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# State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program for Native Entities

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*State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program: Native Entities*

*September 2024*



*This document is intended solely to assist applicants in better understanding the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the requirements set forth in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and follow-on policies and guidance for this program. 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. This document pertains to State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program requirements for Native Entities.*

# State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program: Native Entities

## PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program: Native Entities (NE Capacity & Planning Grant Program) is to conduct digital equity planning and carry out digital equity and inclusion activities consistent with the Digital Equity Act.

Native Entities may apply for Planning Grant Funds in addition to Capacity Grant Funds. Planning Grant Funds must be used for planning activities that will guide the projects and activities funded by Capacity Grant Funds. Native Entities may not only apply for Planning Grant Funds.

*Note: Awards will be made through a competitive process.*

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS



**Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations** that appear on the lists provided in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Section III.B.1 satisfy the definition of a Native Entity.

Applicants are **only allowed to submit one application**, whether as a single applicant or as part of a consortium.

### All applications must include:

- Application Form
  - Formal authorizing documentation from a governing authority
  - Detail of all projects, including planning if applicable, that will utilize the requested funding
- Consolidated Budget Form inclusive of total funding requested

### Consortium applications *additionally* must include:

- Formal authorizing documentation for *each* member of the consortium
- Lead applicant must provide an MOU submission for each member of the consortium

A Native Entity may **appoint a non-profit corporation** to administer the requested funds on behalf of the eligible Native Entity.

- If a Native Entity intends to utilize an authorized non-profit organization for this purpose, the Native Entity must **identify the organization, provide authorizing documentation**, and discuss the role and activities of such organization.

# State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program: Native Entities

## AWARD ALLOCATION AND AMOUNT



**Amount of Total Funding Available for Native Entities** | In total, approximately **\$45.3M** of funding will be available for Native Entities through the Native Entity Capacity & Planning Grant Program.



**Award Amounts** | NTIA expects to make individual awards within a range of **\$500,000 to \$2,000,000**. Applications for funding must include the total amount of funding being requested.

**Note:** This funding range is **not a required minimum or maximum**, but Native Entities requesting funding for projects outside of this range must provide a reasonable explanation for the variance.

## KEY MILESTONES AND DEADLINES



**Period of Performance** | Native Entities shall expend the grant funds during the **5-year period** beginning on the date on which the Native Entity is awarded grant funds.



**Application Due Date** | The application window for Native Entities opened on September 25, 2024. Applications must be received by the NTIA Grants Portal (NGP) or email, or, if submitted by mail or courier, postmarked or show clear evidence of mailing, **no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on February 7, 2025**.



**Issuing Awards** | NTIA expects to begin making awards in Summer 2025. NTIA may issue awards on a rolling basis.



**Application Submission** | While Native Entities are **encouraged** to submit their applications through the NGP, applications may be submitted one of the following ways:



### By NGP

<https://grants.ntia.gov>



### By Email:

[digitalequity@ntia.gov](mailto:digitalequity@ntia.gov)



### By Mail or Courier to:

Angela Thi Bennett  
Director of Digital Equity  
Office of Internet Connectivity & Growth  
National Telecommunications &  
Information Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

**Note:** NTIA expects the NGP will open for application submission on 10/30/2024.

# State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program: Native Entities

## PROGRAM FOCUS

All funded projects or programs must consider the following criteria and focal points:



Focus on Covered Populations



Stakeholder Engagement



Long-lasting and Meaningful Change



Measurable Implementation Strategies

## ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDING & SPENDING CAPS



**Digital Inclusion Activities** | To support digital inclusion activities of the Native Entity



**Subgrants** | To make subgrants to any of the eligible entities identified by statute and located in the Native Entity's jurisdiction to 1) assist in the implementation of the Digital Equity Plan and/or digital equity programs and activities; 2) pursue digital inclusion activities identified in the NOFO; and 3) report to the Native Entity regarding the digital inclusion activities of the entity



**Evaluation** | To evaluate the efficacy of the efforts funded by these grants made to subgrantees.



**Administrative Costs** | For administrative costs incurred in carrying out the activities described in the NOFO.



**Other Permissible Uses** | NOFO Section II.C.3 identifies *examples* of potential programs, activities, and interventions. The list is not considered exhaustive.

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Digital Literacy & Skills Training | ✓ Online Access to Health & Mental Wellness Services |
| ✓ E-Government & Civic Engagement    | ✓ Online Accessibility                               |
| ✓ Device Distribution Programs       | ✓ Access to Affordable Broadband                     |
| ✓ Economic Development               |  |



**Administrative Costs Cap** | *No more than 3 percent* of the amount of the Capacity Grant Funds for this purpose. This cap does not apply to Planning Grant Funds.



**Evaluating Subgrantee Projects** | *No more than 5 percent* of the total grant amount may be used for this purpose.



**Funding Subsidies for Affordable Broadband** | *No more than 10 percent* of the total grant amount may be used fund subsidies for the provision of broadband services through affordable broadband programs.



**Using Planning Grant Funds** | Funding requested for planning activities, if applicable, must **not to exceed 7.25 percent of the total amount of funding requested**. Planning Grant Funds must be tracked separately from Capacity Grant Funds.



**Updating or Maintaining an Existing Plan** | *No more than 20 percent* of the total grant amount may be used to update or maintain the Digital Equity Plan.