

# Your Voice Matters: A Guide to Preparing for Public Comment

December 20, 2023



TEXAS BROADBAND  
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

**ILSR** INSTITUTE FOR  
Local Self-Reliance

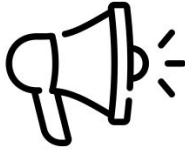
HR&A

# Agenda



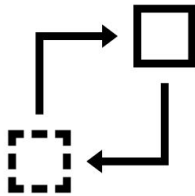
- Welcome and Introductions
- Introduction to Public Comment
- The Purpose, Outcomes, and Process
- Tips for Effective Comment
- TDOP Public Comment Partner Toolkit
- What Comes Next After Public Comment?
- Breakout Rooms: Strategies to Drive Public Comment
- Q&A

# Introduction to Public Comment



## What is Public Comment?

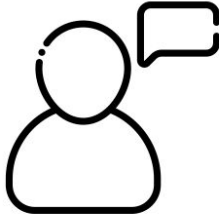
- Opportunity for Texas residents to review and give their feedback on the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan.
- Requirement to receive federal funding needed to connect Texans to reliable, high-speed internet and digital resources.



## How will the Broadband Development Office (BDO) use comments?

- The BDO will review every comment.
- Comments will help to refine the plan to expand digital opportunity and future funding strategies.

# Introduction to Public Comment



## Who should comment?

- All Texas residents and organizations.
- The BDO is especially interested in hearing from individuals identifying with a covered population group or organizations that serve these communities.



## Will my comments be anonymous?

- No. Your name and email address will be shared with the BDO.
- NTIA will also create a searchable national database of all public comments received as part of this process, with names and email addresses removed.

Organizations and institutions that provide connected devices should provide public notice that assistance is available to file a public comment.

# Introduction to Public Comment



Download and review the draft TDOP (by visiting [www.broadbandfortexas.com/tdop](http://www.broadbandfortexas.com/tdop) or taking picture of QR code above) and to explore the NTIA funding program directory (<https://internetforall.gov/programs>).

# The Purpose, Outcomes, and Process

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**THE PURPOSE:** The NTIA requires states like Texas to hold public comment periods to allow both residents and organizations to give their feedback on their digital opportunity plan



# The Purpose, Outcomes, and Process

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**THE OUTCOMES:** The BDO hopes that the public comment period will help refine and improve upon the plan. To do this:

- Suggest changes you'd like to see in the document.
- Share where your organization could be helpful in implementation.
- Provide additional information that the plan may not capture.
- Make policy suggestions.
- Correct the record if needed

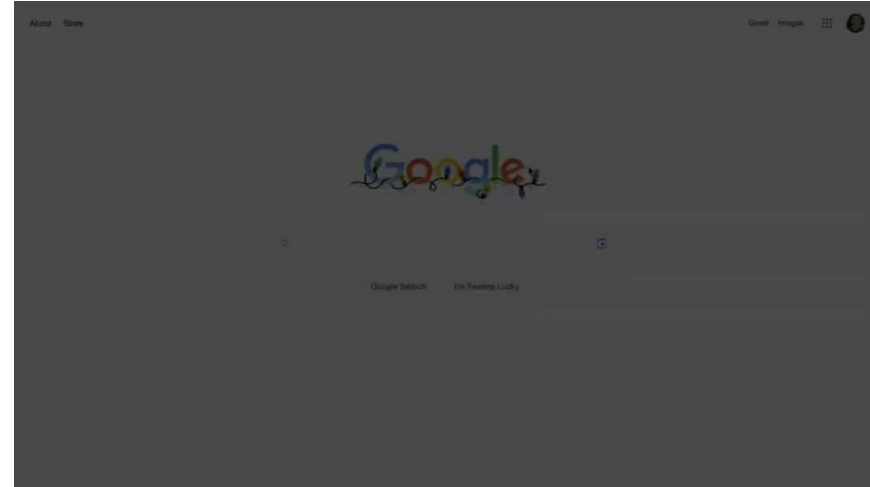


# The Purpose, Outcomes, and Process

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**THE PROCESS:** The TDOP public comment process is open to all Texans, and the BDO encourages residents, local governments, community-based organizations and others to provide feedback.

