OFFICE CREATION CHECKLIST

Guide and best practices for states
Topics for Discussion

Introduction

Office Creation Checklist
INTRODUCTION
Office Creation Checklist

- **Establish legal authority** for standing entity dedicated to broadband program oversight within the state
- Identify and hire broadband office leader
- Identify and recruit for **FTE positions**, providing coverage of portfolios
- Establish **regular communication practices** and cadence with advisory entities, including mentors and NTIA FPO
- Create **state-specific knowledge repository** and knowledge management processes
- Develop a broadband office website
- Develop grants program approach
- Develop digital inclusion/equity approach
CHECKLIST COMPONENTS
Establish Legal Authority and Mission/Value*

Executive and/or legislative mandate for a standing entity dedicated to broadband program oversight within the state

Entity should have authority to:
- Receive, manage, and disburse funds.
- Hire full-time and contract positions.
- Develop and implement broadband policy.
- Represent broadband priorities within the state interagency, to stakeholders, and the federal government.

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

Best in Class: California’s Broadband & Digital Literacy Office

- Manages more than $6 billion for broadband expansion initiatives within the state.
- Works closely with the CA Public Utilities Commission and other state implementers, the Broadband Council, and regional and local broadband planning and stakeholder groups.
Identify and Hire Broadband Office Leader*

**Ideal Experience**
- Broadband program management
- Public sector financial management/budget oversight
- Facilitation of community groups
- Staff supervision

**Ideal Skills**
- Strategic leadership
- Problem-solving
- Project management
- Policy implementation

---

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive*
Identify and Recruit for Full Time Equivalent Positions

At a minimum, a broadband office should have at least **6 full time staff members** fulfilling the functions outlined within the identified key portfolios.

States may need more staff, or more staff in a specific portfolio area, depending on current capacities of the broadband program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Portfolios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal/Regulatory/Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications &amp; Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Equity &amp; Inclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best in Class:** The Colorado Broadband Office has an extensive staff, addressing most of the key portfolios we have identified.
**Program Leadership and Management Portfolio**

- **Defines, shares, and implements** state broadband Mission and Vision
- **Develops** broadband planning priorities
- **Supervises** and sets priorities for staff
- **Represents** broadband authority to state and interagency leadership, stakeholder groups (to include commissions and/or councils), NTIA and federal agencies, etc.

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive*
Legal and Regulatory Policy Lead Portfolio*

- Develops and advocates for necessary regulatory reform
- Connect with ISPs and state government agencies
  - ISP-supplied data uniformity (with Technical Lead)
  - Access, easements, and permitting (federal, state, and local)
  - Pole sharing
  - Enabling access by alternative technology types
  - Dig Once policy
- Drafts state broadband policy framework
- Analyzes constraints
  - Municipality participation
  - Public-private partnerships
  - Funds management
  - Speed standards

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

Best in Class:
Vermont's legislature has passed bills creating communications union districts (CUDs), which allow municipalities to band together to offer broadband services and access state funds as a collective.
Grants Management Portfolio*

- **Conduct planning**
  - Validation of unserved
  - Cost analytics, integration of existing federal funding, etc.
  - Define service areas

- **Develop program design**
  - Matching requirements
  - SOW development

- **Oversee grants evaluation process**
  - Scoring, ranking, record keeping
  - Selection and awards
  - Reporting and compliance monitoring
  - Challenge process

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

---

**Best in Class:** Minnesota has awarded 35+ broadband grants annually since 2014; posts scoring, resources, and all previous awards recipients on its web page.
Technical Programs Portfolio*

• **Conduct data collection initiatives**
  - Unserved and underserved data
  - Identify data for FCC Challenge and S/T Challenge Processes

• **Verify mapping precision and accuracy**
  - Serviceable location, validation of FCC maps, federal permitting

• **Perform technical reviews for grant applications**

• **Review grant mapping submissions**

• **Determine technology deployment plans**
  - Accommodations for rural and remote deployment
  - DSL, fiber, wireless, satellite, etc.

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

**Best in Class:** Maine's maps use FCC and ISP data in addition to crowdsourced speed tests and has address-specific data for wireless and fixed service.
Communications and Outreach Portfolio*

- **Establish overall communications strategy and plan**

- **Develop Communications SOPs**
  - Interagency, stakeholder groups, and the public
  - Consider stakeholder groups and develop content around each group including the use of accessible language such as using "high speed internet" instead of "broadband"

- **Oversee website content management**

- **Manage media engagement & press releases**

- **Maintain public mailbox**

- **Serve as liaison with a diverse set of stakeholder groups**
  - Councils, Task Forces, etc.

