

California Digital Equity Program (CalDEP)

Grant Guidelines and Request for Applications

2025

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Request for Application (RFA) Summary

Program Overview	This Request for Application ("RFA") solicits applications for the California Digital Equity Program ("CalDEP"). CalDEP will make funds available to Eligible Entities for allowable activities including regional and local digital equity planning, digital navigation services, digital literacy training, targeted device programs, community center computer labs, workforce training programs, and targeted statewide ecosystem development and innovation for specific Covered Populations or Outcome Areas.
Funding Instrument	Funding from the California Department of Technology (CDT)'s State Digital Equity Capacity Grant comes from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and will be awarded to selected applicants in the form of subgrants. Note: Funding for CalDEP awards is contingent upon the availability of these federal funds and CDT's ongoing access to them.
Award Project Period	The period of performance for all awards made under CalDEP must end by August 31, 2029. Subgrantees may propose flexible timelines within the maximum period of performance. All Subgrantees will be responsible for final reporting at the close of their award.
Funding Tracks	<p>Track 1: Subgrants to: (1) develop and refine regional and local digital equity plans, and (2) provide capacity to implement digital equity activities directly or through second-tier subgrants to local Eligible Entities.</p> <p>Track 2: Subgrants to support ecosystem development, planning, and innovation for a specific State Outcome Area or Covered Population which may be served more effectively in statewide, rather than regional or local, ecosystems.</p>
Funding Details	Track 1: \$43 million total funding pool to be awarded based on county allocations.

	Track 2: \$7 million total funding pool to be awarded within an expected range of \$400,000 and \$1 million.
Key Dates	Applications from Eligible Entities must be received by May 30, 2025.
How to Apply	Application materials are available at: https://broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov/caldep
Contacts	All questions related to CalDEP should be directed to CDT's centralized mailbox: CalDEP@state.ca.gov

1. Program Background

Broadband for All is California's comprehensive, multi-billion-dollar program to close the digital divide. It reflects the work of the California Broadband Council and its members, [Executive Order N-73-20](#), the *Broadband for All Action Plan* (2020), and the historic Broadband for All Act ([SB 156, 2021](#)). California's State Digital Equity Plan ([SDEP](#)) represents the latest chapter in the evolution of the State's *Broadband for All* program. This plan describes how the State will pair its existing *Broadband for All* investments and efforts with new federal funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program to advance digital equity in California, which means all Californians have access to the technology and digital skills they need to participate fully in modern society. The plan's vision embodies and expands on the State's three long-term goals defined in the *Broadband for All* Action Plan and State Digital Equity Plan:

- **Goal 1:** All Californians have high-performance broadband available at home, schools, libraries, and businesses.
- **Goal 2:** All Californians have access to affordable broadband and necessary devices.
- **Goal 3:** All Californians can access training and support to enable digital inclusion.

California's SDEP, approved by NTIA in April 2024, unlocked \$70.2 million in federal State Capacity Grant dollars to support its implementation.

CDT is the State's Administering Entity to manage the State Digital Equity Planning and Capacity Grant Programs. As outlined in the SDEP, CDT will structure the Capacity Grant program implementation around three components:

- **Centralized Services:** services developed, procured, or curated by CDT are tools and resources to support CalDEP Subgrantees and ecosystem partners to conduct and report on activities and progress in alignment with the SDEP. CDT will provide a set of Centralized Services which may include promotion and outreach materials, a digital literacy training platform, a broadband-specific workforce development hub, the Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping (DEEM) tool, and a Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey.
- **State Agency Digital Inclusion Efforts:** programs that impact digital equity outcomes for Covered Populations statewide.
- **California Digital Equity Program:** subgrants to Eligible Entities for allowable activities including regional and local digital equity planning, digital navigation services, digital literacy training, targeted device programs, community center computer labs, workforce training programs, and

targeted statewide ecosystem development and innovation for specific Covered Populations or Outcome Areas. CDT will inform CalDEP Subgrantees of Centralized Services and State Agency Digital Inclusion Efforts as agreements are finalized to create opportunities for collaboration and alignment, including revisions to the DEEM tool and Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey.

CDT issues these California Digital Equity Program (CalDEP) Grant Guidelines and RFA to describe the requirements under which it will award subgrants through CalDEP to support SDEP implementation and further the goals of *Broadband for All*. Informed by stakeholder input, public comment, and in alignment with NTIA requirements, the final Grant Guidelines and RFA specify CDT's investments in statewide, regional and local planning, ecosystem development, and capacity building that address digital equity through defined activities to benefit California's Covered Populations, consistent with the SDEP.

2. Goals of the California Digital Equity Program

The NTIA requires CDT to consider four focal points in examining proposed State Digital Equity Capacity Grant strategies:¹

- **Focus on Covered Populations:** Activities should align with the State's Digital Equity Plan's goals and objectives, and the priorities of the Covered Populations being served, including subgroups within each Covered Population. Priority should be given to activities with the greatest potential impact, such as targeting Covered Households (i.e., low-income individuals) within other Covered Populations.
- **Long-lasting and Meaningful Change:** Digital Equity Plans are intended to address the systemic barriers and gaps to digital access. Activities should reflect this goal and consider the sustainability of initiatives created through this funding.
- **Measurable Implementation Strategies:** Proposed programs and activities should be based on objectives that are measurable, achievable, sustainable, timebound, and are designed to address identified disparities directly and logically.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Stakeholders who are directly affected by the proposed strategies and interventions should be involved to encourage ongoing feedback regarding the effectiveness of the interventions and to seek input on potential solutions and improvements.

As defined in the SDEP, CalDEP will address these focal points by funding further statewide, regional and local planning and alignment, and the delivery of digital inclusion services from trusted messengers in existing statewide and community-based organizations and institutions who can provide support in the communities and languages in which it is needed most. The SDEP identifies barriers to digital equity for eight Covered Populations outlined in the Digital Equity Act and includes the State's strategies to achieve specific objectives for each of the State's *Broadband for All* goals.²

Goal 1: All Californians have high-performance broadband available at home, schools, libraries, and businesses.

¹ Source: [National Telecommunications and Information Administration \(NTIA\) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#)

² Source: [California State Digital Equity Plan](#) (p. 7-8)

- This goal and its corresponding objectives will be addressed through the continued build-out of existing Broadband for All investments and Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD)-funded projects.

CalDEP is structured around funding further planning, ecosystem development, and capacity building for statewide and regional/local coalitions to implement strategies to overcome digital equity barriers experienced by Covered Populations and supports SDEP Goals 2 and 3, and their Objectives:

Goal 2: All Californians have access to affordable broadband and necessary devices.

- **Objective 2.1:** Decrease the percentage of Californians who cite cost as the primary barrier to internet service.
- **Objective 2.2:** Reduce the percentage of Californians who rely solely on a smartphone to use the internet due to devices being inaccessible and unaffordable and increase the percentage with a home computing device.
- **Objective 2.3:** Increase the percentage of Californians enrolled in low-cost internet options and subsidies, including the Affordable Connectivity Program or successor program.
- **Objective 2.4:** Reduce the average cost that covered populations pay for internet service.

Goal 3: All Californians can access training and support to enable digital inclusion.

- **Objective 3.1:** Increase the availability of digital literacy, cybersecurity, and skills training programs.
- **Objective 3.2:** Increase the percentage of Californians who have access to technical support services for internet-connected devices.
- **Objective 3.3:** Reduce the percentage of Californians whose concerns for privacy and cybersecurity prevents broadband adoption or effective use.
- **Objective 3.4:** Increase the percentage of Californians who possess basic, intermediate, and advanced digital literacy skills³.
- **Objective 3.5:** Expand the number of members of covered populations trained/hired in broadband infrastructure and technology jobs.

³ The [CA SDEP](#) refers to the following definitions of digital literacy skills: "basic" skills include the ability to connect to a Wi-Fi network, send an email with an attachment, or search for information online; "intermediate" skills include the ability to download and install a new app on a smartphone or tablet, make an appointment online, or pay bills; and "advanced" skills include the ability to set up protection against phishing and spam email, set up parental controls, or delete cookies on a web browser.

- **Objective 3.6:** Increase the percentage of Californians who utilize the internet to apply for or use public benefits and other essential services and can participate in civic and social engagement online.

