

Digital Skills, Education and Workforce Grant Application Guide



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DIGITAL SKILLS, EDUCATION, AND WORKFORCE

01 | Program Description

1.1. Overview of the Grant Program

The Digital Skills, Education, and Workforce Development (DSEW) grants program, funded by the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), will distribute \$17 million across digital skills, education, and workforce development, including broadband infrastructure workforce development and higher education/adult educational entities.

The digital skills and education program will invest in evidence-based initiatives that focus on improving introductory-level and advanced digital skills. The goal of this program is to support skilling programs and access to advanced digital tools so that individuals can develop the technical proficiency required to navigate complex digital environments, participate in the digital economy, and drive innovation.

The workforce development program will also invest in evidence-based initiatives that train broadband infrastructure professionals or digitally enabled professionals. The goal of the broadband infrastructures professionals is to develop a well-trained and diverse telecommunications workforce needed to deploy, manage, and maintain broadband infrastructure. The goal of the digitally-enabled professionals is to support digital upskilling across a wide variety of industries, including—but not limited to—technology, music and entertainment, finance, real estate, health care, education, and hospitality.

1.2. Federal Award Information

1.2.1. Funding Availability

TNECD will make up to \$17 million available for federal assistance under the DSEW Grant Program.

1.2.2. Award Amount

The maximum allowable grant is \$1 million. At least \$5 million of the \$17 million

available funding will be allocated to adult educational entities or higher education institutions. This process will be competitive.

The grant will cover up to 90% of eligible project expenses, with a required 10% hard match (cash) by the grantee. In-kind contributions (e.g., services provided by partnering community anchor institutions, donated office or meeting space) will not be considered.

1.2.3. Application Limits

There is no limit to the number of submissions per applicant; however, no more than two grants will be awarded per applicant. Each application can reflect only 1 program.

1.2.4. Period of Performance

All contracts with grantees must be in effect by June 30, 2024, and funds must be expended by December 31, 2026.

02 | Eligibility Requirements

2.1. Eligible vs. Ineligible Grant Applicants

2.1.1. Eligible Grant Applicants

- A local educational agency (e.g., community college, such as a vocational school)
- A community-based or faith-based organization
- A volunteer literacy organization
- An institution of higher education
- A public or private nonprofit agency
- A library
- A public housing authority
- A nonprofit institution (that does not fit the above)
- A small business (1-10 employees)
- A consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or entity described above
- A partnership between an employer and an entity above

2.1.2. Ineligible Grant Applicants

- Internet service providers
- Government entities (e.g., local government, corrections departments, commissions)
- “Pass-through” entities, or entities seeking to receive TNECD grant funding to distribute to other organizations through their own grant programs

2.2. Eligible Communities

An eligible community is the general community that the project is allowed to serve.

Automatically Eligible Communities: Per SLFRF guidelines, eligible communities are counties with a Median Family Income at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a default household size of 3 (\$65,880).

Note: Counties with AMIs above \$65,880 are still eligible to apply if they show that they are serving a target population (defined in the next section).

A list of counties considered “automatically eligible communities” and counties that will be required to additionally state and verify the target populations they are serving will be posted on TNECD’s website.

2.3. Eligible Target Populations

Per ARPA SLFRF specifications, the population(s) served directly by the grantee **in a county with an AMI above \$65,880** must fall into **one** of the following 4 categories:

- Households at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a default household size of 3 (\$65,880)
- Households that experienced unemployment or increased food or housing insecurity
- Households that qualify for the Children’s Health Insurance Program, Childcare Subsidies through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Program, or Medicaid
- Qualified Census Tracts: Census Tracts, blocks, or zip codes that meet the designation of “impacted”/“disproportionately impacted” designation or are considered Qualified Census Tracts

If these categories do not apply to the project, the applicant will be responsible for verifying that the individual end users of the proposed project satisfy the state and federal guidance through eligibility verification.

For more information, please reference the [ARPA SLFRF Final Rule](#) (pages 12, 17 to 20) and the [2023 Interim Final Rule](#) (pages 42 to 43).

Priority Populations: Additionally, applicants must address if their proposed project directly serves any of the following priority populations. Please note that this will not yield a higher score.

- Individuals who live in covered households (household income of most recent year is not more than 150% of poverty level)
- Aging individuals (60 and above)
- Incarcerated individuals (excluding individuals who are incarcerated in a federal correctional facility)
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities

- Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners and have low levels of literacy
- Immigrants and/or refugees
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

2.4. Eligible Program Activities and Services

TNECD will examine the educational design of the program activities and services proposed to determine whether participants can exit the programs with the market-relevant skills, experience, abilities, and qualifications necessary to further their personal and professional goals in digital environments. For workforce development purposes, an effective educational design would promote learning within the context of the work and the community, provide professional development of the individual with top-down support, and nurture each learner’s agency.

