



Indiana Broadband Office
Digital Opportunity Program
Application Guidance Document

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Version History

- Version 1.0 – Posted on April 23, 2025

Introduction

The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), is a \$1.44 billion initiative authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. The Indiana Broadband Office (IBO) has updated the Digital Equity Program to be called the Digital Opportunity (DO) Program. Its primary goal is to empower states, territories, and Native entities to implement their Digital Equity Plans, thereby addressing systemic barriers to digital inclusion for covered populations. The following groups are considered covered populations for this program:

1. Low-income households
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Those with language barriers
7. Racial or ethnic minorities
8. Rural residents

Indiana has been awarded \$15,096,770 through the federal State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program by the NTIA. This funding enables the IBO to implement the state's [Digital Equity Plan](#), developed in collaboration with the Purdue Center for Regional Development and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. Key initiatives include expanding telehealth services, enhancing digital skills for incarcerated individuals, improving accessibility of state websites, and launching digital skills programs to address connectivity barriers, device access, and digital literacy. Entities who are eligible to apply for the grant are as follows:

- **Political subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities of the State**, such as local government units and agencies responsible for adult education, literacy, or public housing.
- **Foundations, corporations, institutions, or associations** that are not-for-profit entities and not classified as schools.
- **Community anchor institutions**, excluding schools.
- **Local educational agencies**.
- **Entities that carry out workforce development programs**.
- **Partnerships** between any of the entities described above.

The DO Program is a component of Indiana's broader strategy to ensure all Hoosiers have equitable access to digital technologies, services, and opportunities. Administered by the IBO, this funding opportunity supports organizations in addressing key barriers to digital inclusion and in promoting outcomes aligned with the Digital Equity Act. This document serves as an official guide for applicants completing the DO grant application.

Indiana Digital Opportunity Application Process

Timing

The application process is a structured selection procedure through which the Indiana Broadband Office awards Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding to eligible entities for programs supporting the goals of the state's Digital Equity Plan. Subgrantee selection is a several-step process, outlined in the table below:

Digital Opportunity Program Timeline	
DO Program FAQs & Guidance documents are released	April 23, 2025
DO Program Webinar	May 5, 2025 & June 5, 2025
DO Program is open for applications for 45 days	April 30, 2025- June 13, 2025
DO Program application period ends	June 13, 2025
Applications are reviewed and awards are decided	June-July 2025
Submission of awarded projects to the NTIA	August 31, 2025

Scoring Categories and Criteria

The scoring process involves a combination of objective and subjective criteria that will be applied to each application. All applications will be scored against identical, neutral criteria that do not favor one type of project over another. The total possible points for a DO application project proposal is **155**. The outline of the rubric is as follows:

Category	Scoring Criteria	Maximum Points
Data and Evaluation Plan	The data and evaluation component should feature clearly defined, realistic outcomes linked to identified barriers, supported by strong baseline data and robust methods for measuring change. It must use relevant data sources with rigorous, well-explained collection procedures and measurable, meaningful indicators. Analytical methods should align with the data collected, and reporting should be regular, clearly formatted, and tailored to appropriate audiences. The approach should include well-defined processes for using data to refine the program and incorporate robust feedback mechanisms that actively engage stakeholders and participants.	40
Organization Profile & Project Experience	The organization should demonstrate extensive, relevant experience in managing similar projects, covering both programmatic and technical aspects. It must provide clear, compelling examples of successful project management directly related to the proposed initiative. Additionally, the organization should showcase strong, successful experience	15

	managing federal or state grants, including compliance and reporting.	
Project Plan, Timeline, & Community Support	The project plan should offer a detailed, feasible description with clearly defined goals and objectives that are specific, measurable, and aligned with the program's purpose. The timeline should be realistic, with comprehensive milestones and identified stages for planning, implementation, and tracking. The plan must identify potential risks and provide effective mitigation strategies. It should clarify whether the project is new or an expansion, providing strong justification and context. The project should strategically address barriers related to digital equity priorities, with clearly defined outcomes that align with project goals. Ongoing, robust collaborations with multiple community partners should be described, demonstrating mutual benefits, along with compelling evidence of strong community support.	50
Target Populations & Locations	The project should clearly identify target populations that align with the project's objectives and community needs, with a strategic selection process. It must demonstrate extensive, successful experience in providing direct support, technical assistance, and capacity building to these populations. The project should highlight past successes in facilitating such activities and identify specific counties, cities, or towns, ensuring alignment with population needs. Additionally, it should describe specific gaps in digital resources and provide a strong, detailed explanation of how the proposed activities will address these gaps effectively.	25
Project Administration	The project administration should include a budget narrative that clearly explains all line items, with costs that are well-justified, accurate, and aligned with the proposed activities. It must demonstrate strong financial capacity, sustainability, and a clear plan for continuation beyond the grant period. Additional financial information should support the organization's stability. A comprehensive risk management plan should be described, with strong protections for covered populations, including privacy and ethical practices. Effective strategies should be articulated to ensure a sustainable, long-term impact that addresses barriers to digital participation.	25
Total:		155