Through the accomplishment of the SDEP Goals and Objectives, CalDEP is also designed to help advance California's State Policy Outcomes:

- Education
- Healthcare
- Digital literacy & inclusion
- Workforce & economic development
- Essential services, accessibility & civic engagement
- Tribal collaborations & partnerships

CalDEP will accomplish these overarching goals, objectives, and outcomes by supporting the implementation of statewide, regional and local planning, ecosystem development, and capacity building to support digital inclusion activities through the development of local and targeted statewide digital equity and inclusion ecosystems in two funding tracks.

Track 1: Regional/Local Digital Equity Ecosystems and Implementation	<p>Subgrants to (1) develop and refine regional and local digital equity plans and (2) provide capacity to implement digital equity activities directly or through second-tier subgrants to local Eligible Entities with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local alignment with the SDEP Strategies, Measurable Objectives, and Key Activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broadband adoption efforts ○ Digital navigation ○ Digital literacy training ○ Targeted device distribution ○ Workforce development programs • Local digital equity asset identification and implementation strategy • Long-term sustainability
Track 2: Targeted Statewide Digital Equity Ecosystems	<p>Subgrants to support ecosystem development, planning, and innovation for State Outcome Areas and Covered Populations which may be served more effectively in statewide, rather than regional or local, ecosystems.</p>

CDT will utilize the remainder of the State Capacity Grant funds on Centralized Services, State Agency Digital Inclusion Efforts, and costs associated with administering the grant, evaluation, and maintaining and updating the State Digital Equity Plan.

3. Definitions

The following definitions are derived from the Digital Equity Act, NTIA requirements, and California's SDEP:

- **Allowable Use:** Grant funds can be used to cover costs for activities permitted by the NTIA Digital Equity Capacity Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity ("NOFO") and CalDEP guidelines.
- **Community Anchor Institution:**⁴ A public school, a public or multi-family housing authority, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a State or Territory library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization.
- **Covered Populations:**⁵
 - Individuals who live in covered households (households with income from the most recently completed year of not more than 150% of the poverty level);⁶
 - Aging individuals (an individual who is 60 years of age or older);
 - Incarcerated individuals (as defined by the State of California), other than individuals who are incarcerated in a federal correctional facility;
 - Veterans (a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable);
 - Individuals with disabilities (with respect to an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment);
 - Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who— a. are English learners; and b. have low levels of literacy;
 - Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and
 - Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area (any area other than – a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants;

⁴ Source: [National Telecommunications and Information Administration \(NTIA\) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) \(p. 17\)](#)

⁵ Source: [National Telecommunications and Information Administration \(NTIA\) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) \(p. 17\)](#)

⁶ As determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.

and in the case of a grant or direct loan, a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants.)

- **Digital Equity:**⁷ In California, digital equity means all Californians have access to the technology and digital skills they need to participate fully in modern society.
- **Digital Equity Assets (“Assets”):** Organizations (including, but not limited to, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, internet service providers, philanthropic entities such as foundations, and government agencies), programs, services, funding, and other resources that are, or can be, leveraged to promote digital equity and support the implementation of the State Digital Equity Plan.⁸ Assets may also include physical structures that can support digital equity, such as the physical locations of Community Anchor Institutions.⁹
- **Digital Equity Ecosystem (“Ecosystem”):**¹⁰ Combination of programs and policies that meet a geographic community’s unique and diverse needs. Coordinating entities (i.e., digital equity or digital inclusion practitioners) work together in an ecosystem to address all aspects of the digital divide, including affordable broadband, devices, and skills.
- **Digital Inclusion:**¹¹ The activities that are necessary to ensure that all individuals in the United States have access to, and the use of, affordable information and communication technologies, such as—
 - Reliable fixed and wireless broadband internet service;
 - Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; and
 - Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration; and
 - Includes—
 - Obtaining access to digital literacy training;
 - The provision of quality technical support; and
 - Obtaining basic awareness of measures to ensure online privacy and cybersecurity.
- **Digital Literacy:**¹² The skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information.

⁷ Source: [California State Digital Equity Plan](#)

⁸ Note: Applicants are encouraged to refer to the Digital Equity Assets outlined in the [CA SDEP](#) under [Section 3.2](#)

⁹ Note: For the purposes of this RFA, Digital Equity Assets primarily refer to those that can help achieve CA SDEP Goals 2 and 3. Digital Equity Assets may, but are not required to, include broadband infrastructure assets.

¹⁰ CDT definition draws from NDIA’s definition for “Digital Inclusion Ecosystem.” Source: [National Digital Inclusion Alliance \(NDIA\) Definitions](#)

¹¹ Source: [National Telecommunications and Information Administration \(NTIA\) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) \(p. 18\)](#)

¹² Source: [National Telecommunications and Information Administration \(NTIA\) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) \(p. 18\)](#)

- **Digital Navigators:** Trusted community organizations or community members who conduct activities including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Assess users' individual needs and goals
 - Advise on availability and access to low-cost offers for devices and internet service
 - Connect residents to or provide digital literacy training
 - Connect residents to digital education, workforce development programs, and online public benefit programs or resources
 - Hardware and software technical support efforts
 - Individual, one-on-one support
 - Communal, group-based support
- **Eligible Entity:** An entity eligible to apply for and receive CalDEP funding permitted by the NTIA Digital Equity Capacity Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity ("NOFO") and the CalDEP guidelines. Eligible Entities refer to both Lead Applicants and Second-tier Subgrantees. See 4. Eligible Applicants for types of organizations that are considered eligible.
- **Lead Applicant:** The designated entity applying for a subgrant.
- **Subgrantee:** An Eligible Entity, as defined in 4. Eligible Applicants, that receives a subgrant for the purpose of carrying out part of CDT's federal State Digital Equity Capacity Grant award. Subgrantees assume fiscal and reporting responsibilities for themselves and Second-tier Subgrantees for activities conducted under CalDEP. Subgrantees may also be known as subrecipients in federal requirements.
- **Second-tier Subgrant:** A formal agreement that includes the provision of funding between the Lead Applicant and a participating partner organization, which is also an Eligible Entity as defined in 4. Eligible Applicants, to further the goals of their CalDEP subgrant, if awarded. Please refer to 4. Eligible Applicants for more details.

4. Eligible Applicants

Both Lead Applicants and second-tier subgrantees for CalDEP must be located and operate in the State of California and have an active Unique Entity ID (UEI) number assigned by SAM.gov and an Employer Identification Number (EIN) assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. Lead Applicants and second-tier subgrantees must come from the following Eligible Entity categories:¹³

- A local political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of the State of California.
- An Indian Tribe¹⁴ or a Native Hawaiian organization.¹⁵
- A foundation, corporation, institution, or association that is:
 - a not-for-profit entity; and
 - not a school.
- A community anchor institution.
- A local educational agency.
- An entity that carries out a workforce development program.
- A partnership between any of the entities listed above.
- A Regional Broadband Consortia (as long as they or their fiscal agents belong to an Eligible Entity category as listed above and have an active UEI. All projects funded by CalDEP must be used for digital equity purposes only, as detailed in 5. Eligible Use of Funds and Program Requirements.)

Encouraged Applicants by Funding Track

CDT encourages applications from the following types of Eligible Entities for Funding Tracks 1 and 2. Note that these are not the minimum requirements, and applicants do not need every listed category of experience to be eligible.

¹³ Source: 47 USC 1724 Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program [47 U.S.C. §1724\(b\)](#)

¹⁴ According to the NTIA's [Digital Equity Capacity Grant NOFO](#), the term "Indian Tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (i.e., Tribal Organizations), including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 43 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq., which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

¹⁵ According to the NTIA's [Digital Equity Capacity Grant NOFO](#), a Native Hawaiian Organization (NHO) is an organization that is registered with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Native Hawaiian Relations and Hawaiian Homes Commission Act Beneficiary Associations and Homestead Associations, as defined under 43 C.F.R. §§ 47.10 and 48.6, or is the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems	<p>CDT encourages Track 1 applications from applicants with the following experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/regional coalition-building • Digital equity or digital inclusion planning or programming • Managing federal or state grants • Strategic planning or service delivery in the county they are applying for and with local partners in place • Awarding grants or subgrants <p>CDT will only award one application per county funding allocation and encourages Lead Applicants to identify partnerships of interested entities within each county prior to the application.</p> <p>However, a Lead Applicant may also partner with entities across multiple counties to submit one regional application for multiple county funding allocations.</p>
Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems	<p>CDT encourages Track 2 applications from applicants with the following experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide coalition-building • Digital equity or digital inclusion planning or programming • Managing federal or state grants • Strategic planning or service delivery for the specific Covered Population or Outcome Area they are applying for • Applicants with a statewide network of partners

CDT encourages applications from partnerships.

