



New Hampshire Department of
**BUSINESS AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RELATIVE TO THE EXECUTION OF
THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN**

RFI 2025-07

DUE DATE: February 13, 2025, at 4:00PM (EST)

RESPONSE SUBMITTED BY (COMPANY NAME) _____

AUTHORIZED SIGNER'S SIGNATURE _____

AUTHORIZED SIGNER'S TITLE _____

PRINTED NAME _____

PREPARED BY:
Department of Business and Economic Affairs
Office of Broadband Initiatives

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1.1. The Office of Broadband Initiatives at the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to seek input from interested parties on the State’s tentative plans for implementation of the State of New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan. The federal government has awarded the State a total of \$4,942,018.62 to implement the State of New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan, with a period of performance for grants running from December 2024 through December 2029.
- 1.1.2. This Request for Information has been issued with the intent of gathering information relative to the process of implementing the State’s Digital Equity Plan.

1.2. TIMELINE:

- 1.2.1. The timeline below is provided as a general guideline and is subject to change. More exact dates will be added to the later processes as the project moves forward.

RFI Solicitation distributed on or by:	01/16/2025
Last day for questions, clarifications, and/or requested changes to RFI:	01/23/2025
States response to questions, clarifications, and/or requested changes to RFI:	01/30/2025
RFI Submission Closing (Eastern Time):	02/13/2025 4:00PM

1.3. BACKGROUND:

New Hampshire has been allocated over \$4.9 million through the first of three expected State Digital Equity Capacity Grant NOFOs¹. The Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program funding is provided to implement the State of New Hampshire’s Digital Equity Plan and promote digital inclusion activities. Future NOFOs are expected to make up to an additional \$300,000,000 available to states, territories, and tribal entities in each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026. Future NOFOs are pending availability of federal funds and allocated through formula calculations amongst all eligible entities.

BEA was originally tasked with creating the [New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan](#), which was approved in April of 2024. This plan provides a blueprint for the development of a statewide infrastructure of responsive technical assistance and pathways that help overcome digital challenges and enable diverse populations to meaningfully participate in the digital economy. The State intends to focus the available funding, an estimated \$4 million of the first round allocated funds, for supporting the creation or continuation of programs that work to close the digital divide in these key areas:

- 1.3.1.1. **Affordable and Reliable Broadband Access:** Make fast, safe, reliable, and affordable internet accessible and affordable to covered populations, enhancing their ability to access healthcare, educational resources, economic opportunities, civic and social engagement, and a host of other essential services.
- 1.3.1.1.1. The Office of Broadband Initiatives is in the application process of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. A federal grant program that will provide funding to Internet Service Providers to deploy broadband infrastructure to eligible unserved and underserved locations throughout the state, giving residents the opportunity of highspeed internet access.
- 1.3.1.2. **Access to Computers and Assisted Devices, Coupled with Technical Support:** Help ensure New Hampshire residents have reliable access to computers and the support and

¹ The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released the first [Notice of Opportunity Funding \(NOFO\) for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant](#) in March 2024.

knowledge needed to utilize digital technologies to safely access healthcare, educational opportunities, economic opportunities, civic and social engagement opportunities, and delivery of other essential services.

- 1.3.1.3. **Digital Literacy Skill Development:** Help New Hampshire residents gain the knowledge and ability to use digital devices effectively and efficiently, as well as benefit from online resources and tools for healthcare, educational advancement, economic opportunity, and civic and social engagement
- 1.3.1.4. **Cybersafety Skills Development:** Help ensure New Hampshire residents understand practices that promote and sustain the safe and secure use of digital tools and protect their data, and make technical support available to the public, public institutions, businesses, and other organizations to help promote safety and security.
- 1.3.1.5. **Access to Web Portals to Essential Public Resources:** Ensure New Hampshire residents have improved access to online public resources through strategic actions that lead to greater accessibility in web design and improved information dissemination through a variety of public and private channels that reach underserved New Hampshire residents quickly and effectively.

Respondents to this RFI should reference the State's Digital Equity Plan for further information on specific objectives for each key focus area.

