



Department of
**Economic &
Community Development**

Digital Adoption
Grant Programs

THE DIGITAL SKILLS, EDUCATION, AND WORKFORCE (DSEW) DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

Program Details and Application Process

October 3, 2023

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Welcome!

Agenda

- A. DSEW Grants: Program Overview
- B. Eligibility Requirements
- C. Project Budgets
- D. Application Information
- E. The Application Review Process
- F. Summary
- G. Next Steps



Tag your questions in the chat!
[#DSEWQuestion](#)



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A. DSEW Grants: Program Overview

High-Level Details

There are some differences between the two program types.

Grant Program	Digital Skills and Education	Workforce Development
Focus	Improving introductory-level and advanced digital skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Train broadband infrastructure professionals 2) Train digitally-enabled professionals
Goal	Support skilling programs and access to advanced digital tools so individuals can develop the technical proficiency required to navigate complex digital environments, participate in the digital economy, and drive innovation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Develop a telecommunications workforce needed to deploy, manage, and maintain broadband infrastructure 2) Develop digitally-enabled professionals by supporting digital upskilling across a wide variety of industries
Job Placement Program or Other Services to Prevent Underemployment	No	Yes

Federal Award Information

Period of performance for both programs:

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

At least \$5 million of the \$17 million available funding will be allocated to adult educational entities or higher education institutions.

Total \$	Max/Grant	Match %	Grant Limits
\$17M	\$1M	Grant covers ≤90% of eligible project expenses; 10% match by grantee	No limit on the number of submissions per applicant; no more than 2 grants to be awarded per applicant

Funds Matching

Each **grant (“Grant”)** will cover up to 90% of eligible project expenses, with a **required 10% match by the grantee (“Grantee Match”)**.

Grant	Grantee Match	Total	Total to be reimbursed	Ratio/Breakdown	Monthly Invoice	TNECD Reimbursement
\$1M	\$200,000	\$1.2M	\$1.2M	TNECD pays 90% Grantee pays 10%	\$100K	\$100K x 90% = \$90k

Note: Please note that providing an additional match will not result in a higher score. Additionally, if a recipient has an additional match, they will receive a lower percentage of reimbursement per invoice.

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B. Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Communities

An **automatically eligible community** is the general community that the project is allowed to serve, defined as an eligible TN county for this grant.

Per CPF and SLFRF guidelines, automatically 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**.



Eligible Communities

Automatically Eligible TN Counties (AMIs at or below \$65,880)

- Anderson, \$53,801
- Bedford, \$57,149
- Benton, \$43,803
- Bledsoe, \$52,876
- Blount, \$65,007
- Bradley, \$57,804
- Campbell, \$45,339
- Cannon, \$61,229
- Carroll, \$50,397
- Carter, \$43,150
- Chester, \$55,727
- Claiborne, \$43,602
- Clay, \$40,165
- Cocke, \$44,218
- Coffee, \$58,226
- Crockett, \$52,319
- Cumberland, \$52,859
- Decatur, \$48,669
- DeKalb, \$53,624
- Dickson, \$60,090
- Dyer, \$53,619
- Fentress, \$41,056
- Franklin, \$59,316
- Gibson, \$49,691
- Giles, \$56,200
- Grainger, \$49,953
- Greene, \$50,427
- Grundy, \$46,206
- Hamblen, \$49,915
- Hamilton, \$63,921
- Hancock, \$34,308
- Hardeman, \$45,257
- Hardin, \$50,011
- Hawkins, \$47,543
- Haywood, \$47,271
- Henderson, \$52,656
- Henry, \$49,627
- Hickman, \$50,411
- Houston, \$49,761
- Humphreys, \$51,513
- Jackson, \$38,863
- Jefferson, \$55,369
- Johnson, \$41,709
- Lake, \$45,236
- Lauderdale, \$46,945
- Lawrence, \$51,475
- Lewis, \$43,831
- Lincoln, \$57,843
- Macon, \$46,912
- Madison, \$53,408
- Marion, \$54,613
- Marshall, \$58,984
- McMinn, \$52,397
- McNairy, \$46,340
- Meigs, \$55,670,
- Monroe, \$50,955
- Montgomery, \$60,380
- Moore, \$65,200
- Morgan, \$47,829
- Obion, \$47,491
- Overton, \$48,906
- Perry, \$48,526
- Pickett, \$43,731

TN Counties Serving Eligible Target Populations (AMIs above \$65,880)

- Cheatham, \$69,873
- Davidson, \$71,223
- Fayette, \$71,734
- Knox, \$66,183
- Loudon, \$66,000
- Maury, \$71,932
- Robertson, \$70,481
- Rutherford, \$74,070
- Sumner, \$75,648
- Tipton, \$69,548
- Williamson, \$124,055
- Wilson, \$88,695

