# Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) 2.0 Program Guidelines

Version 1.0

**September 12, 2024**

# Table Of Contents

# DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT KANSANS (DOCK) 2.0

## Executive Summary

The Kansas Office of Broadband Development (KOBD) under the Kansas Department of Commerce was established to help ensure all Kansans have the opportunity to live, work, play, learn and compete in a global economy by improving universal access to quality, reliable and affordable broadband. Complementing the efforts surrounding improving universal access to all Kansans, the KOBD published the Kansas Digital Equity (DE) Plan in January 2024 that supports Kansans and associated communities in developing the technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. To achieve the vision and goals for digital equity, key measurable objectives were established to guide KOBD's efforts to close the digital equity gap in Kansas. These include:

- Improved availability of broadband across Kansas
- Increased access to and adoption of affordable broadband service
- Focusing on the growth of digital skills, education, and knowledge
- Increased awareness of and proficiency in dealing with online privacy and cybersecurity issues
- Expanding access to affordable devices with accommodating technical support
- Promoting the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services

Digital equity is critical for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. As access to affordable broadband becomes a reality through various state and federal programs, the necessary digital literacy and skill sets need to be enhanced to ensure Kansans can fully utilize the soon-to-be-enabled affordable broadband internet access. In response to this need, the KOBD launched the $4.75 million Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) Program on January 12, 2024, to enhance digital literacy and digital skill sets for Kansans. On May 30, 2024, the State of Kansas awarded $2.8 million to 15 organizations to improve digital literacy and digital skill sets for Kansans. Approximately $1.9 million in digital literacy funding within the DOCK program remains to be awarded.

The KOBD is launching the Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) 2.0 Program to award the remaining $1.9 million in digital literacy funding to qualifying applicants. Funding will be awarded to applications that best advance digital skills within Kansas. The DOCK 2.0 Program will build upon the original DOCK program to further enable Kansans to obtain the digital literacy and associated skills necessary to live, learn, work, play and compete equitably in a technology-driven society.

## Program Overview

The objective of the Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) 2.0 Program administered through the KOBD is to enhance digital literacy and skills training in Kansas.  DOCK 2.0 Program applications will be accepted with priority given to applications that serve the covered population in economically distressed areas.  Applicants are expected to engage community leaders and stakeholders in the development of projects that will benefit Kansas citizens and communities.  Key information for the program is as follows:

- Total program funding available: Up to $1.9 million in grant awards
- Maximum individual award:  $250,000
- Minimum applicant match: 2% of total project cost
- Minimum co-investment amount:  1% of total project cost
- Solicitation date:  September 12, 2024
- Application window:  Ten (10) weeks
- Potential award date:  After February 27, 2025
- Project period:  September 12, 2024, through July 31, 2026
- Funding source:  Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF)
- KOBD reserves the right to distribute funds geographically to ensure Kansans can equally benefit from the program
- Governing Compliance Reference:  Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) applies to this program, including the Cost Principles and Single Audit Act requirements.  Additionally, 2 CFR 200.471 and 2 CFR 200.216 identify specific telecommunications and video surveillance costs that are unallowable
- Investments in equipment must be carried out in ways that comply with applicable federal laws, including Public Law 115-232, Section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2019.  It contains prohibitions on the use of grant funds to procure or obtain certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment provided or produced by designated entities, including certain entities owned or controlled by the People's Republic of China.  The grantee will be required to certify that it shall not provide or procure to the State of Kansas or any agency thereof any covered telecommunications equipment either in whole or in part of any product or during the commission of any service

## Grant Timeline

The application window will be open for ten (10) weeks.  Applicant interviews for selected applications will follow public comment and applicant response windows, which will be followed by Kansas Department of Commerce leadership grant selection and award announcements.  Program timelines are provided below for reference.

**Table 1:  Approximate DOCK 2.0 Program Timeline By Week**

| | Week # | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| DOCK 2.0 | Application Window | | | | | | | | | | Public Comment Window | | Applicant Response Window | | Grant Evaluations | | | | | Applicant Interviews | | | | Final Evaluations | | | Leadership Review | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | Grant Evaluations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Specific DOCK 2.0 Program Timeline Milestones:
- August 30, 2024:  Program Guidelines Posted
- September 12, 2024:  Program Period Begins / Application Window Opens (10 weeks)
- October 8, 2024: Grant Webinar
- November 18, 2024: Application Window Closes (5pm CST)
- November 21, 2024: Public Comment Window Opens (1 week)
- November 27, 2024: Public Comment Window Closes (5pm CST)
- December 4, 2024: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Opens (1 week)
- December 10, 2024: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Closes
- January 9, 2025, through February 13, 2025: Applicant Interviews and Final Applicant Deliberations (5 weeks)
- February 14, 2025, through February 27, 2025: Award Recommendations to Kansas Leadership
- February 28, 2025:  Awards announcement
- Program period ends:  July 31, 2026

KOBD reserves the right to modify the program timeline after the program guidelines are posted as well as request additional information regarding applications throughout the application review period.

