Section I. Grant Program General Information

I. 1. Description of the Grant Program

The NJDOE 2020 Bridging the Digital Divide grant opportunity is a three-month program focused on purchasing technology equipment to ensure equitable teaching and learning environments, to give students and teachers access to remote learning devices and the necessary broadband service to connect with school educational materials. This includes special attention to special education, English learner, and low-income populations. And bridging the gaps to allow districts across the state to deploy one-to-one devices to students and staff.

I. 2. Program Design

The Administration’s approach to closing the digital divide is three-pronged and consists of the following:

1. The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) released today a Request for Information (RFI), seeking information and ideas to bridge the digital divide for New Jersey’s pre-K-to-12 students, including philanthropic support from companies and organizations to help close the digital divide in public schools. The RFI is available here and interested parties will have until July 31, 2020 to respond. District information from the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) will help connect school districts in need with identified philanthropic partners and potential solutions.

2. The DOE will offer a one-time $54 million formula grant using a portion of the State’s federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. This funding will be disbursed to public school districts to purchase digital devices and internet connectivity for one-to-one student use based on need and the availability of philanthropic donations.

3. After philanthropy and ESSER Fund grants have been exhausted, the Administration will redirect Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) funds to close any remaining gap and fill the unmet digital device and internet connectivity needs of New Jersey students. Up to $44 million in CRF funds will be available for this purpose, with an additional $6 million available for nonpublic schools. Because of the ongoing and unparalleled financial strain the COVID-19 pandemic has created across the board in the State, is critical to exhaust philanthropic opportunities and CARES Act funding prior to filling remaining gaps with CRF funds. This will ensure that CRF funds can be efficiently directed to address as many critical needs as possible.

Schools in New Jersey were closed to in-person instruction in March 2020 when Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 104 to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. While school closures were necessary to protect public health, the DOE estimates that more than 230,000 students across the state have been impacted by the digital divide. Last month, the DOE released guidance to assist schools in preparing for the upcoming school year and establishing a learning model that includes the possibility of employing both remote and in-person learning, meaning that students will need continued access to the internet and digital devices. After considering other available district funding sources and estimating need based on June 2020 survey data and low-income enrollment data, the DOE estimates that the cost to close the digital divide is approximately $54 million.

I. 3. Statutory/Regulatory Source and Funding

The applicant’s project must be designed and implemented in conformance with all applicable state and federal regulations. The Digital Divide is funded from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) Fund and the COVID Relief Fund (CRF), CFDA numbers: ESSERF- CFDA 84.425D and CRF- 21.019.
I. 4. **Eligible Applicant**

Local Education Agencies

I. 5. **Grant Program Term**

08-01-2020 – 10-31-2020 – 3 Months

I. 6. **Federal Compliance Requirements (DUNS and SAM Registrations)**

In accordance with the Federal Fiscal Accountability Transparency Act (FFATA), all grant recipients must have a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and must also be registered with the federal System for Award Management (SAM), the successor to the federal Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. DUNS’ numbers are issued by Dun and Bradstreet and are available at no cost to all entities required to register under FFATA.

- To obtain a DUNS number, go to [http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/](http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/)
- To register with the SAM database, go to [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)

Applicants are required to submit their DUNS number and expiration date of their SAM registration as part of the EWEG application using the appropriate EWEG tab (contacts) and must certify that they will ensure that their registration will remain active for the entire grant period.

Applicants must also print the “Entity Overview” page from their [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) profile (which displays their DUNS number and street address with ZIP+4 code), and upload a scan of the page using the UPLOAD tab.

I. 7. **FFATA Executive compensation disclosure criteria**

In the preceding fiscal year, if an applicant:

- Received at least $25,000,000 in annual gross revenues from federal awards; **and**,  
- If at least eighty (80) percent of the applicant’s annual gross revenues came from federal awards; the applicant is required to disclose the name and total compensation of the five (5) most highly compensated officers of the applicant as part of the grant application.

This information is to be entered using the appropriate EWEG tab (contacts). The term “federal award” includes federal contracts, sub-contracts, grants, and sub-grants.

No award will be made to an applicant not in compliance with FFATA.

I. 8. **Sub-granting Funds**

Eligible Sub-grantees: **Not applicable for this grant.**

Sub-grantees must have the capacity to provide services within the grant term.

