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## *Request for Applications*

### *Nevada Education Broadband Grant*

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#### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To enhance high-speed internet connectivity in K-12 public schools in Nevada.
<b>Proposals Due:</b>	January 21, 2021 at 5:00 PM PT
<b>Funding Available:</b>	\$500,000
<b>Bidder's Calls:</b>	December 18 at 12:00 p.m. PT <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91012920202">https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91012920202</a>  January 13 at 1:00 p.m. PT <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91012920202">https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91012920202</a>
	*Note- please submit questions for the bidder's calls by 5:00 p.m. PT on December 16 and January 11.
<b>Eligibility:</b>	Eligible applicants for a Nevada Broadband Education Grant are K-12 public school districts and charter schools in Nevada.
<b>Changes:</b>	Please read this Request for Applications carefully as some requirements have changed.
<b>Website:</b>	Updates to the Frequently Asked Questions document will be posted at <a href="http://osit.nv.gov">http://osit.nv.gov</a> . Please check the website regularly for updates. Additionally, information about past awardees can be found on the OSIT website.
<b>Contact:</b>	Jojo Myers Campos jmyers@gov.nv.gov



## Request for Applications (RFA)– Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Nevada Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) was established by the Legislature (NRS 223.600) to coordinate and oversee the planning, mapping, and procurement of enhanced broadband internet connectivity for education, healthcare, and economic and community development. This grant focuses on enhancing broadband connectivity in schools.

Since 2017, OSIT has partnered with all 17 school districts and many charter schools in Nevada to apply for federal broadband funds and leverage State funding to improve connectivity speeds and lower ongoing costs. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated existing trends toward a greater use of technology in teaching and learning and a greater reliance on fast, reliable broadband internet to facilitate digital and distance learning. When it is safe for students to return to school buildings, more than ever, they will need high-speed broadband.

### **SECTION I: DESIRED OUTCOMES**

#### **Purpose:**

OSIT seeks to enhance K-12 teaching practice and student learning experiences so that all students complete their education with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to obtain a rewarding career and participate as engaged citizens. This effort aligns with Governor Steve Sisolak's objective to create a family and child centered government. A fast and reliable connection to the internet is an important part of realizing these objectives. Through this grant opportunity, OSIT seeks to support projects that will enhance connectivity to or within school buildings, meeting one of the conditions necessary for enhanced student learning. Particularly for rural students and students living in poverty anywhere in Nevada, broadband is the connection to the outside that makes universally available a world of educational resources previously only available to the most privileged students in urban areas. Awarded projects must provide broadband speeds to the school that meet or exceed the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) standard of 1Mbps of Internet Access per student being served by the connection.

### **SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING INFORMATION**

#### **Eligible Applicants:**

Eligible applicants for a Nevada Broadband Education Grant are K-12 public school districts and charter schools in Nevada.

#### **Eligible Uses of Funding:**

Funding must be used to build new or enhanced connections to the school or enhance connectivity within the school. Funding may only be spent on equipment and related labor costs. Examples of eligible uses of funding include:

- Construction of fiber or fixed wireless transport mediums including fiber optic cable, microwave towers, wireless solutions, hybrid solutions, and eligible equipment directly relating to the proposed broadband solution and that supports a reliable network;

- Engineering, project management, permitting, construction materials and equipment, construction labor (including contractors) and inspection charges;
- Point-to-point connections between schools, between schools and a district hub, between a school and an internet access point, and related construction costs;
- Needed networking equipment including switches, firewalls, network cabling, access points; support materials including racks, power supplies, line cards, antennas, and supporting software; and associated labor costs.

*Prohibited Uses of Funding:*

Funding from this grant must be used for costs directly related to the project. Ineligible uses of funding include:

- Funding for ongoing costs;
- Funding that supplants existing funding streams;
- Funding for salaries or benefits for school personnel for the normal course of their duties;
- Funding for equipment not directly related to the project;
- Chromebooks, hotspots, or other supplies used directly by students and teachers.

**SECTION III: AWARD INFORMATION**

*Awards Process:*

A competitive process will be used to distribute a total of approximately \$500,000. Funding may be awarded in any amount up to the total amount available. All responses that meet the minimum requirements laid out below in Section IV will be scored by a review team selected by OSIT. Respondents are required to include a detailed scope of work and a detailed budget in their responses to this RFA. OSIT reserves the right to determine the number of awards for each grant cycle, based on funds available and projects selected.

*Spending Timeframes:*

All funding received from the state must be spent by June 30, 2021. All awardees are required to submit progress and final reports on project activities and deliverables, both during the project period and following its completion. Please see the Reporting Requirements section below for more details.

*Match:*

Matching funds are not required for this grant. However, applicants that include match will receive extra points during scoring. Match may be cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both.

