

State Digital Equity Plan & Capacity Grant Program Stakeholder Briefing

July 30, 2024

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Recap and Transcript

The State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) and Capacity Grant Program Stakeholder Briefing met virtually on Tuesday, July 23, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Engagement and Operations Manager Anh Nguyen welcomed attendees and instructed them to introduce themselves in the Zoom Chat box with their name, job title, and affiliated organization.

Housekeeping

Engagement and Operations Manager Anh Nguyen reviewed a few housekeeping items for attendees to participate in the conversation and have the best participation experience throughout the duration of the meeting. ASL Interpreters were spotlighted throughout the meeting.

Agenda

Ms. Anh Nguyen briefly provided an overview of the State Digital Equity Plan & Capacity Grant Program Stakeholder Briefing agenda for the day.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome & Recap

Deputy Director Scott Adams of the California Department of Technology (CDT) Office of Broadband & Digital Literacy welcomed attendees. He provided a recap of past milestones in the SDEP implementation process, the draft Capacity Grant Program Structure, and the potential eligible uses of funds that California can spend out of the Capacity Grant dollars. Deputy Director Adams also shared that the questionnaire was divided into three distinct parts: Centralized Services, State Digital Equity Capacity Sub-Grant Design, and Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration.

The following meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:

- Gina Gates-Lopez, People-Centric Ventures LLC (SanJoseON)

Agenda Item 2 – Questionnaire Analysis Overview – Centralized Services

Mr. Alex Banh, Principal at Broadband Equity Partnership, shared an overview analysis from the State Digital Equity Plan Implementation and Digital Equity Capacity Grant Design Questionnaire. He reported Questionnaire data about respondents by geography and organization type. In this section, Mr. Banh specifically provided an analysis of the feedback from the Questionnaire's section on Centralized Services. Mr. Banh covered the following topics: digital literacy assessment and training platform, remote digital navigation and technical support services, broadband & technology workforce development upskilling resources, technical assistance programs, and language & accessibility.

Discussion

Assistant Deputy Director Cole Przybyla moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A chat box. Presenters proceeded to address questions.

The following meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:

- Ralph Ibarra, DiverseAmerica Network
- Rebecca Kauma, LA County/ISD
- Gina Gates-Lopez, People-Centric Ventures LLC (SanJoseON)
- Krystal Rawls, CSUDH

Agenda Item 3 – Questionnaire Analysis Overview – Capacity Sub-Grant Program

Principal Alex Banh at Broadband Equity Partnership shared an analysis of the feedback from the Questionnaire's section on Capacity Sub-Grant Program Design's uses and activities, selection criteria, allocation, administration, allocation and geographic distribution, and organizational capacity and interest.

Discussion

Assistant Deputy Director Cole Przybyla moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A chat box. Presenters proceeded to address questions.

The following meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:

- Rebecca Kauma, LA County/ISD
- Ralph Ibarra, DiverseAmerica Network

- Gina Gates-Lopez, People-Centric Ventures LLC (SanJoseON)

Agenda Item 4 – Questionnaire Analysis Overview

Ms. Anh Nguyen, Engagement & Operations Manager at CDT's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, reported on the third component of the Questionnaire Analysis Overview regarding stakeholder engagement. She shared the common themes for improvements, meeting frequency, and most impactful outcome areas for the Statewide Implementation Group, Outcome Area Working Groups, and Community Advisory Group. Lastly, Ms. Nguyen presented the common themes for improvement and suggested content regarding the Broadband for All Portal and monthly Broadband for All Email Update.

Discussion

Assistant Deputy Director Cole Przybyla moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A chat box. Presenters proceeded to address questions.

The following meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:

- Krystal Rawls, CSUDH
- Rebecca Kauma, LA County/ISD
- Kari Gray, Community Tech Network
- Mimi Hernandez, Prosperity Lab — Business Circle LatinX

Agenda Item 5 – NTIA Competitive Grant

Ms. Shawn Daugherty, Director at Broadband Equity Partnership, shared an overview of the NTIA Competitive Grant. Based upon the recently released Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on July 24, she reported that \$750 million dollars is being made available by the NTIA for this grant program. Ms. Daugherty also explained key requirements, important dates, eligible entities, the focus of programs, and the allowable uses of funds to apply for the NTIA Digital Equity Competitive Grant by September 23, 2024.

Discussion

Assistant Deputy Director Cole Przybyla moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A chat box. Presenters proceeded to address questions.

The following meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:

- Kari Gray, Community Tech Network
- Gina Gates-Lopez, People-Centric Ventures LLC (SanJoseON)

Agenda Item 6 – Timeline & Closing

Deputy Director Scott Adams reported the tentative timeline on the approximate important milestones for Capacity Grant Program. He also highlighted a few key dates for the anticipated capacity grant award from NTIA later in August. Deputy Director Adams pointed out the range of dates that CDT intends to further stakeholder partnership and collaboration on grant program design and the related public comment process in the Fall. He also highlighted NTIA Native Entity Capacity Grant opening on September 25, 2024 and closing on February 7, 2025.

Discussion

Assistant Deputy Director Cole Przybyla moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A chat box. Presenters proceeded to address questions.

The following meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:

- Rebecca Kauma, LA County/ISD

Deputy Director Scott Adams thanked attendees and presenters for joining the briefing meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

(The recording and presentation slides from the meeting will be posted on the Broadband for All portal.)

Transcript

Good afternoon and welcome to the July 30th State Digital Equity Plan and Capacity Grant Program Stakeholder Briefing. On behalf of the State of California and the Department of Technology, we thank you for being here. We will begin the meeting shortly. Please use the chat box to share your name, job, title, and affiliated organization. As more folks are coming in right. Sounds like we have most people in here. So let's begin. A few housekeeping items next slide, please. This meeting is being recorded. We will be posting the recording of this meeting slides and transcripts to the Broadband for All Portal. You'll find that link

in the chat very shortly, and we can repost it throughout the meeting, too. So presenters please cue Amanda to advance your slides and for folks please select side by side, speaker mode when slides are being shared in order to see our ASL interpreters. Please note that closed captioning is available throughout the meeting. We will have the Q&A box. Please note there is time allocated at the end of each agenda item for questions. So please use the Q&A box to type in your questions related to that portion of the agenda. While the presenter is presenting, we will temporarily turn off the chat while the presenters are speaking, so that no questions are lost in the chat. But chat will be available during the discussion, and we'll make sure to turn that back on. Additionally, at the end of each agenda portion. Please use your raise hand icon on Zoom or star 9 if you're calling in by phone. Our team will elevate you and request that you come off mute or on camera.

So please, next slide. Thank you. We have quite a packed agenda today with an opportunity for discussion after each agenda section, we welcome you to turn on your camera and mic to participate during the discussion. In a moment, we will begin with welcome remarks and a recap from Deputy Director Scott Adams from CDT's office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. Next Alex Banh, Principal from Broadband Equity Partnership will share an overview analysis from the State Digital Equity Plan Implementation and Digital Equity Capacity Grant Design Questionnaire specifically on feedback regarding the centralized services and capacity subgrant program design. As the OBDL Engagement and Operations Manager, I will then present an overview analysis from the questionnaire specifically on feedback regarding stakeholder engagement. Shawn Daugherty, Director from Broadband Equity Partnership will share information regarding the NTIA Competitive Grant program and then lastly, Deputy Director Scott Adams will talk through key milestones and close the meeting so, as a reminder at the end of each presentation, we will have time for bi-directional conversation, and we encourage, welcome you to participate again. Please feel free to come off mute on your mic and turn on your video at that time. So first, I would like to introduce Deputy Director Scott Adams to provide a brief welcome and recap of the SDEP implementation and capacity grant program designed thus far.