eCivis Access

eCivis is Indiana's new state-wide grants management system designed to track grants from application to close-out. Applicants will access solicitations through the [State Budget Agency \(SBA\) website](#), which offers comprehensive resources to streamline the Digital Equity Capacity Grant application process. All applications must be submitted electronically via the eCivis Grants Portal. Upon award, grant recipients will receive official notification through eCivis. Subsequently, recipients will utilize eCivis to submit activity reports, request reimbursements, and manage grant close-out procedures. Completing the application diligently and thoroughly in eCivis is imperative to ensure proper grants management for both the grantor and grantee.

Resources:

Indiana State Budget Agency Website:

<https://www.in.gov/sba/>

State of Indiana eCivis Grants Portal Subrecipient User Guide:

<https://www.in.gov/sba/grants/resources-for-subrecipients/#tab-717686-2->

[Apply for Funding](#)

eCivis portal login:

<https://portal.ecivis.com/#/login>

Review of the Solicitation:

Interested applicants will navigate to the "[State of Indiana Programs Solicitation](#)" page, housed under "State Agency Grant Opportunities."

In the "Overview," "Eligibility," and "Financial" tabs, the prospective applicant can review the program's requirements to get a brief look at the eligibility of the project/program. In the "Contact" tab, a grant program contact/help email address and program contact are listed for additional program-related questions. In the "Files" tab, the prospective applicant will find the program and application submittal guidance files.

Beginning the Application:

1. To begin the application process, the applicant will click the "Apply" button located above the "Overview" tab. This will bring the applicant to the eCivis Grants Portal. Here, the applicant will fill out the application and upload all required documents.
2. To proceed, the applicant will log onto the eCivis Grants Portal.
 - a. If the applicant has already created an eCivis Grants Portal account, then click "Portal Login."
 - b. If this is the applicant's first time using the portal, click "Create an Account."
 - i. The applicant will be prompted to provide the following information: First Name, Last Name, Email Address, and Password. After this information is provided, click "Sign Up."
 - ii. The applicant will then be sent a confirmation email to complete the account creation process.
 - iii. In the email verification sent by eCivis, click "Confirm My Account." This route brings the applicant back to the portal login page.
 - iv. The applicant will then enter their credentials to log in.

3. Once successfully logged into the portal, the applicant will see the landing page of the application. Click the “Create New Application” button.
4. The applicant will then be prompted to complete the secondary verification in the portal. To proceed, click the “Log in with your credentials again to access your application’s account” button.
5. Click “Portal Login” and enter the previously used login information. Once this verification is complete, the applicant may begin their application.

Budget:

To navigate to the “Budget” section, look below the Application Title and scroll to the Applications Budget section. Click the **Horizontal Lines** icon and Edit Budget to access the budget worksheet. In the Budget Items section, the Applicant can add or adjust the budget item, add sub-categories, and enter line-item budget entries. Click on the corresponding Budget Item to add budget entries. Once all required budget steps are completed, the budget can be saved by clicking the Save icon. This can also be exported to Excel by clicking the Excel logo icon.

Please be sure to complete all 3 sections “**Profile**”, “**Application**” and “**Budget**” Sections before clicking on the submit button. Once submitted, these sections cannot be edited or added to.

Application Submission

Please click the “Open” button to begin. You can save and return to this page to edit your Profile until completed. You can view your Profile by clicking “Edit”. You cannot move forward until you have completed your Profile.

Profile
Action Required
Open

Application Submission

To begin, click the “Application Process” button below. When you return to this Homepage, you can see the status of your submission by the colored status bar below the submission card.

- If the status bar is **gray**, your submission is under review, and no action needs to be taken.
- If the status bar is **blue**, there is an action required. Click on the Submission Card to complete.
- If the status bar is **red**, there is an error. Please reach out to the Administrator of this program.

