State Digital Equity Plan & Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program
Stakeholder Briefing
December 16, 2024
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes and Transcript

The State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) and Digital Equity Capacity Grant (DECG) Program Stakeholder Briefing met virtually on Monday, December 16, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. Engagement and Operations Manager Anh Nguyen welcomed attendees and instructed them to introduce themselves in the Zoom Chatbox 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 meeting. ASL interpreters were available throughout the meeting.

Agenda

Ms. Anh Nguyen briefly provided an overview of the SDEP & DECG Program Stakeholder Briefing agenda.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome & Recap

Deputy Director Scott Adams of the California Department of Technology (CDT) Office of Broadband & Digital Literacy welcomed attendees. He first provided a recap of past Digital Equity Capacity Grant milestones. Mr. Adams then highlighted key metrics of engagement this year, including 6 stakeholder briefings, 2 surveys and questionnaires, 117 market research meetings and listening sessions, as well as 20 presentations at stakeholder's convenings, conferences, and summits. Lastly, Deputy Director Adams recapped the purpose of the Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant.

Discussion

No attendees came off of mute to ask questions, and there were no questions from the Q&A Box.

Agenda Item 2 – Modifications to Subgrant Program Guidelines

Mr. Alex Banh, Principal of Broadband Equity Partnership, began his presentation by explaining the two funding tracks for the draft Capacity Subgrant Design: Track 1 for regional/local ecosystems and Track 2 for targeted statewide ecosystems. Mr. Banh also provided a brief recap of the allowable uses for the Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant. Mr. Banh concluded his presentation by going into detail regarding overall themes received from the public comments on three main topics: program design, funding and costs, and related programs and services. For each main topic, Mr. Banh shared the public comment theme, CDT's response, and status of the update.

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. The presenters proceeded to address questions.

While there were many questions that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, only one meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:
- Danielle Sherwood, Humboldt County DHHS – Adult Services

Agenda Item 3 – DECG Subgrant Technical Assistance Program

Mr. James Spencer, Broadband Administrative Manager at CDT's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, provided further information regarding the Digital Equity Capacity Subgrant technical assistance program. He shared the program components currently under development or in consideration of being developed to support digital equity capacity subgrant applicants. These program components include written resources, webinars and video content, partnership coordination resource webpage, office hours, and Q&A cycles. Mr. Spencer encouraged potential applicants to get organized, identify partners, build coalitions, and continue with research and assessment to get prepared while CDT continues to develop the technical assistance support components.

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. The presenters proceeded to address questions. While there were many questions that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, no attendee raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions.

Agenda Item 4 – Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities in 2025

Anh Nguyen, Engagement and Operations Manager at CDT's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, previewed upcoming stakeholder engagement opportunities in 2025. These stakeholder engagement opportunities include public meetings such as the California Broadband Council and Middle Mile Advisory Committee, stakeholder briefings and webinars, Statewide Implementation Group, Outcome Area Communities of Practice, Broadband for All Portal, as well as Broadband for All email monthly update. The Statewide Digital Equity Planning Group will be changed to the Statewide Implementation Group or SIG. She also shared that the Outcome Area Working Groups will transition to the Outcome Area Communities of Practice to support continued learning, information, collaboration, and coordination of digital equity efforts. Ms. Nguyen concluded her presentation by encouraging attendees to subscribe to the Broadband for All email updates.

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. While there were many questions that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, no attendee raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions. The presenters proceeded to address questions.

Agenda Item 5 – Next Steps & Closing

Deputy Director Scott Adams reported the tentative timeline on the approximate important milestones ahead for the Capacity Subgrant Program. Mr. Adams shared that CDT is still in the formation and finalization of the subgrant program. Final decisions will be reported out at the January stakeholder briefing. The official period of performance began on December 1, 2024 and that there are 9 months to process all subgrants, procurements, and contracts. He highlighted that in Quarter 1 of 2025, there will be a 60-day request for application period, followed by a 90-day application review process, and a 30-day reward period to finalize details. Deputy Director Scott Adams concluded his presentation by thanking attendees for their efforts and providing a QR code to sign up for the monthly Broadband for All email updates.

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. While there were many questions that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, no attendee raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions.

Deputy Director Scott Adams thanked attendees and presenters for joining the briefing meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

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

Transcript

All right, let's get started. Well, good afternoon, and welcome to the December 16th State Digital Equity Plan and 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, and we will begin the meeting shortly. Please use the chat box to share your name, job, title, and affiliated organizations. Before we begin just a few housekeeping items to consider. This meeting is being recorded. We will be posting the recording of this meeting slides and transcripts minutes to the Broadband for All portal. A member of my team will add the link to our chat very shortly. Presenters, please cue Amanda to advance your slides and select side-by-side speaker mode for the best viewing experience, when the slides are shared. And for best visibility of our ASL interpreters closed, captioning is available. Please select TC Closed Caption on your toolbar and select show subtitle. For Q and A, please note that there is time allocated at the end of each agenda item for questions, please use the Q and A box to type your questions related to that portion of the agenda. While our presenter is presenting, please use the 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 video. Just a note as well, we will temporarily turn off the chat while the presenters are speaking, so that no questions are lost in the chat and chat will be available during the discussion, as it is right now. Next slide, please. Just a few items to review for our agenda. We have a full agenda 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, CDT's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy Deputy Director Scott Adams will begin with a Welcome remark and highlight key milestones of Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program developments thus far. And then we'll have Alex Banh, Principal from Broadband Equity Partnership, who will discuss modifications to the DECG

Capacity Subgrant Program Draft Guidelines. Next, we will have OBDL's Broadband Administrative Manager, James Spencer, who will further discuss components of the Digital Equity Capacity Grants that grant Technical Assistance Program. As OBDL's Engagement and Operations Manager, I will review opportunities for more stakeholder partnership and collaboration in 2025. Lastly, Deputy Director Scott Adams will return, and we'll briefly review the tentative timeline, next steps and close the meeting. As a reminder at the end of each presentation OBDL's Access and Deployment Advisor, Maria Kelly will facilitate our Q and A, and the bi-directional discussion. Please feel free to turn on your mic and turn on your video at that time. So, first, I would like to introduce Deputy Director Scott Adams.

