# Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity

## UTAH BROADBAND CENTER

# Local Digital Access Planning Grant Terms and Conditions

## Program Description

Connecting Utah, an initiative of the Utah Broadband Center, is working toward a digitally connected Utah where all are able to fully participate in modern society through access to high-speed internet, useful devices, and tools to achieve digital independence. The Local Digital Access Planning Grant will accelerate digital connectivity planning at a community level by providing funding and tailored technical assistance to recipients.

Participants in the Local Digital Access Planning Grant will receive funding to support the development of plans that address barriers to connectivity community members face. This planning grant is intended to support organizations such as nonprofits, government departments, or collaborative groups as they work with stakeholders and community partners to identify projects to expand digital connectivity and achieve digital equity in their communities, including digital literacy, digital navigation, digital training, digital education, device availability, affordability programs (or the like) to provide digitally inclusive opportunities. This grant is not meant for broadband infrastructure planning. Applicants interested in broadband infrastructure planning should reference the Local Broadband Planning Grant.

Local digital connectivity plans may include but are not limited to:

- Inventory of current digital connectivity assets
- Needs assessment of broadband deployment, adoption, affordability, and access
- Implementation plans to improve broadband connectivity, device access, digital skill building, online service accessibility, and digital independence
- Identification of potential obstacles or barriers that may affect plan implementation
- Plans to expand workforce development efforts related to digital connectivity
- Stakeholder engagement plan

In addition to funding, recipients will receive the following:

- Digital Connectivity Planning Framework templates

- Outreach toolkit, including surveys, flyers, and event plans

- State's mission and vision for Connecting Utah plans

- Technical assistance from the Utah Broadband Center (grant reporting, etc.)

- One-on-one meetings with UBC to discuss planning process

- Virtual monthly cohort calls for the duration of the grant period

Upon completion of grant-funded activities AND approval of the submitted local digital connectivity plan, recipients will have the option to set up a custom local digital skill-building program at no cost for one year (provided by Northstar). This tool provides self-directed learning, classroom curriculum, and a 1:1 instruction curriculum, all meant to increase digital literacy. The grant recipient may utilize this resource in multiple locations and for multiple programs across the area that the digital connectivity plan covered. The Utah Broadband Center will pay for one year of access and the grant recipient will have no obligation to assume any future or ongoing cost.

## Program Goals

- Accelerate community broadband and digital equity planning at a local and regional scale through tailored assistance;
- Align local and regional needs with the statewide vision for digital connectivity; incorporation of the local plan into the statewide connectivity plan
- Develop financial projections for sustainable network design and "shovel ready" projects as well as partnerships to create an ecosystem of digital connectivity support
- Prepare for impactful use of project implementation funding that may be available through the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity Programs.

## Who is eligible to apply?

The following types of organizations are eligible for this grant program:

- Single municipality (city or county)
- Group of regional municipalities (such as Association of Governments)
- Tribal government
- Educational organizations
- Government agencies directly serving, or overseeing service to, members of specific populations
- Nonprofit organizations (except internet service providers)
- Any collaborative effort of the above

## Criteria & Priorities

Program priorities for the Connecting Utah Local Planning Program include:

- Eligible applicants serving one or more of the eight "covered populations" identified statutorily in the Digital Equity Act:
    - o  1. Individuals who live in households at or under 150% of the federal poverty level;
    - o  2. Aging individuals;
    - o  3. Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility;
    - o  4. Veterans;
    - o  5. Individuals with disabilities;
    - o  6. Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who— a. Are English learners; and b. Have low levels of literacy;
    - o  7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and
    - o  8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.
    - o  9. New Americans
- Eligible applicants that have already begun either community-driven digital connectivity planning; defined connectivity goals;  or engaged and assessed their community to define a distinct ownership and/or partnership model
- Eligible areas embarking on digital connectivity planning through a mandate from their municipality's governing body.
- Eligible applications that represent a collaborative effort between municipal areas

## Funding Available

A total amount of $188,423 is available for Local Digital Access Planning grants. Amounts awarded to recipients will vary, based on the scope of the proposed project. Awarded amounts will not exceed $30,000 per project. There is no matching fund requirement for these awards.

To avoid giving partial awards, the Utah Broadband Center requests that all applicants have a clear and accurate budget that illustrates the cost of the proposed project.

## Eligible Costs

The following activities are eligible costs for this grant funding:

- Consultant costs for planning activity support
    - ○  Recipients may contract with a new or an existing consultant
    - ○  Recipients may also request technical assistance from Utah Broadband Center consultant Horrocks. These services include:
        - ■  Local engagement toolkit
        - ■  Determination of priority project areas
        - ■  Mapping and cost projections for future projects
        - ■  Execution strategy implementation toolkit
        - ■  Resource sustainability planning
        - ■  Alignment of existing and new connectivity plans
        - ■  Asset inventory, including methods for determining broadband availability

- ■ Needs and gaps assessments, including population density map and equity zone mapping
- Research and data collection, including travel costs incurred as part of these efforts
- Outreach and communications related to the development of the digital connectivity plan, including outreach events
- Asset mapping to catalog broadband adoption, affordability, equity, access, and deployment activities
- Mapping efforts to identify unserved and underserved locations
- Conducting surveys of unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities to better understand barriers to adoption
- Indirect/F&A costs (capped at 2.00% of the grant award)

Ineligible costs include:

- Subgrants
- Construction costs, including permitting and supplies
- Equipment costs
- Project implementation costs; these grants can only be used to support planning efforts

## How to Apply

Eligible entities seeking to receive funding should complete the application in Go Utah's application portal. Applications are due by February 2, 2023. The application will not assume communities requesting assistance have completed substantial planning, but will encourage those that have performed prior planning or study work to share information already developed.

Accepted applications will be announced by February 15, 2023.

## Expectations, Reporting, and Compliance

The period of performance for these grants will end on August 1, 2023. A mid-term grant obligation review will take place six weeks after the grant is awarded. Based on the outcome of this review, the amount of grant funds obligated to the recipient may be adjusted.

Recipients will be expected to participate in monthly cohort calls for the duration of the period of performance. 75% of the awarded amount will be disbursed upon receipt of the signed grant contract. The remaining 25% of the award will be disbursed after receiving the initial draft of the local connectivity plan. All expenses must be documented and receipts must be submitted through the grants portal. Recipients will not receive unused funds at the end of the grant period, and any advanced funds which are unused must be returned. If the plan is not completed by the deadline, advanced funds may be reclaimed by the Utah Broadband Center. Initial drafts of the digital connectivity plans, along with a financial report, must be submitted to the Utah Broadband Center by June 1, 2023. A final project impact report and complete financial documentation will be due on September 1, 2023.

Deliverables expected from the recipient include, but are not limited to:

- Submission of a completed five-year digital connectivity plan
- Summary of all local and/or regional community engagement events

- Description of local communication channels focused on digital access
- Identification of a liaison for municipal government engagement
- Involvement in data collection and verification
- Contribution to statewide digital asset inventory
- Ongoing participation in state digital connectivity implementation