Written Agreements: Written agreements between the grantee and each sub-grantee are required. A copy of the written agreement must be provided to DOE for review. The written agreement shall include a scope of services which details the services the sub-grantee will be providing, how the grantee will measure a sub-grantee’s progress, reporting requirements of the sub-grantee and the amount of funds that will be sub-granted. The grantee/sub-grantee agreement must use the same budget categories listed in the grantee’s Budget and include a disbursement schedule. The written agreement shall include provisions for early termination of the agreement if the sub-grantee fails to perform under the terms of the agreement.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The subgrantee/s is subject to the same terms and conditions as the grantee.

I. 9. **Minimum Deliverables**

As stated in the Digital Need tab in the Digital Divide EWEG application.
Digital Divide Program Guidance

I. 9. a. Eligible Activities
As stated in the Digital Divide Plan tab in the Digital Divide EWEG application.

I. 10. Apportionment of Grant Funds
Grants funds are to be used solely for the costs associated and incurred as a result of implementing the grant program.

Total Administrative Cap: $0
Total Indirect Costs Cap: $0

Funds are to be used to purchase technology devices and equipment that will bring the district closer to bridging their digital divide identified by the district in the EWEG application.

I. 9. a. Eligible Costs - (see the Quick Reference for Commonly Requested Costs or the Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts to locate the appropriate budget costs codes. When requesting for travel reimbursement the current rates available from the US General Service Administration https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates

Cost associated with purchasing technology devices and equipment as stated in the Digital Need tab of the EWEG Digital Divide application.

I. 9. b. Ineligible Costs - The NJDOE will not reimburse grantees or sub-grantees for ineligible costs. Ineligible costs include:

Supplanting: Costs for salaries, services or media which are covered under other federal, state or private funding.

Outside of grant term: costs incurred outside of the grant term

Existing staff: salaries and/or benefits for existing staff are not eligible unless they are assigned program responsibilities.

Routine operating/admin costs: costs for the routine operation of or administration of the organization are not eligible except when part of the approved budget (see section b of the grant/loan agreement).

No benefit: costs incurred for salaries, services or media which do not benefit the end user of the grant program.

Not reasonable or necessary: cost which are not reasonable or necessary to carry out the grant.

Poorly Documented/Undocumented: Costs which are not supported by adequate documentation.

Curriculum Development or Expansion of Curriculum unless specified by the grant program as an eligible activity.

I. 11. Open Public Records
Please be advised that in accordance with the Open Public Records Act P.L. 2001, c. 404, all applications for discretionary grant funds received September 1, 2003 or later, as well as the evaluation results associated with these applications, and other information regarding the competitive grants process, will become matters of public record upon the completion of the evaluation process, and will be available to members of the public upon request.
Section II.  Grantee Requirements

The grantee is expected to complete the goal(s) and objectives laid out in the approved Digital Divide grant application in the EWEG, complete implementation activities established in its grant agreement, and make satisfactory progress toward the completion of its approved action plan. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) of the grantee’s eligibility for the continuation of grant funding. The Department of Education will remove ineligible, inappropriate or undocumented costs from funding consideration.

II. 1.  Mandatory Orientation and Training

The grantee may be required to attend a program orientation. The NJDOE staff will acquaint the grantee with the general requirements of the program, including grant management, mandated staffing, procedures, general information and compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.

II. 2.  Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to submit reports on activities on a quarterly basis. The grantee will ensure that all reports are uploaded on to EWEG by the due dates. Failure to deliver the reports by due dates may result in the Grantee achieving an unsatisfactory rating and may result in the stop of all NJDOE program payments (as noted in section II. 5. of this NGO.)

II. 2. a. Interim Activity Reports

These reports are to be delivered to NJDOE via electronic format uploaded on to the EWEG system. Reports submitted by other means will not be accepted and will be considered late if not uploaded by the due date listed below. This report tracks actual progress in meeting benchmarks for production of education, outreach, and training events. Specific instructions for completing each report is found in this link.

II. 2. b. Fiscal Reimbursement and Fiscal Interim Report Requirements

Reimbursement Request: The grantee shall request monthly, at a minimum, quarterly reimbursement payment from the NJDOE. The grantee will complete a reimbursement request through the EWEG payment system. Reimbursements request will be shut down 30 days prior to the end of the grant period. Any payments due to the grantee will be paid out in the Final Expenditure Report. Specific instructions for completing this report is found in this link.

Requests may begin once the contract has been fully executed and processed by the NJDOE. All programs are reimbursement only programs. Grantees will be reimbursed based on the grantee’s actual incumbered expenditures. Grantees must submit requests not later than the 15th of the month in order to receive payment the following month.

