

**State Digital Equity Plan & Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program  
Stakeholder Briefing  
September 30, 2024  
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Meeting Recap and Transcript**

The State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) and Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Stakeholder Briefing met virtually on Monday, September 30, 2024, at 3:00 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 spotlit throughout the meeting.

### **Agenda**

Ms. Anh Nguyen briefly provided an overview of the State Digital Equity Plan & Digital Equity 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 and CDT's recent stakeholder engagement efforts, including large group presentations, market research and listening sessions, as well as competitive grant coordinating meetings with 18 applicant groups. Deputy Director Adams also shared information regarding other sources of funding. The NTIA Competitive Grant Application period closed on September 23, resulting in more than 20 California-based applications submitted requesting more than \$250 million in total funding. The NTIA Native Entity Digital Equity Capacity Grant is open from September 25, 2024 through February 7, 2025.

### **Discussion**

No attendees came off of mute to ask questions nor did Access & Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly raise any questions from the Q&A Box.

## **Agenda Item 2 – Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant Program**

Principal Alex Banh from Broadband Equity Partnership shared details regarding the Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant Program structure and purpose. Mr. Banh then explained the two funding tracks for the draft Capacity Subgrant design: Track 1 for regional/local ecosystems and Track 2 for targeted statewide ecosystems. Alex Banh closed his presentation with highlighting changes to the proposed Track 1 formula based upon public input.

### **Discussion**

Access & Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and chat box. Presenters proceeded to address questions.

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

- Mimi Hernandez, Prosperity Lab
- Teresa Valenzuela, San Diego Futures Foundation
- Rebecca Kauma, County of Los Angeles/Internal Services Department

## **Agenda Item 3 – Draft Guidelines Public Comment Process**

Ms. Shawn Daugherty, Director at Broadband Equity Partnership provided an overview of the Draft Guidelines Public Comment Process. She shared that the 30-day public comment period is open from September 30 through October 29. A QR code linked to the Draft Guidelines for Public Comment was shared with attendees. Ms. Daugherty also presented on the twelve sections of the Draft Guidelines available for public comment.

### **Discussion**

Access & Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and chat box. Presenters proceeded to address questions.

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

- Natalie Gonzalez, Digital Equity LA
- Frank Gornick, FPG LLC

#### **Agenda Item 4 – Online Public Comment Demo**

Ms. Anh Nguyen, Engagement & Operations Manager at CDT's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, described the accessibility features of the California Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant Program Draft Guidelines pages, including how to leave public comments on the portal.

#### **Discussion**

Access & Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and chat box. Since no attendees raised their hands on Zoom, presenters proceeded to address questions from the Q&A chat box.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – 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. Deputy Director Adams pointed out the range of dates that CDT intends to further stakeholder partnership and collaboration on grant program design.

#### **Discussion**

Access & Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly moderated the Discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and chat box. Since no attendees raised their hands on Zoom, presenters proceeded to address questions from the Q&A chat box.

Deputy Director Scott Adams thanked attendees and presenters for joining the briefing meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 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 September 30th State Digital Equity Plan and State Digital Equity 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 organizations, as more folks are coming in. Before we 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 and we'll make sure to link that in the chat as well. Presenters, please cue Amanda to advance your slides. Please select side by side speaker mode for the best viewing experience. When slides are shared and visibility of our ASL interpreters, closed captioning is available, please select CC – closed caption - on your toolbar and select show subtitle. As you may have noticed the Q&A box is available, please note that there is time allocated at the end of each agenda item for questions. 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 re-enabled during our discussion. And then, additionally, at the end of each agenda item, please make sure to use your hand raise icon on the toolbar, or on Zoom or Star 9 if you're calling in by phone, our team will elevate you and request that you come off mute and video. So, we have a full agenda today, next slide, please. I'll quickly go over that. We'll start with a quick welcome and recap from CDT's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy Deputy Director, Scott Adams. Next, we have Alex Banh, principal from Broadband Equity Partnership. We will discuss the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Subgrant Program. Shawn Daugherty, Director from Broadband Equity Partnership will present on the draft guidelines for the public comment process. Next, I will do a quick demonstration of the draft guidelines public comment pages that you will find on our Broadband for All portal. Lastly, Deputy Director Scott Adams will return to provide a brief review of a timeline of key milestones and close the meeting. So, as a reminder at the end of each presentation, we will have time for a bi-directional conversation. We really encourage you to turn on your mic and video at that time and participate. First, I would like to introduce Deputy Director Scott Adams to provide a brief welcome and recap of the State Digital Equity Plan SDEP Implementation and Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program designed thus far. Over to you, Scott.