The following may be used as in-kind match:

- Equipment;
- The monetary value of time contributed by professional and technical personnel and other skilled and unskilled labor if the services they provide are an integral and necessary part of the funded project. NOTE: The value placed on loaned or donated equipment may not exceed its fair rental value. The value placed on donated services must be consistent with the rate of compensation paid for similar work in the organization or the labor market. Fringe benefits may be included;
- Professional services valued at fair market value;



## **SECTION IV: APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

A comprehensive, well-written application provides all the information necessary for a complete evaluation. The OSIT review committee will use the rubric located in Attachment B to evaluate applications. A complete application will include the following five (5) components listed below and described later in greater detail. Each section inside the grant should include headings and subheadings:

- 1) Cover Sheet
- 2) Project Abstract;
- 3) Project Narrative;
- 4) Budget Plan;
- 5) Letters of Commitment.

**Incomplete applications or applications that did not follow the submission requirements, including the formatting requirements described in detail below, as of the filing deadline, will be disqualified and will not be scored.**

### **1. Cover Sheet (Pass/Fail)**

Format: The cover sheet must not exceed one (1) page, use Times New Roman 12-point font, is not included in the 10-page narrative limitation and must contain the following information:

- **Applicant Information**  
District or Charter name, full mailing and physical addresses, phone number, and state vendor ID number
- **Project Information**  
Title, location(s), and proposed dollar amount
- **Project Director Information** (overall project responsibility)  
Full name, title, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address
- **Project Contact** (daily project contact – if different than director)  
Full name, title, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address
- **Fiscal Agent Contact** (daily contact for fiscal matters– if different than Project Contact)  
Full name, title, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address

### **2. Project Abstract (Pass/Fail)**

Format: The Project Abstract must not exceed one (1) page, it must be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of 8½ by 11 size (letter size) paper.

The project abstract must succinctly summarize the proposed project and should include:

1. A brief, executive summary of the project;
2. Specific goals and expected results or outcomes; and
3. How the proposal meets OSIT's goals.



### **3. Budget Narrative & Detailed Spreadsheet (10 points possible)**

Format: The budget narrative must not exceed one (1) page, it must be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of 8½ by 11 size (letter size) paper. For the detailed budget spreadsheet, use the template located in Attachment C. The detailed budget spreadsheet does not have a page limit.

The applicant is required to submit a 1) budget narrative and a 2) budget spreadsheet.

- 1) The budget narrative must demonstrate a clear and strong relationship between the program's expenses and the program's goals and activities. The budget narrative should be detailed, reasonable and adequate, cost efficient, and should align with the proposed work plan. From the budget narrative, the reviewer should be able to assess how the budget expenditures relate directly to the goals of the program. The budget narrative does not count towards the 5 page limit of the Project Narrative.
- 2) The budget spreadsheet should be completed in the template provided in Attachment C. Costs should be broken down into individual line items. All project costs should fall in either the "Capital Expenses" or "Programmatic Expenses/Curriculum Development" categories. See Attachment C for additional instructions.

State grant funding must be spent on or before June 30, 2021.

### **4. Project Narrative (90 points possible)**

Format: The Project Narrative must not exceed five (5) pages, it must be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of 8½ by 11 size (letter size) paper.

The following information must be contained within the Project Narrative. Please respond to each question below and number your response.

#### **A. Needs Assessment (20 points possible)**

The Needs Assessment provides the foundation for why funding is needed.

- 1) Provide an overview of the student population the proposed project will serve. Include the number and percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch at the affected schools.
- 2) Provide an overview of the existing connectivity structure leading to and within the school(s) in question. State existing connectivity speeds as Mbps/second/student. Describe the availability of existing fiber infrastructure near the school.
- 3) Describe the needs articulated by the schools. Describe associated challenges associated with learning, if any. What is the gap between needed connectivity and existing connectivity speeds?
- 4) Provide an explanation for why funding is needed from this grant. State whether other funding exists that could cover the costs needed to complete this project.

#### **B. Work Plan and Impact Analysis (30 points possible)**

Provide a detailed work plan with specific data and information that describes how the proposed project and grant activities address the needs identified in the Needs Assessment. In your work plan and impact analysis, please respond to each question below and number your response.



The **Work Plan** should include responses to each of the following elements:

- 1) Building on the executive summary from above, provide a detailed description of the project from start to finish.
  - a. State the project's objectives.
  - b. Describe the proposed solution, what technology will be used (fiber, microwave, hybrid, etc. for external construction or the equipment needed for internal connectivity) and how it solves the problem identified in the Needs Assessment above.
  - c. Describe how the project will be executed.
  - d. Explain how this project fits in with the applicant's larger technology plan. If available, provide the technology plan as an attachment or a link.
  - e. Include as a link or attachment the applicant's network design plan.
- 2) Provide a timeline, in table format, that includes all project milestones and dates from award of funds to the completion of the project and use by students; include the person or partner responsible for executing. Provide assurance that the project can be completed prior to June 30, 2021.
- 3) Provide an organizational description which identifies the project manager, all others responsible for project implementation, and any external partners and their roles. Include the resources, including any in-kind contributions, which the partners bring to the project.