## Eligibility

### Eligible Applicants
Applicants must have a demonstrated history in the planning and delivery of digital literacy and skills development training capabilities at no charge to targeted populations.  Required capabilities include but are not limited to:
- Skills assessment and training
- Curriculum development
- Content creation and delivery
- Monitoring program outcomes

Eligible applicants include:
- Non-profit organizations
- Political subdivisions or entities of political subdivisions
- Counties
- Municipalities
- For-profit businesses and organizations, including broadband service providers
- Tribal Governments
- Libraries
- School districts
- Museums
- Higher education institutions
- Co-operatives
- Electric Utilities

The applicant must be an established organization that has been operating for a minimum of one (1) year in the State of Kansas as of October 8, 2024.

## Eligible Solutions
Eligible digital literacy and skills development solutions include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Digital literacy and skills assessment
- Digital literacy and skills development curriculum design
- Content creation and delivery
- Monitoring program outcomes
- Promoting collaboration between digital equity organizations to expand offerings that could fund opportunities to pilot new collaborations from cohort support
- Enabling established digital literacy and skill development partners to continue to build their footprint until digital equity services are offered statewide
- Funding train-the-trainer programs for organizations that are rapidly expanding their digital navigation systems and building a cadre of certified and qualified trainers (Navigators) capable of providing:
  - Basic device support
  - Guidance for online public services
  - Information on navigating the internet
  - Training for commonly used software
- Identifying, supporting, and promoting programs that build basic and advanced digital skills for high-demand workforce careers including technology-forward programs in higher education institutions, technology skills programs
- Expanding technology-centric "Career Cluster" for K-12 students, paying particular attention to areas with historic underinvestment
- Aligning existing efforts on cybersecurity with the Kansas Office of Information Technology Services (OITS), the universities, community colleges, the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), and others to ensure there is a continued evolution of and learning about cybersecurity issues, including providing funding to increase cybersecurity awareness and facility awareness for covered populations

## Eligible Program Costs
Eligible project expenses are expenses related to directly enabling digital literacy and skills training and include, but are not limited to, items such as:
- Costs associated with completing the grant or Application and Grant Plan
- Pre-project development costs and uses, including data-gathering, feasibility studies, community engagement and public feedback processes, equity assessments and planning, and needs assessments
- Personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants required for directly carrying out the project (such as project managers, program directors, subject matter experts, equity consultants, and grant administrators)
- Cost of long-term leases (for terms greater than one year) of facilities required to provide digital literacy and skills training
- Ancillary costs necessary to improve digital literacy
- Costs associated with monitoring and reporting on Projects in compliance with Treasury requirements, including award closeout costs

- Costs associated with collecting and measuring performance data and conducting activities needed to establish and maintain a performance management and evaluation regime related to Projects funded by the Capital Projects Fund program
- Computer equipment, accessories and software supporting digital literacy and skills development
- Digital literacy and skills assessment, training, and curriculum design
- Program creation
- Content creation and delivery
- Program support costs not to exceed 10% of the total subrecipient award (those costs tied directly to the delivery of a particular project or service undertaken by the subrecipient to achieve an outcome intended by the funding program)

Computer equipment, accessories and software may be purchased to augment current digital literacy and skills development capabilities. However, computer equipment, accessories and software may not exceed 30% of the submitted budget as the DOCK 2.0 Program is not intended to become an equipment distribution program. All equipment, accessory and software plans and associated purchases must be approved by KOBD prior to orders being placed. Subrecipients will own and maintain the computer equipment, accessories, and software.

Subrecipients must have an effective asset management plan and/or system that must include, but is not limited to, the following:
- The ability to inventory all devices that are part of the project contained in a readily accessible database. Each device entry must at minimum contain the make and model, an associated serial number, date of purchase, date of warranty expiration, and estimated life of use (or replacement date)
- The ability to tag all devices with property tags or install asset management software on the device. Each tag should contain a unique identifier to track the device in the inventory
- A surveillance capability to track the location of all devices

Grant expenses must be incurred, and funds *expended* during the project period per the official grant agreement. Funds may be used for costs incurred after September 12, 2024, subject to approval. All funds must be expended by July 31, 2026.

