

**RCW 43.330.5393 Digital equity planning grant program. (1)**

Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall establish a digital equity planning grant program.

(2) (a) This program must provide grants to local governments, institutions of higher education, workforce development councils, or other entities to fund the development of a digital equity plan for a discrete geographic region of the state. Only the director or the director's designee may authorize expenditures.

(b) Priority must be given for grant applications:

(i) Accompanied by express support from community or neighborhood-based nonprofit organizations, public development authorities, federally recognized Indian tribes in the state, or other community partners and partners from the categories of institutions identified in RCW 43.330.421; and

(ii) That intend to use community-based participatory action research methods as a part of the proposed plan.

(3) An applicant must submit an application to the department in order to be eligible for funding under this section.

(4) The digital equity forum shall review grant applications and provide input to the department regarding the prioritization of applications in awarding grants among eligible applicants under the program.

(5) The department must:

(a) Pursuant to subsection (2) (b) of this section, evaluate and rank applications using objective criteria such as the number of underserved populations served and subjective criteria such as the degree of support and engagement evidenced by the community who will be served;

(b) Consider the input provided by the forum, as provided in subsection (4) of this section, in awarding grants under the digital equity planning grant program; and

(c) Consider the extent to which the mix of grants awarded would increase in the number of prekindergarten through 12th grade students gaining access to greater levels of digital inclusion as a factor in awarding grants under the digital equity planning grant program.

(6) The department shall develop criteria for what the digital equity plans must include.

(7) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

[2022 c 265 s 305.]

**Effective date—2022 c 265 ss 101, 102, 301-305, and 401:** See note following RCW 43.330.530.

**Short title—Findings—Intent—2022 c 265:** See notes following RCW 43.330.539.