



Department of  
**Economic &  
Community Development**

# **DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY (DO) GRANT PROGRAMS**

Compliance Webinar

December 2024

# Digital Opportunity VISION

Tennessee's vision for digital opportunity is ensuring that all Tennesseans have access to affordable and reliable internet service, dependable technology, and the digital literacy skills necessary to empower individuals to fully access all digital opportunities



# \$132.6M\*

Dedicated to **200+** digital opportunity grant projects under 2 rounds, ensuring adoption within communities you connect

# 4

**Grant Programs** are active to help achieve TN Digital Opportunity Goals



## **Digital Skills, Education, and Workforce Development (DSEW)**

Focus on skills and workforce gaps, including broadband infrastructure

## **Connected Community Facilities (CCF)**

Focus on **construction or rehabilitation of a building** where digital activities can take place

## **Broadband Ready Communities (BRC)**

For county and local governments for place-based **broadband adoption activities**

## **Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT)**

Higher Educational Institutions offering the **Telecommunications Electronics Technician Diploma** to produce the well-trained and diverse telecommunications workforce

\*DO Round 1 and round 2

# \$1.3B

Has been earmarked under SLFRF, CPF, and BEAD grants to connect remote rural areas with high-speed broadband!

- Tennessee Emergency Broadband Fund – American Rescue Plan (TEBF-ARP) - \$444.10M
- Last Mile – Middle Mile Round 1&2 (CPF) - \$131.73M
- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) - \$813M

# 6

Dedicated Broadband Infrastructure Grant Programs are at different stages of planning and execution under SLFRF, CPF, and BEAD grants!



**Bringing high speed broadband to the communities you serve!!**

## 148,084

Underserved and Unserved Locations to be connected with high-speed broadband under SLFRF and CPF grants!