Thank you, Anh, and good afternoon, everyone. We welcome you to the latest in our series of Digital Equity Plan, Implementation and Capacity Grant Design Stakeholder Briefings. It continues to be an honor for the Department of Technology and the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy to really work arm in arm with all of you to coordinate state activities that are outlined in the Digital Equity Plan that will be funded by the Capacity Grant and to align efforts to really achieve the outcomes that are intended by the Digital Equity Plan Equity Plan. If we go to the next slide here, real briefly, wanted to touch on a couple of the key milestones that got us here. To those of you who you know, have been tracking this the evolution of the State Digital Equity Plan since, you know, well into last year and participated in developing the plan, you probably know that we completed the State Digital Equity Plan, and turned that in and had it approved by the NTIA on March 28th of last year, and then really quickly, the next day afterward the National Telecommunications and Information Administration released the notice of funding opportunity which allocated 70.2 million dollars that would go directly to the State of California to implement the Digital Equity Plan. We spent about 2 months to get to the next milestone, which was the Department of Technology on behalf of the State submitted an application to be the administering entity of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant, which again was 70.2 million dollars. What ensued there was a period of curing and merit review between May 29th and October 24th of this year, where the National Telecommunications Information Agency was reviewing applications and doing a curing process. And then really take you to November 4th when California received notification that we would receive the full 70.2 million dollars in funding. A note here while the announcement was made on November 4th, the period of performance on this 5-year grant is officially December 1st of 2024. Can we move to the next slide, please? One of the things that we wanted to really stress here is, we know that Digital Equity and Broadband for All is really it's you know, it's going to take the entire ecosystem of

folks that have long been working in the space to achieve Digital Equity in this State. Working collaboratively is all of, you know, you have told us over the last 2 years together; to align, to synchronize, to create efficiencies and eliminate duplication. Additionally, we had established values of like an open and transparent and inclusive process, not just in establishing the Digital Equity Plan, but as we shape the overall design of the capacity Grant Program and the Capacity Subgrant Program. So, what we wanted to do is just share some of the metrics of the engagement that have occurred over really, the last significant portion of the year. We've had 6 Digital Equity Implementation and Capacity Grant Program Stakeholder Briefings. We've issued 2 Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program design surveys and questionnaires. I want to make sure to mention that those were really focused on organizational and jurisdictional entities that would potentially be applicants or sub-tier applicants of the Grant Program to further enhance our understanding that we, you know, might not gain even in a bidirectional, briefing session like this. We've done 117 market research meetings and listening sessions with a variety of entities, community-based organizations jurisdictions, etc., and an attendant kind of gone outside of our own process to participate with other entities, to give presentations at their stakeholder convenings, conferences, and summits. Next slide, please. And so really, the purpose of a lot of this effort has been, how do we shape this digital equity subgrant program to achieve the intended purpose. And that is really to fund entities to implement the State Digital Equity Plan, to address digital equity barriers at the local regional and state level, to facilitate and assist the development (or further development) of regional ecosystems and to increase capacity to provide digital inclusion funding to trusted messengers, knowing, as has been shared repeatedly throughout this process that trust, and having the right partners; in community, in culture, in language, doing this work is so critically important. And then to also allocate funding you know, equitably across the state, so that there are funds spent in every county, and to encourage statewide innovation. And so really, that concludes my update here, really setting the table for the next piece of the conversation, which is, you know, how the public comment process that we held on the sub-parent program is leading to potential modifications of the subgrant program guidelines. But I will pause there and answer any questions. If there are some before, we move on to the next speaker.

Thank you, Scott. I'm watching for there's no attendees' hands up, and I don't see anything in chat. And as always remind everyone that we have multiple times throughout this presentation to engage in questions. So please, if you don't have one right now, we'll be able to touch on it here shortly. So just one more second. All right, I think we can proceed. Thank you so much, everyone for

being here. So, I'm going to introduce Alex Banh, Principal of Broadband Equity Partnership, and he'll carry us through the Modifications of the Subgrant Program Guidelines. Thanks, Alex.

Thanks, Maria, thanks for the kind intro we can move on lots to cover today. So, just wanted to dive right in. So…yeah, for this section, we wanted to start off with a quick recap of the subgrant design that was outlined in the draft grant guidelines that went out for public comment. So, you know, within this design, there's really a focus on ecosystem development for digital equity across regions, localities as well as statewide for targeted outcome areas and cover populations. So, this design has two tracks. Track 1 is the regional and local ecosystem track; this is a track that has the formula allocation for every county as a geographic boundary. This is the track that, you know, includes funding for regional local district equity planning as well as capacity, you know, for implementation, and implementation activities. And you know, within this track we also want to encourage you know, lead applicants to, you know, take the lead on doing planning as well as implementation and management and administration of the grants within the county geographic boundary, but all, and also allow for multi-county joint applications. So let's say, you know, 3 counties want to join together to form a regional application, you know, that is totally allowed within this design, and on top of that, there is the possibility of lead applicant providing second tier subgrants. To, you know, local smaller organizations, CBO's, digital equity practitioners, trusted messengers to carry out activities at the community and local levels. So that's Track 1. Track 2 is for targeted statewide ecosystem development and innovation for outcome areas, or specific cover populations. So, outcome areas such as economic and workforce development, health, education, access to essential services, etc. And then, you know any of the eight covered populations. Within this track, you know, nonprofits (or digital inclusion providers) with a focus on outcome areas, cover populations, or statewide reach can apply, as well as tribes, and tribal consortia (or associations). So that's just a quick recap of the design, move to the next slide. And here are the allowable uses of the capacity subgrants. So, funding can be used for developing local Digital Equity Plans. It could be used for broadband adoption campaigns as well as digital navigation services. Also, digital literacy and skills training targeted device distribution and workforce development training and apprenticeships. So, a variety of uses all in alignment with both the NTIA requirements and the State Digital Equity Plan. Next slide, please. So, as Scott mentioned, you know these grant guidelines were put out for, the draft grant finals were put out for public comments in September and October, we received 66. There were 66 total commenters, and in total, they commented. We received comments from them on 192, or 192 section specific

