BAND-NC Rapid Response Community Innovation Grant Application

Accepting applications on a rolling basis through August 31

COVID-19 is exposing the digital divide in North Carolina and its consequences for all of us. Students and adults who don't have access to the internet, don't have a computer or laptop, or don't know how to use them - for education, work, health or connection - are at an impossible disadvantage.

Digital Inclusion – creating opportunities for everyone to access and be able to use affordable internet and devices – is more important than ever.

In response to this immediate need, the Institute for Emerging Issues at NC State (IEI) in partnership with the Broadband Infrastructure Office at the NC Department of Information Technology, and with principal support from the John M. Belk Endowment[1], is addressing the digital divide across NC through a new program called "Building a New Digital Economy" (BAND-NC). **BAND-NC will provide rapid-response community innovation mini grants to communities across the state.**

This fall, grantees will be invited to join technical assistance workshops to build county-wide digital inclusion plans. A second round of funding to support the implementation of these plans will be available in Spring 2021.

How can the BAND-NC grants be used?[2]

These $5,000 mini-grants are available to fund local digital inclusion projects that include, but are not limited to:

1. Gathering data on the number of community members without internet/devices at home
2. Purchasing devices (tablets, laptops, individual hotspots, etc)[3]
3. Offering digital skills or literacy classes
4. Providing technical assistance for remote learners/workers
5. Paying for the time of a 'digital navigator' (someone who provides guidance for how to get connected and use digital tools/devices)
6. Funding subscription subsidies to low-income families
7. Staff time or consulting services for digital inclusion projects
8. Other projects related to providing affordable high speed internet, devices, digital literacy, or technical support/assistance

We plan to distribute rapid response community innovation grants to 30 counties this summer. We will only fund one project per county for the Rapid Response Community Grant.

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[1] Additional support comes from the Roanoke Electric Cooperative and North Carolina Electric Cooperatives.

[2] This grant should not replicate existing funding for but to help fill in the gaps and meet unmet needs.

[3] Significant state, federal, and private funding is supporting the purchase of devices especially for K-12 students. This funding should help fill gaps and not duplicate other funding streams.

If an organization/agency from your county has already applied, we will put you in touch to encourage collaboration.

Who Can Apply: Nonprofits, government institutions, schools/colleges and universities, and churches are eligible to apply for a BAND-NC grant.[4] All applicants should apply on behalf of a county (or a group of counties). Regional entities, such as Councils of Government, can apply on behalf of multiple counties, though the funds cannot exceed $5,000 for any one county, and they must include individual counties in their planning efforts. Applicants should include a list of community partners who are either involved in the project and/or actively supportive of the project and digital inclusion more broadly.

While not required, we highly encourage communities to identify other funding sources to further leverage the $5,000 rapid response grant.

Have questions about Digital Inclusion, BAND-NC, and/or the application criteria? Attend the **Introductory Webinar on Friday, June 19 at 9 a.m.** hosted by IEI and the North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office.

Application Criteria: The application narrative must not exceed 2 pages, single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. The cover page, and budget are not included in the 2-page limit.

Section	Description
Cover Page	Contact information of applicant organization(s)
Narrative (1-2 pages total)	Description of proposed digital inclusion project
	Partners and local engagement
	Intended Outcomes and metrics
	Potential Barriers
Budget (1 page total)	Simple budget indicating how you plan to spend the funding. Please include any leveraged funding.

Cover Page
A Cover Page template is included on page 4 of these application instructions.
Narrative

> Description of Proposed Digital Inclusion Project Tell us about the project you plan to implement or expand. Who will it serve? What is your desired outcome and how does it meet unmet needs in your county? How will you spend the $5,000 grant? What gaps from other funding will this address?

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[4] If you are not a local government agency, please indicate who you are working with in local government

Potential Barriers: Discuss any barriers you might encounter.

Partners and Local Engagement: Applicants should include a list of community partners and describe their involvement in the project and/or their support of digital inclusion more broadly. Partners may include but are not limited to: entities of local government (city and county commissioners), educational institutions (K-12, community colleges and universities), businesses, nonprofit organizations, internet service providers, and faith groups. We encourage applicants to reach out to these partners in advance of developing their application. If you are not a local government agency, please indicate who you are working with in local government

Intended Outcomes and Metrics: What are your intended outcome(s) and metrics for the project? How will you define success?

Budget:
Please include a simple budget that shows how you plan to spend the funding. The budget should be in the following categories:

- Payroll
- Contracted services (payments to independent contractors, external organizations, etc.)
- Supplies and materials
- Travel
- Current services (communication, utilities, printing, repairs/maintenance, postage/freight/express, advertising, data processing, etc)
- Fixed charges

Please also include any leveraged funding.

Application submission and review:

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through **Sunday, August 31, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. EST**. To apply, fill out the Google Form where you will attach your application (cover page, narrative, and budget) in a ***single PDF***. If you have questions or technical difficulties, please reach out to Maggie Woods, IEI's Policy and Program Manager, at mjwoods2@ncsu.edu.

An email will be sent to confirm receipt of the application. Your application will be reviewed against the criteria described above and select finalists to be awarded the $5,000 grants. IEI will also weigh geographic diversity and the needs of more under-resourced counties. The selection committee will review applications on a rolling basis every three weeks. We will do our best to let you know if your project has been selected within a month of submission.

Grantee Expectations:

- Selected grantees will be required to submit a 1-2 page report by November 30, 2020 describing how they used BAND-NC funds.
- Grantees are highly encouraged to attend a series of workshops this fall to build a digital inclusion plan in your community. Additional funding will be available on a competitive basis in Spring 2021 to support implementation of digital inclusion plans. Fall workshop dates are as follows: October 27 and November 10 from 10:30 a.m.-12 noon (Tentative dates)

BAND-NC Grant Application
Cover Page Template

Lead Applicant Organization (organization to receive the $5,000 grant)	
Name of Person Submitting Application:	
Email	
Phone	
Partners Involved (List all)	