



Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)

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<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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APPLICATIONS ENCOURAGED FOR MORE THAN \$1 BILLION FOR DIGITAL EQUITY PROGRAM

National Digital Equity Competitive Program Now Open

Montpelier, Vermont – Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) is encouraging organizations in Vermont to apply for the Digital Equity Competitive Program to fund programs that ensure communities have the access to devices and the skills needed to fully participate in the digital world, regardless of their background or circumstances. Under the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) released this week, a variety of organizations can apply to Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on a competitive basis for funding.

“This funding has the potential to be transformational for digital equity work in Vermont. We have many local organizations committed to ensuring that all Vermonters have the skills and devices necessary to get online effectively and safely. This additional funding will bring us closer to our goal of bridging the digital divide,” said VCBB Digital Equity Officer Britaney Watson.

Eligible applicants include political subdivisions of states, such as city and county governments, certain nonprofits, community anchor institutions, local educational agencies, and workforce development organizations. Partnerships among these entities are allowed, and NTIA encourages proposals that demonstrate a broad partnership of entities with the ability to administer significant resources and address wide-ranging populations.

Applications are due by September 23, 2024. The NTIA expects to begin making awards by the end of 2024. NTIA plans to issue awards made under the Competitive Grant Program on a rolling basis.

As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Digital Equity Act provides \$2.75 billion to establish three grant programs that promote digital equity and inclusion. In 2022, NTIA began awarding \$60 million to states, D.C., and territories from the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program. Since then, all 56 eligible entities (states, D.C., and U.S. territories) submitted their Digital Equity Plans and NTIA has accepted all plans. In March 2024, NTIA made available over \$800 million to states, D.C. and territories, and native entities to apply for funding from the \$1.44 billion Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program. This funding allows states and territories to begin implementation of their digital equity plans and allows native entities to create digital equity plans and other digital equity projects.

“Connecting every Vermonter to broadband is not enough if they don’t have the devices, assistive tools, and skills to use it. This funding can help us complete our mission to enable every Vermonter to take full advantage of the educational, economic, health care, entertainment, social, and other opportunities available online,” said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.

Additional funding opportunities will be available in the future. You can learn more about this opportunity, including how to apply, at [Notice of Funding Opportunity Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program | National Telecommunications and Information Administration \(ntia.gov\)](#).

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