- The BDO is especially interested in hearing from individuals and organizations that represent covered populations





# Tips for Effective Comment

- **Support your comment with substantive data, facts, and opinions.**
  - When possible, provide your lived experience in your comment.
- **Clearly identify the section within the plan that you are commenting on and include the section number.**
  - Although comments should be clear and concise, there is no minimum or maximum length for an effective comment.

# Tips for Effective Comment

- **If you disagree with an aspect of the plan:**
  - Suggest an alternative and include an explanation and/or
  - analysis of how the alternative might meet the same objective or be more effective.
- **Include pros and cons and trade-offs in your comment.**
  - Consider other points of view and respond to them with your views.
  - Include examples of how the proposed digital opportunity programs and activities would impact your life and work positively or negatively.

# TDOP Public Comment Partner Toolkit

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- The BDO has created a toolkit containing materials and action items that you can use to get the word out about the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan Public Comment Period
- This includes:
  - Tips for effective comments
  - Sample Invitation Letter
  - Sample Social Media Posting
  - Sample Press Release
  - Sample Drop-In Article



# The BDO is accepting public comments through **Jan. 5, 2024**

## What comes after public comment?

Following the public comment period, the BDO will develop a capacity grant program to fund and empower aligned organizations across the state of Texas.

The timeline will be revised as needed to align with the release of NTIA's NOFO in 2024 in mind to manage expectations regarding when grant programs will come out and when funds will start to flow.

**Draft Texas Digital Opportunity Plan is Available.**

Nov. 27, 2023

Jan. 5, 2024

**Public Comment Period Ends**

**Final Digital Opportunity Plan Posted to BDO Website**

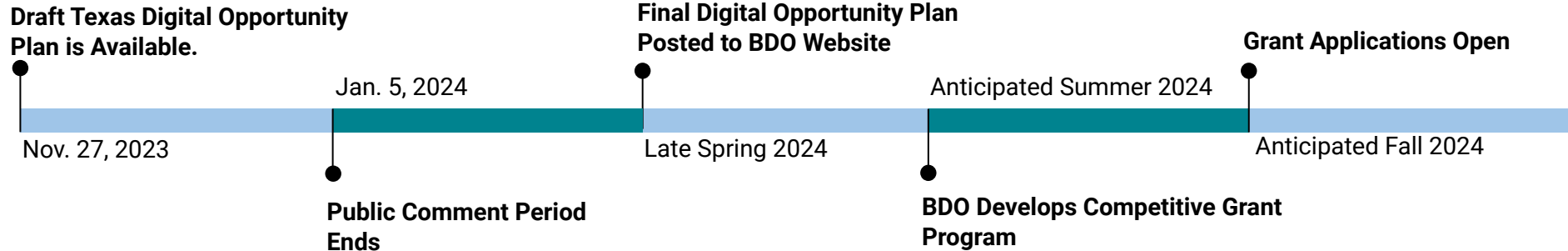
Late Spring 2024

Anticipated Summer 2024

**BDO Develops Competitive Grant Program**

**Grant Applications Open**

Anticipated Fall 2024



# Practical Application Interactive Breakouts

## Ways to Drive Public Comment in Communities

**Group Discussion:** Think about ways resources can be shared, or combined, to tackle the primary barriers of driving public comment in communities in Texas.

Specific sections of the plan you wanted to discuss: need and barriers, assets, implementation

What are some collaborative ways that different communities can come together to help drive public comment on a topic?



What are ways to reach covered populations to have them submit public comments?

Are there other groups in the room or outside of the current ecosystem that might be able to help drive outreach for your community?

What are actionable steps your community can take in driving public comment?

# Q&A Session



Please submit your questions in the chat box

After this event concludes, please visit [www.broadbandfortexas.com/tdop](http://www.broadbandfortexas.com/tdop) to download the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan, and submit your public comments.

# Thank You

If you have any questions about the draft TDOP public comment process, please email [digital.opportunity@cpa.texas.gov](mailto:digital.opportunity@cpa.texas.gov).

Please link to this [online form](#) to read the TDOP and provide comments.

The BDO is accepting public comments through **Jan. 5, 2024**