When applying as a partnership, one Eligible Entity must be designated as the Lead Applicant for the partnership.

Partnership Roles:

- **Lead Applicant:** The designated entity applying for a subgrant.
- **Partner:** Entities participating in, collaborating on, or contributing to the proposed activities. Partners may or may not receive funding. Those who

will receive funding are considered second-tier subgrantees and must be Eligible Entities. Refer to 7.2 Funding Restrictions for additional second-tier subgrantee requirements. Partners on an application must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) executed by both the Partner and the Lead Applicant. In the LOI, Partners should:

- Express their intent to participate in the partnership;
 - Describe the activities the Partners intend to pursue or participate in;
 - Include the point of contact for the organization.
- **Supportive stakeholders:** Entities that express general support or endorsement for the application. Supportive stakeholders on the application must submit a signed Letter of Support.

5. Eligible Use of Funds and Program Requirements

Awards made under CalDEP must advance California SDEP goals, objectives, and Outcome Areas by supporting the implementation of digital inclusion activities through the development of regional, local, and targeted statewide digital equity and inclusion ecosystems.

The period of performance for all awards made under CalDEP must end by August 31, 2029. Subgrantees must expend funds and complete all subgrant-funded activities by this date. Subgrantees may propose flexible timelines within the maximum period of performance. All Subgrantees will be responsible for final reporting at the end of their period of performance.

5.1 Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems

Eligible Use of Funds

All Track 1 Subgrantees must use their awarded funding for digital equity planning and implementation of activities within their specified county or multi-county region.

- **Development or refinement of regional/local digital equity plans** that align with the SDEP. CDT plans to share a local digital equity plan template and local digital equity data collection tools such as the [Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey](#) and the [Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping \(DEEM\)](#) asset inventory tool with Subgrantees to support the development of their local plans. At a minimum, regional/local digital equity plans should include:
 - Regional/local vision, goals, outcomes, and objectives for digital equity in alignment with the SDEP's vision, goals, outcomes, and objectives
 - Identification of barriers to digital equity faced by Covered Populations in the region/county using those in the SDEP as the baseline.
 - Assets to be leveraged for digital equity program implementation (including existing funding, programs, and partners, such as local internet service providers, community-based organizations, and philanthropic partners)
 - A regional/local implementation strategy with holistic activities, address local barriers to participation in the digital world, and align with SDEP measurable objectives and activities

- An explanation of how the implementation strategy will supplement and/or leverage existing federal, state, local, and private funding and initiatives for long-term sustainability
- Plans to collaborate with or make second-tier subgrants to key stakeholders in the county/region, especially those that represent the interests of or provide services to Covered Populations
- A timeline for implementation of the plan

Regional/local digital equity plans must be completed and approved by CDT before CalDEP awards may be used for the implementation of activities. If the county or region has previously completed a local digital equity plan, it must demonstrate to CDT that the pre-existing plan meets all minimum requirements before CalDEP awards may be used for the implementation of activities. If the pre-existing plan is accepted as meeting all minimum requirements, Subgrantees may proceed with implementation activities.

- **Implementation of** local digital equity activities that align with the SDEP measurable objectives and regional/local digital equity plan, such as, but not limited to:
 - Broadband adoption educational and awareness campaigns to educate residents on the value of home internet service, the distinction between mobile connectivity and home connectivity, the rationale for more robust connectivity, the value of using web-based applications on a computer, and the availability of low-cost broadband offers and subsidies
 - Broadband adoption efforts to assist in enrolling Covered Population residents in low-cost broadband offers and subsidies to overcome cost barriers
 - Digital navigation services
 - Referring or conducting digital literacy training
 - Targeted device programs to ensure devices are relevant and useful, and hardware and software sensitive to specific needs for specific Covered Populations
 - Establishment of computer labs/digital literacy training programs at community centers (Senior Centers, Veterans Halls)
 - Workforce training programs and apprenticeships (broadband infrastructure, tech, and digital skills, and knowledge-based jobs)
- **Making second-tier subgrants** to Eligible Entities (as listed in 4. Eligible Applicants) in the county/region to implement any of the above activities. Second-tier subgrants are optional under CalDEP.
- **Coalition-building activities** in support of digital equity planning may be eligible uses of funds. However, CalDEP funding should be prioritized

for implementing activities that align with SDEP's Measurable Objectives.

Additional requirements:

- Regional/local digital equity plans must be completed and submitted to CDT for approval within 6 months of award. If entities cannot complete the plan within this timeframe, CDT may consider requests for extensions up to 6 months, not exceeding 12 months post-award. CDT expects to review and approve regional/local digital equity plans within 3 months of receipt.
- Each regional/local digital equity plan must address the entirety of the county or multi-county area it represents, including municipalities, unincorporated areas, and rural areas. **If a Lead Applicant is awarded for a multi-county area, a regional/local digital equity plan must be submitted for each county.** County-level digital equity plans may include individual plans for cities within the county.
- All Subgrantees are required to contribute to CDT's ongoing collection of responses for the [Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey](#) and [DEEM tool](#) to continue to build out statewide and regional/local needs assessments and asset inventories. Please note that CDT will provide opportunities for input from Subgrantees and subject matter experts to develop the next iteration of the Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey and DEEM tool.
- All Subgrantees are encouraged to leverage CDT's provided Centralized Services to support the efficiency and effectiveness of their implementation activities. However, if local needs exceed what Centralized Services provide, Subgrantees may allocate CalDEP funding to procure or develop services to meet those needs, with approval from CDT. Centralized Services will primarily be offered in English and Spanish. Subgrantees may opt to use funding for services in other languages as needed by their local or regional communities. More information about Centralized Services will be provided as they become available on the Broadband for All Portal.

5.2 Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems

Eligible Use of Funds

Track 2 is designed to fund subgrantees focusing on targeted ecosystem development or digital equity innovation for a Covered Population or Outcome Area.

Covered Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who live in covered households (at or below 150% of the federal poverty level) • Aging individuals • Incarcerated individuals • Individuals with disabilities • Veterans • Individuals with a language barrier • Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group • Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
OR Outcome Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Healthcare access • Digital literacy and inclusion • Workforce development • Essential services • Tribal collaboration

All Track 2 Subgrantees must use their awarded funding within their specified Covered Population or Outcome Area for the following purposes.

- **Ecosystem-building and ongoing planning** to identify additional statewide/regional/local partners and develop a plan for mobilizing and obtaining resources to support the specific needs of the Covered Population or interventions and innovation for the specified Outcome Area. Track 2 Subgrantees must include a plan to support, coordinate, or share best practices with Track 1 Subgrantees, and participate in and contribute to the Statewide Implementation Group and other communities of practice established by CDT.
- **Statewide capacity-building** for the ecosystem of partners to serve the specified Covered Population or Outcome Area. Capacity-building may include train-the-trainer and skill-building activities and other resources for partner organizations to serve their constituents better in the long term.
- **Statewide innovative projects or solutions** that can leverage other sources of funding to address an aspect of the digital divide without a current solution or supplement an existing solution in an innovative

manner and use a unique, novel, and/or creative approach aligned with an Outcome Area and/or tailored to the unique needs and challenges faced by the Covered Population.

- **Making second-tier subgrants** to Eligible Entities (as listed in 4. Eligible Applicants) in the State to implement any of the above activities. Second-tier subgrants are permissible under CalDEP.

Additional requirements:

- Track 2 Subgrantees must engage stakeholders across the state.
- All Subgrantees are required to assist CDT with the ongoing collection of responses for the [DEEM tool](#) and [Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey](#). Please note that CDT will provide opportunities for input from Subgrantees and subject matter experts to develop the next iteration of the Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey and DEEM tool.
- All Subgrantees are encouraged to leverage CDT's provided Centralized Services to support the efficiency and effectiveness of their implementation activities. However, if targeted Covered Population or Outcome Area needs exceed what Centralized Services provide, Subgrantees may allocate CalDEP funding to procure or develop services to meet those needs, with approval from CDT. Centralized Services will primarily be offered in English and Spanish. Subgrantees may opt to use funding for services in other languages as needed by their target communities. More information about Centralized Services will be provided as they become available on the Broadband for All Portal.

6. Who This Benefits

Covered Populations

All applications awarded under either Funding Track must benefit Covered Populations within the applicant's county/region, specified Covered Population, or Outcome Area. Applications should additionally prioritize Covered Households. Applicants should consider intersectionality among Covered Populations and serve communities that may belong to multiple Covered Populations.