Thank you, Anh, yeah. Good afternoon, folks. My name is Scott Adams, deputy director for the office of Broadband and Digital Literacy at the California

Department of Technology. We want to welcome you to our monthly stakeholder briefing for an update on Digital Equity Plan Implementation and also further development of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant. We really appreciate you taking the time to come together with us, and they're really thankful for the meaningful input, and feedback that you've provided to us. So, I'll be really quick with my presentation. Wanted to start off with a recap of some of the key things that have occurred. So, this slide here, it's not unfamiliar to you all really wanted to just highlight that after nearly month, or a year and a half of joint planning collaboration, the State turned in its Digital Equity Plan. Actually, you know, in March, immediately after that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration released the State Capacity Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity and announced that California would get an allocation of 70 million dollars to help fund entities to implement the digital equity plan. We followed that on May 23rd with our 1st stakeholder briefing. The May 28th, 5 days after that, we completed our administrative application for the State to receive its award. That began an NTIA application carrying and merit review process. That process is still ongoing. It began on May 29th and like, I said, it's still going on. The key takeaway here is the State has not yet received the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant from the NTIA, which is really going to be critical for us moving forward, and, you know, structuring our program. The next box I wanted to share is just the gray box in the middle. Wanted to highlight and underscore that we did send out Digital Equity Plan Implementation and Sub Grant Program Design Questionnaire. That was open from June 18th to July second was another opportunity for us to receive feedback and input from you all on how to further shape the program. July 24th is the blue box there, on the right-hand side, on the middle, was when the NTIA released the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity, which was yet again another program. Another opportunity for California stakeholders to apply directly to the NTIA for funds to help support implementation of the Digital Equity Plan. The last 3 boxes are on July 30th was our second stakeholder Briefing August 14th we launched a device program questionnaire. And then on August 26th that was our last meeting, which you know, brings us to today. So next program, please. Our next slide. I wanted to give you just a brief update on some of the additional stakeholder engagement we've done since the last meeting. It's really consisted of you know, meeting stakeholders where they were doing large group presentations. On the 17th of September we were very happy to participate in the Solano Connected Digital Equity Consortiums meeting and speak about how the Digital Equity Plan seeks to align with local efforts. Additionally, I know a number of folks on this meeting here were up in Portland, where the NTIA hosted a joint cohort summit for digital equity leaders in States be leaders and tribal

leaders, and our team went up there to share best practices and learn from others around the State. We were very privileged to speak on a panel about innovation and digital equity and share a little bit about how the State of California is structuring our overarching Sub Grant Program. The next set of engagements we had were continued market research and listening session with a host of entities from State agencies, broadband consortia's, local governments, community-based organizations, and private sector entities. And then really capitalizing on the call in these meetings to align on the NTIA Competitive Grant applications. We're very fortunate to have convened and met with over 18 different application groups based in California that were submitting applications to the Competitive Grant program. Next slide, please. And so, you know, wanted to kind of build off the NTIA Competitive Grant application period and really underscore the need for other sources of funding to achieve digital equity here in California. So, as many of you know, the NTIA's competitive Grant application period closed on September 23rd. We're pleased to report that more than 20 California based applications were submitted to the NTIA, and I think, even more ambitious of those applications, they requested more than 250 million dollars in total funding. So very encouraged by the, really, the work that folks have done to get together, put coalitions together and submit applications, really underscoring the importance of bringing more funds back to the State to do this work. The last thing we'd like to share with people. Is that another opportunity just opened up last week. And that's the NTIA has a very specific native entity Digital Equity Capacity Grant. It actually came out in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, but they just opened the application portal for that program. And the application period is going to run from September 25th of this year to February 7th of 2025. Funds available through this program will seek to fund initiatives that help native communities fully access the digital world. Native entities may apply as part of a consortium or submit individual applications. There is no Federal cost, sharing or matching fund requirement, and the Grants are going to range from 500,000 to 2 million dollars. We've included the link on the slides here which will be posted on the portal, but someone from our team is also posted a link in the chat here for those who any California Native Tribes that are participating here, or folks who are working with tribes. We encourage your support in getting out the word about this great program. So that concludes my update, really looking forward to having other members of our team talk more about the program, design, the guidelines and the public comment period. But Anh back to you, and happy to field any questions, if there are any.

Thank you, Scott. Let's see, I think we see one question in the Q&A. Maria will help facilitate through any of the questions that we receive in the chat for Q&A. But feel free to raise your hands as well.