## Ineligible Program Costs
Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:
- Operating expenses such as utility costs
- Short-term operating leases (for terms less than one (1) year)
- Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments or other debt service costs
- Fees or issuance costs associated with the issuance of new debt
- Satisfaction of any obligation arising under or pursuant to a settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, or judicially confirmed debt restructuring plan in a judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceeding
- To support or oppose collective bargaining. This does not affect the ability to use funds to comply with 41 C.F.R. 60-1.4
- Capital costs to enable broadband services via telecommunications electronics, Wi-Fi equipment, fiber or cable assets

## Application Process

The KOBD will conduct an online webinar informing potential applicants of the Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) 2.0 Program grant opportunity. Guidelines will be posted online for applicants to review. To apply for the grant award, applicants will be invited to submit information on an established online portal. This process will evaluate the project proposal, the project justification, and the proposed budget. Business, economic, and community development professionals and technical experts will be enlisted to review project submissions. Applicants being considered for the award will participate in a final interview to be held via an interactive meeting platform. Once the final recommendation has been developed, the Kansas Department of Commerce leadership will review and finalize the award recommendations.

### Application Submission

The application window will be open for ten (10) weeks. KOBD reserves the right to modify the program guidelines and/or application window timeframes to generate an adequate number of viable applications.

The application contains three primary sections: Project Proposal, Project Justification, and Project Budget. The submission will require documents designated for public posting during a public comment period. Citizens will be provided with the opportunity to comment on proposed projects during the Public Comment Period. If multiple applications provide solutions for the same targeted population within the same area or economically distressed areas, KOBD reserves the right to select one or more projects that provide the most significant overall benefit to Kansans.

An application guide will be available to assist in developing and submitting applications.

## Public Comment Period

To ensure transparency and the best use of taxpayer funds, the application and selection process will include a one (1) week public comment period followed by a one (1) week applicant response period. This process is intended to allow elected officials, constituents, and citizens within the community to either express support or inform KOBD of any issues or concerns regarding an application. Any issues or concerns brought forward should be focused on organizational capability, impact to the community, financial stewardship/appropriateness and/or benefits to covered populations. All comments expressing concern collected during the public comment period will be considered "challenges" and are subject to public disclosure. Public comment submitters will be deemed as "challengers."

## Applicant Response Period

Upon completion of the public comment period, KOBD will notify each applicant of such challenge(s). The applicant shall have one (1) week after notification to provide any supplemental information regarding the challenged application to KOBD (known as the Applicant Response Period). It is the applicant's responsibility to periodically check the KOBD website for challenges to their respective applications throughout the public comment period to ensure an applicant response can be generated.

The KOBD will evaluate the information submitted in a challenge and will not award a grant if the information submitted is credible.

## Program Inquiries

Questions regarding the application process will be accepted from the start of the application window for two (2) weeks, after which no additional questions will be accepted. KOBD will review all submitted questions and provide written responses, which will be posted to the KOBD webpage for viewing one (1) week after the two (2) week question period closes.

## General Project Information

Applicant must provide the following information during the application submission period:

- Project Name
- Primary Organizational Contacts
- Total Project Amount, Grant Funds Requested, Matching Amount, and Co-investment Amount
- City(ies) and County(ies) impacted
- Type of digital literacy and/or skills solution being proposed
- Anticipated impact: description of the project and general impact on the community
- Proposed targeted population(s)
- Economically Distressed area: Identify if the project benefits an economically distressed county. KOBD will consider an area economically distressed if either the 2022 per capita BEA PCPI or PCMI metric is below the 80% threshold. See Key Definitions section for the list of all Kansas counties that qualify as economically distressed
- Covered populations: Identify if covered populations will benefit from the proposed project. Covered populations include low-income individuals, aging individuals; incarcerated individuals active in reentry, second chance or related programs, other than those incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who (i) are English learners; and (ii) have low levels of literacy; individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; tribal nations, and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- IRS Determination Letter
- Last year's filed tax return/Form 990
- Current Year Agency Budget
- List of Management Staff

## Project Proposal - Publicly Posted

The applicant will be required to provide content describing the project proposal. The Project Proposal must include:

- An executive summary of the project: This narrative overview should include the goals of the project, needs addressed, community partners, stakeholders involved, and the intended impact
- A description of the location (City(ies), County(ies), etc.), partners involved, and anticipated improvements
- Goals of the project and community need to include: the targeted population, whether the solution is within an economically distressed area, and identification of the compelling need
- The short and long-term benefits to the community
- The community engagement strategies to reach and support the target population
- How the organization plans to raise awareness of the program
- A concise summary of the applicant's organization, detailing its history, mission, and primary objectives

- The organization's experience in providing digital literacy and skills training to individuals and/or communities

## Community Partners, Roles And Letters Of Commitment

### Narrative
Applicants will be required to provide a narrative describing any community partners associated with the project's planning, promotion, adoption, or use, including a description of each party's commitment and role in the project. Applicants must include any community anchor institutions (CAI) such as municipalities, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, libraries, public safety, or other CAIs, along with businesses, non-profits, and other community stakeholders supporting the project.

