



**Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)**

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**Biden-Harris Administration Approves and Recommends for Award Vermont's Digital Equity Capacity Grant Application for More Than \$5 Million**

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today has approved and recommended for award an application from Vermont, allowing the state to request access to more than \$5 million to implement its [Digital Equity Plan](#). This funding comes from the \$1.44 billion State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, one of three Digital Equity Act grant programs created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

This funding is part of the "Internet for All" initiative, a key component of President Biden's "Investing in America" agenda. For a variety of reasons, many Americans struggle to use the Internet connection available to them—for example, some lack the skills to navigate online resources and protect their personal and financial information online; others cannot afford a computer or tablet at home.

Vermont will use this funding to implement its digital equity plan, which outlines how the state will empower individuals and communities with the tools and skills necessary to benefit from meaningful access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service.

"Quality, affordable high-speed Internet allows families and businesses to thrive in our modern economy. Thanks to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Department of Commerce is connecting everyone in Vermont and across the country to quality, affordable high-speed Internet and providing the resources they need to make the most of that Internet connection," said **U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo**. "We look forward to working with Vermont to ensure residents across the

state have the tools and skills to take advantage of quality, affordable high-speed Internet – whether it’s for work, education, health care, or any other essential service.”

This approval is from the first funding round of the [Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program](#), which made available more than \$800 million for states, including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and Native Entities to apply for grants to implement their digital equity plans. These plans were developed under the [State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program](#). Awards of funding will require additional review and approval of State-submitted documentation.

“For the first time, every state in the nation has a digital equity plan in place to promote widespread adoption of high-speed Internet services. Vermont now can request access to the funds to put its digital equity plan into action,” said **Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Alan Davidson**. “The Biden-Harris Administration’s Internet for All initiative will ensure everyone can thrive online through access to devices and digital skills.”

“This award will be extremely valuable as we work to expand access to broadband and strengthen our workforce,” said **Governor Phil Scott**. “We know that being able to both access and navigate our online world are essential to giving Vermonters equal opportunity to succeed and thrive. This funding will help us invest in initiatives that bring these skills and tools to more throughout our state.”

“Access to high-speed Internet means nothing if you cannot afford your bill,” said **Senator Bernie Sanders**. “Too many people in our state lack access to high-speed Internet or cannot afford the options available. I am pleased that, with this funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was passed in the Senate in August 2021, we will end these disparities by connecting every household to high-speed Internet, regardless of their income, age, zip code, race, or disability.”

“Whether it’s staying connected to work, school, or accessing health care, high-speed, affordable Internet is a necessity in our daily lives. But too many rural communities in Vermont and across the country have been left behind, losing access to essential services and falling into digital darkness,” said **Senator Peter Welch**. “This federal funding, made possible through the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*, is crucial to creating an equitable economy and closing the digital divide. I’ll keep up the fight in Washington to secure more broadband funding and ensure everyone can get and stay connected.”

“Access to broadband is no longer a luxury. Thank you to the Biden-Harris Administration for this grant,” said **Vermont Community Broadband Board Chair Patty Richards**. “It will enable the Vermont Community Broadband Board’s work to ensure all Vermonters, regardless of their income or situation in life, have access to the

Internet and the devices and training to take full advantage of the opportunities it provides.”

“Thank you for these investments in digital equity and providing such an incredible opportunity for Vermont. The digital divide is not just a technological gap; it’s an economic divide that impacts our communities and families. This funding has the potential to empower our rural communities, as well as our more urban communities, equipping residents with the skills and devices necessary to thrive in the digital economy,” **said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.**

“Vermont is very excited to receive our \$5.3 million Capacity Grant. We firmly believe these funds will support Vermont's efforts to ensure every individual in Vermont—regardless of identity, community, or economic challenges—has high-quality, accessible, and affordable technology resources,” **said VCBB Digital Equity Officer Britaney Watson.**

Vermont will use the \$5,299,150 in funding to implement key digital equity initiatives, including:

- A community-based digital skilling and technical support program with multiple parts to meet the needs of Vermonters;
- Supporting access to devices through a program focused on procurement, refurbishment, and deployment of devices and assistive technology; and
- Expanding workforce development programs to include digital literacy training.

Additional funding opportunities will be available in the future. NTIA will announce State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program awards from this first round of funding on a rolling basis.

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### **About the National Telecommunications and Information Administration**

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the Executive Branch agency that advises the President on telecommunications and information policy issues. NTIA’s programs and policymaking focus largely on expanding broadband Internet access and adoption in America, expanding the use of spectrum by all users, advancing public safety communications, and ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for innovation and economic growth.

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