

State Digital Equity Plan Implementation and Capacity Grant Program Questionnaire

The California Department of Technology (CDT) appreciates your contribution to developing the State's Digital Equity Plan (SDEP), which was approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on March 28, 2024. We look forward to your continued partnership as we implement the plan.

CDT has submitted the state's application to the NTIA for its statutory allocation of \$70.2 million in Capacity Grant funding to implement its digital equity plan.

CDT will manage the state's Digital Equity Capacity Grant, once received and authorized, as outlined in the SDEP and structure the program around three components:

- Centralized Services: services procured by CDT to support the efficiency and effectiveness of digital inclusion practitioners
- State Agency Digital Inclusion Efforts: fund programs that impact digital equity outcomes for Covered Populations statewide
- Sub-grant program for entities and coalitions: sub-grants to develop and refine local digital equity plans, provide localized digital navigation services, targeted device programs, workforce training programs, etc.

Additionally, the NTIA requires the Capacity Grants to focus on the following criteria when determining whether an activity furthers the goals and objectives of the SDEP:

- Focus on Covered Populations
- Long-lasting and Meaningful Change
- Measurable Implementation Strategies
- Stakeholder Engagement

As a critical stakeholder, we are requesting your feedback on various components of the overall capacity grant program structure and sub-grant program design.

Your questionnaire responses will help CDT's further program implementation and design,

to the extent possible, while staying within federal and state requirements. The results of this questionnaire will not be made public.

CDT intends to organize more opportunities for stakeholder engagement on program design this summer and release a sub-grant program proposal for formal public comment later this year.

Note: This questionnaire contains 54 questions in 5 sections. It should take about 20 minutes to complete. The first eight questions refer to organizational contact information for CDT's further follow-up, if needed.

Please provide your name, title, organization, and email address for further follow-up.

1. Name (First & Last Name) *

2. Work Title

3. Email Address *

4. Organization Name *

5. Organization Street Address *

6. City *

7. County *

8. Zip Code *

CENTRALIZED SERVICES

The SDEP acknowledges the potential for standard tools and resources to reduce duplication of efforts, increase efficiency, and build capacity of locally-based digital inclusion service providers. CDT intends to develop or procure centralized services or tools to support sub-grantees and the digital equity ecosystem to implement the SDEP and work towards the Plans' Measurable Objectives and Outcomes.

9. Some centralized services examples are below. **Please rate the options below from most to least important for your organization.** *(Drag and drop choices or hover over any choice to see arrows).* *

Digital Literacy Assessment and Training Platform (to provide individual assessment and training for basic, intermediate, and advanced digital skills)

Remote digital navigation and tech support services

Broadband and technology workforce development upskilling resources

Technical assistance programs (e.g., train-the-trainer programs, assistance with program development, etc.)

10. Are there are other centralized services you think are important to consider? If so, please note here.

11. Would you like to provide additional input on this Centralized Service: **Digital Literacy Assessment and Training Platform** (to provide individual assessment and training for basic, intermediate, and advanced digital skills)? *

Yes

No

12. Would you like to provide input on this Centralized Service: **Remote digital navigation and tech support services**? *

Yes

No

13. Would you like to provide input on this Centralized Service: **Broadband and technology workforce development upskilling resources**? *

Yes

No

14. Would you like to provide input on this Centralized Service: **Technical assistance programs** (e.g., train-the-trainer programs, assistance with program development, etc.)? *

Yes

No

15. What **Digital Literacy Assessment and Training Platform** providers or vendors should CDT learn more about or explore? *(Please name the platform, providers, or vendors.)*

*

16. CDT heard during the SDEP planning process that platforms to support digital literacy should include Basic Skills, Intermediate Skills, and Advanced Skills. Are there specific modules or skills that you would recommend CDT to consider within these categories? *

17. What modalities are preferred for centralized **Digital Literacy Assessment and Training Platform?** *

(Select all that apply)

- Synchronous modalities specific to time and platform
- Asynchronous modalities using self-paced training and resources
- In-Person specific to time and physical location
- All of the above
- Other

18. What kinds of **remote digital navigation and tech support services** are most important? Please select the three most important services. *

- Assess users' individual needs and goals
- Advising on availability and access to low-cost offers for devices and internet service
- Connect residents to or provide digital literacy training
- Hardware and software technical support efforts
- Individual, one-on-one support
- Communal, group-based support
- Other

19. What kinds of **broadband and technology workforce development upskilling resources** are most important to best support organizations? Please select the three most important services for the State to consider providing. *

Please select at most 3 options.