comments. And you know, just in analyzing every individual comment, there were themes around program design, like application structure, application timelines and covered populations. There were themes around funding and costs like funding allocation, allowable costs and cost caps. And then themes around related programs and services like centralized services and data collection provisions, updates on SDEP and overall capacity grant implementation as well as questions and comments on, you know, technical assistance and guidance that CDT would provide. So those are the comments that we received. And you know, as we continue, wanted to really show how CDT, how we are addressing and responding to these comments? And whether changes are, you know, planned for modification, whether things are still under consideration, like there needs to be more analysis, and perhaps in certain cases more clarification and confirmation from NTIA, you know, as the Federal funder, or you know in in some cases that where there are no changes, and why? So next slide, we want to move into some responses to these public comments. So, first batch of comments were around program design. So you know, in the draft Grant guidelines, we outlined a very tentative application timeline and RFA launch date, and you know the last day was around December, received a lot of comments about, you know, not wanting to see an RFA Application period straddle the holidays you know, and also wanting to have more time to understand what the NTIA competitive grant decisions were, you know, before applicants designed and framed, you know, their application for this program. So yeah, in response to these comments, we've decided to extend the RFA launch from you know, this month, December 2024 to Quarter 1, 2025, just to give everyone more time, based on some of those considerations. Another theme was around applicant eligibility, we received a number of comments asking if certain other organizations were eligible and just looking at the list that we provided we received a number of comments, you know, asking if regional broadband consortia were eligible, or, you know, encouraging them to be eligible. So, you know, first we want to clarify that the list of eligible entities comes from federal statute, as well as from NTIA. So, you know, in that overall list, when you're looking at like political subdivisions, or nonprofit organizations. We can't change those, but as long as an organization meets one of those Federal / NTIA criteria, they will be eligible. So, for Regional Broadband Consortium, if the organization that leads the consortia, the fiscal sponsor belongs to one of the NTIA / Federal eligible entity categories, then they will be eligible. So, we're just providing that clarification in the RFA, as well based on those comments. We received comments about how we will select amongst competing applications for a specific county, especially if you had a multi-county application overlap with a county specific application. So, we are providing clarification to state

that, we'll apply the criteria in such a way that we'll select the best application for a given county if there are overlapping applications. So, looking at, you know the partnerships, the network, the plans, you know, the proposal for that specific county, which application you know, provides the best plan for that county will be selected. We received comments encouraging us to consider awarding more than one application in a given county. This is one that's still under consideration. So we are considering, you know, whether to include an option to award more than one application for a given county, but we need a bit more time to, you know, to decide and finalize that, it needs a little bit more analysis to understand the feasibility of this of this change. So, this one is still under consideration. And then, lastly, on this slide is period of performance in the draft grant guidelines, we had a period of performance of 3 years, 10 months received some comments, you know, stating that, given some of the allocations, for some counties, 3 years, 10 months might be too long, there might not be enough funding to sustain a program for that long. So, you know, we are changing how we describe the period of performance. So, we'll set a maximum period of performance and an end by date for the programs. But you know, within that maximum, and within that end by date, applicants can propose, their own period of performance. So, if they, you know, want to propose a 2-and-a-half-year or 3-year period of performance, that will be allowable. So, we're making that change. Next slide, please. A few more comments on program design in the draft grant guidelines. We outlined the reporting timelines, you know, If the post award reporting timelines, you know, if the application is awarded. How often will they have to report? And what are their… what are the deadlines for reporting? And we received some comments stating that what we had in the draft, which is 14 days after reporting period ends, the reports will be due, is too short and doesn't allow for enough time for folks to, you know, really gather all the data that they need and prepare the reports. So, we are planning to extend the post award reporting deadlines, based on that feedback. We also received comments on the on the topic of partnerships and second tier subgrantees. So, one is on whether lead applicants need to finalize all their entire list of partners and their entire list of second-tier subgrantees at the time of application, or whether those can be finalized after the award. And then the other question was around, whether the UEI requirements, so the Unique Entity Identification requirement, that is, you know, granted by the federal SAM.gov website, whether that's required for both lead applicants and second tier subgrantees, or just lead applicants. So, both of these are still under consideration. Yeah, we do require a little bit more time to, you know, figure out what is allowable, and what we can move ahead with. But yeah, definitely hear folks on both of these suggestions. On the covered population definitions, we

received comments suggesting either changes to how we're defining certain covered populations or suggesting new groups to be added to the covered populations. So, for this one, the covered population definitions are based on federal statute and within the capacity grant NOFO that grants CDT as a State, the capacity grant, you know, to fund these programs, NCI does have a requirement for capacity grants to focus on the eight covered populations. So, we can't revise these definitions to include individual groups, but you know, we are making sure to include language on intersectionality and the allowability, you know, of applicants to serve groups that may belong to multiple cover populations. Finally, on this slide is Track 2. So, the statewide programs, we received comments and questions asking if all of the eight cover populations and all of the six outcome areas that are from the State Executive Plan are going to be eligible for try to applicants, or only a select, subset of those. So, we are clarifying that it is going to be all of the eight, and you know, the six outcome areas. So those six outcome areas include the ones that I mentioned before, like; education, workforce development and health, but they also include things like; tribal collaboration and digital literacy and inclusion. So, these are areas that targeted areas that applicants, you know, can apply or Track 2 funding for. Slide, please. This slide covers the comments that we received on funding and costs, so received some comments around the Track 1 funding formula, and how funds were going to be allocated to the different counties. And we received some comments, you know, suggesting different data sources or suggesting, you know, changes to the formula inclusion of new criteria, and things like that. So, you know, we're reviewing all of these comments. And yeah, considering the decision as far as how much, which to include, and what to incorporate. But we want to stress that, you know, with these changes we need to make sure that we are remaining consistent with the Digital Equity Act, also with within what's required of us in the NTIA NOFO and prior stakeholder input, including the questionnaire you know, that was released in over the summer. So those are all going to be considered as far as the decision for any Track 1 formula modifications. Another theme around funding was reallocating unused funds. So, you know, we received comments asking if a certain county did not apply for its allocation. What is CDT, how is CDT going to redistribute those unused funds? So, this is another one that is still under consideration. We're reviewing options for reallocating those funds and seeing what's feasible within the NTIA's 9-month timeline. So, I think it was mentioned earlier by Scott, NTIA gives us nine months from the time our award starts, which is December 1st, to the time that we need to finalize all subgrantee selection, and, you know, report back to them as far as who the final subgrantees are. So that is a pretty tight timeline, and we need to see what's feasible within that