## 61,475

Locations have connected under ongoing SLFRF Broadband grant

# 41%

Adoption Rate  
26,128 customers connected

# Agenda

**01**

Reporting  
Walkthrough

**02**

Invoicing

**03**

Desk Reviews

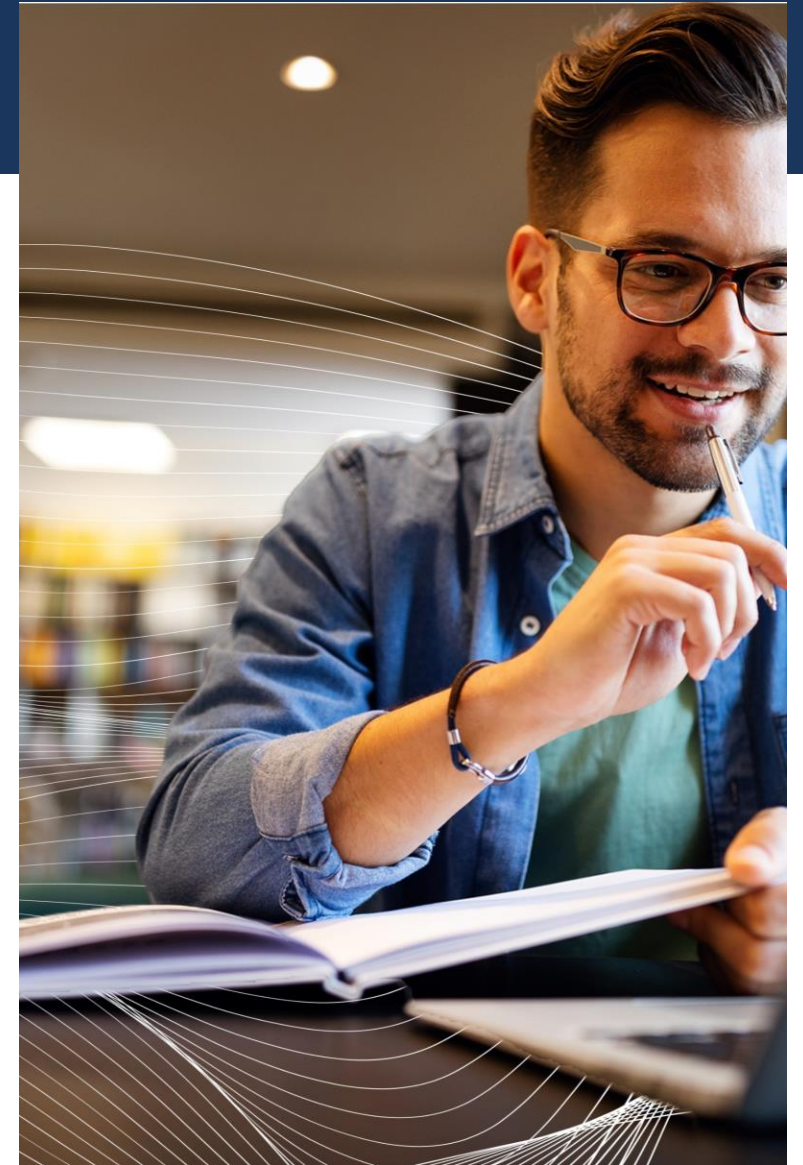
**04**

FAQ

# Goals

1. Ensure reports submitted correctly
2. Ensure reports submitted on time
3. Reduce invoice request errors
4. Ensure grantees feel supported

Attendance Check at the End

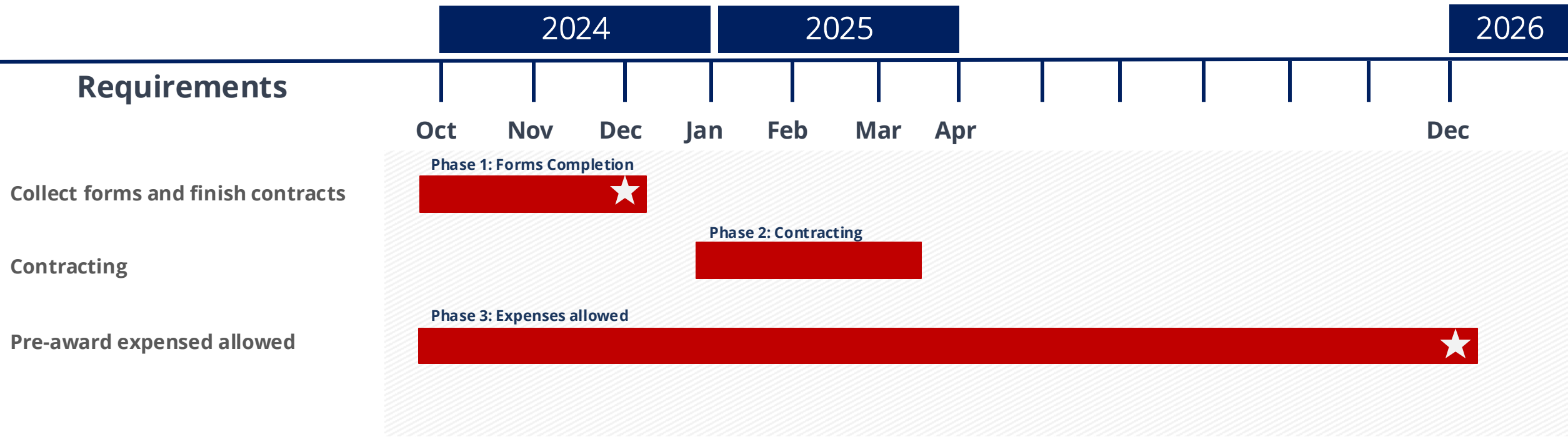


# Round 2 Timelines

- Please do not expect your grant contracts earlier than January 2025.
- Reimbursements can begin once you receive an invoice template.
- Pre-award grant expenses can be reimbursed for expenses after October 28th, 2024.
  - If you have expenses before Oct. 28, 2024, we can consider for reimbursement on a case-by-case basis.
- The deadline for expending grant funds is October 2026.

Round 1 grantees may be contacted to update the scope of their contract to more accurately reflect the full scope of their project.

# Round 2 Timeline



# 01 Reporting Form Walkthrough

[Link](#)

# Reporting Process

## Reporting Schedule

### Quarterly Reports

1. December 1st – February 28th: **April 3rd**
2. March 1st – May 31st: **July 3rd**
3. June 1st – August 31st: **October 3rd**
4. September 1st – November 30th: **December 17<sup>th</sup>**

Note - The Q4 deadline has been moved from January 3rd to December 17th to accommodate delays due to PTO during year end holiday

### Close-out Reports

Once grantee gets 85% of their grant funds reimbursed through invoicing from ECD

The background is a dark blue gradient. On the left side, there are several large, semi-transparent, five-pointed stars arranged in a circular pattern. A faint, larger circular graphic is also visible behind the stars.