- Compilation of relevant certification and apprenticeship programs
- Compilation of broadband and technology-based training and educational programs
- Collection of training and informational materials
- Search tool for relevant jobs
- Other

20. Which kinds of **technical assistance programs** are most important to best support organizations? Please select the three most important services for CDT to consider providing. *

- Templates for required grant reporting materials
- "Best Practices" resources for required grant reporting materials
- Presentation-style webinars to overview program details
- "Office Hour" webinars to answer specific subgrantee questions
- Resources to support subgrantees' use of the Grant Management System (GMS)
- Funding set-aside in subgrant program to cover costs of technical assistance by subgrantee staff or external entity
- Other

21. What accessibility features should CDT consider within each Centralized Service to maximize inclusion? Please select those that most apply to your organization and the communities you serve.

*

- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) for the deaf and hard of hearing
- Captioning available in languages other than English
- Compatibility with screen readers for all asynchronous materials
- Other

22. Which non-English languages are most needed within each Centralized Service? Please rank in order of importance to your organization. *

Spanish
Simplified Chinese
Traditional Chinese
Arabic
Vietnamese
Persian
Korean
Tagalog
Russian
Japanese

23. Are there other languages that are needed for Centralized Services for your organization?

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CAPACITY SUB-GRANT PROGRAM

As stated in the SDEP, CDT intends to develop a capacity sub-grant program that can fund a variety of entities and organizations to deliver programs to address digital equity gaps and barriers for Covered Populations. The following questions are designed to capture your organization's input for the design of the program.

24. Please rank the following uses for capacity sub-grants in order of highest need in the communities you serve or represent - 1st being the most important, 7th being the least. *(Drag and drop choices or hover over any choice to see arrows).*

*

- Developing or refining Local Digital Equity Plans (includes establishing regional digital equity coalitions)
- Broadband adoption campaigns
- Digital navigation and technical support
- Digital literacy and skills training
- Device distribution
- Computer labs at community centers (such as senior centers, public housing, veteran's halls, etc.)

25. Please share more about your response or suggest other uses that are important for your community.

26. Does your region, consortia, or county have a digital equity plan? *

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

27. If Yes, please insert a link below or send a copy to digitalequity@state.ca.gov.

28. The NTIA requires states to consider the following criteria in evaluating sub-grant proposals:

- Focus on Covered Populations
- Long-lasting and meaningful change
- Measurable Implementation Strategies
- Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

What other criteria should CDT consider?

*

29. California’s \$70.2M capacity grant allocation is equivalent to only \$2 for every member of the state’s Covered Populations. Which of the following represents your organization’s perspective on how CDT should consider allocating its funds? *

- Geography
- Depth of impact towards SDEP measurable objectives
- Covered Populations
- Policy Outcome Area
- All of the above
- I'm not sure. This needs more discussion.

30. Please share more about your response.

31. In considering geographic distribution, which geographic unit would allow for the greatest coordination and impact? *

- Economic Regions (<https://economicdevelopment.business.ca.gov/regional-profiles/>)
- Broadband Consortia Regions (<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/communications-division/documents/casf-adoption-and-access/consortia/main-consortia-page/casf---2023-consortia-map.pdf>)
- Counties
- I'm not sure. This needs more discussion.
- Other

32. What should CDT consider if distributing funds geographically?
(Choose up to 3)

*

- Overall population
- Total members of Covered Populations
- Relative lack of broadband availability and adoption
- Minimum funding distribution for each geographic unit
- At least one subgrant will serve each geographic unit
- I'm not sure. This needs more discussion.
- Other

33. The NTIA included the following Performance and Evaluation Measurements in the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant NOFO:

- Number of Covered Population(s) served;
- Number of people served within each Covered Population;
- Total number of people served;
- Number of programs implemented by type;
- Anecdotal/personal testimony demonstrating the positive impact of the Program;
- Quantifiable evidence of progress toward the measurable objectives identified in the Digital Equity Plan;
- Impact on the State or Territory's goals regarding: Economic and workforce development outcomes, Educational outcomes, Health outcomes, Civic and social engagement, and Delivery of essential services.)

What other Performance and Evaluation Measures would you recommend CDT consider including in the capacity sub-grant program?