The **Impact Analysis** must include the following information in table format. Justification should be given for how estimates were determined.

- 1) Expected connectivity speeds expressed as Mbps/second/student
- 2) Percentage increase in connectivity speeds between the current solution and the proposed solution
- 3) Provide existing recurring connectivity costs per megabit and the cost per megabit of the proposed solution (if new costs are unknown, please state "unknown")
- 4) The number of students affected in the district or charter organization by the project
- 5) Then number of schools affected in the district or charter organization by the project
- 6) The percentage of students in the district or charter organization affected by the project
- 7) The percentage of schools in the district or charter organization affected by the project

**C. Broader Impact** (15 points possible)

Beyond increasing connectivity speeds, OSIT seeks to enhance the practice of K-12 education and improve connectivity in the community more broadly. Please answer the following items individually:

- 1) Please describe how education at the school(s) affected by the project will change because of the project. What impact will improved connectivity have on educators and students? How will this project help close the digital equity gap?
- 2) Can this project be leveraged to bring greater or increased connectivity to the broader community?

**D. Sustainment and Capacity Plan** (15 points possible)

A core goal of the Nevada Education Broadband Grant is creating technology solutions that are scalable and sustainable long-term. Please answer the following items individually:

Please list all projected ongoing costs associated with this project, such as maintenance and recurring monthly expenses.



- 1) Please describe how the applicant will fund these ongoing costs including the funding source.
- 2) In the event of growth in the future of either student population or bandwidth needs per student, describe whether the project is scalable to meet future needs.

**E. Data Collection & Evaluation** (5 points possible)

This section should include performance evaluation measures. As a reminder, data collection is not a performance measure but used in developing and evaluating the measure. Please describe each of the following individually:

- 1) Using the goals and objectives stated above, please describe how the success of the project will be evaluated.
- 2) What data will be collected to measure the success of the program and how will it be shared with OSIT?

**5. Letters of Commitment**- (5 points possible)

Format: Letterhead with signature.

Please provide a signed letter of commitment from the district or charter superintendent. Please include a statement of how the project will meet both the organization's technology and student learning goals.



## **Submission Timeline and Instructions**

Submit one (1) electronic copy of the application by email in a single pdf by 5:00 p.m., January 21, 2021, to:

**Jojo Myers Campos**  
**jmyers@gov.nv.gov**

Applications received after the date above will not be considered.

## **Tips & Common Pitfalls to Avoid**

- Ensure budget figures are mathematically correct, and the total of the budget summary matches the total on the title page.
- Use only whole dollar amounts.
- Observe page limits (any pages over the page limit will not be reviewed).
- Follow stated formatting guidelines.
- Respond to all sections of the application; ensure the thread that ties the application sections together are related.
- Supplanting - Grant funds may not be used to replace federal, state, or local funds that are currently being used or are forthcoming.
- Spell out acronyms at initial use. Eliminate jargon whenever possible.
- Do not assume reviewers are familiar with existing projects.
- Read the Request for Application (RFA) carefully.
- Use local statistics rather than national statistics.
- Submit applications early in case revisions need to be made.



## **SECTION V: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **Grant Review and Selection Process**

Eligible applications are reviewed, evaluated, and competitively scored by a review committee using the scoring matrix located in Attachment B. Applications selected to receive a grant award will enter into a contract with OSIT in compliance with the State of Nevada regulations. OSIT reserves the right to award all, part or none of the available grant funding during this grant round. In cases where the ranked applications may “tie”, OSIT reserves the right to consider Section B “Work Plan and Impact Analysis” scoring independently to determine placement.

To avoid disqualification, all application areas must be concise, complete and follow all formatting rules. Denial letters will be sent to applicants that are not funded.

### **Grant Commencement and Duration**

Project implementation must be initiated within thirty days (30) after funding is awarded. Requests for an exception to this rule must be justified and submitted in writing within thirty days of award. At the discretion of OSIT, the grantee risks losing the award if the project does not commence as required.

All grant funding must be spent by June 30, 2021. Projects must demonstrate sustainability beyond the initial reporting period. By submission of the grant application and acceptance of the award, the grantee is certifying its intention to continue and sustain the project beyond the initial grant implementation award. There is no expectation of funding beyond awarded grant funds.