**Report Demo**  
**Link**

# Reporting Requirements

## Reporting Form contains the following sections

### General Project Information

### Financial Section

- Project expenditure and income

### Programmatic Section

- Program operations and impact

### Demographic Section

- Deep dive on targeted population and their demographic background

### Operations and Timeline sections

- Discussion on any delays/obstacles and project's plan for next reporting cycle

# Reporting Requirements

## Demographic Section

Required by the SLFRF to give as much detailed demographics as possible

Purpose of this section is to capture the socio-economic outreach of your program through collating information related to the beneficiary groups under:

- Gender
- Age
- Racial /Ethnic groups
- Education and Literacy level
- Employment status
- Household Income group
- Disability (if any)
- Veteran population (if any)
- Incarcerated group (if any)

Note - This data may be validated during mid-point monitoring. Please keep accurate records of the population that are serviced from this program.

# Reminder

**All grantees are encouraged to make every effort to collect demographic information about the population served.**

**If your organization needs to use sampling, prior approval from TNECD is required.**

[Formstack Survey or Sampling Link](#)

# General Guidelines on Demographics

Diligently track covered populations so TNECD can accurately report this information to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on a quarterly basis:

## Avoid Duplicate Counting

- **What to Do:** Count each participant only once across different quarters.
- **Example:** If someone is in a 20-week program, count them only in the first quarter. In the next quarters, count only new participants.

## One-Time Programs

- **What to Do:** For one-time events, track the total number of participants without being concerned about tracking duplicates.
- **Example:** Let's say you are conducting a multiple one-time digital literacy workshops, capture who attended the workshop for each event. (20 in the Excel class, 20 in the Adobe class)

# Directions for CCF and BRC Grantees

## For CCF

- Organizations may not be able to track individuals until construction/renovation is completed.
- Your organization will write 0 in the demographic section until the facility is able to service individuals

## For BRC

- We understand that surveying may not be feasible for public Wi-Fi projects.
- In these cases, we will request an estimate of those served, based on Wi-Fi metrics or log-in information.

# Progress Questions

**The final questions are the most critical.**

**Be sure to provide a clear and detailed response about what has been accomplished to date and explain any delays or challenges encountered.**

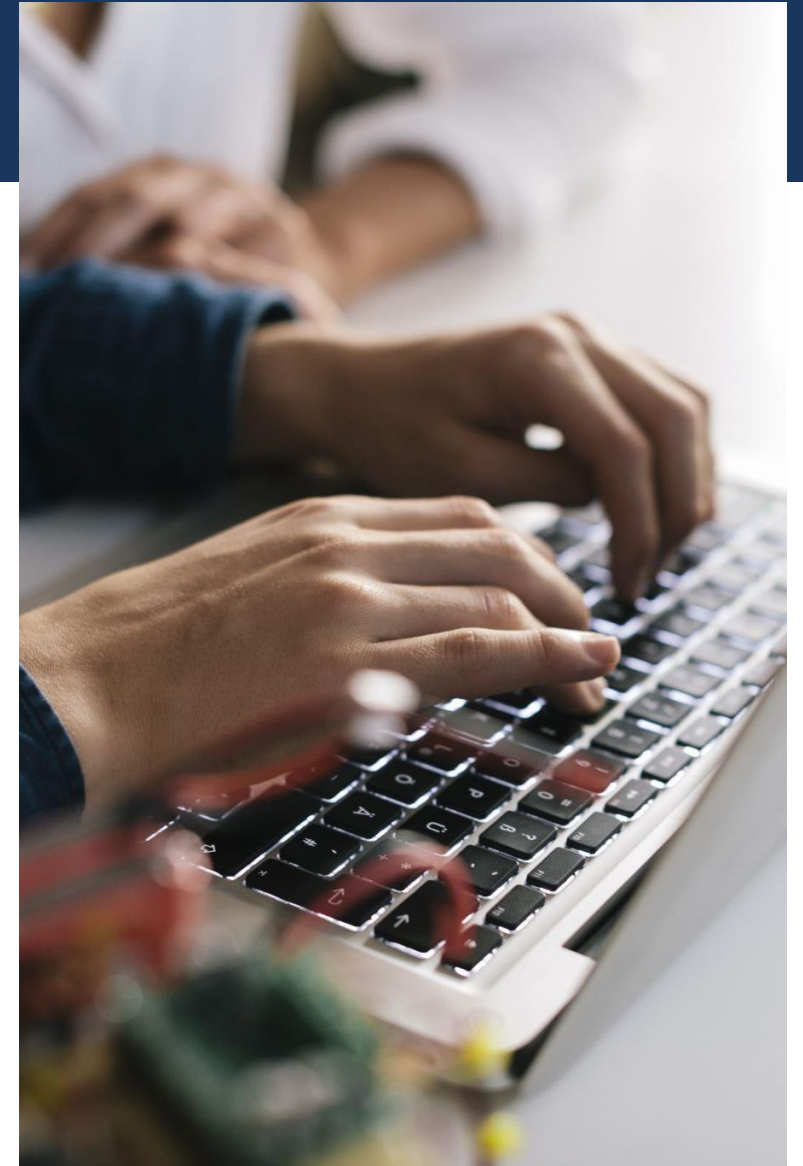
**This information helps assess progress and identify areas needing attention.**