In making disbursements to any third party with whom the Grantee may contract to undertake the Project, the Grantee shall ensure that disbursements are made upon delivery of satisfactory work product and in accordance to the Department’s program policies.

Fiscal Interim Reports: These reports are due quarterly with the interim activity report. In this report, the grantee will report on actual expenditures incurred during the quarterly period and reconcile those expenditures with what the grantee has been paid through their reimbursement request. The expenditures reported in the interim report should match what has been paid to the district during the report period.

Final Expenditure Reports: This is the same as the Interim report, except that this report generates a final payment to the grantee.
II. 2. c. Reporting Periods
Reimbursement requests are due by the 15th of every month.
The reporting periods are as follows:

Final Report 1
Reporting periods: 8/1/2020 – 10/31/2020
Date Due: 11/15/2020

II. 3. Monitoring
The NJDOE Program Managers will schedule on-site monitoring visits with the Program Coordinator during the term of the Program contract to review program performance and fiscal documentation. These visits may be a comprehensive program assessment, or they may be oriented toward a review of performance in specific areas. In either case, Program staff shall cooperate with Program Managers and provide them with files and other information as requested.

II. 4. Acceptable Documentation for Grant Monitoring
Full and detailed documentation for grant expenditures shall be retained at the organization’s level for monitoring purposes. This shall include expenditures of the Grantee and all sub-grantees.

II. 4. a. Activity Reports: Education/Outreach Events/Activities – Properly completed Activity Report detailing events and activities. Flyers, attendance sheets, newspaper clippings should be retained at the agency for monitoring purposes.

II. 4. b. Reimbursements: Staffing – all time sheets and payroll records for any salaries paid using the Digital Divide funds must be retrained by the Grantee for both monitoring and reimbursement purposes. If staff is assigned part-time to the grant, a cost allocation sheet should accompany the reimbursement request.

Travel – mileage records must include the date of travel, the point of origin and its designation (home/office), the sites visited, the purpose of the travel and ending location. Commutation must be subtracted from the mileage claimed. Travel reimbursement rate is 35 cents per mile. Receipts for parking and tolls must be retained.

Mailings – Receipts for postage and other materials and services associated with photocopying, printing and distribution of materials. Cost allocation based upon agency budget may be acceptable. Please review with DOE representative.

Training – receipts for payment of training providers, course materials, venue, proof of attendance and copies of any certificates awarded.

Other costs – receipts, invoices and purchases orders with sufficient detail to determine that the expenditure is an eligible cost under the program.
Digital Divide Program Guidance

II. 5. **Grant Agreement Modifications**

As referenced in Section XIV of Attachment A: Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions contains guidelines for budget modifications. Grantees may move funds budgeted in one approved GAAP category to another approved GAAP category without DOE approval when: the transfer of funds does not result in a change in the scope of work (scope of work means program changes representing a significant departure from the originally approved project under the grant agreement); the cumulative amount of all transfers does not exceed ten (10%) percent of the total grant agreement amount, the funds are not transferred to or from a restricted line item such as subgrants, equipment or indirect costs [link to instructions and modification forms].

IMPORTANT NOTE: The grant’s subgrantee/s is subject to the same terms and conditions as the grantee including all grant modifications.

II. 6. **Suspension/Cancellation of Grant/Loan Agreement and/or Reduction in Funding**

The Department reserves the right to suspend and/or cancel this Grant/Loan Agreement for nonperformance of any of Grant/Loan Agreement provisions. Failure by the Grantee to comply with agreement stipulations, standards or conditions may give the Department cause to suspend this agreement and withhold further payments, prohibit additional obligations or project funds pending corrective action, disallow all or part of the cost associated with the noncompliance, terminate this agreement or take other remedies that may be legally available.

Formal written notice of suspension/cancellation of grant/loan agreement and/or reduction in funding will be provided to the grantee in advance of the adverse action to be taken together with recommendations to correct deficiencies. Grantees that correct deficiencies in accordance with guidance provided in the written notice shall be reinstated.

II. 7. **Grant Close Out**

The Grantee shall provide all documentation necessary to close out this agreement within 60 days of the agreement’s ending date. If performance is ahead of schedule, the documentation should be submitted within 60 days of the conclusion of grant activities. Documentation will include the Final Report referenced in paragraph II. 2. b above.