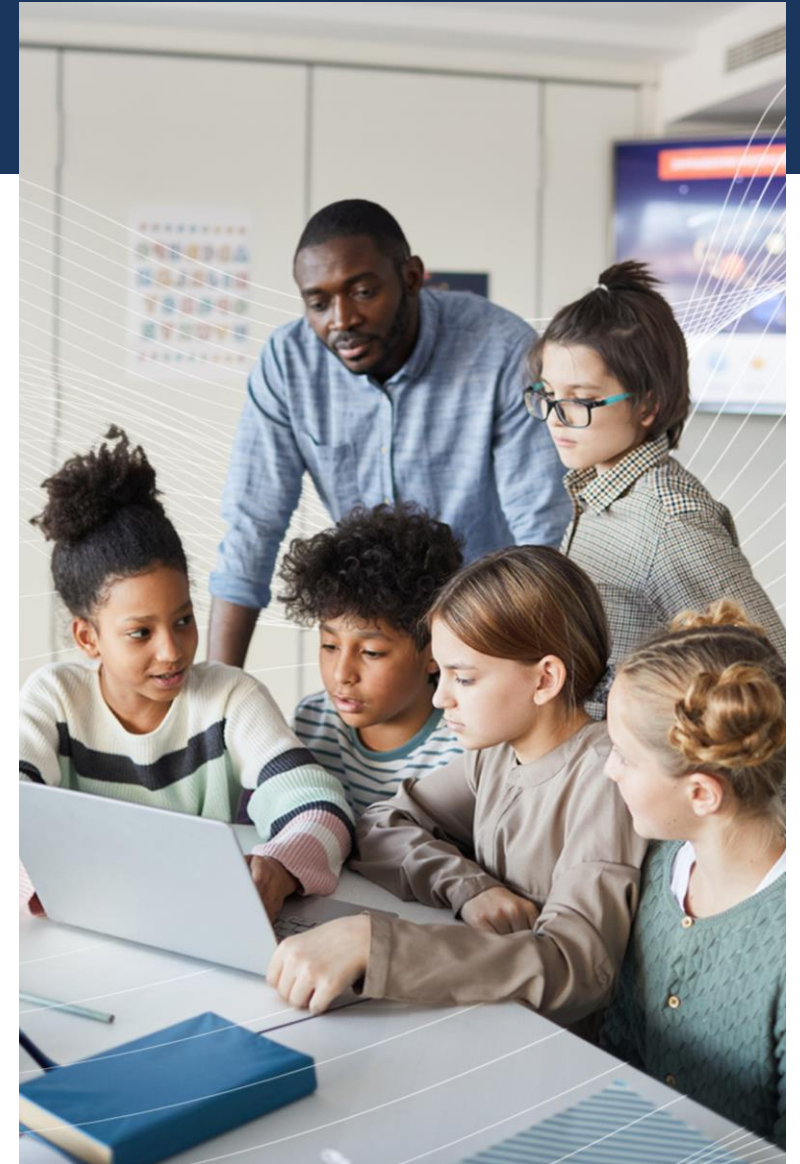
Note: The Area Median Incomes reflected above for each county are based on the [2022 TN County Profiles](#) (household size unknown).

Target Population

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

- **Households or populations at or below \$65,880 in annual income** (300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a default household size of 3, per 2022 US Treasury-provided estimates)
OR
- **Households that experienced unemployment or *increased* food or housing insecurity**
OR
- **Households that qualify for these programs:** Children's Health Insurance Program, Childcare Subsidies through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Program, or Medicaid
OR
- **Households or populations residing in Qualified Census Tracts**

If none of these categories 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.



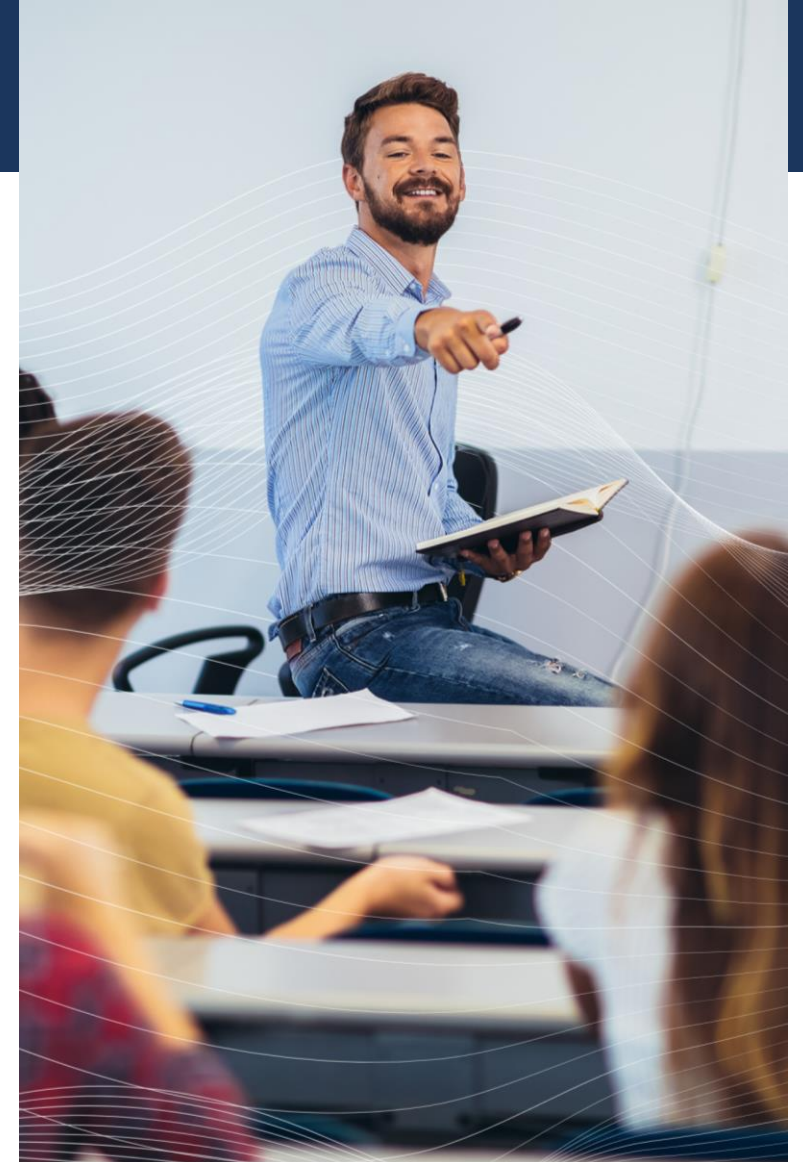
Eligible Grant Applicants

- A local educational agency (e.g., community college, vocational school)
- A community-based organization 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