The background is a dark blue gradient. On the left side, there are several faint, overlapping five-pointed stars. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is also visible, partially overlapping the stars and the text.

# 02 Invoicing

# Invoicing

- Grantees will be required to **invoice exact expenses** directly to TNECD, using the **template prescribed by TNECD**.
- Each invoice package is limited to either 300 pages or 100-line items (whichever occurs first).
- Reimbursement invoices must be submitted at least one month apart for the same Grant contract.



# Compiling the Invoice Request Package

The request should be submitted as one pdf document and in the following order:

- Completed, signed and dated invoice coversheet.
- Completed Backup Details sheet.
- Legible supporting documentation: Vendor invoice and proof of payment, for each budget item.
- The documentation should be labeled to correspond with the backup detail lines (e.g., A1 – Invoice & A1 - Proof of Payment, A2 – Invoice & A2- Proof of Payment, etc.).
- For DO grants eligible to charge for vehicle or land, submit separate capital purchase forms

# Most Common Errors to Avoid

Submitting packages with errors leads to significant delays in the reimbursement process, as time is required for iteration and correction.

Please ensure requests are submitted accurately to facilitate a more efficient and timely reimbursement.

- **Incorrect invoice period (in Cover and Backup Details Sheet):** Ensure that fiscal years are not crossed and that the beginning and end dates provided are consistent with the Supporting Documentation (including the earliest and latest dates).
- **Information mismatch:** Avoid discrepancies between the essential parts of the package. All three components should be aligned with the same information for each budget line item, including invoiced amount, invoice date, invoice number, vendor's name, and grantee's name.
- **Essential part or specific component missing:** Please ensure that all required pages are included in the package, which should consist of the Coversheet, Backup details sheet, and Supporting documentation (including each vendor invoice and proof of payment for every budget line item).
- **Labels missing:** Each budget line item should have a Label (A1, A2, A3...) added in every Supporting Document page related to it, to enable us to verify how the documents relate to each other.

Note - Due to contractual changes, gift cards are not eligible for reimbursement. Ensure to issue traceable vouchers for rideshare services, along with a list of participants to whom the vouchers apply. Additionally, we remind you that stipends must be supported by proof of payment in any of the acceptable formats.

# Resources for Error-Proof Invoicing

**Mini Video Series on Invoicing**

<https://www.tn.gov/e cd/rural-development/crd-grant-administration.html>

**Putting Together your Request Packet**

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/e cd/documents/grants-management/Grantee%20Reimbursement%20Request%20Instructions.pdf>

**Capital Purchase Form**

[https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/broadband\\_capital\\_purchase](https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/broadband_capital_purchase)



# 03 Desk Reviews or Site Visits

# Risk Assessment and Monitoring

## Grantees will be assigned to a risk category based on an initial risk assessment exercise\*

The risk category assignment helps ECD plan the post award compliance processes for you, like Monitoring Mode (Medium Risk - Desktop Monitoring , High Risk - Site Visit)

Below is an example of any grantee's position under listed parameters.