Thank you. Amanda, you can advance the slides and just wanted to say thank and then welcome! Thank you, and welcome to everybody. Here I see many familiar faces who we've engaged and partnered with over the last year and a half, probably, and seen some new faces, too, so just wanted to state at the outset that the State's digital equity plan and the implementation of the capacity grant is really a group effort. And the Digital Equity Plan was developed in concert with community of stakeholders here in California, and the successful implementation will require all of our collaboration. So just welcome everyone to a seat at this big table. Which is really focused on our shared goals of closing the digital divide in California and fostering digital equity

throughout the State. Next slide, please. So we wanted to give you just a quick recap of where we are. And this point in time. We have obviously the NTIA who funded the development of the State plan and approved it. On May 23rd we had the first of a summer's digital equity stakeholder briefing series to really talk through and give folks a heads up, that the State was submitting an application for the NTIA Capacity Grant. That briefing occurred on May 23rd many of you attended, so thank you very much. What followed was on May 28th the State submitted its Digital Equity Capacity Grant application to the NTIA, which was very high-level application, acknowledging that here in California further design of both the implementation of the Digital Equity Plan and further design of the Capacity Grant was going to be done in partnership and in collaboration between all of us. Kind of to the next significant thing that occurred was between July or June 18th and July second, the Department of Technology in our office put forth a Digital Equity Implementation and Capacity Grant design questionnaire. And the purpose of that questionnaire was to really engage you all, and from your perspective, and where you were sitting your input on how we were thinking about both structuring the Digital Equity Capacity Grant and how we could improve ongoing collaboration during the implementation of the Capacity Grant program and the Digital Equity Plan. The final thing we wanted to just update you on is that we are currently in the formal curing and merit review process of the State's application for the \$79 capacity grant, which will help us implement the Digital Equity Plan. We think we're at the end of the cycle. Not at the beginning, and that the award will be fairly imminent sometime in the next one to four weeks before the end of August. Next slide, please. And so just really quickly, we wanted to share the kind of the draft structure that we shared at the May 23rd meeting of how CDT and the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy are envisioning, structuring the Capacity Grant program, and that, of course, begins with the national telecommunications and information administration. They are the Federal Grant administrator. The Department of Technology is the grant recipient and administrating entity. A lot of the functions that they in our office is their agent would conduct would be grant administration, digital equity plan implementation updates to the digital equity plan and evaluation of plan and grant implementation. When you look at the next level there. And what was the subject of the inquiry over the last month is CDT envisions that, as suggested in the State Digital Equity Plan, that there will be some bucket of centralized services or universal tools and resources that will be procured or developed to support the digital equity plan implementation. And that would, you know, potentially be like a digital equity, assessment and training platform. The second bucket would be really endeavoring. Knowing that a number of State agencies you know, have digital inclusion programs. Really doing market research and discussions with those agencies to see which we could potentially fund out of capacity grants to have an impacted scale for both, you know, focus on coverage populations and driving measurable objectives and outcomes that are listed in the plan. And then the 3rd bucket is

really designing the Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant program that will provide entities and coalitions funding to implement the digital equity plan and focusing on key activities outlined on the plan. And that really would focus on like broadband adoption campaigns, digital navigation, digital literacy, training, technical support, etc. Next slide, please. We did want to remind folks that, you know, we have not yet received the award, but based on the Federal requirements, you can see a pie chart here that shows the potential eligible uses of funds that this State can spend out of the Capacity Grant dollars, and you'll see that the sort of yellow or gold bond up to 20% of the total capacity grant can be used to update and maintain the digital equity plan. Next up to 5% could be used on evaluation and effectiveness of those efforts, up to 3% on administration up to 10% on subsidies. And really, the remainder would be on programmatic to really support state and local digital equity initiatives and programming want to note, because this came up in the last meeting that the percentages that are not in the green pie are really the ceilings that the NTIA set on those. We had indicated in our past meeting, it is our intention to try to reduce the amount of money that we leverage and spend to support those efforts, so that as much as we can within, you know, both the Federal guidelines and our capacity can allow us to use as much of the total funds for the green portion you see here on the on the pie. And so if we go to the next slide. Really, the last thing that I wanted to note is that when we mentioned the questionnaire, very thankful to those of you who responded to the questionnaire and acknowledge that some people may have not. This is going to be an opportunity today for us to go over the some of the learnings that from the folks who were able to share their feedback with us, and also provide an opportunity for those who might not have contribute to the questionnaire but want to continue to the conversation. And particularly in help inform us on how we design the program. And so that questionnaire focused on the centralized service portion of the program design, the state digital equity capacity subgrant design and stakeholder engagement and collaboration and those are going to be some of the main topics that my colleagues are going to discuss moving forward. So I will conclude my remarks again. I just say, welcome. We're so fortunate here in California to have such a mature and diverse and active and accomplished digital equity ecosystem that we're really honored to be here and to continue to further, you know, inform how we shape this program and move forward together. We can take the slides down and I'm happy to answer any questions or take any comments from folks. But also want to note that the subsequent portions of the agenda are going to dive a little bit deeper.

Great Scott, and thank you, and thank you all for joining. I did want to note there is a question about funding and did want to share that a good significant piece of our presentations today will be on the Capacity Subgrant Program. So we'll answer that question, when we do get to the Capacity Subgrant Program? But I did want to have Anh join real quickly. If she could just

share what she typed in the chat, which was a question around. Just the slides and functionality of getting this information post this event. Anh can you share kind of where the individuals can find that?

Of course. The events recording, including them. The audio recording the video recording presentation slides and transcript will be available on our Broadband Portal. I linked it in the chat, and I'll drop the link throughout, because I know some folks hop in and out of the meeting, so we usually remediate that for accessibility before posting it online so give us, you know, 10 days, get it together and get it online for you all.

Great! Thank you, Anh, and then did want to share we are, this is a more bi-directional meeting, meaning all participants have access to both video and audio mute, unmute. So if you are interested in raising your hand and sharing a comment, now's a good time. If there are any additional information that or comments those would like to share before you move on to the presentation. Okay, not seeing any kind of opening us up. It makes sense. So we'll have Amanda, can you bring up the oh. Hold on. I do see one here. I'm going to Gina, you are more than welcome to unmute and share your comment.

Okay, great thank you. For I posted a question but I think maybe you didn't see it. My question is, is digital training going to be provided by one source? Or will organizations be able to provide their own digital training? Specifically, I'm looking for an answer to online digital training.

Yeah, that's a great question, Miss Gates-Lopez and we haven't fully made a decision on that. But what we heard through the planning process is that a combination of both, that there may be a centralized digital literacy training platform or platforms that could be used to support local entities, but that local entities who received subgrants, may also want to have some individually, you know, customized training there. So we're trying to be as nimble, as flexible as possible. And that's really kind of why we've brought folks together and are taking this deliver approach to how we design the grant program.

Great. Oh, okay, let me. We're working on that now. We have been doing that with the Casse Grant. It's been very successful, and we actually got our 2 year grant and completed it in 6 months. So people really like it, and we're able to support. So hoping we can have further conversation on continuing that.

Absolutely. And I think there's probably when we get to the centralized service stem, you know, down the road would love to hear about that congratulations on completing. Your grant and the, you know, shortened amount of time and look forward. Thanks.

Thank you for the answer.

Thank you. So I'll pause one more moment and then Amanda, can you bring up the centralized services Questionnaire? Yep, perfect. So now I'd like to introduce Alex Banh, who's Principal of Broadband Equity Partnership, to lead us through the Questionnaire Analysis Overview Alex.