Please note that **proposed workforce development programs must offer job placements or other services that prevent the underemployment of program participants.**

2.4.1. Eligible Educational Activities

- Adult education
- Intermediate and/or specialized digital skills training in K-12 schools
- Workplace education, which refers to adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider; collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location is required.
- Micro-learning
- Apprenticeship program
- Industry-relevant credentialing programs
- Digital navigators
- Other educational activities
- Providing training to trainers/educators on eligible activities

2.4.2. Ineligible Programs

- Conducting of training and apprenticeship programs by internet service providers (ISPs)
- Conducting adoption promotion activities (e.g., adoption campaign, low-cost plans, digital inclusion initiatives)

- Programs that conduct awareness and outreach campaigns and activities of digital inclusion programming and resources, such as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), but do not provide accompanying skilling services (e.g., marketing and awareness campaigns where skilling services are not provided)
- Digital opportunity coalitions/taskforces
- K-12 school system one-to-one computer programs
- Direct technical troubleshooting or repair services for broken devices

2.5. List of Eligible Digital Skills and Broadband Occupations

This section provides examples of the eligible digital skills or broadband infrastructure roles that can be awarded funding under the DSEW program.

2.5.1. Basic/Introductory Digital Skills

- Basic professional/educational skills: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Communication technologies (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, email), data entry
- Navigation of the internet for well-being purposes: accessing government services (e.g., social services website), telehealth literacy (e.g., searching for doctors, scheduling appointments)
- Foundational knowledge about the internet and related technologies (e.g., internet, wi-fi, router)
- Distance/remote education
- Telework
- Social media
- Internet safety (e.g., foundational cybersecurity, personal information protection, parent/child protection, network safety and privacy, protection and awareness (e.g., phishing), online scam/fraud prevention, virtual private network (VPN), virtual desktop)
- Any other training that is designed to eliminate barriers to foundational adoption of digital skills

2.5.2. Advanced/Specialized Digital Skills

- Coding courses
- Programming, website, and application development
- Software development and implementation
- Information technology skills
- Marketing and content creation

- Data science
- Data management (e.g., Excel data tracking)
- Data visualization
- User experience design
- Digital business analysis
- Computer programming
- Digital business management
- Use of precision technology
- Application development
- Digital media and marketing
- Generative AI
- Cybersecurity
- Digital entertainment-related skills (e.g., music, design, social media, digital marketing, product distribution, search engine optimization, data analytics, facility management, sales management systems)
- Financial literacy and knowledge about “financial freedom” (e.g., online investment courses, how to use credit cards, retirement planning)
- Advanced manufacturing skills (e.g., robotics)
- Health data analytics
- Real estate (e.g., rental and lease, property ownership and management, taxes)
- Management (e.g., human resources management systems)
- Industrial sector (e.g., robotics, augmented reality, hand-held devices supporting applications)
- Any other training that is identified to meet digitally focused workforce development needs

2.5.3. Broadband Infrastructure Occupations

- Construction laborers
- Fiber splicing
- Electrical power-line installers and repairers
- Electrical, electronic, and electromechanical assemblers
- Electricians first-line supervisors of construction
- Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators
- Network planner
- Network designer
- Project manager

- Estimator
- Land surveyor
- Pole surveyor
- OSP engineer
- Permitting officer
- Procurement lead
- Laborer
- Pole/anchor foreman
- Tower/antenna foreman
- Safety lead
- Locator
- Quality inspector
- Field engineer
- Tower technician
- Wireless technician
- Tower climbers
- Fiber optic technician
- Splicer technician
- Fiber lineman
- Fiber technician
- Antennae installers
- Electrician
- Premise installation technician

2.6. Match Requirements

The grant will cover up to 90% of eligible project expenses, with a required 10% hard match (cash) by the Grantee. Please note that in-kind contributions (e.g., services provided by partnering community anchor institutions, donated office or meeting space) will not be considered.

If a recipient has an additional match, they will receive a lower percentage of reimbursement per invoice. Because the additional match increases the total funding of the project, the percentage of reimbursement per invoice will be lower. The 90% match will be applied to the original project funding amount only.

Please note that providing an additional match will not result in a higher score.

2.7. Financial Capability

Applicants must provide proof of the project's financing documentation, including their ability to fund the match as well as the grant funds (prior to reimbursement). Two of the following documents must be provided and show that the project can cover the match requirement and any additional funding needed for expenses prior to reimbursement:

- Audited financials
- Bank statement
- Letter of credit
- Proof of funds

2.8. Job Placement Program

If the applicant submits a workforce development program, they must include a job placement program in their proposed project or other services to prevent the underemployment of program participants. The purpose of this requirement is to provide an employment pipeline for program participants. Applicants will be required to explain their organization's relationship with the partner employer(s), the number of positions available to be filled specifically by program participants, the type of employment (e.g., contractor, permanent, etc.), estimated duration of offered positions, the starting wage, opportunities for advancement within the organization (if applicable), benefits, and other relevant information.

2.9. Use of Project Funds: Allowable vs. Unallowable Costs

All applications for DSEW must have a detailed budget narrative explaining and justifying the expenditures by budget category.