Subgrants awarded under **Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems** must develop plans to drive towards measurable objectives to benefit members of all Covered Populations within the county/region or multi-county joint application regions (if multiple areas partner on one application to pool resources and leverage economies of scale). Subgrantees may choose to identify specific Covered Populations to prioritize in their implementation activities based on their planning process and needs assessment results.

Subgrants awarded under **Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems** must focus on digital equity innovation and targeted ecosystem development that benefits a Covered Population or Outcome Area statewide.

7. Allocation & Award Formula

7.1 Anticipated Award Amounts

Track	Total Allocated Amount
Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems	\$43 million
Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems	\$7 million

Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems

The NTIA used the [following formula](#) in determining the State's Digital Equity Capacity Grant allocation.

- Total Population (50%)
- Total number of members of Covered Populations (25%)
- Comparative Lack of Broadband Availability and Adoption (25%)
- Minimum allocation of one-half (0.5) percent

Based on stakeholder feedback, CDT is applying the following modified allocation criteria. Track 1 award funding allocations per county were calculated using a formula-based approach to ensure geographic diversity and equity. The formula considered:

- **Covered Populations (75%):** To ensure service to Covered Populations is prioritized, 75 percent of a county's allocation is based on the number of individuals in the county who are members of Covered Populations, in proportion to the total number of individuals in the State of California who are members of Covered Populations, as determined by data from the US Census Bureau and NTIA's Digital Equity Act Population Viewer,¹⁶ which was used in NTIA's formula that determined the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant allocation.

¹⁶ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> accessed January 10, 2025.

- **Relative Lack of Broadband Availability and Adoption (25%):** To ensure consideration for each county's relative lack of broadband availability and adoption, 12.5 percent of a county's allocation is based on the county's relative lack of broadband availability and 12.5 percent is based on the county's relative lack of broadband adoption relative to all counties, as determined by the most current broadband data available from CPUC's [2023 CASF Annual Report](#) and the broadband adoption data from the [2023 5-year American Community Survey Estimates](#), respectively.
- **Minimum Allocation:** A minimum allocation of 0.5 percent of the total Track 1 funding pool was assigned to counties whose formula allocations amounted to less than 0.5 percent of the total funding pool and for counties with a total population of less than 20,000.

CDT expects to award Track 1 subgrants based on the county allocations below, as determined by the formula developed with public input. The applicable county allocations will be summed if an applicant serves multiple counties. For example, if a Consortium applies for service to three counties, the applicant will be eligible to access the total allocation for those three counties.

County	Allocation	County	Allocation
Alameda County	\$ 1,367,232.09	Orange County	\$ 2,496,320.56
Alpine County	\$ 215,000.00	Placer County	\$ 349,110.16
Amador County	\$ 438,479.69	Plumas County	\$ 215,000.00
Butte County	\$ 276,605.62	Riverside County	\$ 2,165,789.51
Calaveras County	\$ 450,366.16	Sacramento County	\$ 1,220,744.51
Colusa County	\$ 417,999.13	San Benito County	\$ 215,000.00
Contra Costa County	\$ 906,864.89	San Bernardino County	\$ 2,030,809.69
Del Norte County	\$ 476,197.03	San Diego County	\$ 2,586,744.80

El Dorado County	\$ 495,460.53	San Francisco County	\$ 706,379.21
Fresno County	\$ 993,819.14	San Joaquin County	\$ 718,508.63
Glenn County	\$ 215,000.00	San Luis Obispo County	\$ 416,302.57
Humboldt County	\$ 272,228.14	San Mateo County	\$ 657,455.67
Imperial County	\$ 404,627.69	Santa Barbara County	\$ 595,926.49
Inyo County	\$ 215,000.00	Santa Clara County	\$ 1,544,656.49
Kern County	\$ 918,160.87	Santa Cruz County	\$ 311,939.32
Kings County	\$ 293,065.54	Shasta County	\$ 419,665.56
Lake County	\$ 398,522.04	Sierra County	\$ 215,000.00
Lassen County	\$ 662,518.31	Siskiyou County	\$ 624,329.68
Los Angeles County	\$ 8,188,070.45	Solano County	\$ 445,704.21
Madera County	\$ 296,295.99	Sonoma County	\$ 530,394.17
Marin County	\$ 249,144.77	Stanislaus County	\$ 528,760.06
Mariposa County	\$ 215,000.00	Sutter County	\$ 215,000.00
Mendocino County	\$ 627,903.83	Tehama County	\$ 395,948.66
Merced County	\$ 373,270.82	Trinity County	\$ 215,000.00
Modoc County	\$ 215,000.00	Tulare County	\$ 599,035.90
Mono County	\$ 215,000.00	Tuolumne County	\$ 505,561.53

Monterey County	\$ 478,382.88	Ventura County	\$ 858,464.18
Napa County	\$ 215,000.00	Yolo County	\$ 296,232.83
Nevada County	\$ 215,000.00	Yuba County	\$ 215,000.00

Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems

Award Amounts	Expected Number of Awards
CDT expects to award Track 2 subgrants within \$400,000 to \$1,000,000.	Up to 14 awards.

7.2 Funding Restrictions

Subgrantees may only use federal award funds to pay for allowable costs of funds under the federal [State Digital Equity Capacity Program](#). Allowable expenses are determined in accordance with the cost principles identified in the grant program's authorizing legislation. In addition, costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and allowable for the proposed activities and conform to generally accepted accounting principles. Subgrant funds may be used to cover only eligible costs incurred by the Subgrantee during the period of performance and for allowable expenses incurred by the Subgrantee during the subgrant closeout process.

Applicants must comply with the requirements of [47 U.S.C. §1723\(d\)\(3\)\(D\)](#), the Digital Equity Act, and these Program Guidelines. An Eligible Entity awarded must use the subgrant funds only for Eligible Uses defined in 5. Eligible Use of Funds and Program Requirements. Additional funding restrictions are as follows:

- **Planning Costs:** No more than five (5) percent of the amount of the subgrant for this purpose, or \$50,000, whichever is the higher amount, may be used for Track 1 or Track 2 digital equity planning activities. For Track 1 multi-county applications, the planning cap will be applied to the total of each county's funding allocation.
- **Prohibition on Supplanting:** Pursuant to [47 U.S.C. §1723\(h\)](#), CalDEP awards must supplement, not supplant, other federal or State funds that have been

made available to carry out digital equity activities described at [47 U.S.C. §1723](#) and in these Program Guidelines.

- **Broadband Subsidies:** No more than ten (10) percent of the subgrant amount may be used to fund subsidies for the provision of broadband services through affordable broadband programs. Affordable broadband subsidy programs must provide high-quality internet service and be designed for long-term sustainability. CDT recommends that these programs be accompanied by digital literacy training for Covered Populations.
- **Pre-Award Costs:** Reasonable pre-application expenses incurred between RFA release date and the application deadline in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 may be recoverable under federal rules ([2 C.F.R. §200.458](#)). Pre-application expenses, which include costs related to preparing an application, may be reimbursed if they are incurred after the publication date of the RFA and before the date of issuance of the grant award from CDT and are incurred and expensed in compliance with all programs and federal and state requirements. These costs should be clearly identified in the proposed budget and approved by CDT in writing to be considered allowable. Pre-application costs are incurred at the applicant's sole risk and will not be reimbursed by CDT if the application does not receive an award pursuant to this program. If approved, pre-award costs would be considered administrative costs and count against the administrative cost cap for the award.
- **Device Costs:** No more than twenty-five (25) percent of the amount of the subgrant may be used to fund devices. CDT encouraged NTIA Competitive Grant applicants to apply for device funding, given their high cost relative to CalDEP's total available funds. CDT suggests that Subgrantees identify philanthropic and private partners to fund the cost of devices for long-term sustainability.
 - Reimbursement for computing devices used in community training rooms or other public spaces, such as local government centers, senior centers, public libraries, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations (i.e., in-classroom computers) is limited to \$750 per device (device software costs will be considered a separate expense).
 - Reimbursement for take-home computing devices is capped at \$400 per device, including all accessories and software, and is limited to two computing devices per eligible household. CDT may allow exemptions to the \$400 cap for reasonable costs for take-home computing devices related to assistive technologies within the 25% overall device cap. Device distribution programs must be designed for long-term sustainability, and device distribution must be paired with broadband adoption assistance and digital literacy training. Take-home computing devices should only be provided to members of Covered Populations with the most demonstrated need.