### Letters Of Commitment and Letters Of Support
Applicants must provide letters of support outlining the explicit support and role of committed partners, and letters of support as indicated. A letter of commitment may also be provided if the community wishes to further invest in the project.

#### *Letters of Commitment*
Letters of commitment should document the community partner organization sponsoring the letter and the commitment scope. Community project partners must include the following details in the letter of commitment:
- Dated letter with official organization's logo at top of letterhead
- The type of commitment being made to the project
- The partner's experience and/or ability to complete the specific service/role in the project
- Ability to complete the role within the performance period
- Approving person's signature authorizing the commitment

#### *Letters of Support*
Letters of support should document the author and the organization they represent, if applicable. Each letter of support should include the following:
- Dated letter with official organization's logo at top of letterhead
- Dated letter of the individual's name and address, if not a sponsoring organization
- Why the person and/or organization is in support of the project
- Approving person's signature authorizing the support
- Signature block and signature of the individual's name, if not a sponsoring organization

## Addressing A Critical Need Within the Community
A project must be designed to address a critical need in the community, specifically a lack of digital literacy and skills or a lack of access to digital literacy and skill development training. Targeted populations with a critical need for the project include those that do not have access to the resources or services that are provided by the project, whether because of the physical absence or insufficiency within the community of the type of resources provided by the project. Applicants will be required to define the critical need within the community and how the project will address the critical need.

## Justification For the Project

Applicants must provide a narrative to justify the need for the project. Applicants must provide evidence to make a compelling case for the project relative to how the project's targeted population will benefit from the proposed digital literacy and skills training project. Additionally, applicants must describe how the project specifically addresses one or more of the following key components of digital literacy:

1. Finding and consuming digital content
2. Physical navigation and operation of digital tools, structures, and conventions
3. Using digital tools safely, effectively, and appropriately while advocating safety and well-being online:
   o Staying safe online
   o Supporting personal wellbeing
   o Protecting digital systems and devices
4. Sharing and communicating ideas clearly, effectively, and creatively with different audiences while following appropriate digital communication practices
5. Connecting and working with others while using appropriate digital platforms and tools:
   o Connecting and interacting with others using appropriate technology
   o Collaborating with others digitally to complete a task
   o Interacting appropriately in a digital space
6. Using critical thinking and problem-solving skills coupled with technology assets to gather data, analyze information, and find a solution
   o Selecting and using appropriate digital tools for specific purposes
   o Making critical decisions and conclusions about digital data, information, and content
7. Developing methods for searching and managing digital data, information, and content
8. Searching, identifying, and validating reliable and trusted digital resources
9. Creating content and/or products through the use of digital tools to solve a problem or complete a task
10. Create employment opportunities by enhancing individual digital literacy and/or skills

Applicants able to demonstrate the strongest case and the greatest benefit to the community for their respective project will be considered for an award.

## Outcome Evaluation and Metrics

Applicants will be required to provide key data and performance indicators as listed below:
- Describe the major goals and expected outcomes of the project
- Develop and define the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the program

The key data and performance indicators must align to one or more of the applicable sub-bullet(s) of the five Strategy Activities identified on page 91 in the Kansas Digital Equity Strategic Plan found at the following link: https://www.kansascommerce.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DE-PLAN-FINAL.wo-appdx.pdf

## Sustainability and Long-term Impact

Applicants will be required to provide additional details regarding program sustainability beyond the program period as listed below:

- Detail plans for follow up and ongoing support for recipients
- Discuss how the program will contribute to long-term digital equity, digital literacy and skill improvements within the community
- Explain if and how the organization plans to sustain the program beyond the grant period, if applicable

## Service Partners

Applicant must describe any service partners or subcontractors associated with the project's deliverables related to the project, including each partner's role in the project.  The service partner description should include the following for each partner:
- Service partner organization and address
- Service partner point of contact authorizing the support
- The type of support/contribution being made to the project
- The partner's experience and/or ability to complete the specific service/role in the project
- Ability to complete the role within the performance period

## Project Plan And Milestones

The applicant must provide a project plan in .xls format that includes details relevant to each stage of the project and milestones for each phase of the project.  Project milestones should cover the entire period of the project and align with the proposed project budget.  The project timeline should include major project activities, including proposed start dates, benchmarks, and end dates.  At a minimum, the plan should incorporate the following tasks:

- Project planning
- Digital skills assessments
- Curriculum development
- Equipment procurement (if applicable)
- Training venue preparation (online or physical)
- Outreach
- Training availability
- Curriculum updates, post-launch
- Monitoring program outcomes

A template will be provided for applicants to provide requested specific project information and milestones.