Ineligible Grant Applicants

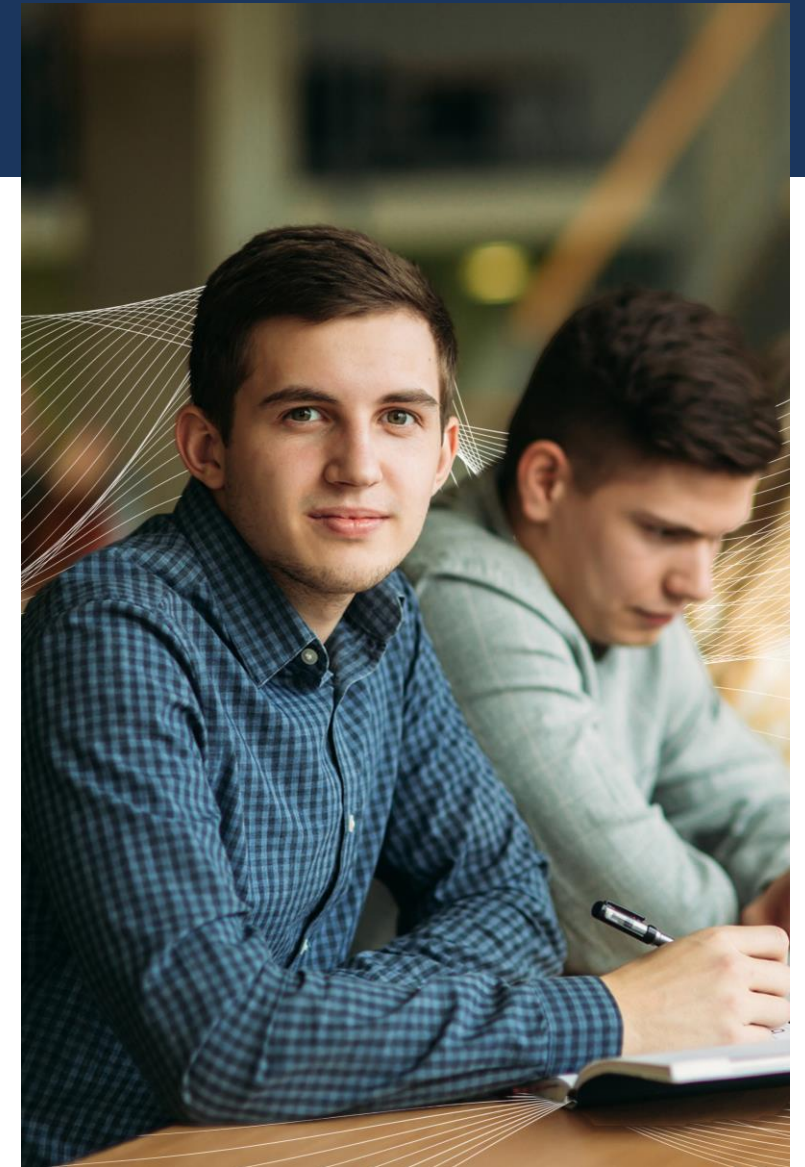
- Internet service providers (ISPs)
- Government entities (e.g., local government, corrections departments, commissions)
- “Pass-through” entities, or entities seeking to receive TNECD grant funding to distribute to other organizations through their own grant programs



Eligible Activities

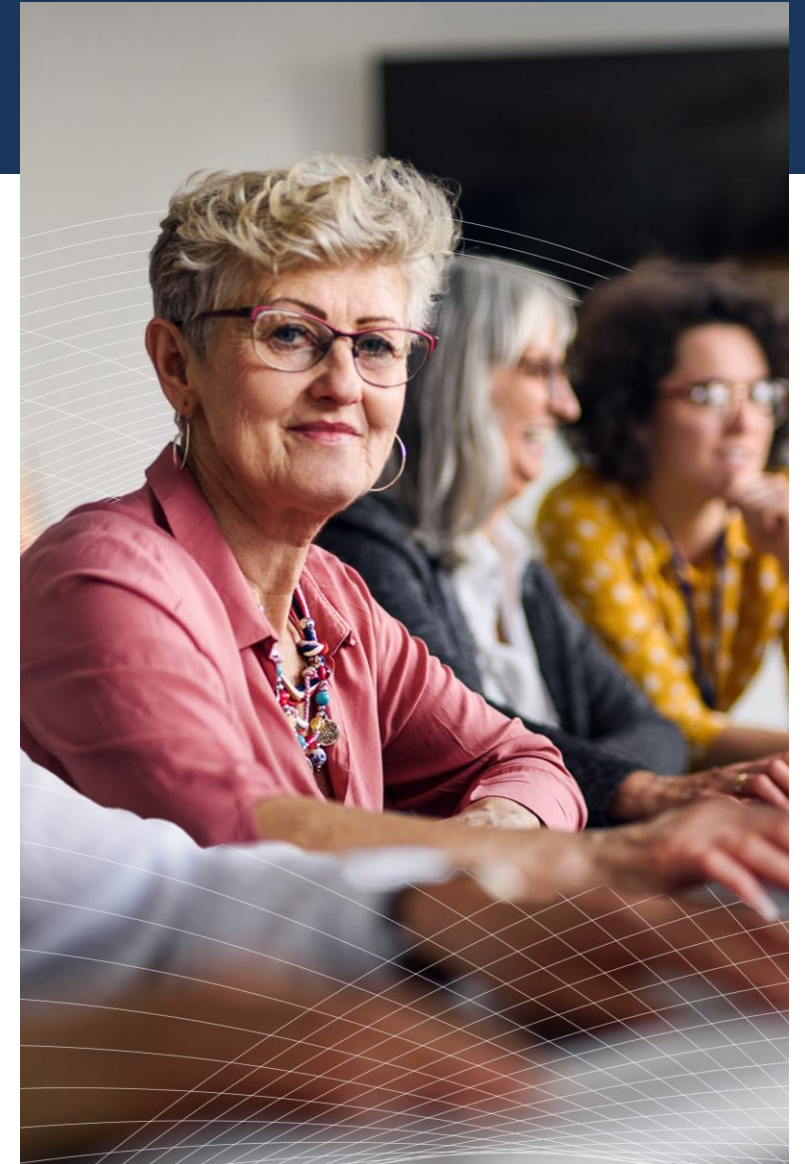
Goal: participants can exit the programs with the **market-relevant skills, experience, abilities, and qualifications** necessary to further their personal and professional goals in digital environments.