### **Reimbursement Notice**

The Nevada Education Broadband Grant is a reimbursement grant. Grantees are expected to pay for expenses up front from their budgets and will be reimbursed for eligible expenses listed in the approved award budget after a review of the expense request form and appropriate backup. Under certain limited circumstances, an advance of funds for specific, approved start-up costs may be requested by the grantee.

### **Fiscal Responsibilities**

All recipients of funding are required to identify a fiscal agent if the grantee is not its own fiscal agent. All recipients of funding are required to establish and maintain accounting systems and financial records to accurately account for awarded funds. All grant awards are subject to audits during and within three years after the grant award reporting period has concluded.

### **Reporting Requirements**

All recipients of funding are required to submit quarterly fiscal reports, quarterly progress reports, and a final evaluation. Recipients have the option of submitting monthly reports in lieu of quarterly reports. The final evaluation is due within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the reporting period. The reporting period is defined as the period of time from the day the grant is awarded to the conclusion of the training program for the first cohort of trainees. Grantees must specify the length of the program in their applications in order to calculate the reporting period. Grantees must continue to submit quarterly reports and a final evaluation even after all state funding has been spent. Fiscal reports must include an accounting of both State funding and match that has been expended. The quarterly reports and final evaluation must include the performance measures proposed in D(2) of the application. OSIT maintains the right to withhold payments if reporting requirements are not met in a timely and efficient manner.

### **Additional Information**

Financial obligations of the State payable after the current fiscal year are contingent upon funds for that purpose being appropriated, budgeted, and otherwise made available. In the event funds are not appropriated, any resulting contracts (grant awards) will become null and void, without penalty to the state of Nevada.

All materials submitted regarding this application for OSIT funds becomes the property of the state of Nevada. Upon the funding of the project, the contents of the application will become contractual obligations.

### **Reconsiderations**

Any applicant whose application has been filed according to the rules governing the grant process and who is aggrieved by the awards made pursuant to these rules may request reconsideration.

Submit requests for appeal to the OSIT within five days of the posting of the grant awards. Requests for reconsideration must be in writing and must clearly state how OSIT has erred in following the administrative rules governing the grant process or the procedure outlined in the program RFA. OSIT will schedule a public meeting to hear the reconsideration as expeditiously as possible so all funds can be distributed in a timely fashion, and a final decision will be rendered within 30 days subsequent to such meeting. Notice of the approval/denial of the appeal will be conducted by legal counsel. This procedure concludes the review process.

### **Bidding Process**

The grantee must follow all applicable local, state and/or federal laws pertaining to the expenditure of funds. Proof of Invitation to Bid, contracts, and any other pertinent documentation must be retained by the grantee. Likewise, all local, state, and federal permits required for construction projects must be acquired by the grantee within 90 days after the contract is entered into.

### **Access for Persons with Disabilities**

The grantee shall assure that persons with disabilities are not precluded from using OSIT grant funded facilities. Projects must meet requirements as set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **Maintenance and Operation**

The grantee is responsible for seeing that OSIT grant funded projects are maintained and operated in a condition equal to what existed when the project was completed; normal wear and tear is accepted. Maintenance and operations standards should be adopted upon completion of the project.

### **Signs**

Grantee shall post and maintain appropriate permanent signs or decals upon project sites or equipment acknowledging funding assistance from the appropriate grant fund upon the start of the project or purchase of equipment.

### **Nondiscrimination**



Nevada Governor's  
Office of Science,  
Innovation and  
Technology

Projects funded with OSIT grant funds shall be available for public use, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, or national origin.

In any instance that the grant notice, award, rules, regulations, and procedures are silent – prior written approval is required.

## **SECTION VI: OSIT CONTACTS**

### **Grant Administration Contact:**

Jojo Myers Campos  
jmyers@gov.nv.gov

*Thank your interest in applying for Nevada Education Broadband Grant funding. You will be contacted if further information is required. Do not begin your project or incur costs until you have received, signed and returned a grant award contract.*



**ATTACHMENT B: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

Each proposed project will be evaluated for inclusiveness and succinctness of their application using the scoring matrix below.

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Points &amp; Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Needs Assessment</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 20 Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Work Plan &amp; Impact Analysis</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 30 Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Broader Impact</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 15 Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Sustainability and Capacity</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 15 Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Evaluation and Data Collection</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 5 Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Budget Plan</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 10 Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Letters of Commitment</b>	<b>Maximum Points: 5 Reviewer Score</b>	<b>Comments/Recommendations</b>
<b>Additional Possible Points</b>		
<b>Match</b>	<b>Up to 4 Points</b>	



**ATTACHMENT C: BUDGET TEMPLATE**

Please be specific and include as much line-item detail as is reasonably possible. Use this space to provide more specific justification for expenditures mentioned in the Budget Narrative.

**Capital Expenses**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Amount Paid with Grant Funds</b>	<b>Match- in-kind or cash</b>	<b>Description/Justification</b>