Thanks Cole. Hi, everyone. Next slide, please. Yeah. So you know, just to kick things off with the questionnaire results just wanted to share a high level overview of our total pool of responses. So a total of 94 respondents completed the questionnaire and they come from 29 counties. In addition, we had 10 respondents from tribal communities, 13 from rural constituencies, and 4 from digital equity stakeholders and practitioners coming from out of state who have been involved in our in in the process. So this is yeah total respondents by geography, and then next slide. These are the respondents by organization type. So as you can see here, we received a substantial number of responses from regional and local CBOs, as well as local EDD branches and Workforce Development Board, Workforce Development Boards, tribes city and county governments, as well as Broadband Consortia. So create the diversity and the responses here. From different organizations. Next slide. Yeah. So going into the questions, as Scott mentioned, you know, the questionnaire was broken up into different sections. So our first section here is on centralized services. And our first question was, you know, asking respondents to rank a couple of options for centralized services in the order of most to least important for their particular organization. And you'll see the options listed here in the order of the highest average ranking. So on average digital literacy, assessment and training platform was ranked highest followed by broadband and technology workforce development. Upscaling resources.

3rd was technical assistance programs. And 4th was remote digital navigation and tech support. Next slide. So going into a deeper dive into each one of these options. We asked a couple of follow up questions about each of them, and for digital literacy assessment and training platforms. One of the first questions was asking about what modalities of training respondents preferred, as far as you know, having this platform be able to support. So some options were, you know, being able to support in person trainings. Another option was being able to support synchronous modalities. So you know, logging out to the platform and having, you know, training at a specific time or being able to support asynchronous modalities. So basically, your self-paced training and resources. So there was a mix of responses, but the plurality of respondents selected all of the above so 44 selected all of the above. And yeah, the preference here is for a training platform that would be multimodal and be able to support multiple types of trainings. The second, you know, most common option was asynchronous or self-paced at 19. Another question we asked about digital

literacy, assessment and training platform was around. You know what skills and what curriculum would be important to be included. And this was an open response question. But you know, in re-analyzing the responses, you know, we quoted for a couple of different themes. So one of the most common themes was for the curriculum to include you know, training on online safety cyber security and privacy, so helping folks know, the you know, have the skills to stay safe online and protect their privacy online. We also had a number of responses mentioned entry level office skills office, you know, productivity software and many of them, you know, combine this with you know, Job, search and application skills, particularly in learning how to, you know. Put together a nice resume and cover letter. We also had a group of responses talk about training on using specific essential services, online services and applications such as online government portals and websites, online banking and telehealth. And we also had some responses mentioned. The importance of training on the awareness and use of AI, so those were some of the common themes that came out of that question. And the final question around digital literacy, assessment and training was around which platform providers or vendors respondents recommended CDT to learn more about or to explore further and the ones listed here had more than one mention in the open response. The open responses. So North Star had more than one mentioned had multiple mentions. So did everyone on Human I-T and Community Tech Network. Next slide. So that was around digital literacy and training. The next centralized service option that we you know, asked, follow up questions on where was remote digital navigation and technical support? And here we asked, you know, amongst this, you know. big topic of remote digital navigation and tech support which activities or which services would be most important. So this was a select all that apply, you know. Question folks could choose more than one. But seeing you know the options that there were four options that the majority of respondents selected and that starts with advising on low-cost device and Internet offers. So that had the highest number of selections at 73 followed by connecting to or providing digital literacy training at 69. Next was assessing individual needs and goals at 58, and then hardware and software tech support at 56%. Next slide. So on the centralized service option of broadband and technology workforce development upskilling resources. We asked, you know, which types of resources would be most important to support. The respondents, organizations. And yeah, very popular for folks to select compilations. So compilations of broadband and tech training. And education programs as well as you know, broadband and tech training certification apprenticeship programs. Both of those had over 80% of folks select them. The next most popular was training and informational materials. Next slide. Technical assistance programs, you know, we saw, you know what types of technical assistance programs would be most important to support organizations, and we saw that there was a lot of support for funding for subgrantee technical assistance as well as different types of assistance and resources around grant

reporting so temp providing templates for grant, reporting providing a set of best practices for grant reporting as well as providing support and resources around using the grant management system. Those all had, you know, over 50 of respondent's selections. Next slide, please. And lastly, for every single overarching for all of our centralized services, we asked which languages would be most important to provide you know, additional access and support for and this is another ranking question so listed in order of highest average ranking first where first was Spanish. That had, you know, by far the most number of first choice selections. Second was simplified Chinese, 3rd traditional Chinese, 4th Vietnamese, and then rounding out the top is Arabic and we also asked about accessibility. So what accessibility features would be most important to be included in in these centralized services? And yeah. Most popular was captioning in other languages at 70, followed by a screen reader compatibility at 60, and then parts or real time captioning at 53%.

Great. Thank you very much, Alex. Yeah, no, no. Sorry if you have any last things to wrap up.

Oh, those are the results for the questionnaire for centralized services. And over to you, Cole.

Great. Thank you, Alex, and so now we'll move on to some discussion portion of the information that Alex just shared on centralized services. So if you would like to ask a question, please use the raise your hand feature. It's at the bottom of your toolbar under reactions, and we'll prompt you to unmute yourself, and you're welcome to turn on your camera and unmute. Looks like we already have a couple questions. So I'm going to go by order that I see him and Ralph, please feel free to ask a question.

Thank you very much. I appreciate the chance to comment. My concern is that it looks to me that the sample of responses was pretty small considering California's population is quite large. Tell me the number shown on that slide, as far as how many respondents out of the tens of millions of Californians.

Yeah, we had a total of 94 respondents.

Wow! Would you agree that that's an extremely small sampling?

You know, Mr. Revive would want to jump in and just kind of go back to the development of the digital equity plan where we did do a number of surveys, including a statewide phone pull. That was conducted through the California Emerging Technology Fund and USC, and a bridge school, that focused on kind of developing a needs assessment for residents. And then, similarly, we developed a online and mobile, friendly version of that statewide

digital equity survey that was translated into about 14 different languages, and we had 40,000 responses. And when you naturalize or when you normalize and clean the data was, you know, tens of thousands of Californians that it, you know, inform that. So the questionnaire that we put out, was really intended to seek input and advice on program design from people like organizations who had planned, you know, and partnered with us on development of the plan, but also asking entities who were you know, part of the pool of eligible entities or organizations that would apply for grants on how we could structure the Capacity Grant program to best support implementation. So your point is well noted that we do have a very large population here, and you know, focusing on the needs of the covered populations is was part of the planning process, and that the intention of the questionnaire was really to solicit feedback from organizations who would potentially be interested in in receiving grants to help implement the plan.

Scott, can I also just say that? Yeah. So the questionnaire was one avenue to get feedback and input. But you know we would. That's one of the reasons why we also want to have feedback and input at this session, so, you know, we know that these webinars are very well attended, and we know that there could be a number of reasons why folks who are attending this webinar might not have been able to fill out the questionnaire. So you know, to the point about, you know, this session being bi-directional, we really want to have enough time and take the time, you know, for folks to bring up additional input or insights on any of these questions.

Great. Thank you, Alex. Thank you. Scott. Next hand I see up is Rebecca. Great to see you, Rebecca. Please feel free.

Yes, good afternoon, everyone, Rebecca Kauma with the County of Los Angeles. Thank you so much for the update, and I do have a couple of points that I just wanted to emphasize, so happy to see that there was a lot of diversity in request for language access. I would like to also uplift the importance of having the Khmer language reflected there. I do see that my city of Long Beach colleagues and partners are on this call right now, and we do have a strong Cambodian population within the County of Los Angeles, and majority of them do reside within the city of Long Beach. So, although that may not have been a primary language that was selected by the survey respondents, I would like to see Khmer language being provided in terms of digital inclusion, resources and services for this programming, please. In addition to that, I also really like the fact that there is a strong emphasis on providing technical assistance for the subgrantees. As everybody already knows, we're in the meat of applying for the Federal Digital Equity Competitive Grant program. And that is a huge task to take on especially being a county entity and making sure that all of our partners that many of them are on this call here. Feel supported. And we want to make

sure that we're continuing to support all of our smaller cities and organizations that would like to apply for funding. So I would like to really hone in on making sure that your entity is able to provide technical assistance for smaller cities and smaller organizations that perhaps maybe cannot participate in federal grant funding because of the requirements, but would like to still apply for Digital Equity Capacity Grant program funding and making sure that we're providing them with resources and support to be able to take advantage of this historic funding that's coming down the pipeline. Thank you.