1.4. RFI OBJECTIVE:

- 1.4.1. The State is seeking feedback that may help the State to implement the Digital Equity Plan and will consider any information, including partial responses, received in response to this RFI. If the State moves forward in the development of an RFP/RFB, the bidding process will be open to all respondents regardless of their decision to participate in this RFI.
- 1.4.2. To determine interests of entities, consortiums, or organizations in assuming the acting lead administrative role towards implementing the State's Digital Equity Plan and developing programs within the available funding and satisfying all key areas of the State's Plan, as summarized in section 1.3.
- 1.4.3. Any reference to cost in the attachments or following sections are intended to be requests for an informal estimate of costs.

1.5. KNOWN CHALLENGES:

- 1.5.1. Limited funding to address the full scope of needs of the state.
- 1.5.2. Reaching all covered populations as outlined in New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan and the NTIA Digital Equity Capacity Grant NOFO.
- 1.5.3. Ensuring all counties of the state are covered under proposed activities.
- 1.5.4. Complying to required federal reporting and audits throughout the period of performance.
- 1.5.5. Complying to required program results tracking throughout the period of performance.

1.6. LIABILITY:

- 1.6.1. This solicitation for information does not commit the State to publish a Request for Proposal or award a contract. The State shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by the Vendor in the preparation of the response. The issuance of a Request for Proposal/Bid as a result of information gathered from responses is solely at the discretion of the State.

1.7. CONFIDENTIALITY:

- 1.7.1. The State retains the right to promote transparency and to place this RFI into public domain and to make copy of the RFI available as a provision of New Hampshire access to public records laws. Please do not include any information in your RFI response that is confidential or proprietary, as the State assumes no responsibility for excluding information in response to records requests. Any request for information made by a third party will be examined in light of the exemptions provided in the New Hampshire access to public record laws.

1.8. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS:

- 1.8.1. Generally, the full contents of any proposal (including all materials submitted in connection with it, such as attachments, exhibits, addenda, and vendor presentations) become public information upon completion of final contract or purchase order negotiations with the selected vendor. Certain information concerning proposals, including but not limited to scoring, is generally available to the public even before this time, in accordance with the provisions of NH RSA 21-G:37.
- 1.8.2. Confidential, commercial or financial information may be exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV. Any and all information contained in or connected to a bid or proposal that a Respondent considers confidential shall be clearly designated in the following manner:
- 1.8.3. **If the Respondent considers any portion of a submission confidential, they shall provide a separate copy of the full and complete document, fully redacting those portions by blacking them out and shall note on the applicable page or pages of the document that the redacted portion or portions are “confidential.”** Use of any other term or method, such as stating that a document or portion thereof is “proprietary”, “not for public use”, or “for client’s use only”, is not acceptable. In addition to providing an additional fully redacted copy of the bid submission to the person listed as the point of contact on Page one (1) of this document, the identified information considered to be confidential must be accompanied by a separate letter stating the rationale for each item designated as confidential. In other words, the letter must specifically state why and under what legal authority each redaction has been made. Submissions which do not conform to these instructions by failing to include a redacted copy (if required), by failing to include a letter specifying the rationale for each redaction, by failing to designate redactions in the manner required by these instructions, or by including redactions which are contrary to these instructions or operative law may be rejected by the State as not conforming to the requirements of the bid or proposal. Marking or designating an entire proposal, attachment or section as confidential shall neither be accepted nor honored by the State. Marking an entire bid, proposal, attachment or full sections thereof confidential without taking into consideration the public’s right to know shall neither be accepted nor honored by the State.
- 1.8.4. Notwithstanding any provision of this request for submission to the contrary, proposed pricing shall be subject to public disclosure REGARDLESS of whether or not marked as confidential.
- 1.8.5. If a request is made to the State by any person or entity to view or receive copies of any portion of a proposal, the State will assess what information it believes is subject to release; notify the Respondent that the request has been made; indicate what, if any, portions of the proposal or related material shall be released; and notify the Respondent of the date it plans to release the materials. To halt the release of information by the State, a Respondent must initiate and provide to the State, prior to the date specified in the notice, a court action in the Superior Court of the State of New Hampshire, at its sole expense, seeking to enjoin the release of the requested information.
- 1.8.6. By submitting a proposal, Respondent acknowledge and agree that:
- 1.8.6.1. The State may disclose any and all portions of the proposal or related materials which are not marked as confidential and/or which have not been specifically explained in the letter to the person identified as the point of contact for this RFP;
- 1.8.6.2. The State is not obligated to comply with a Respondent’s designations regarding confidentiality and must conduct an independent analysis to assess the confidentiality of the information submitted in your proposal; and