For each cost listed below, the applicant must provide the breakdown of each cost. Additionally, applicants must provide a description of each charge to include what it is, who will be doing it (if applicable and if known), and how it relates to the project objectives. If the applicant will be using a match within a cost category, this must be noted and explained in the justification to include a breakdown of the federal and non-federal share of each proposed cost.

The following categories are the most common for grantees and are allowable costs

to the grant. Applicants are invited to suggest additional costs relevant to each of these categories with a justification. However, TNECD reserves the right to reject proposed costs that are not applicable to the grant.

2.9.1. Allowable Costs

- Salaries and Wages
- Employee Benefits and Payroll Taxes
- Professional Fees related to providing services
- Supplies related to training
- Capital purchases related to training equipment
- Specific assistance to individuals
- Other non-personnel expenses (e.g., inspection fee, insurance, benefits, taxes)
- Administrative expenses pertaining to the oversight of the grant (indirect expenses; limited to 6% or indirect cost rate if negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is in place)

2.9.2. Unallowable Costs

- Travel costs (associated with program-related functions)
 - Flights/airfare
 - Hotels/lodging
 - Meals
 - Transportation (vehicle rentals, etc.)
 - Related insurance
- Discounted internet service
- Incentives for incorporation of broadband across different sectors
 - Subsidies
 - Tax benefits
- Promotional items and memorabilia
 - Models
 - Gifts
 - Souvenirs
 - Other costs designed solely to promote the grant-holding agency
- Entertainment
 - Food
 - Amusement
 - Diversion

- Social activities
- Other associated costs
- Grants and awards
 - Scholarships or vouchers to fund industry-relevant credentialing
- Capital purchases
 - Vehicle
 - Land acquisition
- Costs that are not reasonable, necessary, or allocable to the grant

2.10. Compliance

2.10.1. Fair Labor Practices

Applicants must provide record of and plans to be in compliance with federal labor and employment laws. The following is a general summary of laws that applicants must comply with, this summary is not exhaustive.

1. Davis-Bacon Act (Subchapter IV of Chap. 31 of Title 40, United States Code):
 - a. Applicants must provide certification that all laborers employed to be working on the project are paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing.
 - b. If certification is not provided, then the applicant must provide a project employment and local impact report that includes the following:
 - i. The number of contractors and sub-contractors working on the project
 - ii. The number of employees on the project hired directly and hired through a third party
 - iii. The wages and benefits of workers on the project by classification; and
 - iv. Whether those wages are at rates less than those prevailing.
2. National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 158(f)):
 - a. Recipients are to provide certification that the project includes a project labor agreement, a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement that is in accordance with the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 158(f)) section 8(f).
3. Applicants must provide information on whether the project prioritizes local hires.
4. Applicants must provide information on whether the project has a Community Benefit Agreement with a description of such agreement.

2.10.2. Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination Law

Recipients of the Connected Communities Facilities Program are required to be in

compliance with all civil rights and nondiscrimination federal laws related to the use of federal funds. Recipients shall not discriminate or deny benefits or services, on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or handicap. Recipients are required to agree to, by a form of binding commitment, abide by all civil rights and non-discrimination requirements set forth. The following is a general description of requirements; for an exhaustive list with exact requirements, reference <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Compliance-and-Reporting-Guidance.pdf>.

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d-1 et seq.) and the Treasury's implementing regulations, 31 CFR Part 22, which states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, denied benefits or services of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C § 1681 et seq.) and the Treasury's implementing regulations, 31 CFR Part 28, states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, denied benefits or services of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
3. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C § 12101 et seq.) states that discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications is strictly prohibited.
4. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794) prohibits the discrimination of a qualified individual with a disability under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.
5. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. § 6101 et seq.), and the Treasury's implementing regulations, 31 CFR 23, prohibits discrimination based on age for any programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.
6. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq., states that it is an unlawful employment practice for an employer to discriminate against an individual with respect to employment on the basis of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

2.10.3. Domestic Preference

Under Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.322), grantees must provide a preference for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the

United States. This includes items and construction materials composed of metals, plastics, aggregate (such as optical fiber), and lumber. All items made in whole or in part of these covered materials apply. Grantees should make all efforts to document this preference and ensure subcontractor compliance, including listing the referenced clause in all subcontracts.

03 | Application Information

3.1. Pre-Application Steps

3.1.1. System Award Management (SAM) Registration

Applicants must obtain a SAM Unique Entity ID from SAM.gov in order to be eligible to receive funding from the Connected Communities Facilities grant program. As a sub awardee of a federal award, applicants are only required to obtain a Unique Entity ID and do not have to complete a full SAM registration. Once on SAM.gov entities should choose the “Get a Unique Entity ID Only (No Entity Registration Required)” option. In order to receive a Unique Entity ID, the entity must input their legal business name and physical address along with any other required information.

3.2. Key Dates

TNECD Broadband anticipates opening the DSEW grant application on Monday, October 16, 2023 and closing on Wednesday, December 6, 2023.

