



Tech
Exchange



OPTIONAL CONFERENCE: DIGITAL EQUITY BUILDING GRANT NOFA

Connecting Communities, Empowering Lives: Solano Connected

January 4, 2024

AN ARPA-FUNDED PROJECT MADE POSSIBLE BY
SOLANO COUNTY - PROJECT NUMBER: 35-521-01DITBBS



Agenda

- **Welcome/Introductions**
 - Please state your name, the organization you are representing, and your email in the chat
- **Mission and Vision statements**
- **NOFA: Local Digital Grant Funding Details**
- **Application Process**
- **Evaluation Process**
- **Q&A Session**

Welcome

Remarks By:

Stewart Bruce - Regional IT Infrastructure and Operations Manager - Solano County DoIT

Tech Exchange Staff:

Linda Roman, Sr. Program Manager (Solano County)
Kevin Davenport, Digital Navigation Coordinator
Claudia Garcia, Director of Programs
Ulises Zatarain, Executive Director



Our Vision

Our vision is a digitally proficient Solano County community where every individual can confidently navigate online education, employment opportunities, health resources, financial services, and civic engagement. Through the Solano Connected initiative by Tech Exchange, we aspire to eliminate barriers caused by the digital divide and create an environment where everyone has equal access to technology resources. By fostering a culture of digital inclusion and empowerment through our services and programs, we envision a future where every resident of Solano County can fully participate in the benefits offered by today's interconnected world.

Together Tech Exchange and Solano County have created Solano Connected.



Bridging the Digital Divide: Empowering Solano County through Digital Skills Training, Affordable Internet Access, and Digital Inclusion Awareness.



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Mission:

Tech Exchange works to ensure that all families have a computer, Internet access, and technology skills necessary to improve and enhance their lives.

We are dedicated to building a community of digitally proficient Bay Area residents who can access online education, employment, health, financial, and civic services.



Bridging the Digital Divide: Empowering Solano County through Digital Skills Training, Affordable Internet Access, and Digital Inclusion Awareness.

Community Empowerment - Collaboration and Coalition Building for a Connected Solano County

The Solano County Connected Consortium aims to address the pressing need for digital equity accessibility throughout the county.

Our collective effort is to build the capacity of the consortium to work together to increase ACP enrollment adoptions in the community, as well as the Digital Literacy and Tech Support services for Solano County residents.

ARPA Digital Equity Local Capacity Building Grant Program

Tech Exchange and Solano County have released a Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for Digital Equity Programs and Services in Solano County, with a total funding amount of \$250,000 (over the span of two years). **This NOFA was released On December 19th, 2023. Applications for funding through this NOFA are due on January 15th, 2024. Applications are to be submitted to solanoconnected@techexchange.org**

The NOFA aims to identify qualified organizations or institutions that can provide innovative solutions and comprehensive strategies to address the core areas of programs and services that address the digital inequities within our communities. The core areas of programs and services are:

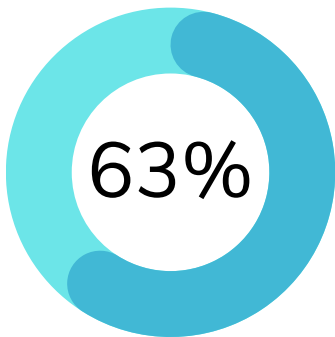
1. Digital literacy and education services
2. Enrollment services for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

The need in Solano County By the numbers

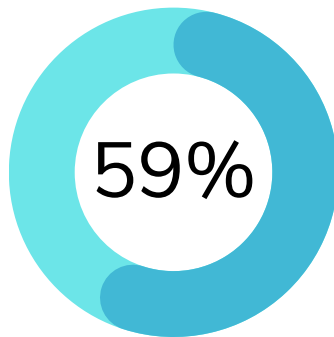
The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Enrollment

As of December 2023 there are **18,516** households in Solano County enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) out of **60,760** that are eligible.