Yeah, feel free to raise your hands, and we'll have multiple times to ask and answer questions. So, if something comes up later and you want to check. We have a question from, do we have any hands up? No hands up. So, we have a question from Shawn, "how can California adult education programs and adult schools and consortia obtain grant funding?" And Shawn, we will cover that in this presentation, but we'll also respond to you via chat in the Q&A box. And that I do not see any other hands up, so we can move on to the next portion of this presentation with Alex Bond from Broadband Equity Partnerships.

Thanks, Maria.

Alex Banh, here, principal with Broadband Equity Partnership. And yeah, let's jump right in on the Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant Program, which is the focus of the public comment process that just opened today. So next slide, please. Okay, so as a refresher, let's start with an overview of the structure of CDT's Capacity Grant Program. NTIA being the Federal Grant administrator, will make the award to provide funding to CDT; and CDT is serving as the State's administering entity for all State related Digital Equity Act programs and CDT will manage the grants. They will also oversee implementation of the State Digital Equity Plan or SDEP, and any updates that need to be made to the plan as well as any evaluation efforts to assess the impact of programs interventions and activities that are funded through this program. So, activities funded by the capacity grant will largely fall under 3 categories. First, are the centralized services, which are standard tools or resources, like a digital literacy training platform that could be leveraged by entities and organizations across the State to work more effectively and efficiently. Next are state agency, digital inclusion efforts which could be new or existing digital inclusion programs that would be managed by other State agencies. And 3rd is the Capacity Subgrant Program which would fund entities and coalitions to implement digital equity activities for communities across California that align with the State's Digital Equity Plan, and these could include digital navigation or digital literacy trainings. So, this structure has been developed and refined through continued collaboration from stakeholders like everyone here today throughout the State's digital equity ecosystem. And this public comment process that we will review later is another step in in the process of stakeholder engagement and input. Next slide. Alright, so now let's zoom in on the purpose and areas of focus for the capacity. So, Grant program. First off, this program, you know, will focus on funding entities to implement the SDEP and address digital equity barriers at the local, regional and

statewide levels. It is intended to develop, to help develop regional and local ecosystems with increased capacity and provide funding for digital inclusion programs that could be delivered by trusted messengers who could be, you know, organizations or groups with the experience and relationships needed to serve cover population communities. And finally, this program will focus on both allocating, funding across every county in in California as well as encouraging some statewide innovation in digital inclusion interventions. Next slide, please. So with that purpose in mind, here is the 2-track program design that you'll see in the draft subgrant guidelines. Track 1 is going to focus on regional and local ecosystem development. So, within this track there will be a formula allocation of funding for every county as a geographic boundary, and within those boundaries one lead applicant is encouraged. These sub grants will be used for developing regional or local digital equity plans, as well as providing capacity for implementation of those plans and all the services and activities that are going to be, you know, designed and configured, you know, within the plan. And you know these interventions will also be augmented and supported by the centralized services. So as far as who is eligible for track one funding, you know, you'll see in the draft grant guidelines that there will be a variety of eligible entities that would include local Governments Consortia as well as nonprofits, and folks are invited to apply as leads for a specific county geographic area, or also they could also apply for a multi-county area through joint applications. And lastly, lead applicants can also make second tier subgrants to other organizations, you know, within the county area within the community to serve as implementation partners. So that's track 1. The focus of track 1, you know again, is regional and local ecosystem development. Track 2 is more for targeted statewide ecosystem development, you know, for targeted outcome areas or specific cover populations. So, within this track there will be competitive grants for the development of statewide ecosystems or innovation for outcome areas such as health or workforce development or specific cover populations. And then within this track, eligible entities could include nonprofits or digital inclusion. Providers with strong reach within the outcome area, or for that cover population as well as tribes and tribal consortia or associations. Next slide please. Alright, so, as folks might recall from the last briefing, we looked at 2 options for the formula to allocate funding to each county geographic boundary for track one. So, the 1st option was the formula specified in the Digital Equity Act, which NTIA used to allocate funding to States. So, in this formula, 50% of a state's allocation was based on the size of its total population. 25% was based on the size of its total number of members of cover populations and 25% was based on the State's comparative lack of broadband availability and adoption relative to other States. And beyond those 3 steps every state is



ensured a minimum allocation of 0.5% of the total funding pool. So that's just one option. And you know, this option served as our starting point but based on public input, including the questionnaire that we ran earlier in the summer. We made some tweaks and came up with this alternative formula that you see on the on the right for county allocations. So, as you can see, the biggest change is the removal of total population from the equation and instead, in this formula, 75% of a county geographic boundaries, allocation will be based on the size of its total number of members of covered populations, and 25% will be based on comparative lack of broadband availability and adoption relative to other counties. And then we also retain the point 5% minimum allocation step to ensure that every county geographic boundary had a minimum viable funding amount to do their planning and programming. So, since this option reflected public input, and also better met the Nti's guidance that states that capacity grants, you know, needs to focus on covered populations, we ultimately went with the alternative formula in the draft grant guidelines but you know, as with everything else in those guidelines, we welcome any thoughts or feedback from the stakeholder community on this formula, through your public comments. With that I'll pass it back to Maria to lead us through the discussion. Thank you.