- **Prohibition on Construction and Infrastructure Projects:** CalDEP awards may not be used for construction activities or infrastructure projects, including installing broadband infrastructure. As noted in Section 2, the Goals of the California Digital Equity Program, deployment of broadband infrastructure will be addressed through other Broadband for All investments and BEAD-funded projects.
- **Indirect Cost:** CalDEP Subgrantees can propose indirect costs in their budget. If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, applicants must either provide a copy of their approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) or certify that they elect to charge the de minimis rate of up to fifteen (15) percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as Indirect Costs. As defined in [2 CFR part 200](#), MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$50,000 of each second-tier subgrant. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each second-tier subgrant in excess of \$50,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.
- **Prohibition on Supplanting and on Certain Website Upgrades:** CalDEP funding may not be used to conduct website upgrades or other accessibility projects that are otherwise required by law.
- **Prohibition on Profit or Fees:** A profit, fee, or other incremental charge above actual cost is not an allowable cost under this Program.
- **Prohibition on Use of Grant Funds to Support or Oppose Collective Bargaining:** Subgrant funds awarded pursuant to this program may not be used, whether directly or indirectly as an offset for other funds, to support or oppose collective bargaining.
- **Restrictions on Lobbying and Political Activities:** Federal rules ([2 CFR 200.450](#) and [15 CFR Part 28](#)) prohibit the use of Federal funds for lobbying the Federal government in connection with the award and require the disclosure of the use of non-Federal funds for lobbying. Any Subgrantee that receives more than \$100,000 in Federal funding and conducts lobbying with non-federal funds relating to a covered Federal action (including the awarding of federally funded contracts, grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) must submit a completed Form SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities). Furthermore, CalDEP funding is broadly restricted from being used for any lobbying or political activities, including, but not limited to:
 - Influencing or attempting to influence the executive or legislative branches of Federal, State, or local government in connection with CalDEP awards.
 - Attempting to influence the outcome of any Federal, State, or local election, referendum, initiative, or similar procedure.

- Attempting to influence the introduction of Federal or State legislation or the enhancement or modification of any pending Federal or State legislation.
- **Contractors:** Lead Applicants may propose entities as contractors at the point of application if they have an existing agreement with the contractor and provide sufficient justification for their selection, including demonstrating that the contractor was selected through a competitive process. Contractors may also be selected through a competitive process after receiving the award and during the period of performance.
- **Second-Tier Subgrants:** Second-tier subgrantees may be identified at the time of application, after awards are received, and during the period of performance. Subgrantees are not required to use a competitive bid process to select second-tier subgrantees. Still, they are expected to choose second-tier subgrantees that are best equipped to support the goals and implementation of their Subgrant. Before requesting reimbursement funding for a second-tier subgrant, the Subgrantee must submit to CDT for approval an executed written agreement with the entity to which a second-tier subgrant is to be awarded, along with justification for their selection. Second-tier subgrantees must be selected no later than 12 months from the start of the award.

8. Application and Submission Information

8.1 Deadline and Procedures for Submitting Applications

Applications must be submitted on the CalDEP Application Portal at <https://apply-caldep.broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov/submit>. As reference material, sample application forms are also available on the CalDEP webpage at <https://broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov/caldep>.

Complete applications must be received in the CalDEP Application Portal no later than 11:59pm Pacific Time (PT) on May 30, 2025. CDT will not consider applications that fail to comply with these requirements or that are not submitted by the deadline. CDT will not accept applications submitted by email, paper, or facsimile.

Applicants should use one of the following browsers to access the CalDEP Application Portal:

- Google Chrome
- Firefox, or
- Safari

CDT recommends that applicants review technical assistance materials and participate in application technical assistance webinars and the Question-and-Answer process that will be posted on the CalDEP website <https://broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov/technical-assistance-resources/>. See 11. Application Questions & Technical Assistance for more information.

8.2 Content and Form of Application

Applications for CalDEP must be complete, adhere to the instructions provided in this RFA, and be submitted in the format required by the [CalDEP Application Portal](#). The application requires the information listed below.

All applicants are required to complete and submit responses to each section. While CDT understands that Track 1 applicants may need to develop their local digital equity plans before finalizing activity details, Track 1 applicants should provide the following Application information to the greatest extent possible to serve as preliminary information.

CDT recognizes that Track 1 applicants may need to revise application details once local digital equity plans have been developed. In this case, Track 1

applicants should provide all relevant information available at the point of application with a timeline to update and finalize implementation details during plan development. If awarded, Track 1 Subgrantees must submit final implementation details (including second-tier subgrantees and budgets) with their local digital equity plans for CDT review.

8.2.1 Applicant or Applicant Team Summary

The following information must be provided for the Lead Applicant:

Lead Applicant Organization Name	
Lead Applicant Eligible Entity Type¹⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of the State of California. • An Indian Tribe or a Native Hawaiian organization. • A foundation, corporation, institution, organization, or association that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ a not-for-profit entity; and ◦ not a school (schools may be eligible as community anchor institutions) • A community anchor institution. • A local educational agency. • An entity that carries out a workforce development program.
Evidence verifying Lead Applicant's status as an Eligible Entity	Examples of documents include 501(c)(3) designation, organization charter, etc.
Lead Applicant Organization Category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County government • Municipal government • Nonprofit

¹⁷ Refer to 4. Eligible Applicants for more information on Eligible Entity categories.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Consortium • Tribe • Other, please specify
Lead Applicant Organization's Unique Entity ID (UEI) number assigned by SAM.gov	
Lead Applicant Organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) assigned by the Internal Revenue Service	
Lead Applicant Organization Address	
Name of the Authorized Representative (AR) within the Lead Applicant Organization	
Email Address of AR	
Phone Number of AR	
Lead Applicant Designation as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), or Small Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WBE • MBE • Small Business • N/A

8.2.2 Application Narrative

Which Track are you applying for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems • Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems <p>Note: Applicants who wish to apply for both Funding Tracks must submit a separate application for each Track.</p>
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Counties to serve	Applicants to select the list of counties their proposed activities would serve.
Application Title	
Executive Summary	<p>An Executive Summary of the proposed activities, including the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the goals of the proposed activities. • The geographic scope of the application. For multi-county applications, please indicate proposed activities as they apply to each county involved in the application. • A high-level overview of the planning (as applicable) and implementation activities proposed. • Description of how proposed activities will benefit Covered Populations. • Description of the sustainability and long-term impact of the proposed activities. <p>Note: CDT may use all or a portion of the Executive Summary as part of a press release issued by CDT, or for other public information and outreach purposes. Applicants are advised not to include information that concerns business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information as part of the Executive Summary.</p>
Applicant Team's Experience and Capacity	<p>Description of Applicant Team's experience and capacity in the following areas (please provide examples):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to implement the proposed activities and meet key milestones. • If applicable, experience managing similar partnerships or coalitions. • Experience with digital equity or digital inclusion planning or programming • Experience managing federal or state grants or subgrants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience engaging with or serving Covered Populations in specified county, multi-county region, or statewide. • If second-tier subgrants are proposed, a description of the Lead Applicant's experience in making grants or subgrants to other organizations. <p>Note: for Track 1 multi-county regional applications, answer the prompts per proposed county, as applicable.</p>
Timeline	A preliminary timeline describing major activities and key milestones throughout the award's period of performance, including start and end dates for planning, implementation, ramp up, and closeout.
Proposed Data Collection Promotion Strategy	<p>All Subgrantees are required to contribute to CDT's ongoing collection of responses for the Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey and DEEM Tool to continue to build out statewide and regional/local needs assessments and asset inventories as stated in 5. Eligible Use of Funds and Program Requirements.</p> <p>Please provide a proposed data collection promotion strategy to support CDT's Statewide Digital Equity Public Survey, DEEM tool, and evaluation efforts by county.</p>