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34. What types of technical assistance or support should CDT provide to sub-grant applicants during the application period? (Select all that apply). *

- Webinars
- In-person Workshops
- FAQs
- Office Hours
- Other

35. While complying with federal and state requirements, which of these payment options should CDT consider for efficiency for grantees? (Select one). *

- Reimbursement
- Advance payment
- Fixed amount based on accomplishment of predetermined milestones
- Other

36. What is the preferred invoice submission timeline? (Select one). *

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Bi-annually
- N/A (Fixed amount based on accomplishment of milestones)
- Other

37. Does your organization have the personnel, organizational infrastructure and capacity to manage the award upon receipt? *

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure. We would like more information.

38. Is your organization interested in applying for a Capacity Grant sub-grant from CDT?

*

- We are interested in leading a grant proposal
- We are interested in partnering with others on a grant proposal
- Both of the above
- We are not sure
- We are not planning to apply

39. Is your organization interested in applying for a federal Digital Equity Competitive Grant award from NTIA?

(The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$1.25 billion to NTIA to establish the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program. The program will begin no later than 30 days after NTIA begins awarding State Digital Equity Capacity Grants.) *

- We are interested in leading a grant proposal
- We are interested in partnering with others on a grant proposal
- Both of the above
- We are not sure
- We are not planning to apply

40. Are there any examples of other federally funded grant programs that should serve as models for the capacity sub-grant program? These may be digital equity related or related to other fields such as economic and workforce development, public health, education, etc. Please explain what you liked about each example.

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Ongoing Engagement and Collaboration

CDT intends to reinstate and establish activities to facilitate ongoing alignment, engagement, collaboration, programs design and information sharing. We are seeking your input on the Statewide Digital Equity Implementation Group (SIG), Outcome Area Working Groups (OAWG), and other stakeholder engagement activities.

- 41. Statewide Digital Equity Planning Group - renamed the Statewide Digital Equity Implementation Group (SIG) for this new phase of work – consists of California Broadband Council member entities and statewide entities and will advise CDT on the implementation of the SDEP. All meetings are open to the public, and artifacts and recordings are posted on the Broadband for All portal.

How can CDT make the Statewide Digital Equity Implementation Group (SIG) meetings meetings more inclusive, informative, and engaging? *

- 42. These meetings will be virtual with closed captioning and ASL interpreters. How can we make them more accessible? *

- 43. How frequently should **the Statewide Digital Equity Implementation Group (SIG)** meet? *

Quarterly (4 times a year)

Other

44. The Outcome Area Working Groups (OAWG) are comprised of subject matter experts and organizations that share best practices, advise on centralized services and tools, and empower outcomes in policy areas.

During the planning process, CDT established six working groups by policy priority areas (education, healthcare, digital inclusion, workforce and economic development, essential services, and tribal collaboration). The OAWGs met four times while the SDEP was being developed.

Would you recommend any changes to this configuration?

*

Yes

No

45. If Yes, please expand below.

46. Which outcome area working groups do you feel will be most impactful in informing the SDEP implementation process? (Select all that apply) *

- Education
- Healthcare
- Digital Inclusion
- Workforce and Economic Development
- Essential Services, Accessibility, and Civic Engagement
- Tribal Collaboration
- Broadband Adoption
- Digital Navigation
- Digital Literacy (Skills and Training)
- Devices
- Other

47. How can CDT make the Outcome Area Working Group (OAWG) meetings more inclusive, informative, and engaging? *

48. How frequently should these working groups meet? *

Quarterly (4 times a year)

Other

49. As proposed in the SDEP, CDT is exploring the development of an advisory group of self- identified members of Covered Populations to bring the voices and concerns of residents to CDT and inform on implementation of the SDEP.

What successful models of community advisory groups or committees have you seen? Please provide links or describe the example below.

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50. The Broadband for All portal (broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov) is the central repository of broadband resources and tools, trackers, etc.

How can CDT improve the Broadband for All portal? *

51. What tools and resources could CDT add to support the implementation of SDEP? *

52. Broadband for All Email Update – a monthly update on all Broadband for All programs and digital equity initiatives. Subscribe using this link: <https://broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov/subscribe/>

Do you receive the monthly email update? *

Yes

No

53. How can CDT improve the monthly email updates?

54. What other content would be useful to include?

Thank you for taking this questionnaire!

Broadband for All is California's commitment to closing the digital divide.

If you have any questions, please submit them to digitalequity@state.ca.gov.

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