Great. Thank you, Rebecca. Krystal. Oh, yeah, thank you. Thank you, Krystal. Gina.

Thank you so much. So some of the things that I did not hear are concerning to me. We've been working on digital equity now for four years, first with the city of San Jose, with the partnership, and now with CASF. And so what I'm still not hearing is a baseline. We really need to have a discussion of what is a baseline phone setup necessary? The number one computer in the world. And so when we talk about devices, we don't talk about cell phones, and we deal with a very poor population, and many of them are dependent on lifeline phones, and they're just garbage. They're horrible. And using those phones is it's just awful. It's just an exercise in frustration. But so, somehow, we need to be able to really look at communication if we are not talking about communication. And it seems like we're just talking about devices. We're missing a step. Also, what I'm not seeing is the baseline computer setup. So what I'm seeing with our seniors is they really aren't getting it. They can go through the digital training, they kind of get it. They did the steps. But they don't know how to set up their computer. So there needs to be that understanding that people do need that one on one where a person goes to their home and helps them connect to the Internet, helps them with their devices, and makes it easy for them, actually functional for them. And finally, what I want to say that I'm not hearing is I don't hear anything about the underhoused or the unhoused. We have a big population with our group here that we work with. And we really need to be able to look at, how do we serve them? And at the same time, how do we prevent waste or abuse within the project? So, for instance, somebody coming to our program and then going over to Catholic charities and using their program, getting 2 computers and then who knows what goes on? There's no checkpoint as far as watching where our devices are going. And also, there's no checkpoint for us to see if we help John. Where is John in 12 months from now? So actually, where we're planning for human beings and not just talking about devices. That's what I want to share.

Thank you very much, Miss Gates, so best, and I do just want to underscore the three points that I think I heard you, said I, I think I agree, definitely on that the need for further conversation with the ecosystem on the

potential baseline for devices and computer setup. And we're you know, thinking about how we can do that potentially looking at doing a micro questionnaire over the next month regarding to those so would be would really welcome anything that you or others would want to send us to help shape those on the on the issue of the unhoused we tend to agree. And during the planning process the ecosystem and shared that, you know, I think, to provide context that the funding through the Digital Equity Act really defined covered populations in a, you know, you know, 8 specific covered populations. Covered households aging individuals, 60 and above disabled, incarcerated. Those with language barriers, members of racial and ethnic minority groups in rural areas. We do acknowledge that there are you know, some populations that don't fall into those that are of importance to both the State and state agencies, and our ecosystem and as we kind of clarified that, you know, in order for us to meet the obligations of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grants, we are going to have to leverage the funding to focus on the covered populations as defined by the Digital Equity Act. That doesn't mean that we're not going to you know, focus on. And how is it? Just it? It represents one of those challenges. And then, lastly, appreciate your comment about waste and abuse. And that's definitely going to be you know, a big focus of how we design the program. And particularly, it's interaction with other programs.

Thank you. Scott. Okay, Krystal last hand raised, that I see, for now.

Hi, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak good to see you again, Scott, as always. So specifically, what I want to ask or put up for conversation is that many of us are participating in both the competitive and the capacity work. It is going to be really hard, and a lot of unnecessary work to apply for things in the competitive, that you may or may not intend to host as Capacity Grant and how would you suggest those of us, you know we've been partnering for quite a while. How do you suggest we navigate that because we've seen the need, as we've articulated it to you coming together in these meetings over the past two years? Right? So, we understand where those requests for centralized services come from and we've accounted for it because you asked us to fill in the gaps of what we saw was needed and there's going to be some overlapping transparency and clarity would be helpful as we try to move forward with our competitive applications that should come compliment the work of the State.

Yes. Well, I absolutely agree with you, and it's always great to see Miss Rawls. So thanks for being here. I think that. What you have shared just underscores the challenge that we all face. And you know why The Digital Equity Plan at the end of the planning process, said that collaboration and alignment and cooperation are going to be so critical because it's like, how do we, you know, with such a big task here in California, Meg. the best, most

efficient use of resources. When there are multiple buckets of funding and not duplicate you know, efforts. And so that is, you know, a guiding principle for us. So I would note that we have been unable to, up until last week, when the Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity was released, to understand what its focus was going to be, and to determine how it might. Different from the State Capacity Grant program or other programs. So probably, like, you know, many of you, we're reading through the NOFO analyzing, creating our and so there is a section later on where we're going to talk about what we've learned about the Competitive Grant program and kind of start a conversation, but we fully intend to continue this conversation, and next month convening. That's more of a you know a point of conversation about how we do that coordination and prevent duplication.

Thank you. And then, Scott, before we move on, there's two questions that I'm going to kind of put into one category, which is devices. So questions about is there funding for devices and procurement and distribution, and then kind of a larger question about engaging with multiple distributors and negotiating, pricing. So really just understanding how does the capacity grant support subgrantees, engage in devices and will device procurement be a part of this?

Yeah, that's a great question. And I think so, Miss Gates-Lopez brought up the need for devices, and so devices are a consideration. I mean, looking at the State Digital Equity Plan, we do know that there's a targeted, you know, a relatively small but significant percentage of the population that needs device assistance. And so you know, that's consideration of how we design the program. And now that the Competitive Grants are out, you know. That's going to further inform how we develop the program. But as I mentioned when Miss Gates-Lopez said this we are considering putting out a questionnaire on the device issue specifically about you know, potentially what are price points, you know, we know during the planning process that particularly, you know that all the devices are not, you know, the best for different, you know, members of our population. So we're going to do more market research and work a meeting with you all to better understand that. And then the larger question, Cole, that, Yes, part of that would be, you know, developing a device, you know, strategy for the State which would include, you know, speaking with manufacturers and getting a sense of that. So again, we haven't received the capacity grant yet. We'll have 9 months from the date of the award to identify how we're going to expend all that funds. There's a lot of joint planning that we all are going to be doing together between that time. So thank you for that.

Great. Thank you, Scott. Thank you, Alex. I think that wraps up the questions that we got for this part of the discussion. There's one more question about rural, but I think it'll be kind of covered in the capacity subgrant

conversation. So we'd love for Amanda to bring the slides back up and pass it back to Alex to kind of share about Capacity Sub-Grant. Alex.

Thanks, Cole. yeah. So next topic for the questionnaire was around Capacity Sub-Grants. And we had questions to, you know, gauge input and feedback on a number of aspects of the capacity subgrant design. So the first aspect was around uses and activities that the subgrant program could fund. So we asked folks to rank different uses of capacity sub grants in order of highest need in the communities that they serve or represent. And again listed in order of highest average ranking are, are the results here. So first was digital literacy and skills training that had the highest average rank, you know, a lot of first and second choice selections for that one. Second was digital navigation and tech support. Third was device distribution, fourth developing and refining local digital equity plans, and then fifth broadband adoption campaigns, sixth computer labs at community centers and seventh was workforce development training and apprenticeship programs. So those are the allowable uses and how they ranked as far as importance for their community.

Next slide, please. Another aspect of the subgrant design that we asked about was selection criteria so the NTIA and the capacity grant NOFO specified four criteria that States should, you know, evaluate and consider when looking at subgrant proposals. So they are focusing on covered populations, you know, ability to produce long, lasting and meaningful change, having measurable implementation strategies and then having a plan for meaningful stakeholder engagement. So we asked, you know the questionnaire and the stakeholder community within the questionnaire, you know, are there other criteria that CDT should consider? And this was an open response question. So we coded again, we coded by, you know, different themes and different types of yeah, results that are coming up. So first major theme was around strength of and depth of partnerships and collaborations. So making sure that in these applications there's plans for partnerships across different entities that could serve covered populations that they could bring the expertise and digital equity programming another common theme was around, having, you know, the demonstrated ability to produce results and impact, not only on closing the digital divide, but also greater, you know, societal and economic outcomes.