## Financial And Legal

### Minimum Applicant Match

KOBD is implementing a minimum 2% applicant match model for the DOCK 2.0 Program.  The minimum applicant match percentage is based on the total project cost.  Applicant match calculations are listed in the **example** below:
- Total project cost = $100,000
- Applicant match = 2% x $100,000 = $2,000

Additional points may be awarded during the grant evaluation period if applicants provide incremental matching funds beyond the 2% match. An **example** of an applicant providing incremental matching funds beyond the minimum applicant match is below:

- Minimum applicant match is 2% of total project cost, per program guidelines
- Applicant decides to match at a 7% total project cost value
- Incremental application scoring points will be awarded for the additional 5% of total project cost matched by the applicant

## In-Kind Match

Applicant matching funds may include an in-kind match of up to 75% of the total applicant match. An in-kind match requires valuation documentation and is subject to KOBD's approval. For federal grants or federal broadband funding, applicant must check with federal funding source to determine allowability.

## Minimum Co-Investment

KOBD is implementing a minimum 1% co-investment match model for the DOCK 2.0 Program. Co-investors are defined as individuals or organizations within the benefitted community, other than the applicant, that commit funds to the project. Co-investment amounts are calculated as a percent of the total project cost as listed in the **example** below:

- Total project cost = $200,000
- Co-investment = 1% x $200,000 = $2,000

Additional points may be awarded if co-investors provide incremental funds beyond the 1% match. An **example** of a co-investor providing incremental matching funds beyond the minimum co-investment match is below:

- Minimum co-investment match is 1% of total project cost per program guidelines
- Co-investor decides to match at a 4% total project cost value
- Incremental application scoring points will be awarded for the additional 3% of total project cost matched by the co-investor

## Calculating Requested Grant Funds

Grant funds requested must be calculated to determine the overall grant request within the application. The requested grant funds amount is derived from the total project cost and then subtracting the applicant match and co-investment match from the total project cost. See the **example** below:

- Total project cost = $200,000
- Minimum applicant match = 2% x $200,000 = $4,000
- Minimum co-investment match = 1% x $200,000 = $2,000
- Calculating the requested grant funds: $200,000 - $4,000 - $2,000 = $194,000

The requested grant funds value will need to be used when developing the project budget template.

## Budget And Financial Requirements

Project budget and financial submission requirements are detailed below and include the following:

- Budget Narrative
  - Provide explanation of costs that correspond with the information included in the project budget spreadsheet

- The necessity and basis for costs
- Reflect only allowable costs consistent with project scope
- Project Budget
  - All applicants must complete and submit a budget using the provided Budget Template, located on the program website. Ensure that the minimum applicant match and co-investment match are reflected within the template.
  - Submissions that do not meet the minimum applicant match and co-investment match may not be reviewed
- Bank Verification Letter
  - All applicants must provide a bank verification letter that proves there are sufficient funds for the applicant match amount
  - Applicants may provide other acceptable proof demonstrating sufficient funds are available as noted below:
    - Companies (Public or Private) providing a bond rating from Moody's, Standard and Poor's, or Fitch of Investment Grade at the time an application is submitted
    - Companies may provide financial information of parent organization if audited financials for operating subsidiary are not available. Parent organization must still provide a bank verification letter on behalf of the applicant
  - Local government organizations or agencies may provide a signed letter of commitment from the organizational leader stating that funds have been secured in lieu of a bank verification letter
- Current Annual Income Statement
  - The last full year of applicant's income statement
- In-Kind Validation
  - Applicant must verify that matching funds include an in-kind match (see note below)
  - If matching funds include an in-kind match, the applicant must provide documentation that validates the in-kind match being submitted with the project

Note: In-kind match valuations must not exceed 75% of the required applicant match. All reimbursement claims for in-kind contributions will be evaluated for reasonableness. KOBD and the Kansas Department of Commerce will ultimately have the discretion to determine if an in-kind contribution is acceptable or not.

## Tax Clearance Requirements

Applicants will be required to provide a Certificate of Tax Clearance to ensure the applicant's State of Kansas account is in current compliance with all applicable:
- Kansas tax laws administered by the director of taxation within the Kansas Department of Revenue
- Taxes/fees/payments administered by the Kansas Department of Labor
- Other various fees/charges administered by Kansas state agencies

A Certificate of Tax Clearance can be requested at the following link (Kansas Department of Revenue - Tax Clearance Request Information (ksrevenue.gov) and will take approximately one business day to process. Applicants will be prompted to upload a .pdf version of The Certificate of Tax Clearance as part of the DOCK 2.0 application submission process.

