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viNGN Seeks Public Insights on Digital Equity Roadmap

USVIDEP: Charting a course for comprehensive digital inclusivity in the U.S. Virgin Islands

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In an effort to foster a digitally inclusive future, the V.I. Next Generation Network is inviting the public to contribute feedback to the U.S. Virgin Islands Digital Equity Plan (USVIDEP).

This strategic roadmap outlines the territory's ambition to achieve digital resiliency and parity with mainland America, ensuring that residents have access to affordable internet, devices, and support services without leaving the Islands.

The USVIDEP will serve as a guiding framework for disbursing federal funds through the State/Territory Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, aiming to empower local organizations

and agencies to enhance the territory's digital infrastructure and skills. The plan addresses five key areas:

1. Providing access to high-speed internet at affordable rates.
2. Ensuring the availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support.
3. Enhancing the digital literacy of Virgin Islanders.
4. Making public online resources accessible and inclusive.
5. Raising awareness about cybersecurity and safe online practices.

The document, available for download [here](#), details the current digital landscape of the territory, comparing broadband coverage, costs, and speed with the U.S. mainland and the Caribbean region. It also lays out specific strategies, activities, and measurable indicators for progress over the next five years. Furthermore, it discusses how improving digital equity aligns with local government strategic plans to improve education, health, workforce development, civic participation, and essential services delivery.

The digital equity team's call for public commentary is an opportunity for community members to shape the digital future of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The USVIDEP, supported by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration under the Biden Internet For All Initiative, complements the \$27 million BEAD Grant Program administered by the VIBO under the OMB.

Public input is vital for refining the USVIDEP and will be accepted until April 28, 2024. Comments can be sent to jnbobbit@vingn.com and/or info@usvideal.com.