Another common theme was having a cultural and linguistic competence. So making sure that you know, when we're evaluating proposals, the folks who are, you know, planning to serve the cover populations and the communities, you know, have that experience both the cultural competence and you know the language capability.

Another, you know, common theme was having a sustainable having a sustainable plan. So making sure that the program and the activity that's funded by the capacity subgrant could sustain itself. And you know, continue after the

funding ends and then, you know, the last one I'll mention here is experience and capacity. So having experience with digital equity, programming and capacity to, you know, manage federal and state funding. Next slide, please. Yeah. So that was selection criteria. Another, you know, set of questions we asked was around allocation. So you know, just looking at the funding amount that California received in this first tranche, and looking at the size of the State, and you know the num, the size of the need. We asked for organizations' perspective on how perspectives on how CDT should consider allocating the subgrant funds. And some of the choices were, you know, allocation by depth of impact towards the measurable objectives that are in the plan another option was, you know, allocation by cover populations. Another option was by geography, and then the last option was policy outcome area. So you know, education workforce development and economic development health, etc. So the results here were pretty varied, you know. No choice got the majority of respondents, but you know the plurality was all of the above. So about a third of respondents selected all the above, and thought it would be important for CDT to consider, you know, each one of these criteria in its allocation. The next highest choice, the next most common choice was, I'm not sure this needs more discussion at 23% so really welcome folks to, you know, chime in during the Q&A. And discussion portion of this, and, you know, share more about their perspectives on how CDT should allocate consider allocating subgrant funds?

Next slide. So more about allocation. We asked, you know, what is the geographic unit that would allow for the greatest coordination and impact. And you know again, very varied and diverse results here. You know no choice got the majority of respondents. But you know, as far as plurality, you know, the most common and most popular results were or choices were, I'm not sure this needs more discussion at 28% and that was actually tied with counties. So folks we thought counties would be the geographic unit that would allow for the greatest coordination impact. That also had 28% and then third was broadband consortia regions at 18%. So again, definitely welcome, you know, more, more insights and more perspectives, during the discussion portion of this on this particular question. And then, as far as what should CDT consider if thinking about, you know, funding for geographies? We did get some more some clear preferences, you know, amongst the questionnaire respondents here. So 70% of respondents, you know, selected or suggested that CDT should consider relative lack of broadband availability and adoption in geographic allocations, and then 61% suggested that CDT should consider total members of cover populations within geographic allocations. So those two had you know, more than a majority of respondents. You know, selecting them.

Next slide, please. So, moving on to some grant administration questions. We asked what were, what kinds of technical assistance or support for applicants would be helpful during the application process? And yeah, a lot of

support for webinars at 83%, a lot of support for office hours at 82% and you know folks also wanted FAQs. And some folks went in-person workshops at 53%. And as far as preferred options for payment for to grantees. So yeah, within this pie chart, you know the 50% slice that is advanced payments. So after the respondents, you know, would like to see advanced payments as an as a payment option followed by fixed payments based on accomplishment of milestones at 27%. And then, as far as preferred, invoice submission timeline, 44% of respondents wanted to see quarterly invoice submission and 35% wanted to see monthly invoice submission and next slide.

So here's our last slide on the Capacity Sub-Grants they were, there were a number of questions around organizational capacity and interest. So you know, we asked the respondents, you know, if they had the personnel, organizational infrastructure and capacity to manage the sub grant a capacity subgrant, and 73% so you know, overwhelming majority said, yes, they do. They have the capacity to manage the grant. And that goes into the next two questions that we asked which were around interest in applying for both the Digital Equity Competitive Grant and the Capacity Grant. So you know, this goes to Dr. Rawls' point about, you know, just interest in both amongst the stakeholder community, and we're seeing that in the questionnaire results as well. So the majority for both were interested in either leading a grant proposal partnering with others on a grant proposal, or you know, flexible on, you know, doing either of those approaches, so either leading or partnering. So on the Competitive Grant 49% you know, said they were open to doing both of the above and 15% said they would be open to partnering with others. Similar results for the Capacity Grant where 47% said they would be open to both leading or partnering and for this one, 12% said they would be interested in leading a grant proposal. So yeah, interested in hearing more about interest and questions. And you know, as was mentioned, we have another session coming up focusing on the competitive friends.

Thank you, Alex.

So again, we're going to move into a discussion about the Capacity Grant Sub- Grant program. If you'd like to raise your hand and speak you're more than welcome to start that process, and we'll prompt you to unmute you additionally. As Alex has been sharing, I am going to put a question in the chat that we would love kind of if there's opportunity for a conversation within the chat on additional considerations and elaborations or insights. On the capacity subgrant program happy to have you there. And so 1st we'll start with any hands raised. Rebecca, go ahead.

Like I always have my hand raised, but that is life. Thank you again for answering my questions. First and foremost, I just wanted to comment in terms of

the uses and activities. I definitely like the fact that it's pretty much spread out in terms of digital literacy, digital navigation devices, distribution. My recommendation to CDT is that all of these digital equities be considered activities, excuse me, be considered as part of a holistic approach. So obviously, you cannot just do broadband adoption and ignore some of the other areas as well, so we need to have that coordinated approach as we're looking at these different activities. Just something for you guys to keep in mind. It was also interesting to see the partnerships case as well, obviously with the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program as we're all trying to navigate as Dr. Rawls also shared as well. That program does have a strong partnership component, so there's an authorized representative as well as subrecipients that fall under that. One of the things that we've been hearing in the digital equity space nationwide is that there are a lot of organizations that have issues joining a partnership, and they don't know where to go. So I would definitely recommend if you guys are going to go through that approach, that there's avenues and mechanisms for organizations that perhaps aren't part of a digital equity coalition, or a committee for them to receive resources and support, to be able to join that if that will be considered a requirement. And then I definitely echo the support that is given towards counties, so the County of Los Angeles, being the most populous county in the country is supporting many of its cities, organizations, nonprofit entities to be able to apply for the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program. So I would definitely echo, continuing a similar approach, if appropriate. Obviously, you'll need to bet that out from region to region but definitely, I feel like counties do have the ability to support this work and can also support smaller cities and organizations. Thank you.

Thank you, Rebecca. Right now, I'd like to call on Ralph.

Good unmuted. Broadband for All, right. Operative word is broadband. o what degree are all of you dedicated individuals at CDT making sure that there's coordinating activities with the CPUC. Who's managing the BEAD program? Cause if you don't have the broadband connectivity to all these communities that need to be served. Nothing's going to happen, whether it's wireless or wired. So I would hope that you have a dedicated person or persons that are monitoring and tracking, like I am, because the CPUC is just going through the challenge process. And there's a number of steps. There's got to be a synchronization going on, because without the ability to move the data via broadband instead of what, unfortunately, is a difficult situation, much as was described with utilizing mobile phones. Okay, there's got to be that coordination, because there's a lot of money over in the BEAD program that's being deployed as well. So that's my that's my hope. Thank you.

Yeah. And thank you, Mr. Ibarra and you know, we definitely understand that like, you know, California is a big state, and that there's many you know,

individual residents and stakeholder groups and organizations that are committed to digital equity, that may be jumping in at a different point in the continuum over the last couple of years. And just wanted to say your point about collaboration and coordination between the Department of Technology and the CPUC is something that there are, you know, kind of multiple, formal and informal touch points where we're coordinating. So generally, you know, we have our statutory public meetings at the California Broadband Council, where, you know, since 2010, we've been coordinating broadband deployment and adoption efforts at the statewide level. Once, you know, the State invested significant amounts of resources for the middle and the Last-Mile programs and Senate Bill 156. The Department of Technology, you know, is the Middle-Mile. CPUC sees the last mile programs work when coordinating, you know, weekly, if not daily, on making sure that those investments connect up to do the connection to the home. And then I would say, you know another, you know, significant effort is that over the last year and a half we did joint digital equity, and be, you know, planning with the Public Utilities Commission. So from our outcome area working groups to our planning group and our regional workshops that was done in coordination with the Public Utilities Commission, and we meet you know, on a weekly basis. If not, you know more frequently to make sure that our efforts are aligned. And just thank you for giving voice to the continued and ever-present need for us to, you know, coordinate and collaborate, because it's all it's about access, affordability and adoption, and all of the, you know, dimensionality and the barriers to adoption. So appreciate your comments.