- 1.8.6.3. The State may, unless otherwise prohibited by court order, release the information on the date specified in the notice described above without any liability to a Respondent.

2. RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS

2.1. RESPONSE PACKAGE, DESTINATION AND DEADLINE:

- 2.1.1. Interested parties may submit a response to the State of New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs by **email to broadband@livefree.nh.gov**. All responses must be clearly marked with subject line: **RFI 2025-07 NH Digital Equity Plan Execution**. **Note: We cannot accept files larger than 7 MB.**
- 2.1.2. IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES EMAILING YOUR RESPONSE OR YOU WISH TO VERIFY THAT YOUR RESPONSE HAS BEEN RECEIVED, PLEASE EMAIL **BROADBAND@LIVEFREE.NH.GOV**.

2.2. INQUIRIES:

- 2.2.1. All questions concerning this RFI must be submitted in writing to broadband@livefree.nh.gov by 4:00PM local time on the date indicated in Section 1.2 TIMELINE. All question emails must be clearly marked with subject line: **Questions - RFI 2025-07 NH Digital Equity Plan Execution**. Answers will be posted on the Bureau of Purchase & Property website as an Addendum. **Phone calls will not be accepted.**
- 2.2.2. Please be sure your questions are clearly stated and include your name, company name and a phone number. (Only the questions will be published as addenda.)

2.3. RESPONSE CONTENT:

- 2.3.1. Respondents are requested to furnish the following as part of their response:
- 2.3.1.1. The business name, address, place of business, contact information, including representative name and alternate (if available), telephone number(s), and e-mail address(es).
 - 2.3.1.2. Summary of the respondent's business and its experience as it relates to the services outlined in the RFI.
 - 2.3.1.3. List of programs for which you are currently providing Digital Equity services.
 - 2.3.1.3.1. In what counties of the state are these services or programs available?
 - 2.3.1.4. Description of respondents proposed solutions, and how these would best meet the Department's objectives. The description should also identify known or potential concerns with, or barriers to, the solutions.
- 2.3.2. The response to this RFI should consider the following:
- 2.3.2.1. Would you consider acting as lead administrator of all key areas listed in Section 1.3?
 - 2.3.2.2. How would the estimated available funds of \$4,000,000 be allocated in pursuing the individual key areas described in Section 1.3?
 - 2.3.2.3. What are key priorities for successful delivery and measurement of results within the key areas described in Section 1.3?
 - 2.3.2.4. The goal of the plan and funding is to provide services and programs to every county in the state, what steps would be considered to ensure this is accomplished?
 - 2.3.2.5. The Digital Equity Capacity Grant requires all covered populations be the focus, how would this be incorporated when developing plans? Would partnerships or relationships be developed with organizations representing these covered populations?

- 2.3.2.6. How would continuity of programs beyond the period of performance be considered?
- 2.3.2.7. What other information would you desire that the Department provide to assist you with your submittal of a proposal if an RFP were to be issued?

3. CLOSING

3.1. CLOSING REMARKS:

3.1.1. The State of New Hampshire, Department Business and Economic Affairs thanks you for your efforts in preparing a response. Although this Request for Information does not require the State to issue a Request for Bid/Proposal or to award contracts, the information gathered in this process will be highly beneficial and will inform the State's decision-making process.

3.2. VENDOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

3.2.1. Please provide contact information below for a person knowledgeable of and who can answer questions regarding your response.

Contact Person

Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Vendor Company Name

Vendor Address