8.2.3 Partnership Information

Partnership and Engagement Strategy	<p>Please describe your partnership and stakeholder engagement strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the partnerships and stakeholder support you currently have in place. Partners here refer to entities that will participate in, collaborate on, or contribute to the proposed activities that
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	<p>may or may not receive funding. All partners receiving funding are considered second-tier subgrantees and are required to be an Eligible Entity. Stakeholders refer to entities that express general support or endorsement for the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your plans for forming further partnerships and engaging additional stakeholders if awarded. <p>Note: For Track 1 multi-county regional applications, answer the prompts per proposed county as applicable.</p>
Partnership Form	<p>Fill out the Partnership Template Form, including information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of all partners and supportive stakeholders Contact information for each entity The scope of work/role of each entity The Organization Category of each entity The Counties served by each entity The Covered Populations directly served by each entity (if applicable) Whether a partner is applying for CalDEP funding under any other partnership, and if so, the Lead Applicant for each other partnership (Optional – may be completed after award) Will this entity receive a second-tier subgrant if the application is awarded? If yes, answer the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of funding to be allocated for each partner Eligible Entity Type Eligible Entity Verification Unique Entity ID (UEI) number assigned by SAM.gov Certification that the entity proposed as a second-tier subgrantee has an existing agreement with the Lead Applicant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how and why the entity was selected as a proposed second-tier subgrantee.
Partnership Form Detail Question	<p>Do you expect any partners and/or second-tier subgrantees to be identified after the application is submitted?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, all partners/second-tier subgrantees have already been identified Yes, we expect to finalize partners/second-tier subgrantees after the application is submitted
Letters of Intent and Letters of Support	<p>Applicants must also provide Letters of Intent from each partner and Letters of Support from each supportive stakeholder demonstrating approval of the application and clearly articulating the specific benefits and responsibilities of the supporting entity. Please see CalDEP Technical Assistance Resources for Letter of Intent and Letter of Support templates.</p> <p>Applications should include at least one Letter of Intent or Letter of Support from partners or stakeholders representing each county and, if applicable, region, within the scope of the application.</p>
Evidence verifying Second-Tier Subgrantee statuses as Eligible Entities	<p>(Optional – may be completed after award)</p> <p>Submit verification for each second-tier subgrantee's Eligible Entity status. Examples of documents include 501(c)(3) designation, organization charter, etc.</p>

8.2.4 Budget Form

Total Funding Requested	
Budget Form	<p>Fill out the Budget Template Form, including information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowable costs that are consistent with this Grant Guidelines and RFA and federal requirements. • Budget narrative to explain the necessity and basis of all costs.
Broadband Subsidies and Devices	<p>Does the budget include funding for broadband subsidies or devices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p>If Yes, please describe how these programs will be designed for long-term impact and sustainability beyond the Subgrant period of performance.</p>

8.2.5 Disclosure of Other Sources of State or Federal Funding

Disclosure of Other Sources of State or Federal Funding	<p>Provide a disclosure of other sources of State or Federal Funding that the Lead Applicant and any partnering entities have 1) already applied for or is in the process of applying for, or 2) already received, for activities related to the purposes of this RFA, along with a general description of their uses (either intended or proposed). Please indicate the amount of funding requested or awarded from these sources.</p> <p>Describe how your CalDEP application will supplement, and not supplant or duplicate, the activities proposed or funded through other State or Federal funding sources.</p>
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8.2.6 Funding Track Specific Questions

Each Funding Track will have a specific set of narrative questions and information requested.

Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems	
<p>Will the Applicant Team develop a new plan, upgrade a pre-existing local digital equity plan, or submit a pre-existing plan that aligns with the State Digital Equity Plan in order to proceed with implementation activities? Note: for multi-county applications, please specify your approach for each county.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new plan • Upgrade pre-existing local digital equity plan • Submit pre-existing local digital equity plan and proceed with implementation activities
<p><i>(if developing new plan)</i></p>	<p>Description of local digital equity planning activities and timeline for completion.</p>
<p><i>(if upgrading/submitting existing plan)</i></p>	<p>Please describe prior planning efforts and provide a description of local digital equity planning activities and timeline for update (if applicable).</p> <p>Note: for multi-county applications, please specify your approach for each county.</p>
	<p>Please attach the existing plan(s).</p>
<p>Covered Populations and Engagement Strategy</p>	<p>Strategy to ensure the Local Digital Equity Plan addresses the needs of Covered Populations throughout the county/region, including municipalities, unincorporated areas, and rural areas. In this strategy, describe how opportunities to serve Covered Households and individuals</p>

	<p>belonging to multiple Covered Populations will be prioritized.</p> <p>Description should also include how the planning process is designed to produce sustainable and long-term impact.</p> <p>The estimated number of individuals for each Covered Population that your proposed activities will be able to serve with the given county (or multi-county) allocation. Please see CalDEP Technical Assistance Resources for data on each county's Covered Populations and report the data per county and refer to 3. Definitions for Covered Population definitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who live in covered households • Aging individuals • Incarcerated individuals • Veterans • Individuals with disabilities • Individuals with a language barrier (including individuals with low levels of literacy) • Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group • Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area <p>Describe how you developed this estimate (e.g., use of any precedent programs or planning efforts to arrive at the estimate.)</p>
<p>Preliminary Estimated Outputs</p>	<p>Preliminary estimated outputs of the proposed subgrant by each county involved in the application.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of regional/local digital equity plans developed • Number of members of Covered Populations enrolled in low-cost offers (including the federal or state LifeLine programs or

	<p>successors to the federal Affordable Connectivity Program)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of members of Covered Populations trained in digital literacy • Number of members of Covered Populations connected to devices, etc. • Number of members of Covered Populations referred to educational or workforce development opportunities • Number of Outcome Area partners established, e.g., partnerships with workforce development organizations, schools, colleges, health clinics, etc. <p>Preliminary estimated outputs should align with California SDEP Goals and Objectives defined in 2. Goals of the California Digital Equity Program and should reflect the Applicant Team's current priorities, which may be further refined through a local digital equity planning process.</p> <p>Describe how the preliminary estimated outputs will help advance the SDEP Goals and Objectives defined in 2. Goals of the California Digital Equity Program.</p>
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Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems

Target Covered Populations/Outcome Areas

Select the target Covered Population or Outcome Area to be served by the proposed activities:

Covered Population (as defined in 3. Definitions)

- Individuals who live in covered households
- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (including individuals with low levels of literacy)
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

Outcome Area

- Education
- Healthcare access
- Digital literacy and inclusion
- Workforce development
- Essential services
- Tribal collaboration

Justification for why the above Covered Population or Outcome Area may be served more effectively in statewide, rather than regional or local, ecosystems.

The expected number of individuals to be served within each Covered Population.

- Individuals who live in covered households
- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (including individuals with low levels of literacy)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group • Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
	Describe the plan to develop a statewide ecosystem and improve outcomes for the targeted Covered Population or Outcome Area.
Program Description	A description of how the proposed activities advance the California SDEP Goals and Objectives defined in 2. Goals of the California Digital Equity Program.
	Describe how your application will address the digital equity needs and barriers identified in the SDEP for the specified Covered Population or Outcome Area.
	<p>Preliminary estimated outputs of the proposed subgrant.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Covered Populations enrolled in low-cost offers (including the federal or state LifeLine programs or successors to the federal Affordable Connectivity Program) • Number of Covered Populations trained in digital literacy • Number of Covered Populations connected to devices, etc. • Number of members of Covered Populations referred to educational or workforce development opportunities <p>Estimated outputs should align with SDEP Goals and Objectives defined in 2. Goals of the California Digital Equity Program.</p>
	Describe how the proposed activities represent an innovative solution. Innovative solutions include those that 1) address an aspect of the digital

	divide without a current solution; or 2) use a unique, novel, and/or creative approach to addressing digital equity root causes or barriers. Of particular interest are innovative solutions that can leverage other sources of funding.
Other Available Funding	Description of the other sources of current or future braided funding that can be identified and leveraged to support this program.
Regional/Local Ecosystem Alignment	Description of how applicant will support, coordinate, or share best practices with Track 1 Subgrantees and their regional/local ecosystems.

8.2.7 Standard Federal Financial Assistance Forms and Documentation

CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying	
Standard Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable	
Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if applicable	

9. Selection Information

CDT will evaluate all applications received by the deadline for eligibility and completeness.

Applicants will be selected based on the processes below for Tracks 1 and 2.

CDT may, in its discretion, decide to partially fund applications. Applicants that are not selected during this funding opportunity are encouraged to apply again in the future as there may be additional funding opportunities depending on the federal authorization of future tranches of funding under the Digital Equity Act.

9.1 Evaluation Criteria

Track 1: Regional/Local Ecosystems

Applications must meet the following Minimum Requirements to be considered for funding:

- Application contains all required information and submitted by the application deadline.
- Lead Applicant is a verified Eligible Entity with an active Unique Entity ID (UEI) number assigned by SAM.gov.
- Application includes more than one Letter of Intent or Letter of Support from partners or stakeholders within the geographic scope of the application (county or multi-county region).