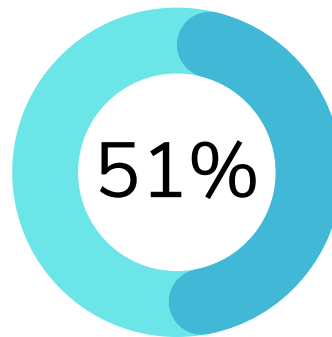
Vallejo



Fairfield



Vacaville



Program Objectives & Description of Services

Core focus of our programs and services aimed to address the pressing need for digital equity accessibility throughout the county:



Digital Literacy and Education Services

Goal: Increase digital literacy skills among Solano County residents

Ensure accomplishment: Regularly assess the participants progress through pre- and post-training assessments to track skill development. Maintain feedback with trainers and learners to identify areas for improvement and address any challenges.



Enrollment services for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Goal: Expand affordable internet access options (ACP) for low-income residents in Solano County

Ensure accomplishment: Regularly evaluate the number of low-income households that have subscribed to affordable internet plans along with keeping track of how many have enrolled in the ACP. Conduct surveys to gather feedback from program participants and make necessary adjustments to improve accessibility and affordability.

ARPA Digital Equity Local Capacity Building Grant Program

- **Grant Amounts:** 4-6 successful applicants will be awarded grants ranging from **\$20,000 - \$50,000**. Funds are to be fully expensed by December 31st, 2025.
 - Note: Organizations can submit proposals for more than one category of service. A separate proposal is needed for each category.
- **Eligible applicants:**
 - Local government agencies (i.e Local Libraries, Social Service Agencies, Senior Centers, Schools), non profit organizations and community-based organizations with programs to increase broadband access and digital inclusion, such as digital literacy programs are eligible to apply.

Local Grant Program:

Scope of work

The chosen organization or institution will have the responsibility of executing and assessing a variety of Digital Equity programs and services aimed at tackling the digital disparities present in our communities. The scope of work encompasses, but is not restricted to:

- Conducting a thorough assessment of the digital divide within your targeted community, identify barriers to access, availability of resources, and specific needs of various demographic groups.
 - Targeted communities: Senior citizens, low-income households, marginalized communities, including racial and ethnic minorities, incarcerated individuals, Veterans, people with language barriers, etc.
 - Based on the assessment, develop a comprehensive digital equity strategy that outlines specific programs and initiatives. Programs may include:
 - Digital skills training workshops
 - Community technology centers or hubs
 - ACP Enrollment events and/or spaces
 - Outreach and engagement campaigns
- Execute the digital equity programs and services in collaboration with local community organizations, schools, libraries, and other stakeholders. Ensure that programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of different target groups.
- Develop metrics and evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact and effectiveness of the implemented programs. Regularly assess and report progress to Tech Exchange.

Application Process

The County has provided an Application Form (Attachment A) in an electronic format on Solano County's website.

Applicants must fully complete and sign the Application Form, responding to every question, and attach all necessary requested documents. Applicants must fill in desired check boxes and adhere to page limits where indicated.

Failure to follow the specified Application Form and format may, at the County's sole discretion, result in the rejection of the Application.

NOTE: ALL GRANTEES (APPLICANTS WHO ARE AWARDED A GRANT/CONTRACT) MUST ATTAIN AND PROVIDE PROOF OF A UEI SAM NUMBER WITH THEIR APPLICATION. SAM UEI NUMBER CAN BE ATTAINED HERE:

[https://sam.directory/UEI?
gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KQCQiAgK2qBhCHARIsAGACuzlg84Cc1CDhetN2
5DIdYv9Znu4yG3cFnI58-bn1slfQtOkPzgA4_cMaArnvEALw_wcB](https://sam.directory/UEI?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KQCQiAgK2qBhCHARIsAGACuzlg84Cc1CDhetN25DIdYv9Znu4yG3cFnI58-bn1slfQtOkPzgA4_cMaArnvEALw_wcB)

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is designed to recommend award(s) of funding to the Applicant(s) that can best provide activities outlined in this NOFA. Applications will be evaluated as set forth below.