Assessment Parameters	Level	Risk Category Assignment under parameter
Experience in managing federal funds	Low  High	Medium Risk
Grant Amount Received	Low  High	Medium Risk
Project Complexity	Low  High	High Risk
Personnel Changes	Low  High	High Risk
Grantee Relationship with ECD	Bad  Good	Medium Risk
Past Performance History	Bad  Good	Medium Risk

### \*Your Risk Level May Change

The initial risk assessment is subject to change post two major compliance exercises:

- **Audit Findings:** If the grantee's single audit report highlight **concerns** related to financial or program specific items, TNECD may raise the grantee risk level from medium to high.
- **Monitoring Result:** If there are **major findings related to non-compliance** found during mid point monitoring, TNECD may raise the grantee risk level from medium to high.

# Monitoring

## Mid-Point Monitoring

When project hits 50% completion mark:

- **Desktop Monitoring** – Medium Risk Grantees
- **Site Visit** – High Risk Grantees

## Close Out Monitoring

After close out report submitted

- CCF: All will have a site visit close out.
- All others: Mix of close out call or site visits.

## Close Out Reporting

- When project is 100% complete.
- Last 15% will be held until this report is submitted.
- Will trigger the close out visit or call.

# Monitoring Checklist

**Monitoring process will cover an exhaustive check of the project around the following major compliance requirements:**



- Procurement document
- Sample Check 1: Non – Competitive Procurement
- Sample Check 2: \$10,000 to \$249,999.99 or any purchase threshold for which three bids received
- Sample Check 3: Purchase above \$250,000.00
- Contractor Debarment check
- Minority / Women’s business details

- Eligibility and Grant Funding Use
- Demographic Impact Assessment
- Project Specific Checks
- Equipment and Real Property Management
- Real Property Acquisition
- Period of Availability of Funds
- Program Impact

- Internal Control
- Program Income
- Reporting
- Invoicing
- Title VI
- Single Audit

- Environmental Review check
- Environmental mitigation requirements check

- Project progress check in terms of evidence-based impact
- Completion of project milestones
- Project closure checks

# 04 FAQs

Questions received in the  
Webinar Feedback form

# FAQs: Procurement & Hiring

## **How can I procure in compliance with DO Grant requirements?**

[Here](#) is an ARPA procurement sample from another Tennessee Department. RFPS and bids are required for any purchases over \$250,000 or your procurement policy's required threshold, if lower.

## **Can equipment in the approved budget be changed if the monetary amount remains the same?**

**Yes**, if it serves the same purpose.

## **Can we begin hiring for trainers/contract employees?**

Grantees can begin hiring employees or trainers. This would follow the organization's normal procedure for contract or part-time employees. It is recommended to mention the position is grant funded and must be fully expended by December 2026.

# FAQs: Invoicing

## **How long does the reimbursement process take after an invoice submission?**

If there are no corrections, four to six weeks.

## **How will salaries be tracked in the invoicing statement?**

Salaries were allowed under DSEW grants. Paystubs will be needed for the back up details. The hours charged to the grant can be hand written on the paystubs. Pulling information for an HR software is recommended.

# Key Reminders

**If you have a contract, you must submit a quarterly report.**

**If you do not have a contract, but you do have expenditures this quarter, you must submit your quarterly report.**

**All grantees are requested to submit the form and outline any delays.**

**Period of Performance is until October 2026. Contracts may be extended to December 2026 with a contract amendment.**

# Feedback

Please scan the QR code on the slide to provide feedback on the webinar and to track your attendance

We appreciate your valuable feedback in order to improve future sessions!



# Q&A

The floor is now open for questions



# Contact Us



**Ciara Carl**  
Digital Opportunity  
Program Coordinator

[ciara.carl@tn.gov](mailto:ciara.carl@tn.gov)



**Codi Drake**  
Digital Opportunity  
Program Manager

[codi.drake@tn.gov](mailto:codi.drake@tn.gov)