Thank you, Alex. Looking for raised hands for any comments or questions on this portion. Of course you're always welcome to ask at any time. And we have 2 hands raised. If you would like to unmute yourself, we have a few hands raised. If you'd like to unmute yourself, Mimi, if you'd like to start, unmute yourself and ask your question, please.

Thank you so much. I was grateful to see this. We did not apply for the previous grant that closed on the 23rd. part of the challenge, and I think there may be other colleagues here for emerging organizations that don't have the deep pockets. But we're doing the work. It would be great to be able to have an opportunity to apply as even as a sub grantee for some of this work that we're already doing. I know for us, we have a waiting list in Santa Clara County. Often people feel that you know we have all engineers and very highly digitized individuals here, but I guarantee you there's 2 silicon valleys. I'm serving the one that doesn't have that access, so I'm grateful for any opportunity for us to be able to still apply through a program. And the last thing I would say, if we can make the progress, something that is doable for small and emerging nonprofits that are trying to solve this problem that would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you so much, Mimi Teresa.

Maria. Actually, I wanted to just...

Go ahead. Sorry.

...comment. Thank you, Miss Hernandez, for your comments. And then one thing that I would encourage is to, you know, voice your comments during the public comment process. And you'll see when we demonstrate the online public comment form, there's a place to indicate whether you're would, you know, we're interested in being a lead applicant or you know, partnering on an application. And that's going to be a helpful tool for us to help do some matchmaking when the actual request for applications comes out. So just thank you for that. And you know, as Alex indicated, this is a set of draft guidelines for the subgrant program. And we feel really confident we've, you know, heard and learned from the input we've received thus far. But also want to indicate to folks that what we're seeking through the public comment processes to further refine and hone the sub grant program. So, it adds that flexibility. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you, Scott. Teresa. If you'd like to ask your question.

Absolutely. I'm just curious. Scott, Teresa Valenzuela here with San Diego Futures Foundation. I'm concerned, and my concern comes from having the door open for Multi County grantees. Here at San Diego Futures Foundation, we're only work in the county of San Diego. We are obligated to do so. So, I feel like that's somewhat unfavorable in that, for example, let's just say Santa Barbara and LA County join forces with a bigger population. Well, we can't match that population in regard to the coverage that we'd be covering because again, we're confined to San Diego County. Can you please address that.

Yeah. So, like I said, don't want to get too much into what's in the draft guidelines themselves. But the way that we have proposed an allocation which again, folks will be able to comment on, is a minimum allocation within each of the States and county boundaries that where those funds are designated for within that county boundary. And so, it ensures an allocation based on a formula there. In the reference to multi applications, or multi-county applications that's really in response to the smaller, more rural counties. Who, through our market research and listening sessions, had indicated that there might be value, and having flexibility for multi counties, so that smaller counties can pull their resources, go in together and do some, you know, economies of scale that way. Thank you for the question.

Thank you.

Thank you, Scott. Rebecca, if you'd like to unmute yourself and ask your question, please.

Awesome. Thank you. Can you guys hear me? Okay. Rebecca, Director of Digital Equity County of Los Angeles. I have a couple of clarifying questions. And

then I also wanted to share some additional thoughts as well. So, going back to the alternative formula, I'm curious to see what forms of data your team will be utilizing to determine the covered population. So, will you guys be utilizing NTIA's, their digital equity population tracker, tool?

Rebecca, thank you for the question and the draft guidelines. There are citations on the data sources that have been used. And Alex, can you please, respond to the question on the covered populations. I do believe we use the NTIA digital equity.

Yeah, we're using the NTIA and US Census Bureau's Digital Equity Act population viewer data.

Okay, awesome. And then in terms of lack of broadband availability and adoption, are you guys using ACS data for that?

So, lack of broadband availability. We're using the latest data from CPUC.

Okay?

And then for broadband adoption, also using data from the NTIA's Digital Equity Act population viewer.

Okay.

So, I believe it comes from ACS.

Okay, thank you. So just to confirm, NTIA's population viewer and then CPU sees data, correct?

