

Request For Comment



TIPS FOR SUBMITTING EFFECTIVE COMMENTS

February 2023



Table of Contents

3	Overview
4	Background
6	Request for Comments
10	How to Write an Effective Comment
12	Listening Session Questions

Overview



The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to ensuring that all Americans have access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service.

As part of this goal, NTIA has published a Request for Comment on Regulations.gov to help inform how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Digital Equity Act programs can work to achieve this national and community driven opportunity for change.

This Request for Comment is part of NTIA’s wider strategy to engage with partners, stakeholders, and most importantly, individuals with lived experiences who are impacted by the digital divide.

These tips are meant to help you submit effective comments that have an impact and help us improve our programs.



Background

The Digital Equity Act - 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 service 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

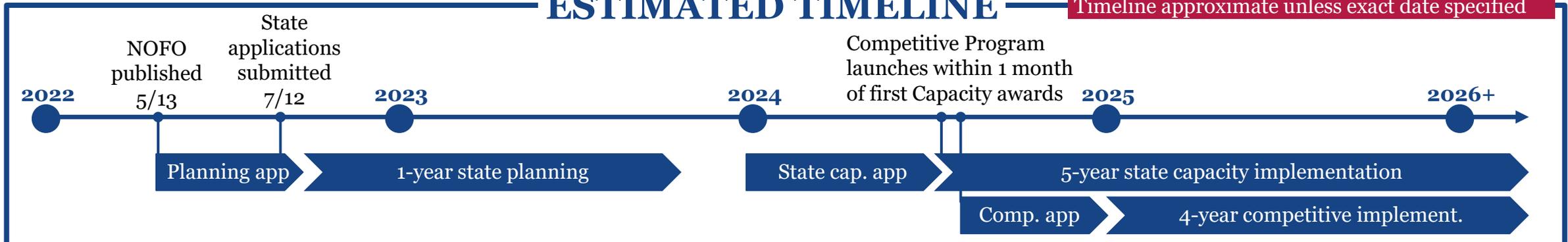
- \$1.25B to implement digital equity and inclusion activities

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 plans related and activities
- ☆ Providing digital literacy and digital skills education
- ☆ Facilitating the adoption of high-speed Internet service

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Timeline approximate unless exact date specified



Request For Comment

NTIA's Request for Comment
on the Digital Equity Act
programs is **currently open**.

The Notice and RFC is available
[here](#). Comments can be
submitted at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)
under Docket **NTIA-2023-
0002**.

The deadline for all comments
is: **May 1st, 2023, 5:00 PM
EST**

How to Submit Comments



1. The Digital Equity Act comment period will close **60 days after date of publication on the Federal Register (March 2 to May 1)** - begin work well before the deadline.
2. If you are uploading more than one attachment to the comment web form, it is recommended that you use the following file titles:

Attachment1_<title>; Attachment2_<title>; Attachment3_<title>; etc.

3. Keep a copy of your comment in a separate file - this practice helps ensure that you will not lose your comment if you have a problem submitting it using the [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) web form.
4. Additionally, NTIA will accept comments via email. Please include the docket number NTIA-2023-0002 in the subject line of the message, and direct your comments to digitalequity@ntia.gov
5. You may also mail a printed submission to
National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce,
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 4878, Washington, DC 20230, Attn: Digital Equity RFC.



Regulations.gov



To submit a comment via [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) enter the Docket “NTIA- 2023-0002 in the search bar, then click on the ‘Dockets’ tab (as shown below).

For further questions, please refer to the [regulations.gov FAQs](#).



- General FAQs
- Site FAQs
- General Information +
Understand what to find and browse for on Regulations.gov
- Find Dockets, Documents, and Comments FAQs +
Learn how to find rules and dockets
- Rulemaking Process +
Get the basics on Regulations.gov's role in the rulemaking process
- Unified Agenda +
Find information about regulations agencies plan to issue or have recently completed
- Privacy +
Know what information will be collected and publicly disclosed on Regulations.gov
- Commenting +
Submit comments, understand how they are reviewed and make a difference
- Media Instructions +
Connect your organization's stakeholders to Regulations.gov
- Regulations.gov API (v4) +
Information about Regulations.gov API Version 4
- Subscriptions +
Sign up for email notifications about a specific regulation on Regulations.gov
- Downloading Data +
Create a custom download of document metadata from Regulations.gov by Agency, Docket or Document