- Adult education
- Intermediate and/or specialized digital skills training in K-12 schools
- Workplace education
- Micro-learning
- Apprenticeship program
- Industry-relevant credentialing programs
- Digital navigators
- Providing training to trainers/educators on eligible activities
- Other educational activities



Ineligible Activities

- Conducting of **training and apprenticeship** programs by internet service providers (ISPs)
- Conducting **adoption promotion** activities
- Programs that conduct **awareness and outreach** campaigns (such as the Affordable Connectivity Program [ACP]) but that do not provide accompanying skilling services
- **Digital opportunity** coalitions/taskforces
- **K-12 school system** one-to-one computer programs
- Direct technical **troubleshooting** or repair services for broken devices



Eligible Skills

This is not a comprehensive list of skills considered eligible. The skills may also span a variety of industries.

Basic and intermediate

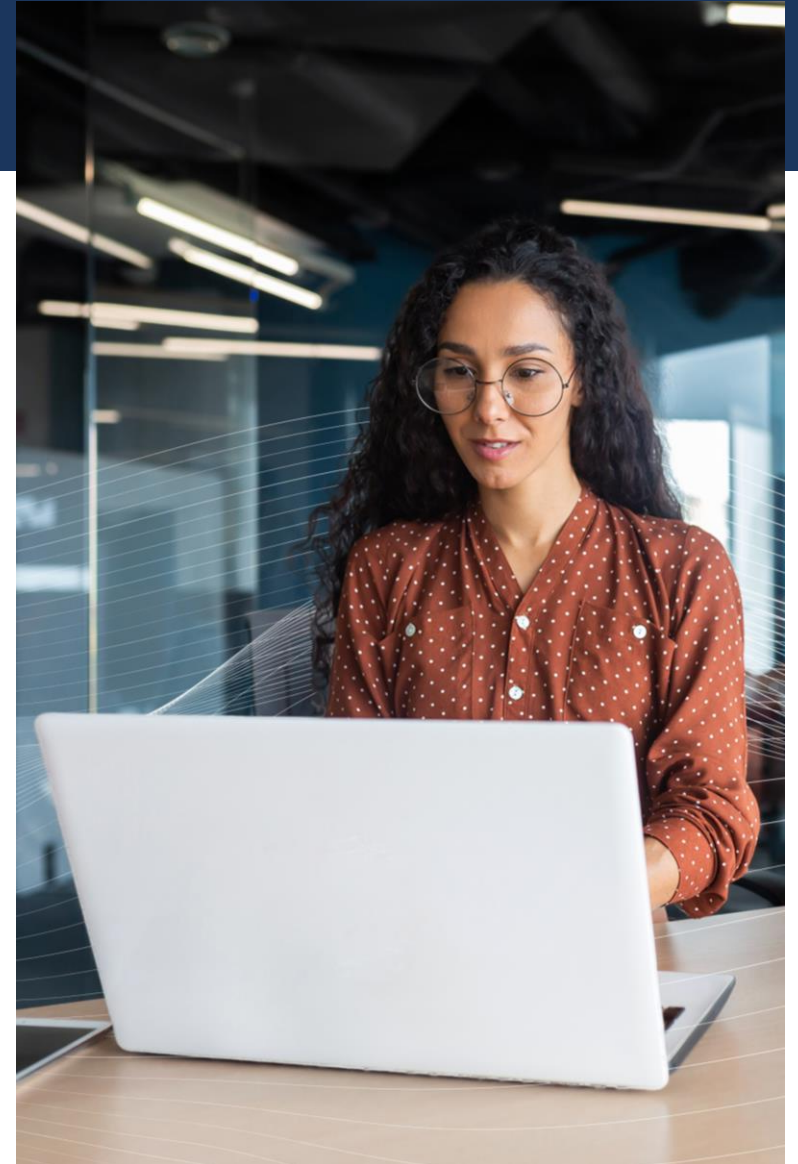
- Basic professional/educational skills
- Communication technologies
- Navigation of the internet for well-being purposes
- Foundational knowledge about the internet and related technologies
- Distance/remote education
- Telework
- Social media
- Internet safety
- Any other training that is designed to eliminate barriers to foundational adoption of digital skills

Advanced

- Coding courses
- Programming, website, and application development
- Software development and implementation
- Information technology
- Marketing and content creation
- Data science and management
- Generative AI
- Cybersecurity
- Any other training that is identified to meet digitally focused workforce development needs

Eligible Broadband Infrastructure Occupations (Tentative)

- 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
- Broadband-related trades groups