constraint. We received comments asking about, you know, certain allowable versus unallowable costs. So, you know, certain items like staff training or professional development for staff or coalition building activities, whether those would be allowable. So, we are preparing allowable cost guidance on these topics, and this guidance will be included in the final RFA. We had comments around the indirect provision, indirect cost provision as well as the administrative cost provision, within the draft grant guidelines. That language flowed down directly from the NTIA capacity grant, the 3% administrative cost cap as well as the Federal indirect cost policy. But you know, we're seeing how much flexibility we have to update, and, you know, increase these caps. We also had comments on device costs as well as planning costs. So, for the device cost, we are planning to increase the device cost cap to $400 per device, you know, based on the comments as well as allowing applicants to use up to 25% of their total budget for devices rather than just that flat cost cap that was in the draft. For the planning costs, in the draft it had 5% (or 50,000) per county, whichever is greater, as the planning cost cap. We've decided not to adjust that cap, but we're also clarifying that this planning cap applies on a per county basis. So, if an applicant applies to serve 3 counties right, their cost cap will be 5% of their total budget (or 50,000) per county. We also received comments on the advanced payment and reimbursement payment structure, and this is another one that's under consideration. We're reviewing options for either quarterly, versus monthly reimbursements. As well as advances, whether to increase from 10% to 25%. So that's still under consideration. Next slide, please. Lastly, these are comments on related programs and technical assistance. We received a lot of questions about these centralized services from the draft grant guidelines. So, in the RFA we will add more information on the types of centralized services that applicants can expect CDT to provide. And we're also clarifying that applicants can, will have the ability and will have the flexibility to use alternatives to the centralized services if needed to meet local needs. So, for instance, if the centralized service does not provide curriculum or programming in a language that is required for a particular county or community. That applicant can, you know, then find their own service option, you know, to meet local needs for that language. So, we'll be including some additional clarification and language in the RFA about that. For the Digital Equity Survey and DEEM tool, we'll be, including opportunities for subgrantees and stakeholders to provide input on the next iterations of the Digital Equity Survey and the DEEM tool. We received some comments kind of pointing out the limitations of these tools, you know, as they were conducted during the SDEP process. So, for the next iterations, you know, in the spirit of continuous improvement, there will be additional opportunities for input before we finalize and release those tools. We had comments just asking

about implementation asking for updates on implementation of the SDEP and overall capacity grant. So, we will be providing more information on the Broadband for All portal. As you know, these updates become available. Finally, we received comments encouraging CDT to provide support for local entities and CBOs to come together to form partnerships for applications as well as questions and comments on, you know, providing more guidance on how applicants can estimate their outputs and outcomes. So, for both of these topics we will plan to provide more information, more guidance on these things as part of the technical assistance offerings. And that's it for our responses to the public comment. I'll pass it back to Maria for Q&A and discussion.

Thank you, Alex. We'll now move on to the discussion portion of what Alex presented. We do have a couple of questions. Scott... and we'd like to all just push to the top here, as we're waiting for other people to raise their hands. If you'd like to raise your hand, and I'll call on you, and you can unmute. We're asked Scott, there's a question about wondering if future tranches of monies will be included in both Tracks? From Norma.

Thank you, Maria. And I'm assuming that Norma is referring to the 2nd anrd tranches, that of the Digital Equity Capacity dollars, that you know, would be the remainder of the statutory allocation included in the Digital Equity Act. I think it's too early to tell right now. It's our understanding and conversations with the NTIA that each tranche is gonna have its own separate notice of funding opportunity and they may or may not have the same requirements. And so we don't know what flexibility we have. What we can say is, we've been very vocal in participating in NTIA focus group with state broadband offices and digital equity entities, and have said that, or requested that, if possible, they allow states to flow funds from future tranches into programs that are established and set up in tranche 1.

Thank you, Scott. We also had a question, and I think we'll touch on this towards the end of the presentation. But a question from Robin, confirming that we'll have an idea of when those announcements when the RFA will be released and I believe we covered that later in our presentation, correct?

And I think I can touch on it right now. Is that of our process here is that as we're, you know going through the deliberative process of shaping the program that both is flexible to the needs of the ecosystem and stays within the constraints of Federal and State guidelines. We wanna make sure we're doing it in an open and transparent way. We, you know, Alex was, you know, I think what he went through was to really try to keep folks, you know, up to speed in the processes we're able to make modifications to program design so that you all can prepare

for that. But in terms of when we are going to launch the program like Alex had indicated that the formal request for application will come in the first quarter of next year. Likely, sometime after the month of January.

Thank you, Scott. We have a question from Blanca asking if funds for tribal collaborations to organizations serving indigenous peoples in urban settings in California qualify?

I would say that. You know, the intention of the tribal collaboration, you know, pieces to really facilitate support for tribal entities throughout the State and developing and shaping their own Digital Equity Plans, that are kind of to both augment and support the infrastructure plans. And so, I think, you know, going to place a high premium on you know, travel entities or coalitions of travel entities who apply for those. But it's our intention to make sure that funds are allocated for that specific purpose. So, you know, we'll take this comment into consideration, prior to finalizing the Track 2 guidelines.

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

Okay, so I was just thinking that $400 per device sounds quite low, especially if you're buying a home computing system. I'm wondering what types of devices you guys are envisioning people purchase for $400 each?

You know, thank you for the question. I respectfully don't want to really get into a conversation about what kind of devices folks can buy with the funds allocated. But what I do want to say is that the draft the draft subgrant guidelines that we posted for public comment used as a baseline, that the caps that the Public Utilities Commission put on devices in the California Advanced Service Adoption Account. Which is you know, is a good standard, and what we heard back from organizations, from public comment is that that was a price point, that you know, was a good price point. And I think, Alex, if you have anything to add to my question, definitely welcome you to kind of expand on that.

No. So yeah, we did use the, in the draft we used language, borrowed from the, aligned with the CPUC caps of broadband adoption program with, you know, their on their device limitations and requirements as our baseline. And you know Scott mentioned, we did receive a number of comments asking us to increase this cap, and they provided, you know, different price points like $350, $375, $400. And yeah, based on the comments and the suggestions, you know, we decided to increase to $400.

Well, our organization was a recipient of the AT&T Grant. I'm not sure if you all are familiar with that one. The Access To Technology through the California Department of Aging. And we use pretty much all, but the majority of our funding to purchase devices for people. And you know, I've Tracked our spending on everything, and I mean there are some things that we were able to find at that price point. But there are a lot of things that were much higher than that price point. Especially if you're looking to serve elderly individuals and people with disabilities. A lot of them really need a real computer with a keyboard they're not really able to use a smartphone, or a tablet as easily. So, I just, I'm not sure how beneficial that's going to be for a lot of the people that we serve, and also the 25% cap on devices seems honestly quite low to me as well. I just, I'm not sure what else we would be doing with the funds, if we're not purchasing devices, because staff are very expensive.

Thank you, Danielle.

Yeah, thank you. We can, I'm sure we'll have some conversations internally. There are a lot of questions coming through. So just please be patient with me for just a moment as I go back through. I did have a question earlier on that we went over from Robin regarding areas on aging area agencies, on aging, whether or not they could apply or be a participant in the grant application process.