How to Write an Effective Comment

Tips on Crafting Effective Comments



1. While NTIA encourages you to support your comment with substantive data, facts, and opinions, **you do not need to be an expert or professional to provide a comment.** You are encouraged to provide your lived experience in your comment
2. Clearly identify the question(s) that you are commenting on and include the question number. There is no minimum or maximum length for an effective comment, and you are encouraged to reply to any or all questions posed.
3. If you disagree with an aspect of our programs, suggest an alternative and include an explanation and/or analysis of how the alternative might meet the same objective or be more effective.
4. Include pros and cons and trade-offs in your comment. Consider other points of view and respond to them with your views. Include examples of how our programs would impact your life and work positively or negatively.
5. Please reach out to NTIA via digitalequity@ntia.gov if you have any questions about the Request for Comment, and stay up to date on NTIA information by visiting broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov and www.internetforall.gov



Listening Session Questions

Listening Session Questions Review



RFC Question 1: During the public comment period for the States' Digital Equity Plans, what guidance should NTIA and/or each State provide to enable communities to review and provide actionable feedback to States regarding their State Digital Equity Plans? What criteria/factors/outcomes should communities focus on in their review? How can NTIA ensure that States/Territories consult with Tribal entities about how best to meet Tribal members' needs?



Listening Session Questions Review



RFC Question 3: How should NTIA define success for the Capacity Grant Program? What outcomes are most important to measure? How should NTIA measure the success of the Capacity Grant Program, including measures and methods?



Listening Session Questions Review



RFC Question 16: How should grantees define digital equity with respect to each of the Covered Populations? What does success look like for each of the Covered Populations? How should NTIA measure the effects of access to and adoption of, and meaningful use of the Internet for each Covered Population? What examples of equity gap analysis and tools should the Assistant Secretary consider when measuring outcomes as they relate to each Covered Populations? To what extent should grantees disaggregate data within each of the Covered Populations to reveal the underlying trends and patterns? NTIA encourages stakeholders to provide the rationale for their comments, including available examples of studies, measures, outcomes, assessments and supporting information.



Listening Session Questions Review



RFC Question 17: What metrics and performance data infrastructure and data governance strategies and tools are needed to create a vibrant digital equity ecosystem (e.g. metrics, digital skills, sustainability) to measure program effectiveness and effects for the Covered Populations? What publicly available datasets and tools should NTIA and grantees (e.g., States, Territories, non-profits, develop) enhance or support to benchmark and to track progress of grantee goals and objectives?



Listening Session Questions Review



RFC Question 20: Youth and young adults are members of each of the Covered Populations except for Older Americans. The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on academic achievement, physical and mental health, and earning opportunities for our youth and young adults. How can NTIA encourage and measure the effects of investments in our youth and young adult populations?



Participating in Moderated Stakeholder Discussion



To provide verbal comments:

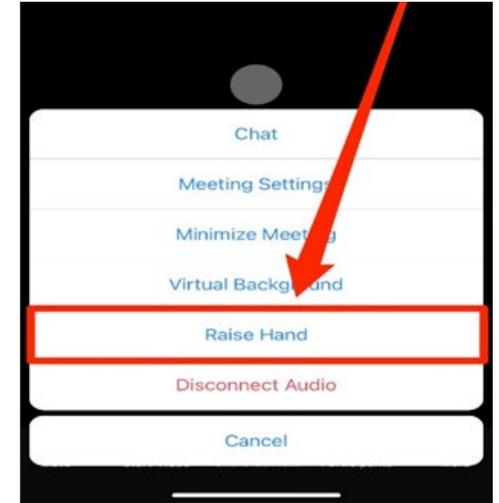
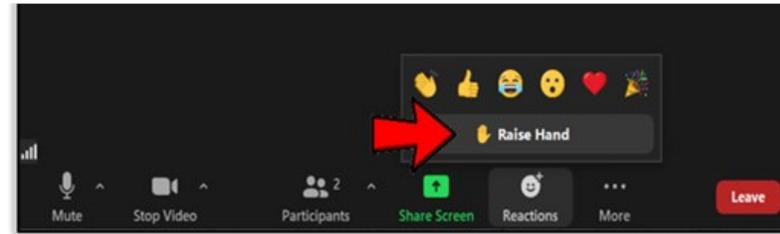
Raise your hand to provide comments.

If you joined via computer/Zoom app: Use the “Raise your Hand” feature on your Zoom module. You will receive a private message when it is nearing your time to provide input.

If you joined via dial-in audio

ONLY: Press *9 to indicate that you would like to provide verbal comments.

When the moderator calls your name, you will be given permission to unmute yourself. Before speaking, please state your full name and the organization you represent.



To provide written comments:

You have two options:

1. Using the Q&A or chat box in the Zoom module, please type out your written comment and submit.
2. You can email your written comment to DigitalEquity@ntia.gov.

Notes and Disclaimer



* Throughout this document, the term “*Comment*” is used in place of the more technically accurate term “*Public Submission*” in order to make the recommendations easier to read and understand.

Disclaimer: This document is intended to serve as a guide; it is not intended and should not be considered as legal advice. Please seek counsel from a lawyer if you have legal questions or concerns.





THANK YOU