3.3. Content and Form of Applications

Applications will be submitted via the grant management software SmartSimple. Grantees will need to register with SmartSimple [here](#) to access the grant application.

3.3.1. General Information

The applicant should be prepared to provide identifying information including the legal entity name, Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), SAM ID, mailing address, and primary contact information. The project name will be auto-populated.

3.3.2. Project Information

The applicant will need to provide information including project descriptions, information about the service area, facility information, project implementation information, and information on the project timeline.

3.3.3. Budget Information

The applicant should click on the “Grant Budget Details” open button to access the

budget worksheet. Then, the applicant should enter line items and descriptions into the appropriate sections and provide the following details for each of those line items:

- Unit cost
- Number of units
- Total unit cost
- Grant funds requested
- Cash match amount
- Additional match funds

3.3.4. Budget Narrative

Each applicant is required to submit a detailed budget narrative that explains and justifies all costs. For each budget category, there must be descriptions and justifications for the necessity and basis for the listed costs. Costs must be within the bounds of what is considered allowable costs and must be in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200 for administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements. All budget amounts must match exactly across all budget documentations. Identifying non-federal sources of the budget is also required to be included in the budget narrative along with distinctions between non-federal and federal portions of the budget with explanation.

The following are summaries of what sections and content are to be included in the budget narrative. Applicants are required to include all information discussed below and information that is required in the budget narrative template in the Appendix B of this document. The applicant will be required to input the budget narrative detailed descriptions into the “Budget Justification and Explanation” section within the application.

Total Federal Funding for DSEW Project:

List the total requested funding at the top of the budget narrative. This total must match exactly across all budget documentation.

The budget categories covering allowable costs are listed below:

1. Salary and wages
2. Employee benefits and payroll taxes
3. Supplies, telephone, postage and shipping, equipment rental and maintenance, and printing and publications

4. Reimbursable capital purchases
5. Other non-personnel expenses
6. Professional fees
7. Specific assistance to individuals
8. Administrative expenses

The following are summaries of what sections and content are to be included in the budget narrative for each budget category. Applicants are required to include all information discussed below and information that is required in the budget narrative template in the Appendix of this document.

1) Salaries and Wages

Applicants must provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed costs, which includes salaries and wages for covered personnel. Costs should be listed by line item, detailing the role or position, the number of personnel, their hourly or annual rates, and the total projected compensation. A clear explanation of the methods used to calculate these costs should be provided in the description.

“Covered personnel” include program directors and assistant directors, teachers, support staff, career or success coaches, other agency staff (e.g., executive leaders, HR staff, IT staff, and/or facilities staff), translators, workforce development specialists, accessibility specialists, and tutors.

2) Employee Benefits and Payroll Taxes

Applicants must detail non-salary related personnel and workforce management costs, including: (a) the organization's contributions to pension plans and to employee benefit programs such as health, life, and disability insurance; and (b) the organization's portion of payroll taxes such as Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment Insurance, and Workers' Compensation. An attached schedule may be required showing client benefits and taxes or other included in the aggregations, and clear explanation of the methods used to calculate these costs must be provided in the description. Costs are to be broken down by line item, and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs.

3) Supplies, Telephone, Postage and Shipping, Equipment Rental and Maintenance, Printing and Publications (less than \$5,000)

Applicants must provide a detailed description of any proposed supplies, telephone, postage and shipping, equipment rental and maintenance, and

printing and publication costs for the project that are purchased at less than \$5,000. Costs are to be broken down by line item, and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs.

Examples of such costs are:

- Office equipment and supplies
- Shipping
- Curriculum materials/kits instructors and students, such as textbooks and manuals
- Student computers, including subsidized or low-cost devices (e.g., computers, tablets), and refurbishing supplies
- Print and digital advertising and other promotional material for marketing purposes (e.g., fliers, yard signs, printing costs)
- Telecommunications equipment (e.g., hotspots)
- Supplies for hands-on learning activities (e.g., ladders)
- Utilities as a percentage (e.g., internet service)

4) Reimbursable Capital Purchases

Applicants must provide a detailed description of any proposed capital purchase costs for the project. Examples of capital purchase costs may include the acquisition of equipment purchased at \$5,000 or more. Costs are to be broken down by line item and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs.

Examples of covered equipment are:

- Computer labs or classrooms with devices in place (measured by price of rental, # of hours of use, # of seats needed, etc.)
- Computers needed for computer labs or classrooms
- Assistive or adoptive technology; assistive technology includes mobility devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, as well as hardware, software, and
- peripherals that assist people with disabilities in accessing computers or other information technologies
- Equipment for hands-on learning activities (e.g., splicers, power tools, wiring lab, simulating lab)

5) Other Non-Personnel Expenses

If applicable, applicants must provide a detailed description of any upfront costs not covered in other categories, such as permits, required licenses, sales tax applicable to new equipment purchases and warehousing expenses, and miscellaneous minor material. Digital subscriptions and software licenses may also be included herein. Mileage rates charged as part of digital skills training expenses should be charged per the state-level regulations (\$0.655/mile), which need to be validated in invoices review. Costs are to be broken down by line item, and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs.