Thanks, Maria. Really good question. I think, you know, to answer, I want to take a step back, and that you know the State and all of us collectively developed a very ambitious Digital Equity Plan that is intended to address digital equity barriers for eight covered populations, you know, across the State. And that's a big mission. Over 33 million of California's residents identify... self-identify as one or more of the eight covered populations and the available amount of federal funding that we have to implement the plan is 70, you know, million dollars. And so the way that we, in collaboration with all of you over the last many months, have proposed to shape the program is to also take into consideration the other tranches of funding, like the Public Utilities Commission's Adoption Account and the NTIA's Digital Equity Competitive Grant program and other fundings, and we feel that to make the best use of this one-time funding that we have for Digital Equity Capacity, that the biggest impact that we can make is on that local and regional planning and capacity building, and that by allowing flexibility to do sub-granting out to trusted messenger groups that we could definitely catalyze the amount of digital navigation services that are provided of digital literacy training connection to low-cost offers and subsidies. If there's a successor to the ACP program and so and part of that is devices. We fully acknowledge that there isn't enough money, and we mentioned that in the Digital Equity Plan.

There's currently not enough funds, but part of the reason we've shaped the Grant program, the way that we have is that part of local planning is to really identify other sustainable sources of funding through philanthropy, private sector, other local solutions that can help create sustainable outcomes. And so that's just, some thinking beyond of where we're coming from. And so, to answer the question about area agencies on aging and other entities, we fully encourage that individual entities that are serving specific populations that have specific programs really seek out the coalitions that are providing applications either for the county's allocation, or if it's a regional multi-county application and be a party to that application. And, you know, potentially a subrecipient of capacity grant dollars to help implement the programs.

Thank you, Scott. There's a great question from Elaine. Would applicants (and this is a good one) will lead applicants be able to submit more than one application? Alex, can you? Oh, there's Scott.

Sorry, Maria, can you repeat that question again for me?

Yeah, there's, will lead applicants be able to submit more than one application?

I'd like to better understand that question. I think that's something that we're still thinking through is maybe the person who's asking that willing to articulate that a little more, or they can contact us, offline. Yeah, Elaine, if you're if you would like to be able to share a little bit more about your thoughts on this question, feel free to unmute and turn on your video camera. Otherwise, just let us know via chat, and we can connect with you later. And I don't see.

Maria, I believe you might be on mute.

Yeah, sorry. There's a cup I'm trying to read through some of the questions. Some of the questions are really individual, and I'll answer some of these via chat. I don't see any other questions right now, or any hands raised, so I think it's a good time to move on. But again. Please continue to drop your questions into chat and we'll capture them by section. We're going to go ahead and move into the next portion. And I'm gonna introduce, there's James. James Spencer, our Broadband Administrative Manager. Thanks, James.

Yeah, thank you, Maria, and good afternoon, everyone. My name is James Spencer. I am the Broadband Administrative Manager for OBDL. Today I'm going to provide a brief update on our technical assistant program being developed. Next slide, please. So, based on stakeholder briefings, questionnaires, and public comment over the past few months. The CDT team continues to build out technical assistance programs to support the Digital Equity Capacity subgrant program applicants. So, the program components

shown here are either under development (or in consideration for being developed) and will be accessible through our subgrant resource page on the portal. So, a quick overview of the program components. You have written resources which will be like condensed and easily accessible reference documents to address common questions and concerns and assist applicants in submitting well informed applications. We also will have webinars and video content. And this will look like, you know, live webinars and pre-recorded video content to discuss some of our TA components. As far as our partnership collaboration we have, we're creating resources to help generate collaboration between applicants and partners. We're also anticipating office hours, which will look like a live opportunity to ask questions. And finally, you know, Q and A cycles. And so, Q and A samples will just be, you know, where you can submit written questions, and they'll be answered on a regular schedule. So, as CDT continues to develop technical assistance support components, there are several actions you can still take to get prepared. Simple as getting organized, identifying your partners, and build coalitions and continue on with your research and assessment. And I'm going to pass it to Maria, who will facilitate discussion.

Thank you, James. As a follow-up, Scott, to our previous question from Elaine we can follow up with her. The question was whether or not maybe the clarification that one lead applicant, there may be multiple projects under one lead applicant for a region and that it wouldn't need to just be one project per application. James, would you like to? Are you able to elaborate? Are you? Does that make sense.

I'm sorry. Yeah, go ahead, Scott. You were kind of cutting out for me. I apologize.

Sorry.

I think there's I think we have to be pay careful attention to deduplication and not you know, double dipping. I really think that the way that I would answer this question is that the way that we have proposed and designed the subgrant program is much like the NTIA competitive grant where you, it really focuses on what we learned during the planning process, that alignment, collaboration and cooperation between entities, building a coalition and implementing, developing a plan and then working together to implement that pulling together the best of their abilities. To be able to uniquely reach out to the dimensionality of the populations in their area. You know, that we are strongly urging that the lead applicant be the applicant for the grant to lead the coalition and the planning and then determine, with the remaining funds how to

subgrant those funds out to the partners that are the most effectively going to be able to implement programming in that regional location. So in that context, we do, you know, agree that once a local or regional plan is developed or amended, refined in line with the State plan, that there will be many projects, but it would be up to the lead entity to really determine and subgrant, or contract those funds out to the appropriate partner to do those.

Thank you, Scott. We have had a couple of questions regarding the Middle Mile would you like to address the questions regarding just sort of general questions regarding where? And how? And...

So, thanks, Maria, and I definitely, thank you for, you know, giving voice to those questions that were asked, and we fully acknowledge that, broadband for all in the States Digital Equity Plan, acknowledge that access availability, infrastructure and affordability and adoption are all critical components of digital equity. And you know, we do acknowledge how much of an important role that infrastructure plays in, you know, completing the digital equity continuum in the State. I think this forum here, our staff and the program we're working on is the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant, which is really intended for those non-infrastructure uses like, that we, you know, kind of listed out at the beginning about coalition building and planning and broadband adoption campaigns and digital literacy training. I think, you know, our colleagues who are working at the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative are the ones who could best answer those questions about them, MMBI. Or I see questions about Last Mile Infrastructure. The Public Utilities Commission has a wonderful staff that's working on those grants who, I'm sure, you know, can help you out with answers to those questions.

Thank you, Scott. I appreciate that. I from, I'm going to go down the questions right now that were posed into the Q and A Alex has a couple of questions about, where do we access this list of potential partners that we can connect with locally? And where do we find the subgrants list programs that James Spencer mentioned on Slide 2?

