
BEAD

Program Procedures: Digital Navigator & Digital Literacy

DRAFT – November 2023

State of West Virginia

West Virginia Department of Economic Development



INTERNET FOR ALL **West Virginia**

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2. Introduction

Digital Literacy & Digital Navigator Program

The West Virginia Department of Economic Development (WVDED), in coordination with the West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council and the State Broadband Office, intends to award at least \$40 million in grant funds — contingent on the availability of Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funds for non-deployment activities — to expand digital literacy and digital navigator activities across West Virginia.¹

WVDED is seeking applicants in two categories:

- a) Regional organizations: Entities that will provide face-to-face digital literacy or digital navigator services across a region; and
- b) Local organizations: West Virginian nonprofit organizations that engage in providing face-to-face digital literacy or digital navigator services in a specific local community or one or more “covered populations.”

Digital navigator activities eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, digital literacy activities that will maximize active community participation and high-quality, face-to-face interactions. Digital literacy activities eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, educational activities to supplement or expand an organization’s digital literacy, privacy, and cybersecurity education offerings.

In line with NTIA requirements, Digital Literacy and Digital Navigator Program grant applications are expected to open in the spring of 2024. Awardees will be selected and notified at the end of 2024, following the approval of West Virginia’s BEAD Final Proposal. Grant agreements are expected to be signed in early to mid-2025.

WVDED recognizes the importance of digital literacy and digital navigator activities in advancing digital equity and ultimately ensuring all West Virginians have opportunities to access the benefits of statewide broadband expansion.

¹ As defined by National Digital Inclusion Alliance, digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills. Digital navigators are individuals who address the whole digital inclusion process — home connectivity, devices, and digital skills — with community members through repeated interactions.

1. Program Overview

The West Virginia Department of Economic and Community Development (WVDED) is committed to advancing digital equity and ensuring that digital literacy training in cybersecurity, privacy, and telehealth is available to all West Virginians. West Virginia's [Digital Equity](#), BEAD [5-Year Action Plan](#), and [Initial Proposal Volume II](#) provide further information about WVDED's nondeployment needs, goals, and priorities.

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2. WVDED intends to extend and enhance existing state networks of digital literacy and digital navigator support activities. WVDED's Digital Literacy and Navigator Program leverages the ongoing trust and relationships with partners and community anchor institutions, including regional organizations, schools, libraries, and senior centers. **Eligible Subrecipients/Grantees**

Entities eligible to apply for subgrants include but are not limited to:

- a) Regional Planning and Development Councils;
- b) WVU Cooperative Extension;
- c) Higher education institutions;
- d) K-12 schools and school districts;
- e) libraries and library associations, or other large organizations that support and oversee digital navigation services in a wide area; or
- f) Local entities that offer digital literacy or navigator services within smaller geographic coverage area.

Applicants must have a current [Certificate of Existence](#) from the West Virginia Secretary of State if required under West Virginia law or be an accredited academic institution. Applicants must have no prior default or significant violations under any Federal, state, or local broadband funding program, must be able to provide certifications required under the BEAD program regarding debarment, suspension, and other responsibility matters, and must meet all other applicable federal requirements for a BEAD subrecipient. Proposals by applicants are subject to review and possible approval, denial, or modification under the Review Guidelines.

2.1 Coordination of Efforts and Best Practices

WVDED will contract with an entity to manage align processes across subgrantees, compile and distribute best-practices and training materials where applicable and facilitate semi-annual convenings of digital navigators. All subgrantees will have access to these resources and must participate in these coordination efforts.

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3. Application Deadline

The application deadline is: **TBD**. Applicants may submit applications through the West Virginia Department of Economic Development website. Further details will be provided closer to the application deadline.

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4. Funding Schedule and Amounts

WVDED is targeting at least \$40 million in BEAD funds for this Digital Literacy and Digital Navigator program. The BEAD program allocates funding to West Virginia through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). West Virginia must use BEAD funding first for “deployment activities” that will deliver broadband service to unserved and underserved locations but may also use some BEAD funding for “non-deployment” activities once unserved and underserved locations are fully addressed. WVDED does not guarantee any specific funding level for this program, and any or all applications received may be declined for lack of funds.

