive Grant Program?

The Digital Equity Act requires the Assistant Secretary to reserve five (5) percent of the amount made available to carry out the Program in a fiscal year to award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations (“Native Entities”) to allow those tribes, entities and organizations to carry out the activities described in the Competitive Grant Program. Accordingly, NTIA will reserve \$37,500,000 of the \$750,000,000 for grant awards to Native Entities. If fiscal year 2025 funds are made available, NTIA will reserve an additional \$12,500,000 of the \$250,000,000 for Native Entities.

Because Native Entities are included within the definition of an Eligible Entity under the Competitive Grant Program, applications from Native Entities will be considered as part of the Competitive Grant Program along with all other Eligible Entities. If Native Entities are not funded to at least the amount of the Native Entity set aside during the initial award process, lower scoring Native Entity applications will be considered until either the set aside has been exhausted, or until there are no further qualifying Native Entity applications. Any Native Entity set-aside funds not awarded will be made available to Native Entities through future NOFOs.

(NOFO Section II.A)

3.2 How much funding is available to U.S. Territories through the Competitive Grant Program?

The Digital Equity Act requires the Assistant Secretary to reserve one (1) percent of the amount made available to carry out the Program in a fiscal year to award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States that is not a State (“U.S. Territories”) to enable those entities to carry out the activities described in the Competitive Grant Program. Accordingly, NTIA will reserve \$7,500,000 of the \$750,000,000 for grant awards to U.S. Territories. If fiscal year 2025 funds are made available, NTIA will reserve an additional \$2,500,000 of the \$250,000,000 for Territories. Because U.S. Territories are not Eligible Entities, and thus cannot participate directly in the Competitive Grant Program, these funds will be made available to the Territories through a separate review process using the same application requirements, as described in Section V.D.4 of the NOFO.

(NOFO Section II.A)

3.3 How will grant amounts to Eligible Entities be determined?

Grant awards will be made on a competitive basis under the criteria outlined in Section V of the NOFO and will depend upon the number of applicants and the size of the proposals submitted. NTIA expects to make individual Competitive Grant Program awards to Eligible Entities within a range of \$5,000,000 and \$12,000,000. This funding range is not a required minimum or maximum, but Eligible Entities requesting award amounts outside that range must explain why their application falls below or above this range and must provide a compelling justification for that variance.

(NOFO Section II.D)

3.4 How will grant amounts to U.S. Territories be determined?

Awards to U.S. Territories will be made based on the criteria outlined in Section V of the NOFO and will not exceed \$2,500,000. While NTIA expects award amounts to be above \$1,000,000, this is not a required minimum and will be determined based on the number of applications and amount of funding requested.

(NOFO Section II.D)

3.5 Can an Eligible Entity receive Competitive Grant Program funding if it is receiving other sources of Federal or State funding for broadband?

Yes. However, a grant or subgrant awarded to an Eligible Entity under the Competitive Grant Program shall supplement, not supplant, other federal or State funds that have been made available to carry out activities described in the Digital Equity Act and in the NOFO. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program funds, including funds used for non-deployment expenditures, as well as the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, are subject to separate financial assistance award terms and conditions and must not be supplanted by Competitive Grant Program funding.

(NOFO Section IV.C.4.c)

3.6 What are the allowable uses of Competitive Grant Program funds?

Applicants must comply with the requirements of the Digital Equity Act and the NOFO. An Eligible Entity or U.S. Territory to which a Competitive Grant is awarded must use the grant funds to support not less than 1 of the following activities:

- a. To develop and implement digital inclusion activities that benefit one or more of the Covered Populations.
- b. To facilitate the adoption of broadband by Covered Populations to provide educational and employment opportunities to those populations.
- c. To implement training programs for Covered Populations that cover basic, advanced, and applied skills or other workforce development programs, including, for example, digital inclusion projects that address online safety, and work to prevent online harassment and abuse

- d. To make available equipment, instrumentation, networking capability, hardware and software, or digital network technology for broadband services to covered populations at low or no cost.
- e. To construct, upgrade, expend, or operate new or existing public access computing centers for Covered Populations through community anchor institutions.
- f. To undertake any other project and activity that the Assistant Secretary finds to be consistent with the purposes for which the Program is established.

Grant recipients may only use federal award funds to pay for allowable costs under the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. Allowable costs are determined in accordance with the cost principles identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including Subpart E of such regulations and in the Digital Equity Act. In addition, costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and allowable for the proposed Digital Equity Project, and conform to generally accepted accounting principles. Grant funds may be used to cover only eligible costs incurred by the recipient during the period of performance, allowable costs incurred by the recipient during the grant closeout process, and limited pre-application expenses as outlined in NOFO Section IV. C.1.

3.7 When can project work begin on the Competitive Grant Program?

Project work can begin once awards have been made and relevant Specific Award Conditions (SACs) are satisfied.

3.8 When will awards be made?

NTIA expects to begin making awards under the NOFO by Winter of 2024. NTIA plans to issue awards made under the Competitive Grant Program on a rolling basis. (NOFO Section IV.H)

3.9 What is the Period of Performance?

Except for measurement and evaluation activities required under the Digital Equity Act and the NOFO, grant recipients must *expend the grant amounts* within four (4) years after the date on which the entity is awarded the grant. The consolidated budget submitted with the application must reflect completion of all projects and interventions during the four (4) year period of performance. As permitted by the Digital Equity Act, *grant recipients may continue to measure and evaluate the activities supported with the grant amounts for a period of one (1) year after the initial four (4) year Period of Performance*. Measurement and evaluation costs are capped at ten (10) percent and should be reflected in the consolidated budget. This timeline is required by the Competitive Grant Program's statutory authority and no extensions to the four (4) year Period of Performance, or the one (1) year evaluation period, may be granted. (NOFO Section II.B)

3.10 What activities are prohibited in the Competitive Grant Program?

NOFO Section IV.C.4 defines the following prohibited activities:

- Prohibition on Supplanting
Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. §1724(i), a grant or subgrant awarded under the Competitive Grant Program shall supplement, not supplant, other federal or State funds that have been made available to carry out activities described at 47 U.S.C. §1724 and in the NOFO. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program funds, including funds

used for non-deployment expenditures, as well as the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, are subject to separate financial assistance award terms and conditions and must not be supplanted by Competitive Grant Program funding.

- Prohibition on Profit or Fees

A profit, fee, or other incremental charge above actual cost is not an allowable cost under this program.

- Prohibition on Use of Grant Funds to Support or Oppose Collective Bargaining

Grant funds awarded pursuant to this program may not be used, whether directly or indirectly as an offset for other funds, to support or oppose collective bargaining.

- Prohibition on General Research

Projects must be limited to serving the Covered Populations and may not include general research projects or academic studies of digital equity or the Covered Populations.

3.11 Is it allowable to use BEAD or Capacity Grant Program funds to apply for the Competitive Grant Program?

No. Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) funds, State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program (Capacity Grant Program) funds, and funds from any other NTIA funded grant program may be not be used to apply for the Competitive Grant Program.

While pre-award costs that are necessary and reasonable for submitting an application are allowable under the Competitive Grant Program, it is not allowable to use BEAD or Capacity Grant Program funds, or funds from any other NTIA funded grant program, to pay for costs associated with applying.