## Applicant Attestations

Applicants must attest to certain conditions as part of the application submission process. The required attestations are listed below:
- The grant applicant is in good financial standing with the State of Kansas

- The grant applicant is not currently involved in pending litigation in association with previous Kansas-sponsored grant projects
- The grant applicant is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participating in covered transactions by any federal department or agency
- If a private entity, the grant applicant has been operating in the State of Kansas for no fewer than one (1) year
- The grant applicant has not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for the commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property
- The grant applicant is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local)
- The grant applicant has not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default
- The grant applicant agrees that if awarded funds through the program, the grant agreement will be executed within 60 days of receipt from Commerce. If the agreement is not executed within 60 days, the Kansas Department of Commerce reserves the right to reallocate funds
- All applicants will be required to sign the Department of Commerce Confidentiality Agreement at the time of application submission

## Application Evaluation Criteria

Application evaluation will be based on the overall quality of the application, including the Project Proposal, Project Justification, and financial information presented. KOBD will be evaluating applications based on projects that optimize stewardship of public dollars through collective investment and include:

- Projects that address a critical digital literacy and skills development need within the community
- Digital literacy curriculum
- Project goals and key performance indicators
- Targeted population
- Cost reasonableness
- Project viability
- Partnerships and community support
- Minimum applicant match and associated applicant match value
- Co-investment match and associated co-investment match value

### DOCK 2.0 Program Application Impact To Future Broadband Infrastructure Program Application Scores

Broadband Infrastructure Program Applicants eligible to apply for future broadband infrastructure programs who choose to submit viable DOCK 2.0 program applications may be awarded bonus points in future broadband infrastructure programs. Broadband infrastructure program points may be awarded in all non-BEAD programs for the next three program periods including, but not limited to, the Broadband

Acceleration Grant 2025, 2026 and 2027 programs. See definition of Eligible Broadband Infrastructure Program Applicants in the Key Definition section.

## Applicant Interview

KOBD will conduct interviews with the final grant candidates and associated partners and give them an opportunity to "make their case" on why funding should be provided for their specific application. This meeting should include organization and financial contacts, key project personnel, co-investors, and partners critical to the overall success of the effort. Participants should be prepared to speak about specific aspects of the proposed project, the implementation plan, the financials submitted, and the demonstrated need that supports the project. This interactive meeting will provide an opportunity for applicants to highlight key aspects of the project, the compelling needs of the proposal, and answer the question: "Why should the State of Kansas invest in this project?".

## Funds Disbursement

The Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) 2.0 Program is an expenditure reimbursement program. The KOBD will provide scheduled reimbursements only for validated grant expenditures submitted each month. Supporting documentation for expenditures (e.g., invoices, receipts) and proof of payment (e.g., checks, bank statements) must accompany the reimbursement request. Grantees must submit all required legal and contractual agreements/documents prior to funds disbursement. Reimbursements will be processed monthly for those grantees requesting reimbursement. Late or incomplete submissions may be processed for payment in the following month when sufficient documentation is not available in time to complete the reconciliation process.

KOBD will hold 10% of the grant dollars until all program requirements are completed and verified by KOBD. Grant reimbursements will not exceed the grant-funded amount in the approved budget. Should total project costs exceed the approved grant budget, grantees will be responsible for completing the proposed project without an increase in the grant award. KOBD maintains the right to recoup funding for incomplete projects or lack of adherence to program guidelines.

## Compliance

KOBD will provide a collaborative partnership and overall support for the Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) 2.0 Program Grantees by offering technical support related to reporting and compliance requirements, as listed in the following paragraphs.

### Adherence to Timelines

KOBD expects each grantee to complete their respective project on time; project extensions are discouraged. In rare cases where extensions are requested, they will be considered on a case-by-case basis. KOBD will consider the reasonableness of the request and determine whether the request is necessary.

### Monthly Reporting

KOBD offers streamlined reporting using baseline reporting templates and clear expectations for grantees participating in the program. The monthly reporting includes the following:
- A narrative update on the status of the project, including notification of any delays and any deviations from the approved scope of work
- A monthly budget expenditure report of the project

- A monthly .pdf containing supporting project expenditure documentation for the reimbursement amount requested (i.e., invoices/receipts/proof of payment)
- Updated metrics on progress toward digital literacy and skill development goals

## Single Audit Requirement

If awarded, subrecipient organizations that expend over $750,000 in **federal** funds during the organization's most recent full fiscal year must have a single audit conducted in accordance with 2 CFR 200.514 except when it elects to have a program-specific audit conducted in accordance with 2 CFR 200.507. On October 1, 2024, the expenditure threshold increases to $1 million during the organization's most recent full fiscal year. If awarded, KOBD will request the required audit documentation after the award is made.

## Program Monitoring

This program is subject to monitoring in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332 and US Treasury guidance. During the application evaluation phase, and before award announcement, applicants may be asked to complete a questionnaire to assist KOBD in developing a plan to monitor the implementation of the program and the capacity of each organization to manage the federal funds. This questionnaire in no way impacts the scoring or selection of applications for award. After awards are made, KOBD will implement a plan to monitor subrecipients that may include remote or in-person meetings, desk reviews, and monitoring visits. The purpose of subrecipient monitoring is to ensure that the subaward is used for authorized purposes, in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward; and that subaward performance goals are achieved [2 CFR 200.332(d)].