WVDED will determine BEAD funding levels remaining for this program and other non-deployment activities after selecting deployment projects through a deployment grant program and considering applications received for other non-deployment grant programs to advance the broadband industry workforce and expand access to digital devices. Project selection for all non-deployment programs will run concurrently. For additional details on West Virginia’s proposed allocation of BEAD funds among programs and for details on the BEAD apportionment formula please see West Virginia’s [BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II](#).

Actual funds awarded will depend on the volume of applications received, the grant support needed for proposed projects, and the requirements of the NTIA. WVDED reserves the right to reevaluate program outcomes and reallocate funds to other announced grant programs or create new programs. WVDED reserves the right to reject any or all applications made to the Program.

4.1 Maximum Funding Amounts

No individual organization may receive more than 75% of all available funding for the Literacy and Navigator Program.

4.2 Eligible & Ineligible Expenses

This is a reimbursement program and projects receiving funding may be reimbursed for eligible expenses up to the maximum grant amount, as identified in the award. WVDED shall, at the request of the awardee, optionally allow cash advances of up to 30 calendar days for anticipated cash needs, with true-up required by the awardee at the end of each 30-day period.

Eligible Expenses

Grant funding must be used only for expenditures associated with developing and running Applicant’s Digital Navigator or Digital Literacy Grant Program. Organizations conducting digital navigator programs are encouraged to apply with activities that will maximize active community participation and high-quality, face-to-face interactions. Entities engaged in digital literacy education activities are encouraged to apply with activities that supplement or expand their digital literacy, privacy, and cybersecurity education offerings.

Eligible grant activities and costs include:

- a) Equipment rental or acquisition costs to be solely used for the successful implementation of the digital literacy and/or digital navigator program;
- b) Facility rental or acquisition costs, including long-term facility leases, to be solely used for the successful implementation of the digital literacy and/or digital navigator program;
- c) Professional services, including but not limited to project management, marketing, and/or communications costs;
- d) Digital navigator training, testing, and certification costs;
- e) Program outreach, communications, and marketing costs;
- f) Other upfront costs not already covered in other categories; and
- g) Internal labor costs incurred as part of eligible grant activities up to the proportion of employees' time spent exclusively on grant activities during the period for which reimbursement is sought. When seeking reimbursement, applicants must submit such costs as line-items and provide supporting documentation for the expense. Supporting documentation shall include time spent by each employee on project activities, total time spent by each employee during the period for which reimbursement is sought, and an hourly cost that may include employee salary, itemized payroll taxes and benefits.

Ineligible Expenses

Costs that appear excessive and/or without justification and costs not considered eligible will not be reimbursed. Ineligible costs may not be paid for with grant funds.

Ineligible costs include:

- a) Indirect costs;
- b) Internal administrative activities, other than those required for administration of grant funds received under this program;
- c) Fundraising activities;
- d) Computers or office equipment not used solely for the implementation of the program;
- e) Equipment owned or leased by entities other than the grantee or subgrantees;
- f) Expenses incurred prior to the date of the grant award announcement;
- g) Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments, or other debt service costs;
- h) Fees or issuance costs associated with the issuance of new debt;
- i) Satisfaction of any obligation arising under or pursuant to a settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, or judicially confirmed debt restructuring plan in a judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceeding; or
- j) To support or oppose collective bargaining, whether directly or indirectly;
- k) To purchase or support any covered communications equipment or service (as defined in Section 9 of the Secure and Trusted Communications Network Act of 2019)²;
- l) To supplant amounts of existing funding WVDED would otherwise make available for the same purposes as these funds; and
- m) Profits, fees, or other incremental charges above actual cost incurred by the Applicant.

² See 47 U.S.C. § 1608 and FCC Covered List at <https://www.fcc.gov/supplychain/coveredlist>.