An Evaluation Committee (EC) will evaluate all Applications. The EC will be composed of Tech Exchange, Solano County staff, and/or other parties that may have relevant expertise or experience. The EC will score and recommend Applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in this NOFA. Evaluation of the Applications shall be within the sole judgment and discretion of the EC.

A maximum number of points will be assigned to each Application Element in the Application Packet as follows:

Application Elements	Maximum Score
Program Description	50 Points
Qualifications and Sustainability Plan	30 Points
Budget	20 Points
Total Maximum	100 Points

Application Process - Cont.

Notwithstanding the format imposed by the Application Form in Attachment A, all Applicants must follow additional formats set forth herein:

- Standard, 8 1/2" x 11" format, with 1-inch margins
- Arial font size 11
- All Application pages sequentially numbered
- All responses, as well as any reference material presented, written in English, adhering to character limits where applicable
- All monetary amounts detailed in United States currency and rounded to the nearest whole dollar

NOTE: ALL GRANTEES (APPLICANTS WHO ARE AWARDED A GRANT/CONTRACT) MUST ATTAIN AND PROVIDE PROOF OF A UEI SAM NUMBER WITH THEIR APPLICATION. SAM UEI NUMBER CAN BE ATTAINED HERE: [https://sam.directory/UEI?](https://sam.directory/UEI?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAgK2qBhCHARIsAGACuzlg84Cc1CDhetN25DldYv9Znu4yG3cFnI58-bn1slfQtOkPzgA4_cMaArnvEALw_wcB)

[gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAgK2qBhCHARIsAGACuzlg84Cc1CDhetN25DldYv9Znu4yG3cFnI58-bn1slfQtOkPzgA4_cMaArnvEALw_wcB](https://sam.directory/UEI?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAgK2qBhCHARIsAGACuzlg84Cc1CDhetN25DldYv9Znu4yG3cFnI58-bn1slfQtOkPzgA4_cMaArnvEALw_wcB)

Signatures

All signatures must be “wet-signed” and scanned or signed digitally using an eSignature program, such as DocuSign.

Attachment A - Section 1

SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

A. Program Activities: (3 pages maximum): Please include:

- Description of activities, including numbers served, types of services, and if you are targeting a specific geographic location within Solano County or a specific population.
- Description of need, including impact of digital literacy education efforts and/or ACP outreach efforts to the proposed population to be served with ARPA grant funds. Impact may be related to increased clients, decreased revenue, or other impacts which demonstrate a need for digital equity capacity building funding.
- How funds will be used to continue or expand an existing effort.
 - If continuing an existing effort, describe how these capacity building funds will supplement your existing efforts.
 - If expanding an existing effort, describe the need to expand your efforts or services with capacity building grant funds
- How you will ensure activities are completed within the 16-18 month timeframe.
- How you will ensure your activities are equitable and inclusive.
- Please address how your programming will address multilingual/multi-cultural populations.
- Describe what engagement strategies you will employ to reach diverse and hard to reach populations.

Attachment A - Section 2

SECTION 2: QUALIFICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY

A. Describe the capacity of the organization to provide the digital equity programming activities as outlined in this Application (**2 pages maximum**). Please include:

- Experience implementing aforementioned digital equity work in the activities described
- Qualifications and experience of key personnel who will be implementing the activities

B. Provide a sustainability plan for the activities (**1 page maximum**). Please include:

- How you intend to sustain the digital equity programming activities beyond the 16-18 month timeframe of the ARPA Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant program.
- Please list if you have identified any additional funding, and if this funding is in the planning phase, you have applied, or it is fully secured?

Open Discussion

Q&A

Additional Questions can be sent to:
linda@techexchange.org OR
solanoconnected@techexchange.org

- Questions will be accepted until January 10th, 2024. All questions and answers will be posted on Solano Connected website by January 12th, 2024
- All Applications are due on Friday January 19th, 2024 at 5:00 pm
- Submit all applications to solanoconnected@techexchange.org



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