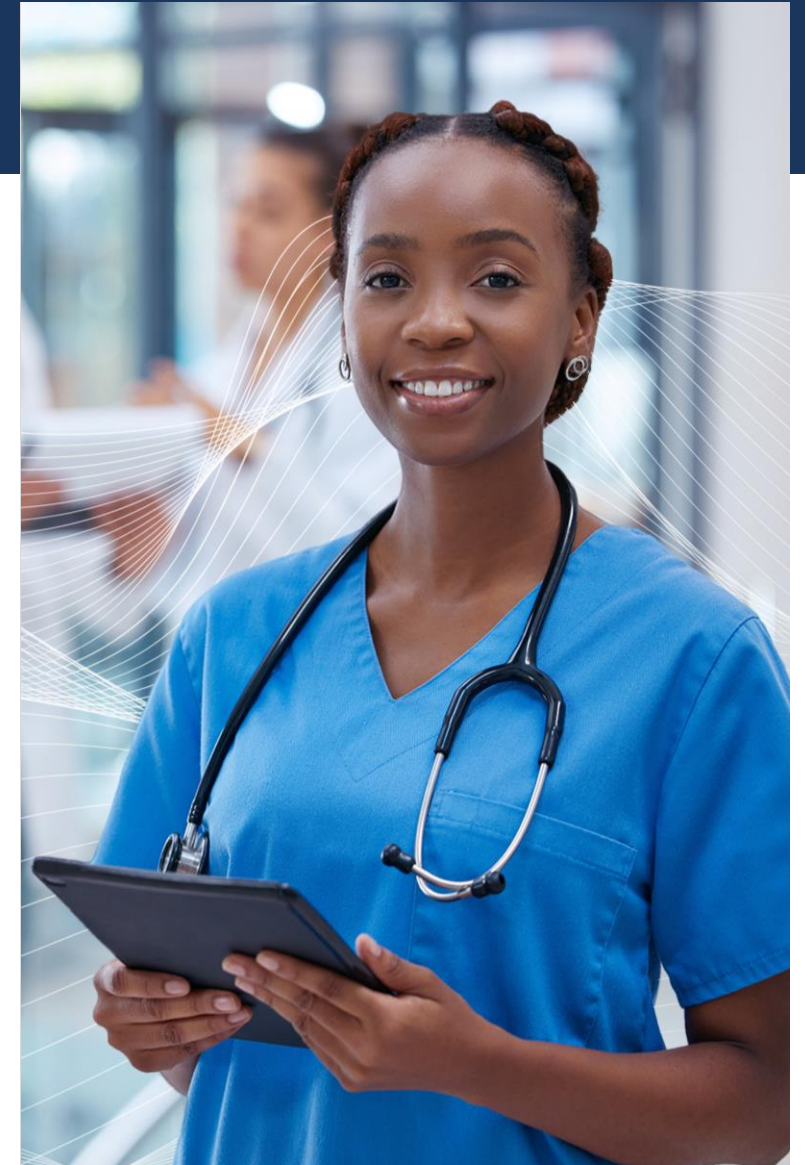


Job Placement Program (Workforce Development)

Applicants submitting a workforce development program must include a **job placement program** in their project. The purpose of this requirement is to provide an **employment pipeline** for program participants. Applicants will be expected to describe:

- Organization's relationship with the partner employer(s)
- # of positions available to be filled by program participants
- Type of employment (e.g., contractor, permanent, etc.)
- Estimated duration of offered positions
- Starting wage
- Opportunities for advancement within the organization (if applicable)
- Other relevant information

If a job placement program is not feasible, the applicant must describe what other services they will provide to **prevent the underemployment** of program participants.



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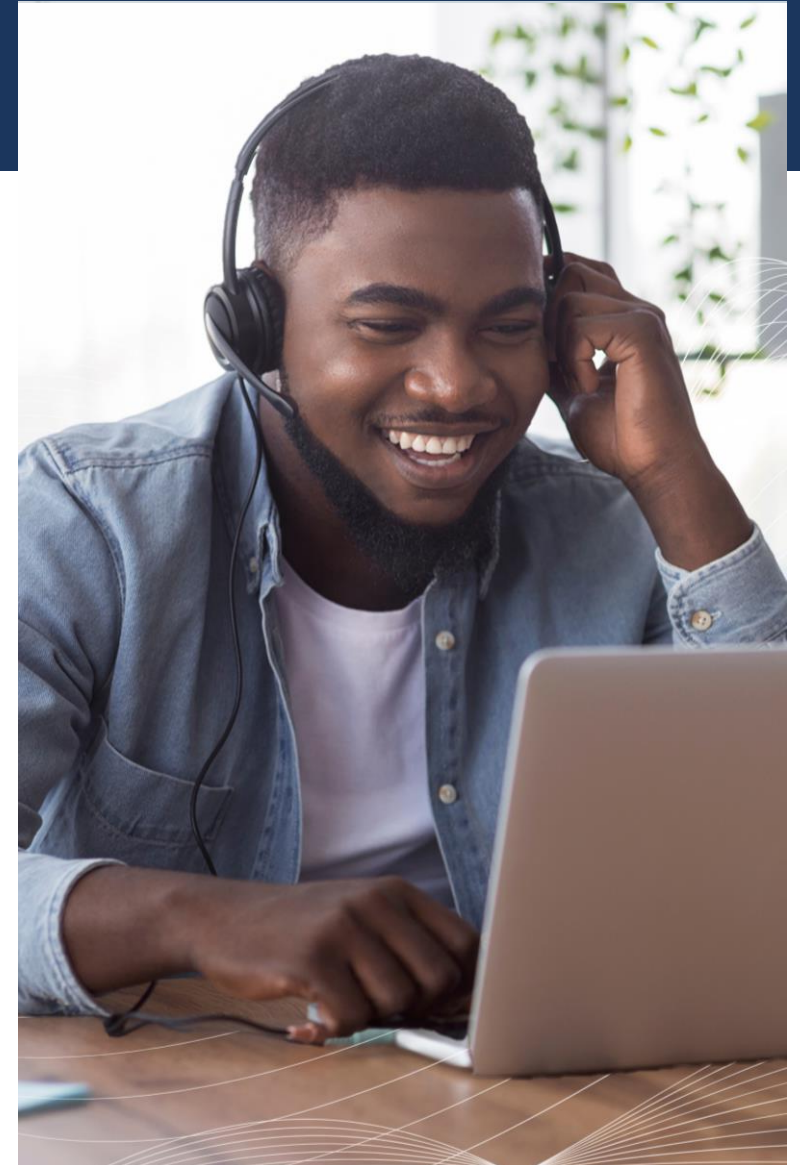
C. Project Budgets

Allowable Costs

Following is a list of the **most common budget categories** of allowable costs.

- Salaries and wages categories
- Employee benefits and payroll taxes
- Professional fees related to providing services
- Supplies (less than \$5,000)
- Capital purchases (equipment \$5,000 or more)
- Specific assistance to individuals
- Other non-personnel expenses (e.g., licenses, permits, registration, etc.)
- Administrative expenses pertaining to the oversight of the grant (indirect expenses; limited to 6% or the indirect cost rate if a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is in place)

Note: 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.