6) Professional Fees

The organization's fees to outside professionals, consultants, and personal-service contractors and includes legal, accounting, and auditing fees. Costs are to be broken down by line item, and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs.

Examples of such costs are payments given to specialists involved with:

- Outside professionals, consultants, and personal-service contractors that help review sub-recipient contracts
- Accounting
- Contracting
- Budgeting
- Translation services
- Engagement and public feedback processes
- Equity assessments and planning
- Needs assessments
- Device repairing services
- Other

7) Specific Assistance to Individuals

Applicants must provide the organization's direct payment of expenses of clients, patients, and individual beneficiaries. Costs are to be broken down by line item, and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs.

Examples of such costs are:

- Transportation assistance for students (e.g., vouchers for public transportation fares, ride sharing vouchers)
- Childcare assistance for students
- Participation stipends

8) Administrative Expenses (limited to 6% of total budget or indirect cost rate if a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is in place)

Administrative expenses refer to indirect costs associated with operating the program. Applicants must provide a detailed description of any proposed indirect grant and project administration costs for the project. Costs are to be broken down by line item, and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs.

Examples of covered administrative costs are:

- Administration, including carrying out performance accountability requirements (e.g., compiling monthly expenditure reports, aggregating quarterly performance data, fulfilling a request from TNECD concerning costs or other program-level information, etc.)
- Planning activities (excludes strategizing and implementation of developed plan)
- Budgeting and accounting services to track grant and prepare reimbursement requests
- Environmental review
- Federal grant compliance (Davis-Bacon, financial management, procurement, closeout, etc.)

Applicants, if awarded, are permitted to charge both direct and indirect costs to their award as administrative costs. If an applicant has a current Negotiated Indirect Costs Rate Agreement (NICRA), the applicant may use their current NICRA to charge indirect costs to the award. However, if the applicant does not have a current NICRA, they may elect to use the de minimis rate of 6 percent of the modified total direct costs to charge indirect costs to the award pursuant to 2 CFR 200.414(f).

3.3.5. Additional Uploads

The upload section of the application will allow applicants to upload required and optional documents, including:

- The organization's procurement policy
- Any supplemental documentation relating to the need for funding
- Documentation of any proposed overlapping federally funds scheduled to be served by 2026
- Documents of community support (including letters of support, community survey results, and local match letters of assurances)
- Partnership agreements
- Budget documents (including proof of financing and match, the Grant Payment Setup Form, and long-term lease agreements)

04 | Application Review Process

4.1. Process Overview

4.1.1. Administrative or Completeness Review

Following the closing of the application, all applications will be assessed for eligibility and completeness. This review will include assessing that administrative information is complete and correct and that the applicant is in good standing with their other federally funded projects. The applicant’s adherence to application instructions, and completion of budget and other supplementary attachments will be examined at this stage. After submission, TNECD may take 7 to 10 business days (December 7–20, 2023) to review the application for completeness. If TNECD determines that an application is incomplete, TNECD will allow the applicant 5 business days to make the necessary adjustments.

4.1.2. Scoring Review

Applications will also be assessed for their impact on the community they seek to serve, their organizational capacity to manage the award, and their proposed specific initiatives under the digital skills training or/and workforce development program. The following criteria will be assessed as part of the community impact review. Please note that the points per category are not divided equally across each scoring criteria within the category.

Application Evaluation Criteria

Category	Description	Points Possible	Total Points Possible
Need for Grant Funding	Description of the organization’s need (not the community’s) for funding. This could include a discussion of current assets and the resources needed to deploy intended services or programming at scale.	No Points	No Points

Category	Description	Points Possible	Total Points Possible
Demonstrated Capacity	Describes the applicant’s capacity or history to provide digital skills education and/or workforce development programming or services. Discussion of evidence of demonstrated capacity, which could include secured partnerships, available staff, and resources.	20	20
Project Design	Describes the design of the services/ programming offered and how they support digital literacy training as defined in section 2.3. Describes evidence-based intervention and discusses the evidence if applicable. Describes how the program will enable market-relevant competence, professional development, and/or learner agency if applicable.	15	50
	Describes the community’s need for the services/programming the applicant seeks to provide. This could include a discussion of how the applicant assessed the digital skills needs and wants of the community and what they are, how involved the community was in the design of the described programming, any relevant research about how the program fits within the context of local labor/ employer/industry conditions, etc.	20	
	Programming is designed to be accessible to target population in a variety of ways (e.g., time of day, location of choice, remote options, childcare assistance, transportation assistance, ADA-compliant building and equipment, participation stipends offered)	15	