Created on 07/25/2023
Application Review

Applications Budget

Show 10 entries
Search:

Project Title	Create Date	Status	Total Requested	Actions
N/A	08/04/2023	Draft	\$0.00	

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries
Previous 1 Next

Application Content

The application process captures the necessary documentation that fulfills the requirements of the NTIA's Digital Equity Notice of Funding Opportunity. If any entity is submitting multiple applications, please provide a unique title for each application. Below are the sections that applicants will fill out to satisfy the requirements of the DO application:

- Organization Profile
- Project Plan
- Data and Evaluation
- Target Populations & Locations
- Project Financial Details
- Risk Management Plan
- Community Support/Testimonial
- Legal

Digital Opportunity Program Application Sections

Organization Profile

This section gathers essential background information about the applicant organization. Applicants must provide their Indiana Secretary of State (IN SOS) number and Indiana Bidder number to verify eligibility. If applying as a partnership of eligible entities, applicants will need to list all participating partners, outline the scope of work for each, and provide documentation confirming each partner's eligibility.

Additionally, applicants are asked to detail their organization's experience with program and grant management. This includes highlighting relevant projects, success stories, and the organization's demonstrated capacity to manage federal and/or state-funded initiatives. Applicants are encouraged to include any other organizational information that supports their readiness and qualifications to implement a digital equity project.

Applicants will be asked to provide:

- Indiana Secretary of State (IN SOS) number
- Indiana Bidder number
- Whether applying as a partnership of eligible entities
 - If yes, provide:
 - List of all partners
 - Scope of work for each partner
 - Documentation verifying eligibility of each partner

Applicants should also summarize their experience in project and grant management and share any additional relevant organizational information, including past success stories and relevant experiences managing similar programmatic initiatives and a demonstrated ability to manage federal/state grants effectively.

Project Plan

In this section, applicants provide a comprehensive outline of their proposed project. This includes a clear description of project goals, alignment with the DO Program's priorities, the total duration in months, and a detailed timeline with key milestones. Applicants must also identify potential risks to the timeline and outline strategies to mitigate them.

Applicants will specify whether the project is a new initiative or an expansion of existing work. If it is an expansion, they must describe the additional outcomes made possible by the expansion and detail any prior investments already made.

The application also requires identification of the digital equity barriers the project seeks to address, such as broadband access and affordability, digital literacy, accessibility of public services, device availability, and online privacy/cybersecurity. In addition, applicants must select a primary, and an optional secondary, digital equity outcome, choosing from economic/workforce development, education, health, civic/social engagement, or essential services delivery.

Applicants must also disclose whether the project involves human subject research, and if so, whether it qualifies for exemption from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review. If exempt, a narrative describing the research and the applicable exemption must be included.

Finally, applicants must indicate whether the project involves broadband infrastructure as defined under federal regulation (2 CFR 184.3).

Applicants will describe:

- Overall project description and goals
- Alignment with Digital Equity Act and IBO priorities
- Project duration (in months)
- Detailed activity timeline with milestones
- Risks to timeline and mitigation strategies
- Whether the project is new or an expansion
 - If an expansion:
 - Additional outcomes enabled
 - Amount already invested

Applicants will indicate which digital equity barriers are addressed:

- Broadband access and affordability
- Accessibility of public digital services
- Digital literacy
- Online privacy and cybersecurity
- Device availability and support

Applicants will choose a primary and secondary (optional) digital equity outcome:

- Economic/workforce development
- Education

- Health
- Civic/social engagement
- Essential services delivery

Applicants will be required to indicate:

- Whether the project involves human subject research (per 15 CFR 27.102)
- If yes, whether the research is IRB-exempt
 - If exempt, describe the research and applicable exemption

Applicants must indicate:

- Whether the project involves broadband infrastructure (as defined in 2 CFR 184.3)

Data and Evaluation

This section focuses on how applicants will measure, evaluate, and improve the impact of their proposed project. Applicants must outline a clear evaluation strategy that demonstrates how the project will address digital equity barriers and define the immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes they aim to achieve.

Applicants will be required to identify baseline conditions and explain how changes will be measured over time. The application must also detail the data collection methods that will be used, such as surveys, interviews, or participation logs, and the metrics and analytical approaches, whether quantitative, qualitative, or both, that will inform the evaluation.

A reporting plan should also be included, describing how findings will be communicated, to whom, how often, and in what format. Applicants must explain how evaluation results will be used for continuous improvement during project implementation and describe feedback mechanisms for engaging participants and stakeholders in shaping and refining the project.

Finally, applicants must address how data will be collected and managed ethically, with particular attention to transparency, individual privacy, and compliance with all applicable regulations.