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

**Examples demonstrate general good practices for the office, but do not reflect the local coordination requirements outlined in BIL NOFOs

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/21/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/21/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/21/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16/2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best in Class:** Oklahoma's broadband office provides transparent communication resources available to public and private stakeholders; examples of OK's resources include meeting schedules and documents, press releases, etc.
Digital Equity and Inclusion Portfolio*

- Incorporate equity and inclusion into all office efforts
- Equity policy lead
- Coordinates affordability, digital literacy, and device adoption programs
- May lead relationships with Digital Equity implementers
  - Community anchor institutions, schools, etc.
  - Digital equity advocates
  - Technical assistance providers

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

Achieving Digital Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gov. Cooper’s Plan</th>
<th>Measuring Success</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Affordability</th>
<th>Digital Literacy</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Too many North Carolinians lack access to an internet connection or cannot afford an internet subscription. They also lack the skills to take advantage of digital services like telehealth, online education, or online job boards.

Gov. Roy Cooper’s plan aims to close the digital divide by addressing:
- Infrastructure and access
- Digital literacy
- Affordability

The nearly $1 billion in federal American Rescue Plan funds invested in this plan must be spent by the end of 2026.

Best in Class: North Carolina, in addition to other resources, provides an informative breakdown of digital equity and the specific challenges of overcoming the digital divide.
Establish Regular Communication Practices*

- **Create communications plan to gather input on DE/BEAD plans**
  - Goals
  - Audience
  - Identify short and long-term approaches

- **Engage mentors**
  - State peers identified as leaders in broadband development
  - Advocacy groups, think tanks, etc.

- **Engage federal consultants and other experts, as needed**

- **NTIA FPO**
  - Federal program officer assigned to each state
  - Point of contact between state and federal program team
  - Disseminates resources and information provided by NTIA to states broadband or high-speed internet offices

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive
Create State-specific Knowledge Repository and Management*

- **Arrange access to NTIA TA knowledge repository**
  - Centralized online hub for all things broadband
  - E.g., documents, maps, data, templates, samples, case studies

- **Prioritize intake of NTIA TA materials**
  - States will have equal access to federal broadband information resources
  - Will facilitate clear communication between state and federal governments

- **Establish and maintain state-specific TA repository**
  - Authorizing legislation, executive actions, grants history, policy framework

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

**Best in Class:** Minnesota’s broadband office provides federal and state resources, links to NTIA sources, maps of tribal and count-level broadband service, recorded webinars, archived data, etc.
Develop Grants Program Approach*

Prepare to receive BEAD Program Planning Funding & Notice of Available Amounts

- **Plan and Develop Five-year Action Plan**
  - Develop the state's vision and goals
  - Document the current state of broadband
  - Identify barriers and obstacles
  - Develop an implementation plan

- **Prepare for FCC Broadband Data Collection and Challenge processes**

- **Plan and Develop Initial Proposal**
  - Develop long-term objectives
  - Develop local, regional and Tribal coordination
  - Document current state of broadband funding and unserved / underserved locations including CAI’s
  - Develop plan to conduct a challenge process
  - Plan to stand-up competitive sub-grant program

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive

Best in Class: Wisconsin has a mature grants program with clear documentation of their application and awards processes.
Develop Digital Inclusion/Policy Approach*

• Utilize expert resources on Digital Equity and Inclusion
  ➢ Digital Inclusion Start Up Manual
  ➢ Digital Equity for States
  ➢ Coalition Guide
  ➢ Asset Mapping Tool

• Discuss digital equity and inclusion goals

• Identify and address major gaps in digital inclusion
  ➢ E.g., telehealth and education
  ➢ Address key inequalities in affordability, literacy, adoption, device ownership

• Develop digital equity plan

• Think broadly about who is at the table
  ➢ Broaden stakeholder outreach and ensure input from everyone who will be affected by this initiative

Best in Class: California

➢ CA's Broadband Plan addresses many aspects of digital equity and inclusion, addressing:
  • Special attention to marginalized/disadvantaged populations
  • Affordability
  • Device ownership
  • Digital literacy
  • Digital navigation support
  • Funding and TA for digital inclusion programs

➢ Digital Equity for All Task Force is part of CA Broadband Council

*Examples are provided for consideration, but are not exhaustive
THANK YOU

InternetForAll.gov
Broadbandusa.ntia.gov
BroadbandForAll@ntia.gov