Category	Description	Points Possible	Total Points Possible
Community Impact	<p>Applicant states the # of people it will serve and how that number was calculated. Note that a higher # of individuals served does not necessarily equate to a higher score.</p> <p>Applicant’s stated level of reach should be reasonable based on other datapoints in the application considering the amount of funding requested.</p>	5	55
	<p>Applicant outlines which metrics they will use to measure the impact of the program’s services on the community and defines the target outcomes for the program.</p> <p>Applicant’s metrics are both output and outcome focused (e.g., enrollment of 100 individuals into credential program in addition to 80 individuals secure higher-paying or skills-appropriate positions).</p>	15	
	<p>Applicant has an established process of collecting participant’s feedback regularly through various methods (i.e., offline or online). Applicant has an established organizational procedure in place to incorporate participant’s feedback and make necessary changes to their services accordingly (i.e., applicant uses certain feedback collection tools to capture participant’s satisfaction levels and suggestion through online survey tools or have an onsite grievance redressal mechanism in place).</p>	10	

Category	Description	Points Possible	Total Points Possible
	<p>Demonstrates a strong connection with working with marginalized and historically underserved communities. Communities may include one or more the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who live in covered households (household income of most recent year is not more than 150% of poverty level) • Aging individuals (60 and above) • Incarcerated individuals (excluding individuals who are incarcerated in a federal correctional facility) • Veterans • Individuals with disabilities • Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners and have low levels of literacy • Immigrants and/or refugees • Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group • Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area 	10	
	Applicant will provide services for free or at a discounted rate to program participants.	15	
Project Management	Applicant’s demonstrated ability to meet proposed project plan (timeline and key milestones) given requirements of federal funds, documented experience in program management, ability to oversee a program using federal funds or non-federal organizational funds, etc.	20	20

Category	Description	Points Possible	Total Points Possible
	Discussion should address possible program risks and include a risk mitigation plan.		
Financial Feasibility	Budget and budget narrative are clear and specific.	20	40
	Budget is realistic and reasonable based on project's defined design and impact.	20	
Total Base Score All Programs		185	185
Workforce Development Program-Specific Points Possible			
	Workforce Development Programs: Applicant offers a job placement program or other services that prevent the underemployment of program participants.	10	15
	Workforce Development Programs: Applicant offers workforce development programs that are tailored to TNECD's priority industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications (Broadband Infrastructure) • Arts, entertainment, and recreation • Information (computer and mathematical occupations) • Finance and insurance • Real estate, rental, and leasing • Manufacturing • Health care • Retail • Protective services • Accommodation, food service, and hospitality 	5	

Category	Description	Points Possible	Total Points Possible
Total Score Workforce Development Programs		200	200
Digital Skills Training Program-Specific Points Possible			
	Digital Skills Training Programs: Applicant offers digital devices for free or at reduced prices to program participants in order to enable them for digital skill education	5	15
	Digital Skills Training Programs: Applicant has a program outreach strategy at place that would ensure that program objectives and plan reach out to maximum number of eligible participants (e.g., program outreach strategy may include reaching out to participants through targeted social media platforms, online forums, community centers, schools, local businesses, or relevant events).	5	
	Digital Skills Training Programs: Applicant has a dedicated channel to ensure smooth enrolling of participants under the digital skills program (e.g., the applicant has a dedicated process to ensure smooth enrollment, such as via text or in-person enrollment, website, Facebook page, or other dedicated social media presence, providing detailed information about the training, its benefits, and how to get involved).	5	
Total Score Digital Skills Training Programs		200	200

05 | Tennessee Award Administration

5.1. TNECD Award Notices

A grants officer from the TNECD Broadband office will serve as the Grants Officer for awards issued from this program. Applicants will be notified in writing by the TNECD Broadband Grants Officer if their application is selected for an award in March 2024. If the application is selected for funding, the TNECD Broadband Grants Officer will issue the grant award by an authorizing financial assistance award document. By signing the document, the recipient agrees to comply with all terms, conditions, and provisions set forth. If an applicant is awarded funding, TNECD Broadband office is not under any obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award or make any future awards.

5.2. National Policy Requirements

5.2.1. Uniform Guidance and Cost Principles

Recipients of an award are subject to various federal regulations that include but are not limited to uniform guidance, cost principles, and audit requirements set forth in 2 CFR Part 200, Treasury may deem certain provisions inapplicable to such award and are subject to such exceptions provided by Treasury. Subpart D – Post Federal Award Requirements of the Uniform Guidance shall apply to this award along with, Subpart E – Cost Principles, and Subpart F – Audit Requirements, including the Single Audit Act, of the Uniform Guidance. For an exhaustive list of uniform guidance requirements, reference [eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

Cost principles: As set forth in 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E, allowable costs are based on the premise, but not limited to, that the non-Federal entity (recipient) assumes the responsibility for the administration of funds in an effective and appropriate manner, employment of sound organization and management techniques, and appropriate accounting practices. Recipients are responsible for the creation of internal controls that monitor to ensure compliance with 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E. For the exhaustive list of cost principles regulations, see [eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E -- Cost Principles](#).