Unallowable Costs

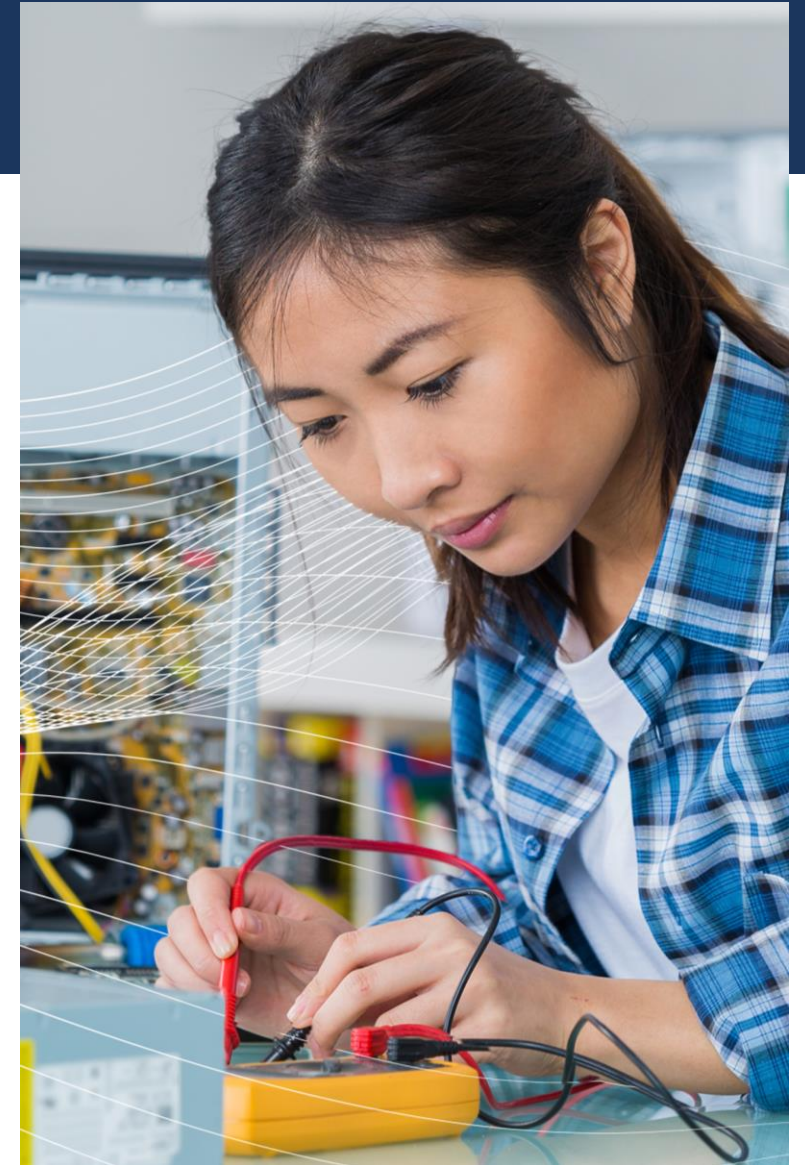
- **Travel costs** (associated with program-related functions)
 - Flights/airfare
 - Hotels/lodging
 - Meals
 - Vehicle rentals, etc.
 - Related insurance
- **Incentives for incorporation** of broadband across different sectors
 - Subsidies
 - Tax benefits
- **Discounted internet service**
- **Promotional items/memorabilia**
 - Models
 - Gifts
 - Souvenirs
 - Other costs designed solely to promote the grant-holding agency
- **Grants and awards**
 - Scholarships or vouchers to fund industry-relevant credentialing
- **Capital purchases**
 - Vehicle
 - Land acquisition
- **Entertainment**
 - Food
 - Amusement
 - Diversion
 - Social activities
 - Other associated costs
- Costs that are **not reasonable, necessary, or allocable** to the grant

Submitting Project Budgets

Each application must include a breakdown for each cost and a detailed budget narrative explaining and justifying the expenditures by category.

A breakdown is required for each cost, with a description of each charge indicating:

- What the item charged is
- Who will perform the associated activity/task (if applicable)
- How the item charged relates to the project objectives
- A breakdown of the federal and non-federal share



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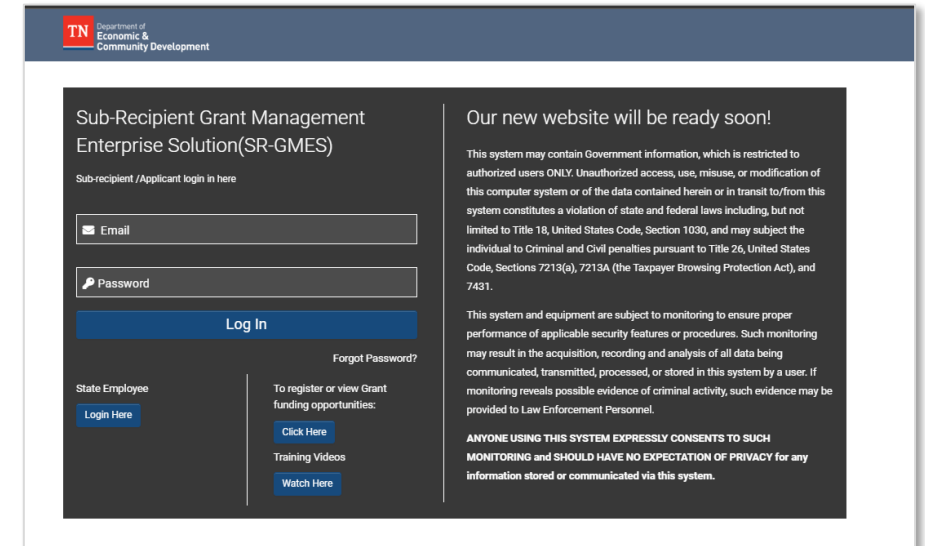
D. Application Information

Content and Form of Applications

Applications will be submitted via the grant management software SmartSimple. Applicants will need to register with SmartSimple at https://ecd.grants.tn.gov/s_Login.jsp in order to access the grant application.