Applicants must describe:

- Evaluation strategy for tracking impact on digital equity barriers
- Immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes
- Baseline conditions and methods to measure change
- Data collection methods (surveys, logs, etc.)
- Metrics and analytical methods (quantitative/qualitative)
- Reporting plan: audience, frequency, format
- Continuous improvement plan using evaluation results
- Feedback mechanisms from participants/stakeholders
- Ethical data collection and privacy safeguards

Target Populations & Locations

In this section, applicants will identify the specific covered populations their project will serve. Covered populations, as identified by the NTIA, include:

1. Low-income households
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Those with language barriers
7. Racial or ethnic minorities
8. Rural residents

Applicants must estimate the total number of individuals the project aims to serve, including a breakdown by each covered population. They are also required to describe their organization's previous experience working with these populations, particularly in delivering services, technical assistance, or capacity-building efforts.

Additionally, applicants will provide a list of the geographic areas to be served—such as counties, cities, or towns—and explain how the project is designed to address current gaps in digital access, resources, or support within those communities.

Applicants will indicate which covered populations are served:

1. Low-income households (below 150% of federal poverty line)
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Individuals with language barriers
7. Racial or ethnic minorities
8. Rural residents

Applicants must:

- Estimate number of individuals served (total and by population)
- Describe prior experience serving these populations
- List geographic locations to be served (counties, cities, towns)
- Explain how the project fills existing gaps in digital services

Project Financial Details

This section captures the financial scope and sustainability of the proposed project. Applicants must state the total amount of grant funding requested as well as the overall project budget. If there are additional funding sources, such as federal, state, or private contributions, applicants must identify these sources and explain their intended use.

Applicants are required to complete and submit a Budget Worksheet detailing line-item costs and to provide a Budget Narrative that justifies each expense. This narrative should

clearly explain how costs align with project goals and demonstrate responsible use of grant funds.

Finally, applicants must describe their organization's financial capacity to manage the project and provide a sustainability plan outlining how the project or its benefits will continue beyond the grant period.

Applicants will provide:

- Requested grant amount
- Total project budget
- Other funding sources (if applicable)
 - If yes, describe the source and purpose
- Completed Budget Worksheet
- Budget Narrative (with cost justifications)
- Description of financial capacity and sustainability plan

Risk Management Plan

This section asks applicants to outline their approach to identifying and mitigating potential risks that could affect the success, integrity, or equity of the project. Applicants must describe specific steps they will take to protect covered populations, particularly in areas such as privacy, data security, and equitable access.

Applicants are also expected to address broader risk management strategies, including how they will manage risks related to algorithms or automated decision-making (if applicable) and ensure that the project promotes long-term equity. Any additional risk mitigation efforts, such as contingency planning or staff training, should also be described to demonstrate a comprehensive and responsible approach to project execution.

Applicants must:

- Describe steps to mitigate risks, particularly to covered populations
- Provide privacy, algorithmic, and long-term equity risk strategies
- Describe any additional risk management approaches

Community Support/Testimonial

This section provides applicants the opportunity to demonstrate the level of community backing for their proposed project. Applicants will indicate whether their project has support from local stakeholders such as government officials, community-based organizations, or residents. If support exists, they are encouraged to upload letters of support or testimonials that reflect community endorsement.

Additionally, applicants should describe any ongoing or planned collaborations with regional coalitions, community anchor institutions, local governments, or other partners that will contribute to the project's success. Any other relevant information or

documentation that highlights community engagement and alignment with local needs should also be included to strengthen the application.

Applicants will:

- Indicate if they have community support (officials, residents, orgs)
 - If yes, upload written letters of support/testimonials
- Describe ongoing collaborations (regional coalitions, anchor institutions, etc.)
- Provide any additional information that demonstrates community support

Scoring Considerations

Human Subject Research:

If an applicant's proposed project includes human subject research (as defined in [15 CFR 27.102\(l\)](#) and [15 CFR 27.102\(e\)](#)) that is **not exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval per [15 CFR 27.104\(d\)](#), the IBO will deduct points in the scoring rubric. It is the expectation that no amount of grant funds be used for non-exempt human subject research. Please refer to NTIA guidance, video recording and slide deck linked below to determine if your project includes humans subject research subject to IRB approval.

Link to HSR Resources:

[Download Guidance \(PDF\)](#)

[View Recording](#)

[Slide Deck \(PDF\)](#)

Infrastructure Project:

If an applicant's proposed project includes installation of broadband infrastructure (e.g., broadband installation, broadband upgrades, capital improvement activities, installation of access points and other network components, other fixed equipment, new or replacement cable) or any other infrastructure project (as defined in [2 CFR 184.3](#)), the IBO will deduct points in the scoring rubric. It is the expectation that no amount of grant funds be used for infrastructure build out.