5.2.2. Property Trust Relationship and Public Notice Filings for Grant-Acquired Property

In accordance with § 200.316 Property trust relationship, real property, equipment, and intangible property, that are acquired or improved by a federal award must be held in trust by the recipient as trustee for the beneficiaries of the award under which the property was improved or acquired. The awarding agency may require the recipient to record liens or other public notices of record that are appropriate to demonstrate that real or personal property has been improved or acquired by a federal award and that use and disposition conditions apply to the property. For more information, refer to [eCFR :: 2 CFR 200.316 -- Property trust relationship](#).

5.2.3. Contracting with Small and Minority Businesses, Women's Business Enterprises, and Labor Surplus Area Firms

In accordance with 2 CFR § 200.321, the recipient of an award must take the following affirmative steps to ensure that businesses under 2 CFR § 200.321 are used when possible.

1. Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists
2. Assuring that small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources
3. Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises
4. Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises
5. Using the services and assistance, as appropriate, of such organizations as the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce
6. Requiring the prime contractor, if subcontracts are to be let, to take the affirmative steps listed in this section and further described in [eCFR :: 2 CFR 200.321 -- Contracting with small and minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms](#).

5.3. Technical Assistance

If awarded, grantees will have access to procurement and compliance resources that contain information regarding grantee requirements. TNECD will provide

compliance webinars and trainings as well as provide one on one assistance for compliance questions.

5.4. Reporting

If awarded, grantees will have access to procurement and compliance resources that contain information regarding grantee requirements. Grantees will be required to report quarterly to TNECD, the quarterly report dates are as follows: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Grantees will also have to submit an annual report and closeout report.

For more information regarding reporting requirements, reference [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Compliance and Reporting Guidance June 2023](#).

5.4.1. Required Programmatic Data

Recipients of the DSEW Grant are required to submit additional information in the Project and Expenditure reports based on its SLFRF expenditure category. Please reference [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Compliance and Reporting Guidance June 2023](#). More information will be provided upon award.

5.5. Audit Requirements

Requirements for non-profit subrecipients:

Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200 states that any recipients and subrecipients of federal awards that expends \$750,000 or more during the fiscal year in such awards are required to have a single audit conducted for that year in accordance with § 200.514. The exception for a single audit is when it elects to have a program-specific audit conducted. For more information on audit requirements, see [eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F -- Audit Requirements](#), as the recipient will be required to adhere to all audit requirements.

Requirements for for-profit subrecipients:

The single audit requirement does not apply to for-profit subrecipients, TNECD has established audit requirements that apply to for-profit subrecipients and these subrecipients must be in compliance with such requirements.

5.6. Monitoring

All grantees will be subject to monitoring activities including a desk review of project documents. Some grantees may be subject to additional monitoring such as a site visit, based on risk level determined by TNECD's broadband team. The first monitoring check will be at the midpoint of project completion—when the project is 50% complete as attested to by the grantee—and at closeout review. Grantees will be eligible for the remaining 15% of their invoice reimbursements once the closeout review has been completed.

5.7. Invoicing

Grantees will be required to invoice exact expenses directly to TNECD monthly. Grantees must follow the format prescribed by TNECD which includes a cover sheet outlining the invoice items against each contractor or make-ready/material charge-out/inhouse labor expenses along with supporting documentation including individual invoices and proofs of payment. The file should be submitted to the mail ID ECDBroadband.Invoices@tn.gov.

Grantees must redact information such as ACH Company name, ABA code, account number, MICR code from their invoices, and proofs of payments before submitting invoices to TNECD. Invoices will be thoroughly reviewed for accuracy and consistency before payment can be disbursed.

06 | TNECD Contact Information

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07 | Appendix

7.1. Application Checklist

Completion Status	Documented Upload	Description
	Applicant organization's procurement policy	The organization's existing procurement policy to demonstrate consistency with federal and state procurement standards
	<p>Completed Grant Payment Setup Form</p> <p>Miscellaneous supplemental documentation</p>	<p>The applicant's banking information to expedite grant disbursement, if awarded. If applicant has submitted a grant payment setup form previously and their bank information has not changed, they do not need to resubmit.</p> <p>Any other supplemental documentation that does not fit in the other categories.</p>
	Community support letter(s)	Letters from community members or organizations endorsing the applicant and demonstrating that the applicant has made outreach efforts
	Community partner agreement(s)	Any agreement made between the applicant and a community partner in which the community partner is involved in the delivery of resources, activities, or programming

Completion Status	Documented Upload	Description
	Partnership agreement	Any agreement made between an employer and an eligible applicant
	Proof of project financing	Two of the following documents to show that the project can cover the match requirement and any additional funding needed for expenses prior to reimbursement: audited financials, bank statement, letter of credit, proof of funds
	Any applicable local match letters of assurances	Letters from local sponsors assuring their partnership and their willingness and ability to match funds
	Long-term lease agreement, if applicable	Any long-term lease agreements that are made for the proposed project, if applicable

7.2. Budget Narrative Template

All applicants must submit a budget narrative proposing how funds will be expended. The budget worksheet will be completed in SmartSimple. In SmartSimple click on the "Budget Sheet" button.

