

## **BAND-NC Grant Application Fall 2021**

**Application deadline: November 1st at 11:59 p.m.**

COVID-19 has exposed 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.***

The Institute for Emerging Issues at NC State (IEI) in partnership with the Department of Information Technology, and with principal support from the John M. Belk Endowment<sup>1</sup> and follow-on funding from numerous others, is addressing the digital divide across NC through a program called “Building a New Digital Economy” (BAND-NC). **BAND-NC will provide mini grants to communities across the state who want to develop or implement digital inclusion plans.**

Grantees will be invited to join technical assistance workshops to learn more about digital inclusion and how to build county-wide digital inclusion plans.

### **How can the BAND-NC grants be used?**

\$5,000 mini-grants are available to fund local digital inclusion planning and implementation efforts including:

1. **Digital Inclusion planning:** Counties and communities that want to begin developing a digital inclusion plan can apply for planning funds.
2. **Digital Inclusion Plan implementation:** Counties and communities that have already completed or drafted a digital inclusion plan can apply for funds to implement a portion of their plan.

**Who Can Apply:** Nonprofits, government institutions, schools/colleges and universities, and churches are eligible to apply for a BAND-NC grant.<sup>2</sup> 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 Thursday, September 9th at 2 p.m. hosted by IEI.***

---

<sup>1</sup>Additional support comes from the Roanoke Electric Cooperative, North Carolina Electric Cooperatives, Duke Energy, Corning Optical, Google Fiber, PNC Foundation, ATMC, CoBank, Corning Foundation, and the Hillsdale Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> If you are not a local government agency, please indicate who you are working with in local government.

**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 planning process or proposed digital inclusion project. If applying to implement a portion of your digital inclusion plan, please indicate how this project fits into your plan goals.
	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 leveraged funding.
Digital Inclusion Plan	Upload a copy of your plan or draft plan if applicable. This plan should be a community-wide plan that incorporates the voices/needs of community members and stakeholders. It should not be a document created in a vacuum.

**Cover Page**

A Cover Page template is included on page 5 of these application instructions.

**Narrative**

Description of Planning Process or Proposed Digital Inclusion Project:

If you are applying for a planning grant, tell us about your goals for the digital inclusion plan and where you are in the process. What is your desired outcome? How will you spend the \$5,000 grant?

If applying to implement a portion of your digital inclusion plan, please indicate how this project fits into your plan goals. Who will the project serve? What is your desired outcome and how does it meet unmet needs in your county?

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 planning process and/or their support of digital inclusion more broadly. If you’ve already developed your digital inclusion plan, please list what partners were a part of the planning. If you want to start a planning process, please indicate what partners are already at the table and who you’d like to include.

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:**

The application deadline is through **Monday, November 1st 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 are applying to implement a part of your digital inclusion plan, you will also be asked to submit that plan (or drafted plan) as part of application.

If you have questions or technical difficulties, please reach out to Maggie Woods at [mjwoods2@ncsu.edu](mailto:mjwoods2@ncsu.edu).

An email will be sent to confirm receipt of the application. Your application will be reviewed against the criteria described above. The selection committee will review all applications after the November 1st deadline.

Our North Star: IEI will also weigh geographic diversity and the needs of more under-resourced counties. We understand that digital inclusion affects regions, counties and people differently and that there is no one-size-fits all approach to meeting local needs. However, national and state-level data demonstrates that certain groups are experiencing *digital exclusion* at higher rates than others, including low-income households, Black, Latino, immigrant and Tribal communities, seniors, and those without access to the internet in their homes. Extra consideration will be granted to projects that serve these groups.

### **Grantee Expectations:**

- Selected grantees will be required to submit a final report describing how they used BAND-NC funds (reporting deadline TBD)
- Grantees are highly encouraged to attend any technical assistance trainings or workshops on digital inclusion hosted by IEI.

**BAND-NC Grant Application  
Cover Page Template**

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