Well, I can answer that to the components that James spoke to that are those are the and components that he and his team are developing as part of the technical assistance program that are still being developed. You know, part of the connections they're looking at developing a partner collaboration page on the Broadband for All Portal that they're looking into. Those are things that I would expect. We can speak more to you know, after the first of the year at our stakeholder briefing in January. And then, James, if you want to expand on that, please do.

Yes, Scott, I appreciate that. Yeah, I think you pretty well covered it. So, all those are kind of in development right now or being considered for development. And so, as we know more information that will be relayed through email updates, portal updates, and whatnot.

Thanks, James. I want to drop, everyone mentioned that we did drop the grant…the draft guidelines, the Capacity Grant Subgrant Program Guidelines in chat. Again, we have a couple of questions regarding the format applications, and what will be expected of them. What we are offering right now is, you can see the draft that we're working off of and we're providing updates to how that will be changing and when we'll start having those finalized, so hope that answers your that one person's question that asked that. We have another question...So could you clarify the definition of digital inclusion provider and whether adult education agencies providing digital literacy programs would qualify under that designation for Track 2?

Wondering, Alex, if you would want to be able to come on, answer that question, for folks.

Yeah, I mean, I think it depends on that organization's fit within the NTIA eligible entities definition, whether they're going to be eligible to apply or not. But you know, within that slide we really want to, you know, we're encouraging organizations, if, as long as they meet those NTIA eligible entity definitions if they have the reach within across the State and they have a focus on a particular covered population, you know, like; aging individuals, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency or within a specific outcome area. Definitely want them to apply.

Thank you, Alex.

It's more about. I just wanna say it's more about, you know. Number one, you know, assuming that they meet those NTIA requirements. You know whether they have that experience. They have that statewide reach; you know which is what Track 2 is all about.

We have a follow up question, from the same person. It's similar and I think that it's more around centralized services. So, education agencies considering applying as lead agencies, what specific types of centralized services will be available? And if we could touch on that, that might answer actually a few questions around centralized services.

I think we've provided a lot of information on our past briefings, and I know staff will provide a list there. But you know, in the centralized services that are being envisioned, we're really called out during the planning process and included in

the plan. So what we're thinking of as a centralized services is, you know, a modified iteration of the State Digital Equity Survey that can be used and implemented by the entities who conduct the work revised and iterated digital equity ecosystem mapping tool to help, you know, map out their area and their ecosystem. You know, looking at procuring a digital literacy assessment and training platform and potentially workforce development platform to support broadband, you know, job applications. Also, a number of developed resources on the Broadband for All portal, there's a Low-Cost Offer Finder and some other things. So really, we're looking at centralized services as the things that folks told us during the planning process that we could leverage our expertise and our purchasing power to develop tools and resources, at the state level that could support applicants to actually, you know, better focus on the programmatic work, doing digital navigation, you know, helping connect people to training and training platforms, etc.

Thank you, Scott. I have another question from Courtney in Stanislaus County. And Courtney I'm going to answer the first part of this, in that, there haven't been any applications submitted yet, so there's nowhere to look for that list. But we can answer your question in regards to searching for partners. And, James, could you talk a little bit, maybe share a little bit more about finding sort of, again, building that coalition.

Yeah, so we're currently developing a resource for partner coordination. So currently, we're using some of the stakeholder feedback, and comments were received. And as soon as we have that developed it will be released to the ecosystem. So that's kind of all we can share right now until it's finalized. But we are we have heard the comments, and we are looking to facilitate something like that.

Thank you, Alex. and I'm watching for hands raised. I'm just going to keep going through questions, and some of some of you are direct messaging me, which is fine. I'm trying to catch up because there's a team of us trying to pull these questions. So, if you can type, if you're comfortable typing your question to everyone, it's a little bit faster, but I'll just keep pulling them as fast as I can. A question regarding, and I'm going to take this as another coordination question. Can an organization submit 2 applications but focus on different populations? And I think this is where sort of that understanding of you could have one large application with multiple projects or types of projects for covered populations within that. Yeah, maybe Scott, or somebody could, or Alex, we could clarify that a little bit.

I think I here's the one thing that I would suggest is, I really respect the question and are sensitive to making the Grant program as flexible to meet the needs of the ecosystem to cater to the specific needs of the population. I think we're starting to get into you know, multiple scenarios that I'm not sure we can project out. What I would suggest is, if the staff can drop our email into the into the chat box. That if there's a specific question for us into, we can take a look at that and see how we can either incorporate clear guidance into the final, you know, guidelines for the grant program or build in some language in the technical assistance program that can address kind of specific scenarios that folks are bringing up right now.

Thank you, Scott, and there's a very robust conversation happening regarding computers and devices, and we'll just let you continue everyone to carry on your conversation there. We're going to keep addressing questions as we move forward.

Thank you, Anh, for responding about follow up how you can reach out to us. And a question, one more question that I think we'll be able to move on to the next section. How can we connect with proper channels, if we have solutions that are for centralized services? Another question about centralized services that would be good to touch on again.

Well, we've done a significant amount of market research and talk to various you know, private sector, nonprofit vendors, etc. I think, you know, I would suggest, if folks have, you know, solutions that you've taken a look at the Digital Equity Plan and you've taken a look at the key activities and think there's something we should know about. Please send us an email, and a member of our staff will try to meet with you and learn more about what you're doing.

Thank you, Scott, appreciate that. There's no hands raised, and we're answering the questions if we can. I think we're ready to move on to Anh Nguyen, thank you.

Thank you, Maria, and thank you for all the questions, comments, coming in. It's a very lively discussion, and this is exactly what we intend with the bi-directional approach. So, without further ado, I wanted to dive straight into what you can expect from us in 2025 Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities. But for us it's really an opportunity, partner and collaborate with you. Next slide, please. So just a few to highlight. If you don't know already, for Public Meetings, we have Quarterly California Broadband Council and Middle Mile Advisory Committee meetings that happens, like I said, on a quarterly basis. Date and time is announced in advance, and so we can definitely, drop the link in the chat for you to take a look at. And the next thing that we want to highlight is Stakeholder

Briefings and Webinars. Very much like what we've been doing recently, with our live briefings. And, as James mentioned before, the webinars that will be more focused on the RFA the subgrant process. The next part is the Statewide Implementation Group, also known as SIG, which is being transitioned from many of you may be familiar with the Statewide Digital Equity Planning group, the SPG, it will be changed to SIG. So, it's a state table in partnership with CPUC and the NTIA. So, keep on a lookout for that, and we'll announce when that would be happening. The next part, you may also be aware of the Outcome Area Working Group which we will transition to the Outcome Area Communities of Practice to support continued learning, information sharing, collaboration and coordination of digital equity efforts. Lastly, wanted to continue updates throughout the year via the Broadband for All portal and the Broadband for All email monthly update. So, if you haven't been subscribing to our monthly update and getting emails from us already, please do so. Our staff will drop the link in the chat again as well. But that's briefly for me, and then back to you all for discussion.