The first table in the worksheet, Budget Details, will auto-populate based on input from the tables below: Salaries and Wages, Professional Fees, Supplies, Telephone, Postage and Shipping, Equipment Rental and Maintenance, Printing and Publications (less than \$5,000), Capital Purchases, Other Non – Personnel, Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes, Administrative Expenses, and Specific Assistance to Individuals.

If there are expenses relating to a table specific to each budget category, you may add as many rows as needed by clicking the "+" button below the table. If you need to remove a row, you may click the "X" button at the end of the row.

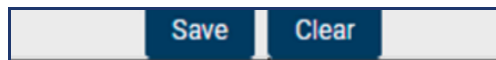
Supplies, Telephone, Postage Shipping, Equipment Rental Maintenance, Printing Publications

Please include a brief description of supplies costs.

Item Description	Unit Cost	Number of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional match funds
Modems	\$250.00	10	\$2,500.00	\$1,250.00	\$312.50	
	\$250.00	10	\$2,500.00	\$1,250.00	\$312.50	\$0.00

Note that the Total Unit Cost column and the Cash Match Amount columns will automatically populate based on input from the other columns.

Once you have completed filling out the budget worksheet, press the save button at the bottom of the worksheet. If you need to restart the worksheet for any reason, you may also quickly clear the worksheet by pressing the "Clear" button as shown here.



The following examples are references for each budget category of the budget worksheet. Please note that costs are to be broken down by line item and the description should include methods used to calculate the costs and any additional information to describe the costs. Below is an example of what the detailed budget will look like in SmartSimple.

Budget Category #1: Salaries and Wages						
Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
Ex. Program Director	\$50	120 hours	\$6,000	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Program Director (\$6,000): 120 hours of a program director's time at \$50 each. A program director is necessary for project coordination, oversight, and strategic planning. The purchase price is based on the average market cost for this position.

- Note: “X” indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only.

Budget Category #2: Professional Fees						
Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
<i>Ex. Equity Assessment Planning</i>	\$1,000	1	\$1,000	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Equity assessment planning (\$1,000): An equity assessment needs to be conducted for the project. To accurately complete the assessment, there needs to be a plan on how necessary data will be gathered and submitted. The \$1,000 will cover the costs of data-gathering and the submission of the assessment. Costs are based on average costs for assessment planning.
- Note: “X” indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only.

Budget Category #3: Supplies, Telephone, Postage and Shipping, Equipment Rental and Maintenance, Printing and Publications (less than \$5,000)						
Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
<i>Ex. Modems</i>	\$250	10	\$2,500	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Modems (\$2,500): 10 consumer-grade modems at \$250 each. Modems are necessary for communication between ISP and devices. Purchase price is based on standard cost for this equipment type.

- Note: “X” indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only.

Budget Category #4: Capital Purchases						
Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
<i>Ex. Computer Desktop</i>	\$500	10	\$5,000	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Routers (\$5,000): 10 consumer-grade routers at \$500 each. Routers are necessary for communication between internet and devices. Purchase price is based on standard cost for this equipment type.
- Note: “X” indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only.

Budget Category #5: Other Non - Personnel						
Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
<i>Ex. Building Permit</i>	\$5,000	1	\$5,000	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Building Permit (\$5,000): Permit is necessary for the construction of infrastructure. Cost is based on industry standards for building permits for the area.
- Note: “X” indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only.

Budget Category #6: Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes

Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
<i>Ex. Health Insurance</i>	\$3,400	5	x	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Health Insurance: Employees will require health insurance for the project's life. On average, health insurance costs \$3,400 per employee. The total cost for five employees would be \$3,400 x 5, totaling \$17,000.
- Note: "X" indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only.

Budget Category #7: Administrative Expenses

Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
<i>Ex. Legal fees associated with sub-recipient contracts/ Accounting fees associated with Audit</i>	\$3,000	4	\$12,000	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Legal Fees/Accounting Fees: Recipients will be audited annually for the life of the project. An audit costs \$3,000; the anticipated life of the project is four years. The

total cost of accounting fees associated with auditing would be \$3,000 x 4, which totals to \$12,000.

- Note: “X” indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only

Budget Category #8: Specific Assistance to Individuals						
Line Item Description	Unit Cost	No. of Units	Total Unit Cost	Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Amount	Additional Match Funds
<i>Ex.</i> <i>Transportation</i>	\$200	50	\$10,000	x	x	x
Final Total						

Example of a sufficient budget narrative detailed description for the line item above:

- Transportation (\$2,500): This will fund 50 WeGo cards (1 for each of our planned 50 program participants) at \$200 each. \$200 for each card to enable round trips for our twice-a-week programming for our 6 month-long training program (estimated 24 weeks). $(24 \text{ weeks}) * (2 \text{ days / week}) * (\$4 \text{ daily fare cap / 1 day}) = \192 for each card. Rounded up to \$200 for each card.
- Note: “X” indicates fields that will need to be filled in by the applicant—the fields filled in above are for example purposes only.



Department of
**Economic &
Community Development**

Digital Adoption
Grant Programs