Programs funded by digital literacy or digital navigator grants must primarily serve the population(s) or area(s) described in the grant application. Program costs that incidentally serve population(s) or area(s) not described in the grant application are reimbursable, but costs that solely serve population(s) or area(s) not described in the grant application are not reimbursable.

4.3 Conducting Joint Activities

Entities may apply for grants that include both digital literacy and digital navigator activities but will be evaluated on both their previous experience in digital literacy and their experience with digital navigator programs.

4.4 Timeline

Applicants offering Digital Literacy or Digital Navigator services must begin providing funded services to their population and/or area of interest not later than one year after the date that the Applicant receives an award from WVDED. Awards to selected applicants shall be made following certification that all unserved and underserved areas are covered under BEAD deployment programs (expected early 2025).

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5. Program Requirements

5.1 Minimum Digital Navigator Standards

To guarantee a minimum level of digital navigator quality across West Virginia, digital navigators whose salaries and benefits are paid for in part or whole by grant funds must hold or obtain a transferrable Digital Navigator certification from a list of WVDED-approved certifiers within 90 days of beginning digital navigator work funded by this program.

Training and certification activities for digital navigators are considered allowable expenditures under this program. WVDED shall publish a list of approved certifiers within 90 days of awarding digital navigator grants. The certification process is expected to involve an online proctored test.

At its sole discretion, WVDED may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis for a fixed period or in perpetuity.

5.2 Coordination and Outreach

Applicants proposing digital navigator services must demonstrate a plan to conduct coordination and outreach activities to meaningfully engage each of the following categories of entities within their proposed geographic service area:

- a) Local governments;
- b) Local K-12 schools or districts;
- c) Local post-secondary institutions, including community colleges or professional schools;
- d) Relevant Community Anchor Institutions within proposed service area (if applicable);³ and
- e) Organizations within 15 miles of proposed geographic service area that have received Digital Equity Act funds (once funds are released).

³ A final list of Community Anchor Institutions will be published by WVDED in 2024.

6. General Qualifications

Prior to entering into a grant agreement with the Applicant, WDVED must ensure that Applicants will meet three general qualifications under the Program. Applicants must be capable of carrying out activities funded by the subgrant in a competent manner in compliance with all applicable laws; they must have the financial and managerial capacity to meet the Applicants' commitments under the subgrant; and they must have the technical and operational capability to provide the services promised in the subgrant in the manner contemplated by the subgrant award.

6.1 Financial and Managerial Capacity and Sustainability

Applicants must demonstrate the level of financial capacity that they have to support potentially awarded projects in West Virginia and must demonstrate that projects that they may be awarded will be financially sustainable for the lifetime of the grant.

6.2 Certification of Compliance with Relevant Laws

If awarded projects, subgrantees must comply with a range of laws and regulations relevant to this federally funded program. Applicants must therefore certify that they will comply with all applicable Federal, state, and local laws relevant to carrying out their grant agreement. These requirements, including procurement, labor, and environmental protection standards, will be outlined in compliance guidance that will be communicated through the WDVED website and grant agreement materials.

6.3 Technical and Operational Capacity

Applicants must demonstrate that they are technically and managerially qualified to complete and operate any potential project and that they will use an appropriately skilled workforce.

7. Application Requirements

Entities applying for subgrants through WVDED's Digital Literacy and Navigator Grant Program should use the list below as a structural guide for their application. For assistance with the application process, WVDED encourages applicants to leverage the resources available to them through the West Virginia Grant Resource Centers.