Thank you, Ralph and Scott. So I did want to bring up two questions that are in the same flavor before I get to Gina, which is about subgrants. And so the question is, how much funding is expected to go out in subgrants, what will be the award range for each subgrant, and that was a question. But then Malika asked added on in a separate question, and accurately described, that the Competitive Grant NOFO indicates a range of 5 to 20 million per grantee. And so, following that same question, does CDT have a current estimation for project and Grant range.

Yeah. Thanks for the question there. Is not a projected allocation cause what we are right now in the period of you know, seeking stakeholder feedback and input on how we design the program. And you know, part of that is, you know, you know, the allocation criteria. If we, you know, go beyond what the NTIA use to determine the States allocation, the, you know, kind of the other metrics, and then how this, you know, fits into the other programs out there. So everything we're hearing here today is going to be factored into the development of the subgrant program, and you'll see later on in the slides, we fully intend to develop a draft, you know, Capacity Grant program proposal and put that out to public comment. So there's much more iteration

engagement to come before we figure out what the allocation amounts going to be.

Great thanks, Scott! Now I'm going to pass it over to Gina. Go ahead, Gina.

I'm. Hi, I just wanted I wasn't going to speak until the gentleman spoke about connecting with other agencies and Internet. So here's my thought. We work in Santa Clara County with our grant, and it is very difficult for us to get to convince people to even work with us with digital literacy. And then get a computer. I mean, come on, you're getting a computer. So it's really great. But what's going on and what I'm hearing from moms, and mostly moms that we work with is, why would I want to do that when I can't even connect to the Internet from where I live. So it seems to me, and what I've learned is that we need to be able to provide them something so that they can engage now, and we can't wait for these towers to be built, because what's happening is the disparity is getting further and further along and not just for the moms. We're talking about the children. So is there space within this realm to help people with their data or help people in some way connect from their homes when the towers are not available. I think it's something that to consider strongly.

Thank you. We appreciate those comments, Miss Gates-Lopez.

And Scott. Noting that we're starting to run up against our time, and we want to continue to make sure there's enough to get through all the information. We'll bring the slides back up, and I would like to introduce Anh Nguyen of the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy – who is the engagement and operations manager to present on stakeholder engagement. Anh.

Thank you so much, Cole. Thanks for everyone for being here. Next slide, please. As you have heard, we've split our questionnaire into three parts. The third part of it is really about seeking additional feedback on how we can engage with you all much better in the implementation of the SDEP. So a few questions we asked were on the Statewide Planning Group, which is this first slide right here. Many common themes for improvements, including improved communication about meetings, more time for discussion or questions, which you've seen we're already implementing to make sure that there's discussion after each agenda item. Improve representation and diversity of attendees, but definitely use all your help with collaborating on outreach for that improve accessibility, improve meeting content and jumping right over to meeting frequency, majority actually agreed to keep the frequency the same as we have done as the Statewide Planning Group going into the Statewide Implementation Group to have it on a quarterly basis. So just keeping that brief. And we can definitely talk more about this in the discussion. Next slide, please.

As for the Outcome Area Working Groups and if you remember, these are the six Outcome Area Working Groups that we had during the planning phase again, when we ask about if their interest to change configuration, a majority of feedback said no change to configuration and keep it the same. Preferred meeting frequency again to keep it as quarterly of four times a year. So awesome. We had much less time to meet with everyone, so we met once every month, for I think four or five months. So this would actually give us the opportunity to spread out the Outcome Area Working Group, right? If that's of interest. So yeah, next slide, please. And a follow-up to that previous question about the Outcome Area Working Group. We started with the original sip, and we add on a few topics that you all gave feedback and selected as potentially having more impact in informing the SDEP implementation process. So, as you see here, the majority did choose workforce and economic development. But equally important is digital literacy in skills and training digital inclusion, which was one of our Outcome Area Working Groups in the past. There's also broadband adoption, education, essential services, accessibility and civic engagement, devices, digital navigation, healthcare and tribal collaboration and a few others chose the option of other as well. So wanted to share that. And we can definitely talk about more about it during discussion. Next slide, please. And when we asked about Community Advisory Group, which is, as we are exploring the development of the advisory group, which is self-identified members of covered populations to bring out the voices and concerns of residents to CDT and inform on implementation of SDEP. A few suggested successful models are listed here, so thank you for those who provided this input. And a few that I'll read out loud here is in person focus group, design thinking sessions, community foundation for Monterey County, Climate Equity Working Group at the City of San Diego, The Black Mothers Board for the African American Infant and Maternity Mortality Initiative of Los Angeles County and the Inland Empire Fair Chance Coalition so we'll definitely do our desk research. But if you have others successful models to share, please feel free to add that in the chat when it is enabled. Next slide, please. And when we asked about the Broadband for All Portal, some common themes for improvement include including more community spotlights, improve user experience, increased visual content, updates and knowledge sharing of best practices, simplifying the language and update more frequently. So we hear you and we'll take this into consideration. Next slide, please. And lastly, for the monthly Broadband for All email update, I'll make sure to add the link in the chat to subscribe, but some of the most commonly mentioned themes for improvement and content. Again, we hear community spotlight and features a lot, and so it's showing up again here on the email update, concise content, local or regional information, sharing best practices, stakeholder engagement opportunities as well as resources for CBOs. Thank you for the link. So yeah, definitely do subscribe and we are striving to continue to improve our communication to you so that you

join our discussion like these and, you know, sharing best practices. So I think that's the last of my slide.

Great.

Yep.

So let's move on to the discussion portion of the questionnaire analysis on stakeholder engagement. Again, if you'd like to ask a question or make a comment. Please use the raise your hand feature, and we will call to unmute you. Additionally, Anh is going to put a question in the chat to kind of further discussion on. If there's any additional considerations, any elaborations or insights on results and takeaways on stakeholder engagement and would love for you to continue to have a discussion in the Chat. Krystal, please feel free to unmute.

Hi, thank you. One of the things about stakeholder engagement and the use of language is the readability index that I've mentioned a few times in my sharing, in comments over the couple of years. And so, as I rely, like many people on the newsletters, to quickly summarize what is massive volumes of information for my community partners to consume having bullet points in a readability index that aligns with minimally gunning fog. And I've provided that report to you guys where, when I read it, I can turn it around and get it out to the community in time for them to be able to react and give feedback could improve survey responses and could get more diverse opinions and people able to consume the information. I do very much rely on those newsletters that you send given the amounts and volume of information. So I hope that you will consider seriously that community work involves us being able to communicate with the community.

Thank you very much. We appreciate that, and we'll endeavor to improve in that area.

Thank you. Any additional hands raised, or any comments that anyone would like to bring forward? Yes, Rebecca, go ahead.

Yeah, I'll keep this one short and sweet. But I'm very happy to hear about the community engagement aspect and as I outlined in the questionnaire for your team, it would be great for you guys to consider equitable community engagement strategies when engaging with community so making sure that all the community engagement barriers are being addressed, and I would even recommend offering some type of compensation whether it's a stipend or a gift card to honor the community's time for the input that they're providing when engaging with a government entity. And I do have some best practices as well

from my previous organization, so happy to share and discuss that with your team if you guys are looking for equity centered community engagement best practices. Thank you.

