## Affordable Devices Proponent Q&A

| Question | PRBP[1] Answer |
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| Is there a contact person in the NOFA, we can reach out to should we be stuck on an question? | Any questions regarding this NOFA or the evaluation process must be submitted in writing via email to FAQ@smartisland.pr.gov, referencing this specific NOFA in the subject line as "Q&A NOFA Affordable Devices." No telephone inquiries will be accepted.<br><br>*[Provided during the webinar]* Questions must be submitted by October 17, 2024, at 4:30 pm, and answers will be posted on the Smart Island website by October 21, 2024, at 4:30 pm. The PRBP reserves the right to extend this deadline depending on the volume and timing of questions. |
| How will the webinar be shared? | The webinar was recorded and is available on the Smart Island website at the following link: https://www.smartisland.pr.gov/rfps/affordable-devices. |
| If an individual meets the eligibility criteria but already owns a tablet or computer, are they still eligible to receive an additional device under this program? | The eligibility criteria for selecting beneficiaries of devices should be part of the proposal, as specified in Question C.1. of the Appendix. These proposed criteria will be part of the evaluation to select a subgrantee.<br><br>For reference, the NOFA states that one of the objectives of the program is to: "Prioritize low-income households that do not own a device to be beneficiaries of this program."<br><br>And although the program prioritizes low-income households without a |

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[1] Puerto Rico Broadband Program

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| | device, owning one does not automatically disqualify an individual. Final eligibility depends on the criteria proposed by the subgrantee. |
| Are there provisions to collaborate with libraries, community centers, or other public spaces for device distribution? If so, what are the required logistics, or do you have a specific method in place for device delivery? | As stated in the NOFA: "The subgrantee will partner with relevant partner institutions like libraries, community-based organizations or Multiservice and Internet Centers (MIC) to connect with target populations and present and promote the program. Device delivery to target populations will be performed as well through anchor institutions"<br><br>Please also refer to guidance regarding the Pricing Proposal of Proponents, as two of the allowable uses of funds are:<br><br>- Promote the program and reach potential beneficiaries through marketing and outreach campaigns (on their own or via third parties), in coordination with the holistic efforts of the PRBP.<br>- Hire personnel to deliver the devices, provide technical support and follow-up with the beneficiaries to promote device adoption.<br>- *Other uses of funds included in the NOFA.*<br><br>It will be the responsibility of the subgrantees to ensure that devices are delivered according to the eligibility criteria set for beneficiaries and to manage the required logistics. Please explain your proposal for logistical plans for device sourcing and distribution in Question A.3 of the Appendix. |

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| For technical training, is it mandatory that each participant receive in-person training upon device delivery, or can we provide alternative methods, such as written guides or remote support via a call center? | The program is open to different approaches. However, Proponents should justify how the method proposed ensures the right adoption and usage of the delivered devices, and this will part of the evaluation to select subgrantees. It is important to highlight that both technical support and digital literacy trainings should be performed in Spanish. |
| Does the program require an extended warranty plan for the duration of the program (five years), the manufacturer's standard warranty, or a 3-year plan? | The NOFA does not state a minimum warranty required. However, we understand warranties to play a part in the potential success and sustainability of the program. Proponents should include their proposed warranty in Question B.3 of the Appendix and that will be part of the evaluation to select subgrantees. |
| After the five-year program period ends, if issues arise with the devices, who will be responsible for ongoing support or replacement? | It is important to make sure that this program is sustainable. That is why the NOFA is asking Proponents for a plan towards that program sustainability in Question B.4 of the Appendix.<br><br>Moreover, if a device is delivered in the last years of the program and includes a warranty that extends beyond the program duration, that warranty should still be provided beyond the fifth year of this program. |
| What are the required specifications for the devices? Are there any preferred brands or models for laptops, desktops, or tablets that we should prioritize? | In this NOFA, we have not included concrete specifications or types of devices detailed as we are open to your proposals. Please detail those points in Questions B.1 and B.2 of the Appendix. |

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| As technology evolves rapidly, how will the program handle potential changes in the device lineup or pricing adjustments throughout the program's duration? | Please detail how you could navigate these potential changes within the Pricing Proposal that you make, justifying your estimates. |
| Could you clarify the definition of "high volume" and "affordable cost" within the program context? | The program would like to prioritize the number of devices provided to beneficiaries, to ensure the maximum impact of the program. Moreover, the NOFA states as one of the targeted outcomes to "Distribute between 150,000 to 200,000 free or low-cost devices to target populations in Puerto Rico in the next 5 years (2025-2029)."<br><br>The program did not include ranges of pricing, so it is open for Proponents to make their proposals based on their understanding of the market and context, in a cost-effective way. |
| What programs or software must be pre-installed on the devices, and will this vary depending on the user's age or specific needs? | The NOFA asks Proponents to make their proposal on what software and antivirus that would be provided. These could vary depending on the target population, to ensure better adoption of the devices. Please detail them in Question B.2 of the Appendix. |
| Are there specific cybersecurity measures required for the devices? Should we implement tools to prevent theft or resale, or is there preferred software for endpoint visibility and control? | In Question C.1 of the Appendix, Proponents are asked to "detail how that plan will ensure that **there is no fraud**".<br><br>In Question B.2 of the Appendix, Proponents are asked to "describe the minimum specifications that you will require / include for all devices, as well as the software and **antivirus** that will be installed in all of them." |
| Are devices with cellular connectivity within scope given remote areas may | Yes. |

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| not have access to traditional internet services? | |
| Will deliveries be centralized at a partner organization's location, or will there be regional distribution points across Puerto Rico? | Subgrantees will have the responsibility to manage that process, and we are asking Proponents to explain their logistical plans in Question A.3 of the Appendix. |
| Is there a target timeline for delivering a total of 150,000-200,000 devices over the program's five-year period? Are there yearly distribution quotas we should aim for? | There are no specific quotas provided in the NOFA. However, given the current low levels of device adoption and ownership in Puerto Rico, the earlier those devices can be delivered, the better. |
| What are the expectations for ensuring internet access for beneficiaries? Are there preferences for subsidized home connections, public hotspots, or other models? | Taking into consideration that this NOFA is focused on Affordable Devices, and is not primarily focused on Internet access, the program believes that affordable connectivity is a critical step for device adoption. Therefore, in the NOFA one of the allowable uses of funds is to: "Consider options to provide connectivity solutions for users eligible for devices."