Submission Period: Oct. 16 to Dec. 6



SmartSimple Registration Page

Registering in SmartSimple

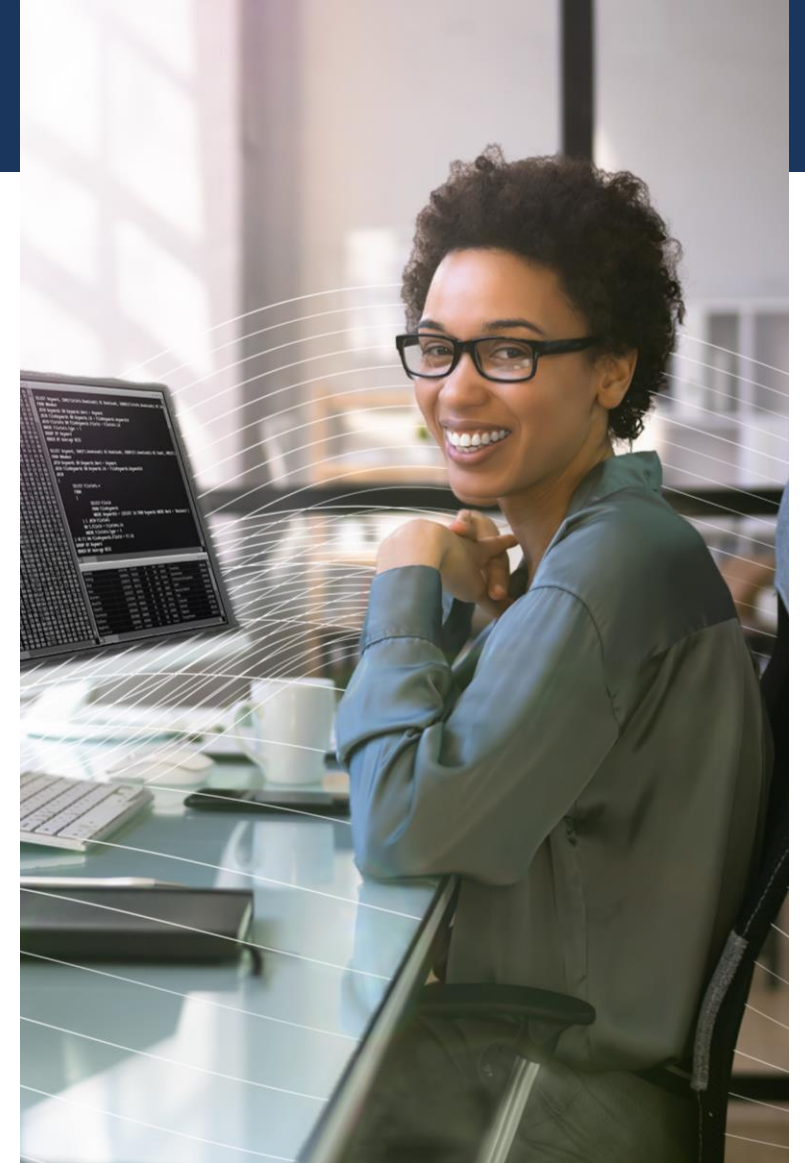
The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/broadband-office.html. The page header features the TN Department of Economic & Community Development logo and a search bar labeled "Search ECD". A navigation menu includes links for Advantages, Industries, Corporate Expansion, Small Business, Rural Development, News, Resources, and Grants. The main content area is titled "Broadband Office" and features a large banner image of a tree with the text "Digital Opportunity Plan Public Comment". A mouse cursor points to the text "Digital Opportunity Plan Public Comment" in a tooltip. Below the banner are three resource cards: "Individual and Family Resources" (with sub-links: "Get Help with Internet Bills", "Find Low-Cost Wifi Options and Devices"), "Providers Resources" (with sub-links: "Funding Opportunities", "Broadband Accessibility Grantee Report"), and "Community Resources" (with sub-links: "Digital Opportunity Listing Session Toolkit", "Broadband Ready Communities").



Additional Uploads

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

- 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 (e.g., letters of support, community survey results, local match letters of assurances)
- Partnership agreements
- Budget documents (e.g., proof of financing and match, Grant Payment Setup Form, long-term lease agreements)





E. The Application Review Process

Application Review

Two steps to the application review process:

- **Completeness review:** All applications will be assessed for eligibility and completeness to confirm that:
 - Administrative information is complete and correct
 - The applicant is in good standing with their other federally funded projects
 - The applicant adhered to application instructions, submitted budget and other supplementary attachments, and included their signed certification forms
- **Scoring review** (per next slide; **200 possible base points**)

TNECD may take up to 7 to 10 business days (December 7–20, 2023) to review the application for completeness. If TNECD determines that an application is incomplete, the applicant will be allowed 5 business days to make the necessary adjustments.

Note: If an application is submitted after the completeness review deadline (December 20, 2023), it will be reviewed for completeness without the opportunity for the applicant to make adjustments.

Application Scoring

Applications determined to be complete will undergo a scoring review. The number after each category title represents the **total number of points possible** for the category; however, points per category are not divided equally across scoring criteria within each category.

Category	Scoring Criteria
Need for Grant Funding (0)	Discussion of current assets and the resources needed to deploy intended services or programming at scale.
Demonstrated Capacity (20)	Discussion of evidence of demonstrated capacity, which could include secured partnerships, available staff, and resources.
Project Design (50)	Describes how they support digital literacy training. Describes how the program will enable market-relevant competence, professional development, and/or learner agency if applicable.
	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, and any relevant research about how the program fits within the context of local labor/employer/industry conditions.

Application Scoring (cont'd)

Category	Scoring Criteria
Community Impact (55)	Applicant's stated level of reach should be reasonable based on other datapoints in the application considering the amount of funding requested.
	Describes impact on the community and defines the target outcomes for the program.
	Applicant has an established organizational procedure in place to incorporate participant's feedback and make necessary changes to their services accordingly.
	Demonstrates a strong connection with working with marginalized and historically underserved communities.