Thank you, Rebecca.

Great. Thank you. And Kari?

Yeah. Hi, oh, my gosh, Rebecca, that is a great offer. I think that was you that just spoke, because what I'm feeling from this particular group of people is that the State Digital Equity Plan was concocted or written by CDT. Oh, after all these community meetings and stuff, and there's still a lot of folks especially on this call, who may not have known about that original process and are super eager to join us in creating responses. And one of the things I'm hearing a lot of right now is how we might be able to form coalitions, and how we might be able to collaborate both on the Competitive Grants at the Federal level but more specifically, within California. There are loads of people on this call that I know and I recognize. And some of us have gotten together to discuss what we might possibly collaborate on. But I'm really looking forward to somebody kind of figuring out how we're going to collaborate, what that's going to look like? Is it more regional meetings? Is it more meetings through people who serve the same communities? Are the state agencies, for example, CDA, I see you on here, Brian. Are you going to convene a group of people outside of the Triple A's like everybody who's been working on the CDA funded programs to see how to explore how we might work together? And so I don't know if the State is taking a lead on convening partners, or if it's something that we could be or should be doing ourselves. So it's not really a question, for you know, Scott and Cole and Alex. It's more kind of a question for everybody else about how we might think about how what are our next steps for working together? Cause that's what I'm really looking for is what is what are our next steps to work together? And in addition to these very specific strategies for serving our communities, identifying those next steps might also help us identify which collaborative tools and capacity building services we need.

Great. Thank you, Kari, and it looks like you might have your first step in the chat if you look at the chat. We're going to do one more hand up, Mimi, and then we'll move on to talk about Competitive Grant.

Excellent. Thank you so much for that and my apologies for running in late. I think everybody's meeting is running late today, since we're all being so productive, and ideas are just flowing. The only thing I would urge I am super open to working collaboratively within a group, especially in the northern California region. We are in Santa Clara County. But I would ask that whatever we do, I don't want to create another process that is just so convoluted. And

there's a lot of wonderful organizations that are emerging. We we're not. We're not the multi-million dollar groups that do this work where emerging organizations. I will mention Gina. Gina's here. She has your group, and we're both kind of working in the same area. There is more than enough work for her and I to exist in Santa Clara County along with other folks. The only thing I would urge based on our experience with the CASF funding is that the reporting can be a lot for an emerging organization. I think it's almost a full-time job for myself to just prepare the reporting so I would love to sit in the conversations on seeing what we bring, how we can create a win-win situation that serves our community but that also isn't so difficult for an emerging organization. You know, the digital, the digital problems that we're having and the lack of access require new approaches and innovative thinking. So I would love to be in a conversation to see, yeah, how do we get partners and emerging organizations that are working in this field that doesn't create more work for us, but also is transparent in the way we're spending public money. So please add my name to the list, and I'm sure Gina will support that. You know the CASF, it was just it took six months to get funding and going back and forth, and you know not everybody can afford to spend money on the front side, and then come back and get reimbursed so thank you.

Great. Thank you, Mimi, acknowledged and heard. I did want to note, there's a question Anthony is asking. There's a lot of uplifting about application and time and timeline do want to note. That's one of our last remaining slides. So let's talk about competitive program. And then, Anthony, I think we'll get to your question. So, Amanda, if you could bring slides up, wand then I'd like to introduce Shawn Daugherty, who is the Director at Broadband Equity Partnership, to talk about the NTIA Competitive Grant program.

Thanks, Cole. Amanda, if you want to go to the next slide. I'm just going to spend a few minutes doing an overview of the third and final grant program that has come out of the Digital Equity Act, part of the Infrastructure and Jobs Act that was passed in 2021, and the competitive grant provides for \$1.25 billion, of which \$750 million is being made available for this current NOFO. So we were really excited to see the notice of funding opportunity the NOFO just as by talk it too many acronyms was released a week ago. A few days earlier than statutory statutorily required. I hope we'll put a link to the NOFO in the chat, so that everybody has access to that if they don't currently and again, there's \$750 million dollars made available for this grant program. NTIA, in that NOFO has identified ranges of grants from \$5 million to \$12 million. They will accept applications outside of that, either higher or lower but you will have to do a little bit of extra explaining as to why you're outside of that range. In addition to that range of funds, the five to twelve million, NTIA will only fund up to 90% of your activities so there is a minimum 10% match required, and the NOFO said it will take additional consideration to applicants that have a funding match above

and beyond that 10%. And really, the restrictions that have been identified is a 10% cap on administration and a 10% cap on evaluation. So those are kind of the broad funding structures by which the Competitive Grant is being built out of. Just flagging some key dates. The application portal is going to be opening on August 14th so that is the soonest that entities can submit applications for the Competitive Grant. Applications are due September 23rd so the NOFO came out on July 24th so that is a 60-day application window that they have made available, and NTIA expects to begin issuing awards in the winter of 2024 on a rolling basis. So, as those awards are reviewed, go through both a merit and a perform and a programmatic review, they will issue the awards on a rolling basis. Amanda, next slide, please. And the Notice of Funding Opportunity clearly identifies a range of eligible entities from political subdivisions or agencies of states, tribal and native entities, foundations, community anchor institutions, workforce development programs and then partnerships of, you know, any of these entities, and I think that's a key word that the NTIA has throughout the Notice of Funding Opportunity is partnerships. They're really I think, emphasizing partnerships and the role of coalitions, and how this work is not done by just one entity. Amanda, do you want to move to the next slide. And the focus of the programs. This might actually look familiar, because this is the same thing as the focus of the Capacity Grant NOFO focusing on covered populations those eight covered populations that were identified by the NTIA, and that we spoke about earlier. That needs to be a focus of an application, a focus of a program. Is it going to be long, lasting, and produce meaningful change? Is it a sustainable program that an entity is applying for? Is there a measurable implementation strategy? Is there a time limit? Is it reasonable? Is it measurable? Really thinking about those smart goals and how is that part of the strategy. And what is the stakeholder engagement continuing to engage with community and the entities and the populations that those entities serve will be an important focus of the programs that NTIA funds through the competitive grant. And then really kind of just wrapping out this this conversation, again mentioning that it was a brief overview on the next slide, Amanda, is these are just some of the or these are the allowable uses that have been identified in the in the NOFO you can develop. Oh great, thank you. You can identify to develop and implement digital inclusion activities for the benefit of covered populations, or you can facilitate adoption of broadband for the benefit of covered populations. So really, these allowable uses are being focused and applied to those covered populations. But I do think that there is an interesting component to this, so that NTIA encourages innovative approaches. They're willing to think above and beyond, and to maybe some ideas that are out of the box thinking. And so it doesn't necessarily need to be a long existing program. NTIA is encouraging innovative approaches to apply for this grant as well. So happy to take any questions about the Competitive Grant program. Again, the NOFO was just released last week, so we encourage entities to take a look at the NOFO and see where your organization might fit in.

Thank you, Shawn. It looks like we do have one question from Steve, which is both free public Wi-fi qualify for the NTIA Grant, and maybe we might want to point Steve in a direction to find that answer.

Free public Wi-fi. I could, let me get back to you on that one. I there's ways that I could see it fitting in there, but I don't want to give bad advice or bad feedback.

Understood. Thank you, Shawn.

Yeah.

And does anyone have any raised hands, or any questions related to the Competitive Grant? Great Kari.

