



OFFICE OF  
Educational Technology

# Digital Equity Champions for All Learners: Preparing Higher Education Leaders for Upcoming Digital Equity Opportunities

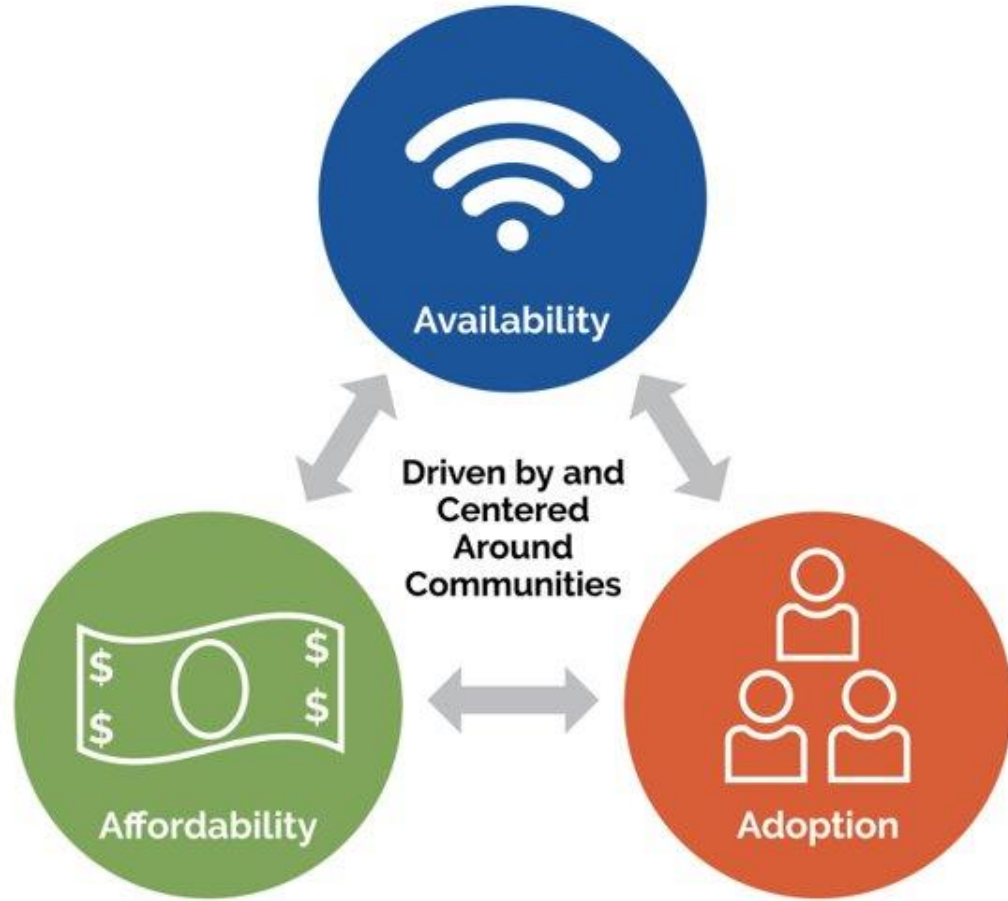
Ji Soo Song, Digital Equity Advisor

Office of Educational Technology • US Department of Education

 @OfficeOfEdTech

# Digital Equity

The condition in which individuals and communities have the information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States.

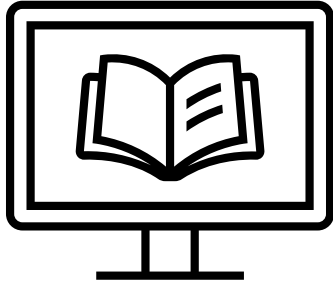


# Digital Inclusion

- **Reliable fixed and wireless broadband** internet service;
- **Internet-enabled devices** that meet the needs of the user; and
- **Applications and online content** designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration; and
- Includes—
  - Obtaining access to **digital literacy** training;
  - The provision of quality **technical support**; and
  - Obtaining basic awareness of measures to ensure **online privacy and cybersecurity**.

# Why Digital Equity?

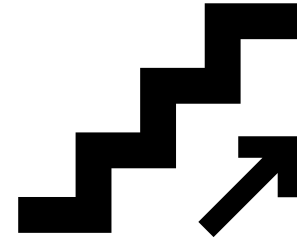
**Educational Equity**



**Community Health**



**Economic Mobility**



# Why Digital Equity?



Efforts to bridge the digital access divide are foundational to the conversation about uses of AI in education.