Yep.

Okay, awesome. Thank you. And then...

Hey Alex, can you explain the rationale behind using the PUC data versus the other data?

Yeah, so the PUC's data was last updated a lot more recently than the broadband availability data that was in the Digital Equity Act population viewer. So, we felt like that was a more accurate representation of lack of broadband availability in California's counties, compared to what was in the in the population viewer.

Okay, got it. Thank you very much for clarifying, and we'll make sure to relay that information to our stakeholders as well. And then one quick recommendation for you, Scott and team, as you guys are going through the public comment period. If you guys have capacity and availability, I would also recommend you

conducting informational interviews with the 20 California based primary applicants that did apply for the digital Equity competitive Grant program. There was a lot of great insight that was learned just by going through that process over the past few months, and I would say, there's some great best practices that we can take from that application, and perhaps other opportunities that can maybe be revised as we prepare for this one. So just a thought, if you guys have capacity to do that, because there's a lot of wisdom from those groups that went through that process. Thank you.

Scott, we have several questions about track 1 and track 2 funding. Looking for some direction, whether we have Alex answer, or you answer. But there's a couple of questions, and I'm going to bundle a couple of these together regarding "can applicants apply for both track one and track 2?". And "what is the split between track one track 2, and then centralized services and state efforts?"

So on the 1st one, whether or not applicants can apply for both track one and track 2, I think it would depend on the nature of the organization or the entity. As Alex had indicated, the draft guidelines proposed that track one or really you know, lead entities that are building a coalition within a county region to either refine or develop a plan that aligns with the State plan, and then with a small percentage of the funding and then have the remaining amount go to sub grants that, track 2 funds are really around statewide innovation around the outcome areas or covered populations. And so again I could envision a scenario where an entity would be both a track one and track two applicant. But I think once folks read the guidelines that may become clearer on the on the second question about what's the split between centralized services agency, digital inclusion efforts and sub grants. So I mentioned at the top of the of the meeting that we have not yet received the the State Capacity Grant from the NTIA yet. And so we wanted to get moving and start shaping these guidelines and seeking public input on that. We're not locking ourselves into percentages beyond what we mentioned in the guidelines. because we want a chance to 1st receive the grant dollars from Ngi and make sure that there aren't any restrictions that might inform us having to change those allocations.

Thank you, Scott. We do have one more question that I believe will be answered. Sort of as we move through this process. Recalling or quite asking about the split, how will we ensure that the split will not conflict or overlap with services or proposed services and programs within that within the State? So how much of the 70 million once received would be distributed? So there's a question about how it would be distributed, and.

Yeah, that I'm I'm sorry I don't really understand that question.

It's hard, you know what we can answer it. I can type an answer in response, because it's it is a little bit of a tough question to answer.

Let's let's take that back, and we can provide, you know, an answer in our next briefing.

Thank you.

I don't see any other hands raised, or any other questions at this time, so if we could move on to we will move on it to Shawn Daugherty from Broadband Equity Partnership. Thank you.

Thanks, Maria. Thanks, Alex. o I'm going to talk a little bit about the actual process that will happen over the next 30 days as we go through this public comment process. So, Amanda, next slide, please. Great. So as many of you or all of you should be aware that public comment opened earlier today, an email was sent out. And there's going to be probably a link put in the chat of where you can actually go to for the landing page of the public comment process. It'll be open for the next 30 days. So public comment will be live through October 29th and all of the activities for public comment will take place on the Broadband for All portal. We do have a QR code there. So if you have your cell phone available and you want to scan that QR code that will take you directly to the landing page as well. And after I kind of discuss the process a little bit. My colleague Anh will actually do a step by step, guide you through all of those various pages, if there's any questions on that.

But, just broadly speaking, about the process, NTIA does not require a public comment process for any of the subgrant development programs. This is a departure from the SDEP planning process. However, you know they really encourage the process be open, transparent, inclusive, equitable, and that really, you know, just aligns very nicely with the values of CDT and OBDL. And so that is why we are going through this public comment process. We want to hear from the stakeholders. We want to hear from the community to be able to integrate all of your thoughts into the grant guidelines that ultimately will be published, to provide funding at the geographic level. And into that regard CDT will review every single comment that we receive. We will only accept comments via the form online, which again, my colleague Anh will walk through very briefly and only one set of comments per organization will be received. I'm sorry, will be reviewed and analyzed. You do have the ability, as you know, part of the plan very similar to the planning grant process or the draft, the draft SDEP process to comment on multiple sections. I'll go over the various sections

momentarily, but you'll be able to comment on each and every section. So you'll be able to really break down your public comments into digestible bites for us as well. All comments will receive a confirmation when you hit submit, live on your screen as well as you will get an email comment, emailed version of the comments that you have submitted for your reference as well and all comments that we receive will be posted online to our portal within 2 business days of them being received by CDT. So this should be very familiar to how we, we operated the process earlier this year with receiving public comment on the draft plan, and ultimately many of those comments were integrated into the final plan that was submitted to the NTIA.