I thought you all might want to know how we've been we've been thinking about the Competitive Grant, because we're one of the founding members of the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. So hello to all of you out there who are also National Inclusion Alliance members. And so for the Competitive Grant, we're thinking, how do we leverage the experience that we've had in California and Texas with our partners, who are members of larger national organizations. So working with a national partner like US Aging on a application for working with Triple A's all over the country, or where I can't remember the name of the group that is the community colleges or umbrella organization. And so that's kind of where our attention has been going with the Competitive Grants. And we're going to kind of organize our California specific approaches with our California partners. But we are kind of taking the experience we've had working with libraries and older adults and other communities. people living in affordable housing. That's the other one. It's some affordable housing coalition. We're also working with them and also looking at like a regional approach, for with our affordable housing partners who are working regionally, who have properties regionally, how might we support their work? So they're applying for the Competitive Grant. And we are for those of you who don't know as Community Tech Network provides digital skills training and advice for folks who are adopting so for broadband adoption. So we are seeing, how can we fit into their Competitive Grant, which might include devices or broad or data plans? And what is our piece of the training piece, the basic skills and advanced skills training pieces. So I just thought I would share with that with folks who might also be in affordable housing, working with older people. How you might start thinking about, where are you in their space, regionally and nationally, and reach up to the larger regional and national partners and think about how you might be able to work with them on the Competitive Grants. Although California is a pretty big region itself.

Yeah, I want to thank you so much for that feedback. And I want to harken back to Doctor Rawls's comment is, there's going to be a really strong need for coordination and collaboration and alignment within California both on you know how we design the Capacity Grant program and you know you know how you know folks come together and apply for Competitive Grants, cause I think you know, the focus is we all would like to get see California get its fair share of those Competitive Grant dollars. Cause we've got, you know, potentially the biggest state potentially the biggest amount of need, the largest amount of need here. And so there's a challenge and an opportunity that, you know, the Competitive Grant is out before the Capacity Sub-Grant or the Capacity Grant or Sub-grant program have been received, or, you know, designed. So we welcome and are thankful to the folks who are considering applying for Competitive Grants that have reached out to us, and would encourage other folks that just give us a heads up on things you might be planning on applying for and how on the competitive side that might impact how we can shape the Capacity Grant program.

Thanks, Scott. Gina?

Hi, I just wanted to share with you all. This is a great place to do. It is we do work with folks who are in affordable housing units. And this is this is the rub is that I'm finding too many of these affordable housing complexes who say they offer web access. The web access is just inundated because there's so many people using it. It's not enough power to help everyone. So because of capacity is one thing. The other thing that we're finding is sometimes I have to actually go to somebody's apartment and find, well, the Internet isn't getting that far. and nobody's checking on that. There's this assumption because that housing development says they offer Internet that we can believe it. And we can't. And I that's just a challenge that I'm seeing. And I'm hoping that we're going to be able to address it because we cannot assume that everybody is getting ample Internet because of a situation like that. The next thing is, I'm a little bit confused. I'm confused in that. If we're looking at Internet and connecting people to the Internet, and with the loss of loss of ACP. And again, I work with a very poor part of our community. They don't have \$5 to spend on Internet. It's buy food or try to pay for Internet. They just don't have it. How can we serve them? And within this grant, how can we do that? That's my question.

Yeah. So, Miss Gates-Lopez, thank you. But you brought so much meaningful like, input and expertise to the conversation today, I think on the ACP port cause. I know we're at time. I just wanted to address that when we looked at the, you know, the allowable uses on the Capacity Grant side. That 10% of the potential 70 million could go to subsidies. And as we had kind of mentioned at the last meeting briefing that we had on this subject, that in

California alone nearly 3 million residents signed up for the ACP. The total impact of that of those subsidies amounted to close the 70 billion dollars. And I would, you know, surmise it to say that we're all aligned. That absent ACP our challenge got a little more challenging, and that affordability is a huge issue cause for many as you said, and you said \$5 for many folks. Anything more than 0 is a challenge. And so you know, short term there's work we can do together to help educate folks about existing low cost offers, and then collectively, we can advocate and push forward to some you know, replacement for ACP, and be prepared to kind of integrate that into our approach. You know, when and if that comes together. But you mentioned a really great point. And you know, ACP is a significant missing arrow. Now in our quiver, moving forward.

Thank you, Scott. Noting that there's quite a few people that are needs to drop off. I'd love to kind of go to the tentative timeline, and then we can circle back to some additional conversation if needed, at the end of the timeline. So, Scott.

Yeah, we can skip this slide. Let's just go. I think. yeah. A couple of people asked about the timeline. I want to jump in really to where we are, which is around the July 24th and thereafter timeframe. So the Competitive Grant NOFO was just released. I believe Patrick Messac asked the question. We anticipate receiving the capacity a grant award sometime on or about August 28th. There will be, you know, a native entity digital equity capacity grant opening up on September 25th if you look at the gray box at the bottom. What we're doing now is kind of the ongoing engagement and collaboration between May 6th and August 30th, and then market research on program design. We are hoping to go out to public comment in the in the early fall with a draft program. Design and Capacity Grant program based on what we learned here and then finalize sub grant RFA in the late fall. And then if you go back up to the earlier part of the or the top part of the timeline here, you know, the native entity Digital Equity Capacity Grant closes on February 7th and a real important date for the State is going to be to finalize the budget and identify all projects, or, you know, entities that are going to be funded by the Capacity Grant no later than 9 months after the receipt of the award. And so this is the tentative timeline, and the reason we say tentative is that as with the allowable uses, we're seeking to reduce the amount that the State uses on administration to put as much into program as possible, and we will endeavor to shorten timelines as much as we possibly can, acknowledging the urgency and the desire for entities to start applying for and receiving Capacity Grants . And so Cole that's it for me. We can take this slide down and answer any additional questions if there are some.

I'm going to pause a moment to see if there's any questions related to the timeline. There are a few competitive grant questions that are getting answered in a typing fashion. So if you're looking for questions related to, there's question

on the Admin Cap at 10% for the competitive. And so we did refer them to page 28 and 32 of the NOFO. So thank you, Laura, for that question. Rebecca, please go ahead.

Yeah, going back to. I can't remember if it was you or Scott that mentioned this, but in terms of next steps would it be appropriate for us. Once we've figured out, if what key activities that we're doing within the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program to let you guys know. So that way you guys can anticipate, perhaps, what our region is applying for? Would that be correct?

Yeah, that would be really helpful, Rebecca. And I think likewise, when we hear of folks that are putting competitive grants together, and we see, you know, synergies of partnership will, you know similarly, contact connect others to you or others to appropriate partners that we've heard about. There's already been some examples of that.

Okay, awesome. So we'll make sure to do that. And we're already cause based on after reading the NOFO, it's very clear that to a certain degree applicants are required to make sure that there's no duplicate effort. So we'll also make sure that we're doing that in terms of both applications and then based on your guises, timeline, and this is more of a statement, but it would be fair to say that, based on the timeline that we've received from NTIA, they plan on making initial awards, starting in 2024, and it looks like that will continue through the end of April of next year, and based on your timeline, we would most likely know if we would be funded for Digital Equity Competitive Grant program before your guises opens up so it looks like your guises timeline won't be opening up until like spring 2025, anyway. Would that be fair to say?

It's tentative. We're trying to thread the needle on these so that we can avoid as much duplication as possible. And so...

Okay, got it. Thank you.

Thank you.

Right. Is there any last burning questions on timeline? Great! Scott, I think the majority of kind of the remaining questions are Competitive Grant ones that we can follow up. So I do want to acknowledge and respect that we're just about 10 minutes over and allow you the space to kind of close us out.

Yeah, that's excellent Cole! Well, again, we just are incredibly grateful to be able to work in, aligned with and collaborate with all of you to close the stage digital divide. We know how important this work is to communities and individuals across the State and to each of your organizations. We look forward

to continuing to benefit from your expertise and knowledge and are just excited about all of the steps moving forward so wanted to send you a thanks and just note that, you know, we've mentioned the Broadband for All email update the QR code that's on your screen right now will take you directly to the email list. We send that out monthly. We do have the Broadband for All website. The URL is in the middle, and then if there's any need to reach out to us, the digital equity email is right there. And we're happy to, you know, field responses, answer questions, have follow-up meetings if you so desire. So again, thank you, and have a wonderful day. We look forward to seeing you next month!