Thank you, Anh, so we're still capturing all your questions. Would like to step back a little bit, to clarify what we mean by allowable activity cost for planning that has a $50,000 cap. Does that mean regional Digital Equity Planning as an activity, or a planning for pulling together the regional application, or something else? So, there's 3 options that we've been given.

Thank you, Maria, and thank you, Miss Cortina, for the question. What we mean on the planning cap is that you know, we acknowledge that many of us have worked together over the last you know, year or 2 to develop the State Digital Equity Plan, and that you know, gathered input from over 50,000, you know, residents and stakeholders through the 20 regional planning workshops and the 48 virtual meetings that included the outcome area working groups, etc. So, the state Digital Equity Plan is fairly well defined. It has the strategies, key activities, measurable objectives, and really targets and baselines that the Federal Government is intending us to kind of adhere to as we spend the capacity, grant dollars to implement the plan. And so when we look at the planning dollars and the caps that's really to focus on acknowledging that you know, if local and regional coalitions are going to either form, or build out or expand their planning to potentially align with the Digital Equity Plan that some allocation of funding would need to be used to further develop or refine, or on those plans and part of that could also include Coalition building, which folks and so they would like to encourage us allowing during this process. But the reason that there's a cap on the planning is that it really wants to place focus on implementing program. And that you know, using the bulk of the remaining

funds to establish those digital navigation services, or fund digital navigation providers, or connect local residents to training, etc. So, I hope I answered that question. Thank you.

Thank you, Scott, and I think I think we're caught up on our questions. But if we're not, and I missed something, please drop it into chat again. And we do have a question for you. Someone anonymous, has been trying to join our monthly email list, but isn't receiving them. Who could they reach out to? And maybe you could answer that for us. Please.

Yeah. Happy to resolve that, for you feel free to send me an email. I'll drop it in the chat or direct message me in the chat when it's open, and we can look that up. Sometimes, I won't go into the technicality of it, but we can resolve it.

Thanks, Anh. Another participant asked. How we define digital navigators, and some of this can be found within but our portal. But if somebody would like to answer that question for this participant that might be helpful to frame that.

Alex, do you? Are you able to come on and speak to that.

Yeah, I'm looking for the specific list, but we do define it in both the Grant Guide, the draft grant guidelines and the State Digital Equity Plan it includes one-on-one services for one-on-one group assistance, technical assistance support; help using, help navigating website, and technology light tech support things like that. Referring out to more specific types of digital literacy training workforce development training or providing digital literacy training themselves. And this is also, you know, something that we asked about in the questionnaire. What were the most important aspects of digital navigation that we should include, and these were the things that rose to the top, really focusing on that one-to-one connection drop in assistance, you know, by trusted messengers for community members.

And the another anonymous participant is asking where we can find that information, and if we could drop the draft guidelines into chat again, please. I would encourage folks on this call to be prior to our next webinar, we have some time taking a look and checking our grant guidelines. There's a question that's been sitting here for a little bit, and it's an allowable cost question. I believe. Will solutions that provide Internet connection to seniors along with devices be exempt from the $400 tab? So, asking about devices, as well as actually asking about cost to connect? Are we able to respond to that question.

Alex, do you want to take that one.

I mean, we'll take it under consideration. But I just want to state overall, you know, with the NTIA, and how they designed this NOFO. They you know, for the States to implement there. There is quite a bit of language in the NOFO about broadband subsidies, and how they are allowable costs, you know, to the extent that they are necessary for a specific type of activity like digital literacy, or digital navigation to be successful and to get to those end outcomes of digital equity. But we know that, you know, these funds are limited. And you know, we're really trying to design for long term sustainability. And you know, that's coming from the Federal government. It's also coming from the Digital Equity Plan. So, we want to limit the amount of funding. You know that or at least one of the considerations that we have is, you know how much funding is going to go towards ecosystem development and planning things that could be long term and sustainable versus things that are just, you know, one time within the next one to… 1, 2, 4 years. Yeah, but we will consider, you know, what it's the cap for devices that come along with, you know, broadband and internet connection.

Thank you, Alex, appreciate that. There are no hands raised and no outstanding questions. Again, if I missed it, please drop it in the chat again. We will have another one more opportunity to go ahead and go through questions. And we'll pass it back to you. Scott.

Thanks, Maria. Thanks team. So real quick, just wanted to go over some of the next steps, and I think it consistent with what we've tried to do. We want to be as specific as we can. Provide as much specificity as we can for all of you, because we know that you're you know, need the lead time, and the background information to plan. But wanted to also underscore the challenges of these Federally funded grant programs where there are, you know, some back end things that are slightly beyond our control. The one thing I'd like to do, though, is, if we could go to the next slide, please. This is a tentative timeline. I know that folks have been asking about the couple of things to clarify that. The we are still in the formation and finalization process of this subgrant program. We have not procured any centralized services, and that those are all things that are happening, you know, really, the beginning of next year. The final decisions on the subgrant program are still a number of big-ticket items that will be decided on, and then we will come and report out at a stakeholder briefing in January. And so, there is still more time to prepare and get ready for the grant program prior to the launch. And so, I think that, you know, what we wanted to communicate out to folks today is that really, the top row demonstrates, where we were this year there was the competitive or the capacity grant notice of funding opportunity. There was the caring and merit review from the NTIA. The

