

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD CONGRATULATES NEKCA ON ACP GRANT AWARD

Montpelier, Vermont – Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA) has been awarded a \$500,000 Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant to help promote and raise awareness of and participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

NEKCA will be the main grantee and will subgrant out funding across the five different Community Action Agencies of the Vermont Community Action Partnership (VCAP). Funded entities include NEKCA, BROCC, CVOEO, SEVCA, and Capstone.

The ACP is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) benefit program that provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households. To be eligible, a household income must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or a member of the household must meet other requirements outlined [here](#).

NEKCA is a leading organization in the NEK addressing poverty through education, community collaborations, and community action. It submitted one of 250 applications from organizations across the country for a grant to help it implement strategies to reach historically underserved and unserved communities with the goal of bridging the digital divide.

“Internet is the backbone of today's world. It powers all aspects of our modern lives such as education, economy, healthcare, and social wellbeing. Due to the ruralness of our state, most of Vermont is considered both “high-cost” and “underserved” due to our remote locations, lack of population density, and unique topography. As a result, the cost of building out broadband service is higher as compared to the national average, making it more expensive for consumers to enter the market. NEKCA is looking forward to teaming with our Community Action partners in coordinating this state-wide effort,” said Jenna O'Farrell, Executive Director, NEKCA.

The Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) has been appointed to administer Vermont's Digital Equity Act programs. Progress to date includes receiving a planning

grant, pulling together an advisory group for planning purposes, and releasing an [RFP](#) for a contractor(s) to help with outreach and engagement with stakeholders.

“Affordability is a major barrier for thousands of Vermonters to be able to access the education, healthcare, work, and social opportunities offered online these days. Congratulations to NEKCA on this award and their work to level the playing field for Vermont families,” said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.

Grant applicants were assessed to determine the impact of proposed projects against the program’s goal, objectives, and priorities. Assessments included a merit review to determine the quality of proposed projects, costs/budget, and a risk review to determine fiscal stability of the applicant.

To learn more and apply for the ACP click [here](#).

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