We can go on to the next slide. And, as I mentioned, you know you'll have the ability to comment on each and every one of these sections. There are 12 sections in the Grant guidelines, or chapters, or sections, and so you'll be able to provide feedback on what our program background is, maybe on proposed allocation and award formula, if you want to comment on what Alex just presented on. We have a proposed schedule of activities, and you know, and so we really have broken down the Grant guidelines into all of these various sections, and we encourage everybody who is able to provide comments to us because we do take these very seriously. I will stop there and see if anybody has any questions on the process that will take place over the next 30 days.

Great, and I did notice that the landing page link has been added to the chat.

We do have one hand raised Shawn.

Great.

From Natalie. Natalie, if you'd like to unmute yourself.

Sure. Hi, thanks, Shawn, this is Natalie Gonzalez with Digital Equity LA out of California Community Foundation. Was just curious. I noticed, so how the comments are only going to be accepted from the form. Will CDT acknowledge or accept, perhaps, a letter identifying and addressing some of the comments and concerns from those 12 areas from a nascar coalition letter just seeing the limit of capacity regarding public comments for some organizations. It's easier for us to do an organized effort, wondering if those will be acknowledged and accepted?

Scott, did you want to speak to that, or?

Yeah. Hi, Natalie. The reason that we are using the online form is to both, it's a short window. It's a 30-day public comment period. We want to increase the transparency and allow folks to view what other entities are saying and

requesting, and also to adhere to the accessibility standards on our website. I think one suggestion I would have if you were going to you know, provide a coalition letter by section, that you know you submit the letter on behalf of the Coalition, and, you know, put the comments according to the you know to response to what section of the guidelines that they're referring to.

Thank you, Natalie. I do not see any more hands raised and there are a couple, one question. Let's see, we've answered one question, is there any concern about the time that has passed since these funds were approved and received, and the ability to implement these programs?

Wondering, Mr. Gornick, are you able to come on? And maybe further expand on that?

Good. Can you hear me now?

Yeah.

Yes.

Good. Well, it seems like we've been doing this for such a long time, Oh, trying to get these funds to areas that are underserved, and I don't know, and I guess I'm just surprised that there's just seems to be a lack of urgency about it.

Got it. So, Mr. Gornick, get the thank you for your question, and we agree that there's much need for the funds to get out, and we've been working with as much urgency and intentionality as we can. The slide that we showed at the beginning of the recap shows the major milestones we completed the State's Digital Equity Plan and turn that in on March 28th. The State Capacity Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity was March 29th and we completed our application for the grant on I believe you know May 29th So we've been in the the formal curing process with the NTIA and we've been doing as much as we can to advance this. The State and the Department of Technology have not yet received the award for funds. And so I hope that kind of clarifies that there's a lot of different funding pools out there. But on this one I think we've been working as quickly and urgently as we can, particularly since we haven't received the grant yet.

Thanks. Scott.

Thank you.

We do have a couple more questions that are coming through via chat. Should we email coalition letters to [digitalequity@state.ca.gov](mailto:digitalequity@state.ca.gov)?

I would suggest that coalition letters be inserted into the online form online.

Thanks, Scott.

And then from Jake the comment period ends at the end of October. Can you give an estimate of when the guidelines will be approved, and the process moves forward? That's a recap of our timeline that we'll be sharing here shortly.

And there is a section number 12, is on proposed schedule of activities which gives a broad, you know, outline of when we hope to, or kind of kind of the timelines or you know how many days will be available to do the application moving forward. But again, as Scott has mentioned, it is all dependent on us receiving the award from the NTIA.

And being aware of time and we have one more section. We want to walk you through the actual grant guideline public comment process. Mimi, if you would like to ask your question, and then we'll move on.

Just in terms, so our our action item for today is to complete the survey, to give it some thoughts. And then one person per organization. That's our action item for today. Correct?

So that's the the call to action is thank you, Miss Hernandez is for stakeholders to go to the website to review the draft Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant Program guidelines and then utilize the online public comment form to submit public comment on any or all of the sections in the document for us to further consider ways to you know, shape or refine the draft that we presented. Thank you.

Thank you, and we can move on to you now Anh, for the next portion of our..