As can be seen, there is no preference for a specific approach for ensuring internet access for **some beneficiaries that may need it.**

However, the program wants to make sure that the approach is sustainable for beneficiaries over time and that it is cost-efficient for the program.

Some approaches could be but are not limited to: providing hotspots or negotiating lower internet rates with ISPs (Internet Service Providers). |
| Should the warranty cover accidental damage? | The NOFA does not state any minimum warranty required. However, we understand warranties play a part in the potential success and sustainability of the program. Proponents should |

| | include their proposed warranty in Question B.3 of the Appendix and that will be part of the evaluation to select subgrantees. |
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| Should post-warranty options for device repair or maintenance be included as part of the proposal? | The NOFA does not state any minimum warranty required. However, we understand warranties play a part in the potential success and sustainability of the program. Proponents should include their proposed warranty in Question B.3 of the Appendix and that will be part of the evaluation to select subgrantees.<br><br>This could also be a way to ensure that the program is sustainable over the long-run. |
| What level of technical support is expected for device users? Will 24/7 support be necessary, or are specific hours of operation acceptable? | The NOFA asks Proponents in Question B.3. of the Appendix to: "Please describe your plan to provide technical support in Spanish and the warranties that will be provided to the delivered devices."<br><br>The Program expects to see proposals that, given your experience, serve the purposes of providing technical support to beneficiaries in a cost-efficient way. |
| Can you provide more details about the criteria for determining "eligible program participants"? Specifically, how will fraud prevention be handled during the eligibility verification process? | The eligibility criteria for selecting beneficiaries of devices should be part of the proposal, as specified in Question C.1. of the Appendix. These proposed criteria will be part of the evaluation to select a subgrantee.<br><br>The NOFA also states that: "Minimum criteria the PRBP and the subgrantee may consider to select target households include, but are not limited to, the following: |

| | - Have an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines;<br>- Participate in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;<br>- Receive a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;<br>- Receive unemployment insurance at any point in the past two years; or<br>- Other factors to consider might be the location in rural areas of the household or the number of devices already in the household."<br><br>For reference, regarding the questions about fraud, the NOFA states that one of the objectives of the program is to: "Prioritize low-income households that do not own a device to be beneficiaries of this program." In your proposals, we are expecting to see plans regarding fraud prevention. |
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| For outreach, would it be acceptable to utilize call centers and mass media for contacting potential participants, or are there restrictions on how outreach is conducted? | Yes, that would be acceptable. Always with the close coordination and validation of the Puerto Rico Broadband Program outreach team. |
| What qualifies as "minimum digital literacy training," and can this be delivered via video or other digital formats? | For context, in parallel to this NOFA, the PRBP launched under BEAD funding for other NOFAs:<br><br>- **Digital Literacy Program**: "To select one sub grantee to design and implement the Digital Literacy Program Coordinator project, which includes defining and standardizing the digital literacy curriculum, coordinating and executing training of digital navigators from partner institutions, and gathering |

|  | reporting from the digital navigator partner institutions to ensure overall program success." |
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|  | - **Digital Navigators**: "To solicit proposals from interested Proponents to partner on two projects, Regional Digital Hubs and Targeted Population Specialists. This includes hiring and managing Digital Navigators, delivering personalized digital literacy support to underserved communities and Puerto Ricans of all ages, and collaborating with the Digital Literacy Program Coordinator to ensure consistent training and service delivery."

Subgrantees under this Affordable Devices NOFA will be able to coordinate with the subgrantees of the aforementioned NOFAs to provide part of the digital literacy trainings. However, they will be the responsible for ensuring the right adoption of the devices.

Trainings could happen virtually if that is proved to be an effective way to ensure adoption of the devices for specific groups of population. |
| When will the specifications of Multiservice Internet Centers (MICs) be shared? | The PRBP's MIC program (which has specific funds, not related to this NOFA) is still in the planning and design stage. For example, we are currently analyzing more than 200 centers on the island, and the current plan considers both existing centers and the creation of potential new centers depending on the condition. It is estimated that MICs |

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| | will be available by 2026. We will have Multipurpose Training Centers and Internet Community Centers. |
| How do we know if we comply with this requirement? What evidence should we present?<br><br>"Proponents shall be companies properly accredited to provide services in the broadband value chain in Puerto Rico at the time of the submission of their Proposals and comply with all applicable Puerto Rico or U.S. laws and/or requirements." | Proponents must be companies properly accredited to provide services in Puerto Rico and/or the United States. As an applicant, you do not need to provide the documentation at the time of your NOFA submission. Detailed documentation required will be provided after subgrantees are selected. For future reference and need for contracting, proof of accreditation may include certifications issued by relevant Puerto Rican or U.S. authorities (e.g., Company Social Security Number, Registry of Professional Services Providers of the General Services Administration - (Registro Único de Proveedores [RUP]), professional or industry-specific licenses, and any other documentation demonstrating compliance with applicable local, state, or federal regulatory requirements. |