7.1 Entity and Contact Information

Applicants must provide a complete set of relevant company/entity information and any accompanying materials and information to demonstrate the accuracy of that information. This includes, at a minimum:

- a) Legal entity name and any relevant doing business as (DBA) names;
- b) Address of entity headquarters and other key locations;
- c) Type of Entity (i.e. non-profit, partnership, LLC);
- d) Entity history and brief overview;
- e) Contact information of authorized individual submitting application on behalf of the applicant (name, title, phone number, email; and
- f) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

NOTE: Each Applicant must obtain a UEI and provide it to the WVDED, but Applicants are not required to complete the full SAM.gov registration to obtain a UEI.⁴

7.2 Executive Summary

This section should not exceed two pages in length, and should include a project title, name, geographic service area, type(s) of non-deployment grants sought (e.g., digital literacy and/or digital navigators). Applicants should provide:

1. Project Purpose: Summarize the purpose of proposed project in a single sentence.
2. Non-BEAD Funding Sources: Provide amounts of all non-BEAD funding below.
3. Project Description: 1-2 Paragraphs describing major activities to be conducted. The description should address who, what, where, when and how for each major activity.
4. Strategic Rationale: 1 paragraph max. Identify the problems and/or opportunities the project will address.
5. Collaborative Partnerships: 1 paragraph max. Identify local, regional and/or state partnerships that will support the project, if applicable. You may attach letters of engagement or similar documentation that verify partnerships as appendices to your application package.
6. Project Sustainability and Capacity: 1 paragraph max. Describe capacity to undertake the proposed activity by describing previous experience with similar activities.
7. Performance Measures: Identify quantifiable output and outcome measures.

⁴ For more information on the establishment of a UEI, please visit <http://www.sam.gov>.

7.3 Project Narrative

This section should not exceed eight pages in length.

7.3.1 Needs Statement

8. List the primary need(s) that the project will address, citing the State Digital Equity Plan, Five Year Plan, and/or Initial Proposal Volume I/II as evidence of this need in the geographic service area where applicable.

7.3.2 Project Description

9. Describe the project's primary purpose, main activities, and expected outcomes.
10. Identify the geographic service area where the proposed project will be based and counties in the project's entire service area. If the project is not county-wide, identify the cities and towns of the project's entire service area.
11. Provide a detailed work plan that includes a description of all major project activities (what will be done and by whom) and timelines for each activity during the course of the project. Include as many details as possible.

7.3.3 Strategic Rationale

12. Describe any problems, opportunities, or local/regional demand that the project will address beyond what is identified in the State Digital Equity Plan, Five-Year Action Plan, and/or Initial Proposal Volume I/II, and how these issues impact the community.
13. Explain why the proposed project is the most practical, cost-effective, and beneficial way to achieve the desired results when compared to alternative approaches.
14. Describe other project benefits likely to result from the project (e.g., positive impact on future economic development activity in the area).
15. If the proposed project is a continuation or expansion of an ongoing program (whether or not the program received federal funding), describe the program's outputs and outcomes to date, as well as other project milestones reached.
16. If the proposed project is new, include evidence from peer-reviewed sources or studies demonstrating that this approach has been successful in the past.

7.3.4 Performance Measures

17. List expected outputs and outcomes of the project.
18. Provide a credible and established methodology for estimating each performance measure (i.e., expected outputs and outcome) that results from the project.

7.3.5 Collaborative Partnerships

19. Describe any partnerships or collaborations with other local community, state, regional, and federal partners in the development of the proposal.

20. Describe surrounding past community engagement conducted and a detailed community engagement and outreach plan involving commitments from community stakeholders.
21. Describe existing or planned coordination with social service providers, including which social service providers, a summary of activities, and outcomes if applicable.
22. Provide letters of engagement from partner organizations that commit to undertake specific activities in support of the project.

7.3.6 Project Sustainability and Capacity

23. Briefly describe capacity to undertake the proposed project by describing previous demonstrated cost-effective success(es) with similar activities.
24. Briefly detail demonstrated ability to serve covered populations without sufficient, existing, and/or nearby digital navigation or digital literacy assets.
25. Describe experience in managing grants and federal awards.
26. Briefly detail existing demonstrated capacity or an ability to scale to meet capacity requirements for planned activities.
27. Describe the qualifications of key individuals who will manage and operate the project. Attach position descriptions or brief resumes of these individuals (1 page max).
28. Describe the desired qualifications of all consultants and subcontractors, if any, and describe the competitive procedures that will be used to select them.
29. Explain how the project will achieve long-term sustainability once BEAD non-deployment support is no longer available. Include a plan and timeline of efforts to secure other sources of support for future operations.