1. Home internet access
2. Cost
3. Digital literacy

# What Can It Look Like?

## Māpunawai



## Madison College



## Queens Library



*[tech.ed.gov/stories](https://tech.ed.gov/stories)*

# Digital Equity Act

- The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) includes a \$65B broadband package.
- This includes the Digital Equity Act programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA).
- The first part of the Digital Equity Act funds the development of state digital equity plans.
- All states, territories, and the District of Columbia are currently developing their digital equity plans.



# Digital Equity Act

- Individuals who live in covered households (household income < 150% of poverty level)
- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals incarcerated in a Federal facility
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier, e.g., English learners & individuals with low literacy levels
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

# Digital Equity Act



# Digital Equity Act

*Given their experiences navigating the pandemic, identifying barriers and strategies, developing trusted relationships in communities, and building digital skills, education leaders can provide essential perspectives on how to meet the needs of "covered populations" required by the BIL.*

Roberto Rodríguez & Kristina Ishmael, ED

# State Digital Equity Plan: Public Comments



Home

## Public Notice Posting of State and Territory BEAD and Digital Equity Plans/Proposals

Public engagement, stakeholder coordination, and transparency are a central part of working to close the digital divide. Both of NTIA's State-formula grant programs, the [Broadband Equity and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#) and the [State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program](#), have public disclosure and comment requirements to facilitate community engagement and input into each State and Territory's plans and proposals for using grant funds. Below are public comment and disclosure links hosted by States and Territories to facilitate public input into key elements of their Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program plans and proposals and the State Digital Equity Plans. For more information on the programs and State and Territory submission requirements, including BEAD Five Year Action Plans and Initial Proposal and Digital Equity (DE) Plans, please see each program's Notices of Funding Opportunity.

*[bit.ly/DraftDEplans](https://bit.ly/DraftDEplans)*

# Digital Equity Act: Looking Forward

## State Digital Equity Planning Grant

A \$60M formula grant program for states, territories and tribal governments to develop digital equity plans.

[Learn more about this program](#)

## Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program

A \$1.44 billion formula grant program for states, territories, and tribal governments

Coming Soon

## Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program

A \$1.25 billion grant program. It will fund annual grant programs for five years to implement digital equity projects

Coming Soon

*[internetforall.gov/funding-recipients](https://internetforall.gov/funding-recipients)*

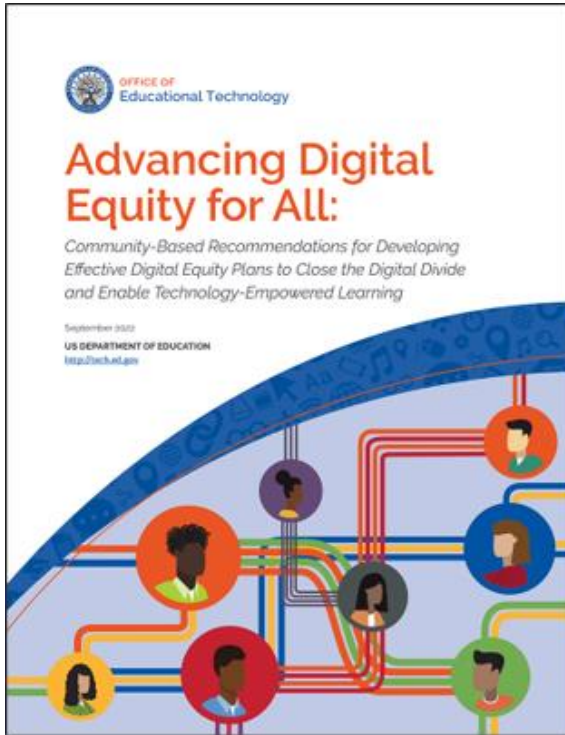
# Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program

- **A political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of a state**
- An Indian Tribe, an Alaska Native entity, or a Native Hawaiian organization
- A foundation, corporation, institution, or association that is a **non-for-profit entity** and not a school
- **A community anchor institution (e.g., library, IHE)**
- A local educational agency
- An entity that carries out a **workforce development program**
- A **partnership** between any of the entities

# Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program

- Develop and implement **digital inclusion activities** that benefit covered populations
- Facilitate the **adoption of broadband** by covered populations in order to provide educational and employment opportunities
- Implement **training programs** for covered populations or other **workforce development programs**
- **Make available equipment, instrumentation, networking capability, hardware and software, or digital network technology** for broadband services to covered populations at low or no cost
- Construct, upgrade, expend, or operate new or **existing public access computing centers** for covered populations through community anchor institutions

# Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program



*tech.ed.gov/DEER*





# Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program

- What ideas are you thinking about exploring?
- How can you build on already ongoing work?
- Which resources can you consult to refine ideas?
- What relationships might also help in refining ideas?
- How can you keep up to speed on upcoming announcements?
- How can the Office of EdTech support you?