



**Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)**

112 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05620-2601

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD ENCOURAGES VERMONTERS TO COMMENT ON UPCOMING DIGITAL EQUITY PROGRAMS**

**Montpelier, Vermont** – National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is seeking input on how to structure nearly \$2.7 billion in grant programs to ensure everyone in America has the digital skills and devices they need to realize the full potential of high-speed Internet access.

The goal of the [Digital Equity Act](#)'s \$1.44 billion State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the \$1.25 billion Competitive Digital Equity Program is to promote adoption and meaningful use of the Internet among underrepresented communities and populations, including low-income households, veterans, aging individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, rural residents, and others.

The Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) has been appointed to administer Vermont's Digital Equity Act programs. So far VCBB has received a planning grant, formed an advisory group for planning purposes, and released an [RFP](#) for a contractor(s) to help with outreach and engagement with stakeholders.

"Feedback from a diverse group of Vermonters is crucial in planning our programs to accomplish our goal, which is to ensure everyone has access to affordable broadband, devices they can use, and the training to use them. We encourage those who are concerned about Digital Equity to provide feedback to the NTIA," said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.

"We need to hear directly from those who are most impacted by the systemic barriers that prevent some from fully utilizing the Internet," said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo.

NTIA requests feedback on the design, rules, and evaluation criteria for both digital equity programs:

- The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program will fund implementation of state and territories' digital equity plans, which will identify barriers in communities to achieving full participation in the digital economy, and strategies to overcome those barriers.
- The Competitive Digital Equity Program will fund organizations including schools, libraries, nonprofits, and others offering digital inclusion activities and promoting Internet adoption. "Digital inclusion" refers to activities that ensure access to and use of affordable Internet service, including providing devices, applications, and content that enables self-sufficiency online, digital literacy training, technical support, and learning basic awareness of how to ensure online privacy and cybersecurity.

In addition to requesting written comment, NTIA will host a series of public virtual listening sessions in connection with the Digital Equity Act programs in the coming months.

Comments are due by May 1, 2023. To submit a comment, click [here](#).

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