

# **DIGITAL EQUITY GRANTS**

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## **2024 GUIDELINES**



## SEATTLE'S COMMITMENT TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Seattle is working together for digital equity, to ensure all residents and neighborhoods have the information technology capacity needed for civic life, cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. We collaborate with education, community, and business partners on intentional strategies and investments to create opportunities and to reduce and eliminate existing and historical barriers to technology access and use.

Digital equity grants are a cornerstone of the City's Digital Equity Program. Our vision is for Seattle to be a city where technology's opportunities equitably empower all residents and communities, especially those who are historically underserved or underrepresented. These grants seek to support community-driven solutions to achieving digital equity in Seattle.

The Technology Matching Fund program was established by Resolution 29673 and 31919 in 1997 to support the community's efforts to close the digital divide and encourage a technology-healthy city. Over \$7 million has been awarded since 1998. The fund continues the legacy of Bill Wright, a Central District community leader who embodied the program goals of creating digital equity and opportunities for all, and of using technology tools to engage residents, improve communications and strengthen communities. Bill Wright developed Midtown Commons, one of the early technology access and education centers in Seattle.

The pandemic has magnified the digital inequities in key demographic groups lacking high-speed internet and devices needed for school and work. In response to this crisis, the City spearheaded the Internet for All Seattle Initiative in 2020 (see Res. 31956 adopted by Council and signed by the Mayor). This framework has served as a roadmap for Seattle to move closer to the ambitious goal of universal internet adoption for all residents. As a result, the Digital Navigator Grant was created in response to community-expressed needs for residents without reliable internet and computing devices. Digital navigators have emerged locally and nationally as trusted guides to ensure residents receive on-demand tech support and assistance with foundational digital skills.

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# GRANT OVERVIEW

## FUNDS AVAILABLE

- **\$545,000** is available for digital equity grants.
- Each organization is eligible for a maximum of **\$35,000**.
- **25% Community Match** is required, based on the amount of the funding request. For example, if your organization is requesting the maximum grant amount of \$35,000, the required match is \$8750.
- Projects must be **completed within one year**.

# GRANT GOALS

**DIGITAL EQUITY GRANTS** aim to increase internet access and adoption through:

- **Digital literacy classes and/or workshops:** Provide digital literacy skills training to new technology users.
- **Devices and technical support:** Provide devices (for example: laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, desktop computers, smartphones, assistive technology) and the support needed to use them effectively.
- **Internet connectivity:** Provide internet to low-income residents by expanding WiFi or another means (for example: hotspots, routers, or WiFi access points).
- **Digital navigator services:** Provide one-on-one or small group, just-in-time assistance in person, virtually, via phone/text/email to help residents (1) use their devices (computers, laptops, and smartphones); (2) connect to the internet; and (3) sign up for low-cost internet plans.

**TECHNOLOGY MATCHING FUND** projects may include a combination of the above digital equity categories. The primary focus of the project must be one of the following: **(1) digital literacy classes and/or workshops; (2) devices and technical support; or (3) internet connectivity.**

**DIGITAL NAVIGATOR GRANT** projects provide **digital navigator services.** Grants will be awarded to organizations committed to partnering with the City to accomplish the following:

- Assist residents navigate and apply to city affordability programs
- Help improve City services through focus groups and reporting
- Assist inequitably impacted populations that are least likely to access City services, which may include providing language access

## PROPOSAL IDEAS

**DIGITAL NAVIGATOR SERVICES:** An organization wants to provide more comprehensive technical support for its community. This organization can apply for funding to have dedicated staff available to provide information on how to access devices and to assist with enrollment in low-cost internet programs.

**DIGITAL LITERACY CLASSES AND/OR WORKSHOPS:** A group offers an employment program for low-income adults. It can apply for funds to provide specialized digital skills training and new or refurbished laptops, positioning its clients for a more successful job search.

**DEVICES AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT:** A community group wants to provide devices to immigrant and refugee families at risk of homelessness. This group can apply for funds to upgrade their on-site lab equipment or establish a loaner program for remote learning.

**INTERNET CONNECTIVITY:** A homeless shelter or community building could extend wiring and/or add wi-fi access points to provide better community access outside or improve shared connectivity.