7.4 Budget Information and Supporting Materials

7.4.1 Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative

30. Provide a detailed budget that lists the sources and uses of BEAD non-deployment funds and any other additional non-BEAD funds, if available.
31. Provide a budget narrative that includes a detailed explanation of expenditures by line item. Include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists and describe expenses in the 'other' line item, if applicable.
32. If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses (cash or in-kind resources), estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate (or portion of FTE and salary) for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. (After grant is awarded, all time should be tracked by actual hours worked for each individual.)

7.4.2 Non-BEAD Funding Sources

33. If applicable, identify each non-BEAD funding source as Federal, state, local, or private. Include a letter of commitment from each funding source that specifies the amount of funds committed and the kind of funds committed (grant, loan, cash, in-kind, etc.).
34. Provide descriptions of in-kind resources, including the methods used to determine their value.

7.4.3 Additional Documentation

35. Enclose pertinent supporting materials that will lead to a better understanding of the proposed project.
36. Do not include form letters.

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8. Application Review

Below are the criteria which will be used to score applications during the competitive review process. Applicants should adhere to these requirements to ensure their application has the best chance of being selected.

8.1 Digital Navigator & Digital Literacy Scoring Criteria

Prior Digital Navigator Program Experience	Max points: 50
To receive 50 points: Application must detail the applicant's existing, cost-effective digital navigator, digital literacy, or other digital education programs that have a track record of demonstrated success.	
Planned Staffing Capacity	Max points: 20
To receive 20 points: Application must detail the applicant's demonstrated capacity or ability to scale to meet capacity requirements for digital literacy or navigation services in planned service area.	
Populations Covered	Max points: 20
To receive 20 points: Application must detail the applicant's demonstrated ability to serve covered populations without sufficient, existing, and/or nearby digital navigation or digital literacy assets, as defined by the Digital Equity Act.	
Community Coordination	Max points: 10
To receive 5 points: Application must include details surrounding past community engagement conducted by the applicant and a detailed community engagement and outreach plan involving commitments from community stakeholders.	
To receive 5 additional points:	

Application must include details pertaining to coordination with social service providers, including which social service providers, a summary of activities, and outcomes if applicable.

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9. Grant Recipient Obligations and Post Award Monitoring

Awardees of grant funds must comply with post-award monitoring and reporting requirements to maintain continued eligibility for disbursement of grant funds. Awardees are responsible for active technical, financial, and project management of awarded projects through their own staff and or by hiring and managing well-qualified contractors. Awardees should also expect to cooperate with technical and financial monitoring and review provided by WVDED contractors and staff.

9.1 Certification of Compliance with BEAD Requirements

WVDED will ensure subgrantee compliance with BEAD program requirements as part of post-award subgrantee monitoring, including:

- a) Budget Amendments
- b) Invoice Submittals
- c) Grant Disbursement Requests
- d) Compliance Reporting
- e) Clawback/Recoupment of Funds
- f) Audits/Monitoring
- g) Civil Rights Compliance
- h) Cybersecurity and Supply Chain Risk Management

These requirements will be outlined in compliance guidance that will be communicated through the WVDED website and grant agreement materials.

9.2 Compliance with Federal Funds Obligations

In general, recipients and subrecipients of federal funds must comply with IJJA/BEAD funding recipient obligations, in addition to reporting obligations. Awardees should expect to comply with requirements of other applicable federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders applicable to recipients of federal funds. Awardee obligations are more fully described in the WVDED's *Guide to Reporting and Compliance Obligations for West Virginia BEAD Broadband Investment Plan Subrecipients*.⁵ Applicants should review this *Guide* as well as the applicable guidance provided and requirements as identified by the NTIA and the Department of Commerce.

⁵ This document will be made available at <https://broadband.wv.gov>.