CDT encourages one application per county and will only award one application per county funding allocation.

If multiple applications are submitted for the same county and meet the Minimum Requirements, the following Evaluation Metrics will be used to determine which application receives funding. Scores will be assigned based on the breadth, depth, and clarity of the application according to each Evaluation Metric in the bulleted list below, not to exceed the maximum number of points in each category.

Track 1 Evaluation Metrics	
Need, Purpose and Benefits (Up to 30 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan for reaching Covered Populations within the county/region, including municipalities, unincorporated areas, and rural areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizes Covered Households and maximizes opportunities for intersectionality, or to serve those from multiple Covered Populations • Ability to demonstrate support from regional/local digital equity ecosystem through Letters of Intent or Letters of Support
Strength of Applicant's Organizational Capacity (Up to 30 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Applicant's experience with managing large initiatives, managing federal or state grants, and making grants or subgrants to other organizations (if proposed) • Applicant Team's experience in serving Covered Populations in specified county or multi-county region • Applicant Team's experience in digital equity or digital inclusion planning or programming • Robustness of partnership strategy presented, including diversity and regional/local reach of partners and stakeholders
Strength of Proposed Timeline and Budget (Up to 30pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soundness of proposed activities • Realistic timelines & milestones • Feasible & efficient budget • Sustainability and likelihood of long-term impact
Application Administration (Up to 10 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoroughness of application • Compliance with application instructions

Track 1 Model Application

A model, or competitive, **Track 1** application may include the following components:

- A Lead Applicant with experience, reach, and partnerships across their specified county or multi-county region.
- Local partners representing Covered Populations and digital equity practitioners identified by the time of application.
- The Applicant Team (Lead Applicant and partners) reflects a strong understanding of the regional/local digital equity landscape (stakeholders, barriers, and assets) to expedite local digital equity plan development.
- Application clearly aligns with SDEP goals, measurable objectives, targets, implementation strategy, and key activities.
- The Lead Applicant will award and manage second-tier subgrants to community-based partners and digital equity practitioners to implement eligible digital equity activities and strengthen the local digital equity ecosystem.

Track 2: Targeted Statewide Ecosystems

Applications must meet the following Minimum Requirements to be considered for funding:

- The application is complete and submitted by the application deadline.
- Lead Applicant is a verified Eligible Entity with an active Unique Entity ID (UEI) number assigned by SAM.gov.
- Application includes more than one Letter of Intent or Letter of Support from partners or stakeholders across the state.

The following Evaluation Metrics will be used to determine which application receives funding. Scores will be assigned based on the breadth, depth, and clarity of the application according to each Evaluation Metric in the bulleted list below, not to exceed the maximum number of points in each category.

CDT will award the highest-scoring applications while avoiding duplication of targeted Covered Population(s) or Outcome Area(s) based on the following Evaluation Metrics. For example, if the two highest-scoring applications propose activities in the same Outcome Area, CDT plans to award only one. At the State's sole discretion, in cases where the remaining applications are below 70 points, CDT reserves the right to award one or more applications within the same Covered Population or Outcome Area.

Track 2 Evaluation Metrics	
Need, Purpose, and Benefits (Up to 30 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification for targeted statewide ecosystem • Addresses digital equity needs and barriers for the specified Covered Population or Outcome Area • Number of Covered Populations served & individuals within each that will benefit • Effectively advances SDEP Goals and Objectives for Covered Populations • Benefits Covered Populations in diverse regions of the state • Ability to demonstrate support from the statewide digital equity ecosystem through Letters of Intent or Letters of Support
Strength of Applicant's Organizational Capacity (Up to 30 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Applicant's experience with managing large initiatives and managing federal or state grants • Applicant Team's experience in serving Covered Populations in diverse regions of the state • Applicant Team's experience in digital equity or digital inclusion planning or programming • Robustness of partnership strategy presented, including diversity and statewide reach of partners and coordination with Track 1 Subgrantees at regional/local levels
Strength of Proposed Timeline and Budget (Up to 30 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soundness of proposed activities • Realistic timelines & milestones • Feasible & efficient budget • Sustainability and likelihood of long-term impact (including through innovation and ability to leverage additional funding)

Application Administration (Up to 10 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoroughness of application • Compliance with application instructions
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Track 2 Model Application

A model, or competitive, **Track 2** application may include the following components:

- A Lead Applicant with experience, reach, and partnerships across the state's diverse regions, specializing in serving one Covered Population or Outcome Area.
- Local partners representing Covered Populations or Outcome Areas and digital equity practitioners identified by the time of application to strengthen the statewide digital equity ecosystem.
- The application outlines a plan for large-scale, statewide digital equity activity implementation and ecosystem coordination and/or demonstrates an innovative idea.
- The application demonstrates why the specified Covered Population or Outcome Area is better served at the statewide level instead of at the local/regional level.

9.2 Review Process

The RFA will have an **Open Application** period of 60 days for applicants to submit their applications. Technical assistance and a Question-and-Answer (Q&A) process will be conducted during this period.

There will be an Administrative Review stage after the application deadline on May 30, 2025. CDT will conduct an initial review of all submitted applications to ensure they contain the information and documentation required and this information was submitted promptly.

During the Administrative Review stage, an initial screening will be conducted to flag any overlapping geographies across Track 1 applications. CDT may, at its discretion, provide an applicant with opportunities to cure their application to address inconsistencies or ambiguities. The applicant will be given up to seven (7) calendar days to submit information responsive to the feedback provided by CDT, unless CDT extends this period.

Applications satisfying the Administrative Review will move to **Technical Review**. Applications that reach the Technical Review stage will be reviewed by an evaluation team. During Technical Review, applications will be evaluated on their merits and scored according to the Evaluation Metrics listed above.

After completing the Administrative and Technical Review, the CDT Grants Team will prepare a package of eligible applications ranked by the score to CDT Leadership for **Final Review and Selection**. The scores and feedback from the Technical Review will be the basis of the Final Review and Selection. In determining which applications will be selected for funding, CDT Leadership may consider other factors beyond the final Technical Review scores in the following limited circumstances:

Track 1 Overlapping Applications:

- During the **Administrative Review** stage, an initial screening will be conducted to flag any Track 1 applications that serve overlapping or duplicate counties.
 - In these cases, CDT will apply the Track 1 Evaluation Metrics during the **Technical Review** stage to score the applications for the overlapping county or counties. CDT will prioritize the application with the best proposal for a given county based on the Evaluation Metrics.
- **Primary Tiebreaker:** In cases where there is a tie between applications for an overlapping county, CDT will prioritize applications with the highest combined score in the following Evaluation Metrics: 1) ability to demonstrate support from regional/local digital equity ecosystem through Letters of Intent or Letters of Support; and 2) Lead Applicant's experience with managing large initiatives, managing federal or state grants, and making grants or subgrants to other organizations (if proposed).
- **Secondary Tiebreaker:** In the unlikely event there is still a tie between applications for an overlapping county, selection will be made as a result of a coin toss. Tied Lead Applicants will be invited to attend the coin toss and State witnesses will also be present.
- Based on the evaluation steps above, CDT will award a county's allocation to the application with the best application for the given county, which may result in the removal of that county from another awarded application's scope through an additional curing process.

Track 2 Overlapping Applications:

- CDT will seek to ensure adequate distribution of funds across targeted Covered Populations and Outcome Areas. In cases where comparable applications propose serving the same targeted Covered Population or Outcome Area, CDT plans to select the highest scoring application between

the overlapping applications. At the State's sole discretion, in cases where the remaining applications are below 70 points, CDT reserves the right to award one or more applications within the same Covered Population or Outcome Area.

- **Primary Tiebreaker:** In cases where there is a tie between applications for a funding decision, CDT will prioritize applications with the highest combined score in the following Evaluation Metrics: 1) Lead Applicant's experience with managing large initiatives and managing federal or state grants; and 2) robustness of partnership strategy presented, including diversity and statewide reach of partners and coordination with Track 1 Subgrantees at regional/local levels.
- **Secondary Tiebreaker:** In the unlikely event there is still a tie between applications for the funding decision, selection will be made as a result of a coin toss. Tied Lead Applicants will be invited to attend the coin toss and State witnesses will also be present.