## Quarterly Meetings

At KOBD's discretion, grantees may be asked to participate in required meetings with KOBD on a quarterly basis or as needed. The purpose of these meetings is to gather more in-depth information regarding the progress of the project, provide technical assistance to ensure on-time progress, and provide grantees with updated program information.

## Material Project Changes

KOBD acknowledges that changes in the overall implementation plan may be required once a project begins due to unforeseen circumstances. Material project changes must be disclosed to KOBD immediately and reported on the monthly report, prior to implementation. **Examples** of material changes include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Project scope
- Project duration
- Electronics manufacturer and model number changes from budget, if purchasing computer equipment
- Software vendor and/or version number changes
- Individual budget line-item variances greater than 10% of the original budget
- Total project budget variances greater than 10% of original budget

Upon receipt of material project change notification information, KOBD will review the potential project changes. The changes must be approved by KOBD prior to awardee implementing changes. Changes to the implementation plan without advanced KOBD notification and approval may result in a reduced budget and/or clawback actions. If there is any doubt about materiality of the potential project changes, awardees must engage KOBD to determine materiality. Failure to engage KOBD to determine materiality prior to

change implementations may also result in a reduced budget and / or clawback actions. Expenditures incurred without prior approval of KOBD may be deemed unallowable and will not be reimbursed.

## Closeout Reporting

Closeout reporting is required to be submitted within 45 days of the project completion date. KOBD will reconcile the submissions with program requirements and calculate the final payment. Final payment will be released after all closeout requirements, including a closeout meeting, are completed.

Closeout reporting includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- A brief narrative explaining the number and types of digital literacy trainings and other support services provided including the number of individuals who attended or made use of the trainings and support services
- Success stories or testimonials from beneficiaries that illustrate the program's impact
- The Grantee's documented results of measuring the project's effectiveness and impact through data collection (key performance indicators, surveys, etc.)
- Any required financial documents, legal agreements, and/or reports
- Any other information required by the federal program for reporting or other purposes

## Accountability

The Grantee shall create, maintain, and preserve sufficient records to demonstrate their compliance with the requirements of this program. The Grantee shall provide all required records to KOBD promptly upon written request. KOBD requests may include, but may not be limited to, the following:
- Documentation related to required audit activities. The project may be subject to state and/or federal audits during and after the project period. If a field audit is required due to program guidelines non-compliance, subgrantee shall pay for the field audit, subject to KOBD's discretion
- Data contributing to key performance indicators measuring impact of the project
- A disposition of physical property/assets if equipment was purchased in support of the project
- At KOBD's discretion, annual reports through the program period, documenting the following:
  - A brief narrative explaining the number and types of digital literacy trainings and other support services provided, including the number of individuals who attend or make use of the trainings and support services
  - The Grantee's documented results of measuring the project's effectiveness and impact through data collection (key performance indicators, surveys, etc.)
  - Total number of individuals trained
  - Participant feedback regarding the likelihood: 1) of using the training; 2) how it impacted their employability; 3) of recommending it to another person; etc.
  - Curricula and content used to train digital literacy and skills development

Grantees are required to retain all records for up to five (5) years after project completion.

## Key Definitions

**Adoption Efforts**
Adoption goes beyond access to high-speed internet and speaks to the ability of individuals and communities to harness access for quality-of-life implications.  These efforts may include digital literacy training, low-income assistance programs (for equipment and/or broadband service), partnerships with co-working or entrepreneurship organizations, awareness or marketing campaigns, service provision to community anchor institutions, and/or additional programming, along with other programs designed to meet the needs of the local community.

**Applicant Match**
The funds that the applicant is contributing to the project is represented as a percent of total project costs.  The minimum applicant match is 2% for the DOCK 2.0 program.  At the time of application submission, the applicant must demonstrate available cash reserves in an account(s) of the applicant equal to at least the minimum applicant match.  Matching funds must be used solely for the Project and shall not include any financial assistance from federal sources unless there is a federal statutory exception specifically authorizing the federal financial assistance to be considered as such.  An applicant must provide evidence of its ability to comply with this requirement in its application (www.ecfr.gov).

**Broadband**
Broadband (or high-speed internet) access allows users to access the internet and internet-related services at much higher speeds than those available through "dial-up" services.  Broadband speeds vary significantly depending on the technology and level of service ordered.  For additional information, visit the source of this information: Getting Broadband Q&A | Federal Communications Commission (fcc.gov).

**Budget and Financial Requirements**
An explanation of costs that corresponds with the information included in the project budget spreadsheet.  The information should also explain the necessity and basis for costs and reflect only allowable costs consistent with the project scope.  Content must include the last (1) year of the organization's tax returns and/or 990s if the organization is a non-profit entity.