Thank you, Maria. Thank you, Scott, Shawn, and Alex, for teeing up where we are at and I'm very excited to provide an online public comment demonstration for all those who are attending and participating here today. So you can do the same for the partners you are working with. We thank you for your partnership and collaboration. And we can start with the next slide, Amanda. To further seek input and refine our program, here we have our landing page. The link is the same as the QR Code that you saw earlier, but we'll put it in the chat again as well, pointing out some key features of accessibility. Before we even begin on top right of the page. Amanda, if you can use it for so, yeah, thank you. When you click dropdown, you're able to select up to a hundred languages. This plugin will allow you to re read our web pages in any of those languages, so we won't do that here since the static page, but we can see how that looks like on the browser. So to reiterate the public comment period is a 30-day period from today through October 29th bolded in all the pages that you'll see to read and print the California Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant Program draft guidelines. You'll see that there's a button for English and PDF and another one translate in



Spanish in PDF. Alternative access in HTML can be used by screen readers. So 2 ways to access, that is, if you just keep scrolling on the screen, you'll get through the 12 sections that Shawn mentioned earlier, or use the left hand navigation bar. Say, you know, you want to quickly go through Section 6 due to benefits, it will scroll down to the page for you to review so, and then that left navigation follows you throughout the page so you can. The screen reader will allow you to read it pretty efficiently. So from here we'll go on to the next slide. But to get to the public comment page, you see that large, wide submit public comment button, or the 1st link under related content public comment form to get you to the form right? So just all static screenshots right now will go into the browser in a little bit. Next slide, please, Amanda.

Here's our form, just screenshot in 3 sections, so that we can see it on one screen. All fields marked with an asterisk are required, and all other fields are optional. So your commenters, first name, last name, title, organization email addresses are required to submit. And of course, we you know, to help us understand our commenters, and also help us do the matchmaking process, as Scott mentioned earlier, we ask additional questions to help us understand the applicant's profile. So here we also ask which covered population your organization serving, which isn't new, are 10 cover population that we've listed in the past and select a section to provide comment. You'll see here that it's default as one. But if you click on the arrow to scroll down, you'll be able to see that as well.

Next slide, please. We'll have time to see it in demo. Okay? And once you submitted public comment, you'll see it here in 2 working days as Shawn shared earlier. This is an example. So all everyone can kind of see what it should look like, and we can go to the browser just to kind of see all this live. And let's take a look at that real quick. Thank you.

Oh!

Give us a second just to switch screen. There we go. So we're starting here on our homepage. Just so you know where to get to it in case you have our Broadband for All homepage bookmarked. Under initiatives, click on that. The last link is DE Capacity Sub Grant program guidelines. You'll get to our landing page. Right? So for the sake of time, we cut, we open all 4 tabs already, just to show you. So once you click on that or have this direct link, you'll get to our landing page. And, as I've said earlier, the public comment form is linked here. The 1st bullet under related content as well as the blue, large blue button. submit public comment right? Those are the 2 places to get to the same page, but 2 links for you to submit a public comment and on the left, let's click on Who

This Benefits number 6, Amanda, just to show folks how it gets to the relevant section of the page right? So very easy to navigate using the left hand nav, and then up top. Let's scroll back up top. Nice. Yep. The translation, if you click down, feel free to select any of these languages provided by Google, translate. And so, yeah, making sure that everyone can access our content and provide public comment. So let's take a look at the form. Alright.

So content, wise it does not change from what I shared earlier in the static slides. But here you'll see it, let's scroll down real quick, just to see how you can select multiple sections to comment. And right here, right? So right now we're on we say, choose Number one. You put in your comment. Note that you can click voice to text comment where you can verbalize a comment, and the plugin will transcribe what you say in this box. Just make sure that you, I think there's a button to like stop in order to stop commenting. And if you're interested in comment on another section, you can click, yes, which will populate, which then, select second section to provide public comment. Alternatively, if you're done with one section and you would like to complete, you can click no and it will allow it will show the green submit button for you to submit the comment.

So let's test that out real quick, Amanda. Just click, submit. Oh, we have to fill this out. Never mind, we will not do that, because that will take time, but once you hit submit, there will be a CAPTCHA screen just to verify that you're not a robot, and that you're able to submit the comments. Lastly, our submitted comment page, it's right here on default. It is organized from newest to oldest. But once, you know, if you would like to read it in alternative, feel free to sort it differently and click on, read, comment real quick. Here is an example of how a comment will be shown. The card itself will show which organization's name, or organization made the comment when and the comment ID, but by clicking, read comment, you can see the actual content expanded. So here you can print or close it to read the next comment. But yes, that's I think that is it in terms of my key, key points for you to take away, but make sure to do it by October 29th We would greatly appreciate it if you do it earlier, so that we are not trying to process a hundred comments the night before it's due. So we want to make sure this is visible to everyone, too. That's it that wraps up for me back to you, Maria.