The Final Review and Selection stage is expected to take 20 days, after which CDT will approve the final list of selected applicants recommended for award and submit to NTIA for approval. The award decisions of the CDT team, following NTIA approval, are final. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified through email and will have the opportunity to receive a debrief. Applicants must make a request within 10 business days of the email or written notifications to receive a debrief from CDT. CDT will then work with the unsuccessful applicant to arrange a date and time for the debrief.

If the entire pool of funding is not awarded through the first RFA round for either Track, CDT will conduct a second RFA round. Details of any subsequent RFA rounds after the initial request will depend on the outcomes of the first round.

Anticipated review timeline:

Step 1 (5 days)	Step 2 (45 days)	Step 3 (20 days)	Step 4
Administrative Review	Technical Review	Final Review and Selection	Submission to NTIA for Approval

10. Post-Award Expectations

10.1 Reporting

- **Financial Reporting**

- Each Subgrantee must submit a Financial Report to CDT twice yearly, consistent with [Federal reporting guidelines](#). If awarded, further instructions on where and how to submit reports will be provided via a specific award condition.

- **Programmatic Reporting**

- Each Subgrantee must submit a programmatic progress report to CDT twice yearly. If awarded, further instructions on where and how to submit reports will be provided via a specific award condition. Reports will be due within thirty (30) days after the end of the reporting period.
- Programmatic progress reports shall contain information including:
 - Status of achieving implementation milestones;
 - Progress towards measurable objectives;
 - Challenges or delays in completing subgrant activities;
 - Alignment to expenditures and
 - Activity outputs (e.g., number of devices provided/subsidized, number of digital literacy/training programs developed, number of training hours provided, number of Internet subscriptions provided/subsidized, etc., as applicable).
- Subgrantees are responsible for second-tier subgrantee compliance with CDT reporting requirements. Second-tier subgrantee data must be included in the Programmatic Report.

- **Audit Requirements**

- All Subgrantees are subject to audits from CDT during the period of performance. CDT audits will include a review of Subgrantee programmatic and financial records and documentation pertaining to the performance/compliance of the subgrant agreement through site visits, desk reviews, or other agreed-upon procedures. Subgrantees must submit a written corrective action plan in response to performance/compliance concerns identified through the CDT audit.
- If subgrant activities include device purchase and distribution, Subgrantees must maintain sufficient documentation of device purchases, inventory, and distribution.
- Federal regulations require any Subgrantee that expends federal awards of \$1,000,000 or more in the Subgrantee's fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with

federal requirements and submit the completed audit to CDT for approval.

- Applicants are reminded that CDT, NTIA, the NIST Grants Office, the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, or another authorized federal agency may audit an award anytime.

10.2 Payments

- Subgrantees may submit reimbursement requests quarterly.
- Payment to second-tier subgrantees is the responsibility of the Subgrantee. All second-tier subgrantees are responsible for submitting the required information to their Subgrantee for payment.

10.3 Execution and Performance

- **Period of Performance:** The period of performance for CalDEP awards is expected to begin in November 2025 and must end by August 31, 2029. However, these dates are subject to change as CDT Subgrantee selections must be approved by NTIA before award.
- **Performance Tracking:** All Subgrantees are required to incorporate program measurement and evaluation activities into their program design and implementation. These activities must include documentation of progress toward measurable objectives identified in the State Digital Equity Plan and/or Regional/Local Digital Equity Plan. Templates will be provided.
- **Closeout Period:** The final financial and programmatic reports are due within ninety (90) days after the end of the period of performance.
- **Additional Terms and Conditions:** If selected and approved for funding, Lead Applicants will receive a Subgrant Agreement from CDT. Award of funding is contingent upon Lead Applicant's execution of the final Subgrant Agreement and adherence to all terms and conditions stated therein. Note: CalDEP is funded through CDT's State Digital Equity Capacity Grant from NTIA. Funding for CalDEP awards is contingent upon the availability of these federal funds and CDT's ongoing access to them.

10.4 Compliance with State and Federal Requirements

- **Code of Federal Regulations**
 - Guidance for federal awards is published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The CFR is accessible through the Electronic

Code of Federal Regulations at www.ecfr.gov. Subgrants awarded to Eligible Entities through CalDEP are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards contained in [2 CFR part 200](#) and [2 CFR part 400](#).

- Grant funds awarded to for-profit organizations are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements contained in [2 CFR part 200](#) and [2 CFR part 400](#), and the Cost Principles contained in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 31.2, Contracts with Commercial Organizations, codified at [48 CFR 31.2](#).
- Subgrantees are responsible for consistently applying federal regulations to CalDEP funds. Subgrantees are responsible for ensuring their contractors/consultants comply with federal regulations.
- Requirements for record retention and accessibility as contained in [2 CFR 200.334 – 200.338](#).

- **Timekeeping Requirements**

- Activity reports and/or functional timesheets are required to support salary, wage, and fringe benefit expenditures charged to CalDEP awards. Each report must account for the total activity for which each employee is compensated and the hours worked on a particular CalDEP activity. A description of activities must be included, and the description must include enough detail to determine whether the activity is CalDEP-related. This also applies to salaried employees, such as Executive Directors (reference [2 CFR 200.430](#)). Costs not adequately supported are unallowable and will not be reimbursed.
- All CalDEP-funded personnel who are directly allocated to the Subgrant or second-tier award, either in whole or in part, must maintain functional timesheets that:
 - Include the actual time and function(s) performed by the employee for both Subgrant and non-Subgrant activities to which the employee's time is allocated;
 - Account for all time worked by the employee (not just the time allocated to the Subgrant);
 - Are approved by both the employee and their supervisor (electronic signature is acceptable); and
 - Are supported by a system of internal control that provides reasonable assurance that the charges are accurate, allowable, and properly allocated.
- Template will be provided to Subgrantees post-award.
- Fringe benefits must be billed at or below actual cost in accordance with the Subgrantee's established fringe benefits

policy; billing fringe benefits based on estimated rates is unallowable.

- **Contractor/Consultants**

- Subgrantees may contract for services that cannot be provided by staff employed by the Subgrantee. Generally, these services are for a short-term period and provide a specific and identifiable product or service. Subgrantees are responsible for ensuring their contractors/consultants comply with applicable federal and State regulations and requirements and may be subject to audit (for reference, see [2 CFR 200.501](#)). Contracting out must not affect the Subgrantee's overall responsibility for managing the CalDEP award, and the Subgrantee must reserve sufficient rights and controls to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities for the award.
- Subgrantees must establish and follow a documented procurement policy that conforms to federal law and reflects applicable state, local and tribal laws and regulations. Reference [2 CFR 200.318](#) for additional information on general procurement standards.

- **Competitive Process**

- Federal regulations require all procurement transactions to be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition and consistent with the procurement standards of [2 CFR 200.318](#) – [2 CFR 200.327](#).

- **Written Agreement**

- The Subgrantee must have an executed agreement with each contractor/consultant and second-tier subgrantee. The written agreement must include, at a minimum, beginning and ending dates, contractor/consultant or second-tier subgrantee's Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), the dollar amount of the contract, a description of activities, services or deliverables to be performed with a schedule, a budget that accounts for all hourly positions and rates, the cost principles to be used in determining allowable costs, payment provisions, the policies and requirements that apply to the contractor/consultant and second-tier subgrantees, and signature and date by all parties. The budget in the contract must include the same line-item categories as the Subgrant Agreement budget.
- The Subgrantee is responsible for ensuring any second-tier subgrantee complies with all CalDEP program requirements as indicated through the Guidelines and RFA.

11. Application Questions & Technical Assistance

11.1 Contact Information

CDT encourages all interested entities to apply and contact CDT for support as needed.

Questions about CalDEP and this RFA must be communicated in writing and sent by email to CalDEP@state.ca.gov. Please include "CalDEP RFA Question(s)" in the subject line of the email.

For technical support related to the CalDEP Application Portal, please check out Submittable's [Submitter Resource Center](#) or contact the [Submittable Customer Support](#).

11.2 Technical Assistance

CDT will provide pre-application technical assistance to all applicants during the application period, including a Question & Answer period, Webinars, and Office Hours. Please refer to [CalDEP Technical Assistance Resources](#) for more details and regular updates.

12. Schedule of Activities

Milestone	Date
RFA Launch	March 26, 2025
RFA webinar	March 28, 2025
Deadline to Submit Questions	May 9, 2025
RFA Close	May 30, 2025
CDT Application Review	June 2 – August 15, 2025
Submit Recommendations for Award to NTIA for Approval	August 30, 2025

13. Addenda

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFA, a written addendum will be issued by CDT and added here.