**Career Cluster**
 A collection of jobs with shared characteristics and efforts, such as industry and objective.  There are 16 career clusters defined by the National Career Clusters Framework, which is a framework used by many schools and state agencies.  Additional career cluster information can be found at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2015/article/career-clusters.htm) and the Advance CTE (https://careertech.org/what-we-do/career-clusters/) websites.

**Co-Investment**
Committed funds to the project provided by an individual(s) or organization(s) within the benefitted community, other than the applicant.

**Community Anchor Institution**
Community Anchor Institutions are schools, libraries, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income, unemployed, and the aged (www.usac.org).

**Community Support (Narrative)**

Community partners associated with the project planning, promotion, and adoption includes the description of each party's commitment and role in the project. It also includes any involvement by Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) including municipalities, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, libraries, public safety, businesses, non-profits, and or other community stakeholders.

**Covered Populations**

Covered populations: Identify if covered populations will benefit from the proposed project. Covered populations include low-income individuals, aging individuals; incarcerated individuals active in reentry, second chance or related programs, other than those incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who - (i) are English learners; and (ii) have low levels of literacy; individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; tribal nations, and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

**Digital Equity**

A condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.

**Digital Literacy**

The ability to leverage current technologies, such as smartphones and laptops, and Internet access to perform research, create content and interact with the world.

**Digital Navigator**

Trusted guides who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices. Digital navigation services include ongoing assistance with affordable internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support.

**Digital Skills**

Any skills related to operating digital devices (mobile phone, tablet, laptop computer, desktop computer, etc.) or taking advantage of digital resources.

**Economically Distressed Community**

KOBD will consider an area economically distressed if either the 2022 per capita BEA PCPI or PCMI metric is below the 80% threshold. The Kansas counties meeting this definition are in the table below:

| Table 2: Economically Distressed Counties in Kansas | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Allen | Elk | Leavenworth | Rice |
| Anderson | Ellsworth | Lincoln | Riley |
| Atchison | Finney | Linn | Rooks |
| Barber | Ford | Lyon | Rush |
| Barton | Franklin | Marion | Russell |
| Bourbon | Geary | Marshall | Saline |
| Brown | Graham | Montgomery | Scott |
| Chase | Grant | Morris | Seward |
| Chautauqua | Greenwood | Morton | Sherman |
| Cherokee | Hamilton | Neosho | Stafford |

| Clark | Harper | Norton | Stevens |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clay | Harvey | Osage | Sumner |
| Cloud | Haskell | Osborne | Washington |
| Comanche | Jackson | Ottawa | Wilson |
| Cowley | Jewell | Pawnee | Woodson |
| Crawford | Kearny | Pratt | Wyandotte |
| Dickinson | Kingman | Rawlins | |
| Doniphan | Kiowa | Reno | |
| Edwards | Labette | Republic | |

The counties listed above can also be found at the Stats America website via http://www.statsamerica.org/distress/distress.aspx.

**Eligible Broadband Infrastructure Program Applicants**
Applicants that are authorized to provide broadband services in the proposed area. Eligible applicants include:
- Political subdivisions or entities of political subdivisions
- Tribal Governments
- Corporations
- Limited liability companies
- Co-operatives
- Electric Utilities
- Partnerships or other business entities
- Non-profit organizations
- Those authorized to provide broadband services in the proposed service area

**KBOR**
Kansas Board of Regents.

**Letters of Commitment / Support**
Explicit commitments and roles of committed partners and letters of support.

**Partnership**
A formal relationship between two or more parties that enter into an agreement for the sake of advancing broadband enablement or digital equity.

**Project**
An applicant's proposal.

**Project Justification**
Narrative to justify the need for a project and relevant data indicators to support the effort. Narrative must include:
- Evidence to make a compelling case for the project relative to the proposed services and covered populations
- Description of how project addresses critical need(s) of communities to be served

**Project Milestones**
A project planning tool that is used to mark a point in a project schedule.  Project milestones can note the start and finish of a project, mark the completion of a major phase of work or anything that's worth highlighting in a project, such as the production of project deliverables.  Milestones help project teams coordinate their efforts by helping everybody understand the objectives of the project and the action steps that must be taken to achieve them.

**Project Plan**
A project plan includes information on each stage of the project, covers the entire project period, and aligns with the proposed budget.  The plan contents include an executive summary, narrative overview, goals, proposed target critical need communities, partners, stakeholders, intended impact, digital literacy training, short and long-term benefit to the covered populations within communities.

**Scalability**
The capacity to change the size or scale of the program to achieve substantially higher impact with minimal to no investment.

**Service Partners**
Organizational partners that provide key services that assist in implementing project deliverables for the overall program.

**Veterans**
A person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.