Thank you. Thank you, Anh. Thank you, Shawn. Thank you, Alex. Thank you, Scott. And one question in the Q and A is, how large can a comment be in each section of the form? Did we impose a word count?

There's no word, count but be kind. Be kind to our staff. As we do have to read that word by word, and we want to read it and be able to post it back online for

all to see. Right? So there's no word limit to the box itself in. Yeah. But there is limit to each section. I guess you can, you know, try to choose section one, and then section 2, section 3. But you can do it in any order. Really, you need 3, 5, 4, 3, 6, 8. Yeah, Thank you.

Yeah, thank you for that question. It's good for us to know. The follow up question to that was, is there easy way to format the comments within the text boxes. Can we use bold italics? Is there a way to?

Yeah, I don't think when you submit it, that you can bold per se. I think technically, if you know HTML, you can add in front of each header like a a bracket - B, but that's requires like on your part, because we, when you submit it will send it to us as an excel. That just. Yeah, very technical. But I would say, leave it as as easy to read as possible, and then we can make sure to visualize it on the other end.

And we don't have any other hands raised, or any other comments right now in the Q&A box or in chat. So we are going back to you, Scott.

Thank you, Maria, and thanks for the rest of the team for all your hard work. I really appreciate, you know, Alex and Shawn and Ann for. And you know the work that went into to kind of putting this presentation together. If we go real quick, we're gonna do our best to show the timeline here. I think we had mentioned in part of the conversation here one of the complexities of you know, dealing with or not of advancing work on a federal grant program is that you know we have to work within the the timelines of the granting entity. NTIA is working as hard as they can to get this out, but just want to, know we have not received the public comments. So you may notice, if you've been looking at the timeline, that this has changed a bit. We wanted to keep you up to date on that the I think Mr. Cornik asked a great question earlier. Wanted to kind of talk through or or show some of the you know key milestones here on this timeline. So March 29th is when the Capacity Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity was released. May 28th is when the State turned in its application for that grant. We've spent 5 months doing stakeholder engagement and market research on the program design. A key milestone was achieved last week with all of the hard work of the, you know, over 20 California-based entities that submitted applications to the NTIA competitive Grant program. Another significant milestone occurred on Friday, which is the application portal for the NTIA Native Entity Grant application that opened on the 25th last week. You'll see that and again apologies for you know the readability of this, but we wanted to try to show the complexity for you. There's the gray box in the middle September 30th through October 29th, the 30 day public comment period. You'll see we're

starting the public comment period on the guidelines before we've received the Grant award because we know how much urgency there is to get this funds out. Moving back up to the top. You'll see that sometime, hopefully in October, or a date to be determined, we will receive the award from the NTIA and there's a sort of a wide range of things that need to occur in the 9 months that follow receipt of that award. The 1st is going to be for us to complete the final program guidelines and do a request for application solicitation. We're envisioning that to be around 60 days. There will be, you know, we're anticipating a 90 day review of applications and then taking about 30 days to finalize agreements, and really on the right hand side, the State will have to identify within the 9 months of receiving the award provide to NTIA specific line item budget of every expenditure contract and grant that we're gonna be making during the 5 year period of time. And so that gives you a sense of the the steps that are going to occur over the hopefully, you know, next 9 or 10 months, depending on when we receive the award. And so and I think that concludes it for me. There's any other content.

Say no content, but we receive a comment in the Q and A.

We've answered all the Q&A questions online. We have no outstanding questions..

Great well, if we can go to the next slide, just wanted to, if anyone here hasn't signed up for the Broadband for All email update, please do. The website is at [Broadbandforall.CDT.ca.gov](http://Broadbandforall.CDT.ca.gov), you can always reach out to us with questions or any other, you know, thoughts at [digitalequity@state.ca.gov](mailto:digitalequity@state.ca.gov). The QR code, I believe, takes you to the email update list. If we can take the slides down, please.

Just really wanted to emphasize on behalf of CDT and the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, and the extended team here, how grateful and thankful we are to all of you for the continuing partnership, the hard work that you and your organizations and teams and communities are doing every day to close the digital divide. And we're looking forward to the next steps. And we're looking forward to you know, hearing your thoughts on the draft guidelines. So just thank you very much.

Anh I think we can wrap up the meeting.