Application Scoring (cont'd)

Category	Scoring Criteria
Project Management (20)	Applicant's demonstrated ability given requirements of federal funds, documented experience in program management. Discussion should address possible program risks and include a risk mitigation plan.
Financial Feasibility (40)	Budget and budget narrative are clear and specific.
	Budget is realistic and reasonable based on project's defined design and impact.

Application Scoring; Workforce Development

Category	Scoring Criteria
Workforce Development (15)	<p>Applicant offers a job placement program with employers for program participants and/or other services that prevent the underemployment of participants.</p> <hr/> <p>Workforce Development Programs: Applicant offers workforce development programs that are tailored to TNECD's priority industries:</p> <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

Application Scoring; Digital Skills Training

Category	Scoring Criteria
Digital Skills Training (15)	Applicant offers digital devices for free or at reduced prices to program participants in order to enable them for digital skill education.
	Strategy ensures 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).
	Applicant has a dedicated process to ensure smooth enrollment of program participants, 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.

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F. Summary

Key Points Discussed

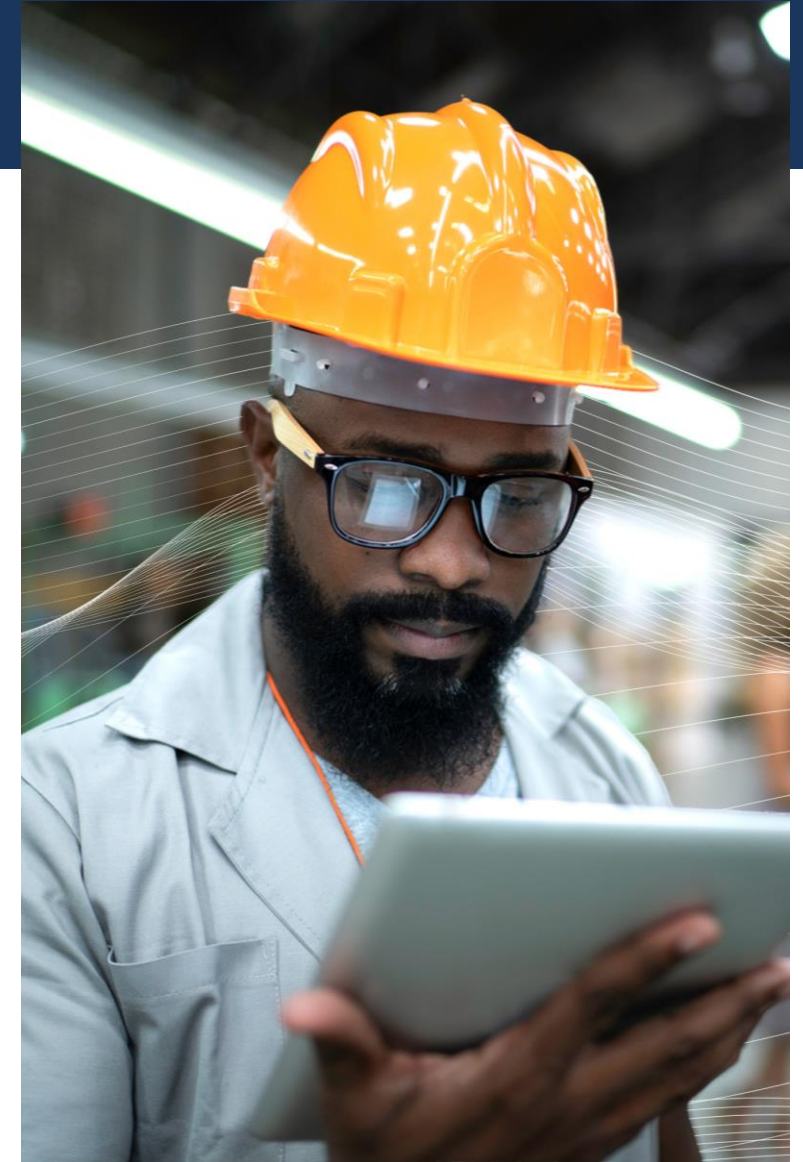
- Through the **Digital Skills, Education, and Workforce (DSEW) Development** grant, \$17 million will be distributed with the goals of:
 - Improving introductory-level and advanced digital skills for individuals
 - Training broadband infrastructure professionals and other digitally-enabled professionals across various industries
- The grant covers up to **90% of eligible project expenses**, with a **required 10% match** by grantee.
- Applicants must propose projects in an **eligible TN county (AMI at or below \$65,880)**
 - ARC-designated **“at-risk”** or **“distressed” counties** are **eligible for additional points**
- Target populations, per ARPA-SLFRF specifications, must be one of the following:
 - **Households or populations at or below \$65,880 in annual income OR**
 - **Households that experienced unemployment or *increased* food or housing insecurity OR**
 - **Households that qualify for these benefits:** Children's Health Insurance Program, Childcare Subsidies through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Program, or Medicaid **OR**
 - **Households or populations residing in Qualified Census Tracts**
- To prove eligibility, each application must have a **detailed budget narrative**.
- The two parts of the application review are the **completeness review** and the **scoring review**.
- All contracts with grantees must be in effect by June 30, 2024.

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G. Next Steps

Resources and Key Dates

TNECD Broadband Office:	https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/broadband-office.html
TNECD Broadband Grant web page:	https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/broadband-office/grants.html
Contacts:	Codi Drake, Broadband Grants Coordinator – Digital Opportunity Coordinator: codi.drake@tn.gov Leah Mims, Broadband Grants Coordinator – Digital Opportunity Coordinator: leah.mims@tn.gov
DSEW application period: Award announcement date: Contract signature deadline: End of contract period:	Oct. 16 to Dec. 6 March 2024 (tentative) June 30, 2024 (tentative) Dec. 31, 2026



Take the Survey!

Please take a few minutes to share your feedback.

Post-event survey
DSEW Grants: Program Details and Application Process





Department of
**Economic &
Community Development**

THANK YOU