second row is the program design work, the stakeholder engagement, the market research, the webinars that we tried to do as much as we could, concurrently so that we could be prepared to hit the ground running because we know how critical this is. Now we wanna direct folks to an administrative, you know, kind of nuance to the Digital Equity Capacity Grant that both myself and Alex had mentioned is that while we've received the award and the performance period of performance begins or began on December 1st, based on the notice of funding opportunity, we will have 9 months from December 1st to issue the request for applications make the awards. Do all the procurements and establish all contracts that we're gonna fund over the 5-year period with the 70 million dollars subgrant. So there's still a lot to be done, and there's a really short window of time once we turn the New Year over. But I think most importantly for folks here, whether you're intending to be a lead applicant on Track one or a partner and a sub tier applicant on Track 1 or a Track 2 applicant to do the kind of statewide ecosystem wanted to let you know that. When we launch the request for applications it will. We'll give advance notice. We'll do a launch webinar. We'll walk people through the process. There'll be a 60-day application period. With a technical assistance program. That is basically, you know, begins before and during the application process, we'll do a 90-day review process, and then really have 30 days to award. So, from a high level as we conclude this year. And look at what next year looks like. Just wanted to make sure that we stress that there's going to be a short period of time to make a lot of key decisions and identify all these expenditures and grants and awards and contracts. But to also give you a glimpse of what the application, the review, and the award process will look like once we get into next year. So, with that, I am really, I think, gonna conclude my comments today just with incredible thanks on behalf of my staff. And I were very humbled to be able to work so closely with all of you and align our efforts. I know the folks have asked if you would like to sign up for the broadband for all email update. I believe this QR code will take you to where you can do that. The Broadband for All portal is intended to be really a central repository of information for everything that we've talked here, and that's always a resource and if you ever have specific questions of our staff on where to find things, or if channel questions feel free to contact us at this email, it's digitalequity@state.ca.gov. And with that, I'll conclude my remarks and say, Thank you. And then, Maria, defer to you if we might answer a couple more questions, if there are any.

We do have 2 more questions, or we might have 3. And Scott, we get this with a lot, and I think it's we? We don't tend to speculate regarding a change in administration. So, there's a question about the change in Federal administration, and whether that will impact.

Yes, we have been told by the current NTIA administrative staff that the full portion of our 70-million-dollar capacity, state capacity grant has been obligated. And that we, you know, don't anticipate there being any clawback of those funds. It's really too early to speculate what any you know new administration will do, and how that might impact any future tranches of funding. But we appreciate the question.

And it's a hot question. It comes up. There's a clarification. I think this one is straightforward. Anonymous said that they heard that for Track 2, there needs to be a statewide capacity. Can you please define, what this is? If LA County is due to receive 19-million or so, do we need to be looking at statewide capacity? So, I think there's a there's the 2 fundings. There's the statewide allocations, and then there's the county allocation.

I'm not sure, I'm equipped to answer the question with the... as it's prevented. What I would say is that there are 2 Tracks to the subgrant, which are the first track is going to be the lion's share of grant funding that will go towards regional and local planning capacity. Which will support, you know, lead entities coming in with coalitions or partners to develop a plan or plans for that, you know, specific county or cluster of counties. If it's you know we're allowing for that kind of cooperation to occur and that those funds will be subgranted out. Where we developed the Track 2 subgrants were acknowledging that the NTIA has asked all states that develop Digital Equity Plans to look beyond overcoming those digital equity barriers, the common barriers of access, affordability and adoption. And then you know the specific barriers that all of us have identified for the covered population that we also work to improve outcomes for the residents that we work with, to achieve better outcomes in education and health care and access to essential services and digital literacy and inclusion and rebel collaboration, etc. So, what we did is said, let's allocate a certain amount of that funding to you know where, if there were a statewide focus an entity that had the ability to, and the expertise to bring people together to, help further rally the ecosystem and develop solutions or innovations, if they will, to support those that's what Track 2 is really intended to drive. Okay.

Thank you, Scott. Appreciate that. There's a question in chat regarding the Digital Equity Plan and jurisdictions that received $500,000 from local agency, technical assistance, planning grants. So again, there's this infrastructure planning. And then the Digital Equity Planning questions that a clarification might help that there's a state Digital Equity Plan that we're working to implement. And that's what this conversation is about. I'm not sure. Can you see that?

Is…I can't see that question.

I'll it's it says, please comment one application per. Oh, no. Sorry. Please clarify the need to implement the State Digital Equity Plan for those jurisdictions that received a $500,000, local agency technical assistant grant from the CPUC which allowed us to develop our own vision and action steps.

Alright. Well, yeah. And so definitely respect that the individual is referencing the Public Utilities Commission's local agency technical assistance program grant which you know, is part of the… I believe, local infrastructure planning. So, this is slightly different. I think it goes to the question that Miss Cortina asked earlier, is that given that there's a lot of funding and focus on infrastructure planning and funding actual programs, you know, beyond the Public Utilities Commission's California Advanced Services Adoption Account. There hasn't been a lot of funding for the planning and implementation of the non-infrastructure uses what this specific grant is intended to do.

Thank you, Scott.

Anonymous is asking if there's any updated information on the key activities. Specifically, California connect-core and digital literacy training platform. And my guess, is they're asking that about as a centralized service.

You know. Yeah. So, we have not need any modifications to the key activities referenced in the plan. The you know kind of the process. The deliberative process we've been going through here is the shape of the overall State Capacity Grant, which will help implement the Digital Equity Plan you know, the strategies and key activities outlined in those? This, you know, conversation and the deliberation over the last many months has been, how are we gonna shape the broad subgrant program to fund implementation and alignment at the local level? And so, you know, we have not changed the key activities. And you know, we're kind of working towards that goal.

Thank you, Scott, and we have one more question. I believe, before we wrap it up. I don't have any hands raised, and there's no comments or questions in chat that I'm seeing, but I do have one in the Q and A. And again, it's just a clarification that we've touched on. The question is, if seniors are given a device using a capacity grant, are they expected to obtain their own internet connection?

I appreciate the question here. You know, the…what we've tried to do with the shape of the Grant program is to enable flexibility for regional and local entities that apply for the money to, you know, develop or align their Digital Equity Plans with the States (because we're all going to be having to provide metrics to the

NTIA), but leave flexibility from individual groups to implement as long as they're consistent with the key activities. I don't necessarily want to speculate on specific scenarios. But you know because there's a lot of unknowns like I'm not sure who would give the senior device or how to obtain their own connection. What we're envisioning is that coalitions who are funded to do digital navigation, or doing a number of things like helping to do individual assessments, helping to base on those assessments, connect folks to low-cost Internet service, or subsidy programs. If cost is a barrier to help connect people to training. If training is a barrier, and to help connect individuals to devices, if devices are the barrier. And so that was, you know, really what you know folks had shared with us during the planning process, and what was envisioned in the Digital Equity Plan.

Thank you, Scott. Thank you all, that I believe we've answered all the questions, and if not, you can always reach out to us via email. That's been dropped in chat, and I will pass it back to…Is it back to you, Anh…Scott…Scott for the full wrap.

Well, it's just on behalf of you know, the Department of Technology. And this very dedicated and committed staff wanted to thank all of you. We know how busy you are, and we know how hard you're working, and we thank you for all of the great feedback and information, and we wish you the happiest of holidays, and look forward to seeing you at the beginning of next year and moving forward. Thank you.