## TIMELINE

<b>Applications Accepted</b>	<b>September 18, 2023</b>
<b>Preliminary Application Deadline</b>	<b>12PM on October 5, 2023</b>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>12PM on November 9, 2023</b>
<b>Award Notification</b>	<b>February 2024</b>
<b>Project Implementation</b>	<b>April 2024 to March 2025</b>

## PRELIMINARY APPLICATIONS

Submitting an optional Preliminary Application will enable you to meet with a Seattle IT staff member who can review your application with you. Preliminary Applications are not scored or shared with reviewers. To request a session to review your preliminary application, email [communitytechnology@seattle.gov](mailto:communitytechnology@seattle.gov).

## APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

If you have questions about the application, face barriers applying, or need technical assistance:

Email: [communitytechnology@seattle.gov](mailto:communitytechnology@seattle.gov)

Website: [seattle.gov/digitalequitygrants](https://seattle.gov/digitalequitygrants)



# HOW TO APPLY

- 1 Open the web browser and go to [seattle.fluxx.io](https://seattle.fluxx.io) (use Chrome browser for an optimized experience).
- 2 Click on “Create an Account Now”.
- 3 On the registration form, fill out ALL the information. Note: you will need to add your organization to the application.
- 4 Click on “Submit Request”.
- 5 Login to the email you provided in the registration form and verify your account using the link provided in the email.
- 6 You will be asked to enter a password.
- 7 Once the password is set, you will be navigated to the Grantee Portal.

You must complete all the application sections and submit your application online.

Please support your budget request with the following required documentation. Applications with insufficient documentation will not be awarded funds. These documents are for verification purposes only. Reviewers will not have access to these attached documents to score your application.

- Staff names, titles, schedules, pay rates, and hours
- Schedule of programs/services supporting budget allocations
- Cost quotes from reputable vendors for devices, internet connectivity, software, and/or online services
- Letter of support from fiscal agent verifying fiscal agency fees
- Verification of community match sources

# APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

## WHO SHOULD APPLY?

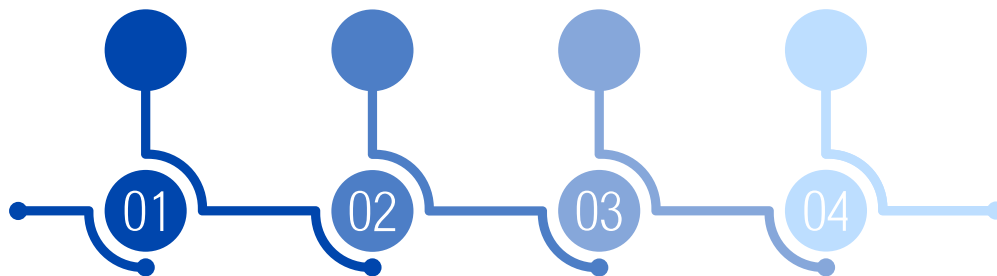
- Non-profit organizations
- Neighborhood groups
- Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA)
- Business groups
- Community-based organizations



## WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- Individuals
- For-profit businesses
- Religious organizations
- Major institutions, government agencies, hospitals, universities, schools
- Political groups
- Organizations outside the City of Seattle

**SCHOOL-BASED PROJECTS:** Applications for school-based projects are eligible but must come from a Parent-Teacher-Student Association or community-based organization. The fund will support after-school or evening-based programs. Funds may not be used for in-school projects that do not engage the larger community in a meaningful way.





# COMMUNITY MATCH

Your match can include items from any combination of the following categories:



## IN-KIND MATCH

- Materials or supplies such as computers, furniture, software, or paper
- Additional cost of utilities for the space for your project
- Staff time dedicated to the project, but not paid for by grant dollars
  - Professional services valued at the “reasonable and customary rate” up to a maximum of \$100/hr
  - Application preparation expenses up to \$500 (10 hrs x \$50/hr)

## VOLUNTEER MATCH

Volunteer labor valued at \$35 per hour. Volunteer hours may be counted starting on the application due date.

## CASH MATCH

- Money you have collected and approved for use on your project
- Money you will raise during your project by fundraising
- Grants received from other foundations for your project

## MATCH RESTRICTIONS

- Your match must be appropriate to the goals of your project
- You must obtain your match during the life of the project

## INELIGIBLE MATCH

- City of Seattle resources such as City staff time, use of City facilities, and/or any other city grant funding
- Time spent preparing your proposal over 10 hours. \$500 is the maximum amount that can be counted towards your organization's community match.

# EXPENSES ALLOWED



## INFRASTRUCTURE & BROADBAND

- Computers, laptops, tablets, mobile devices, and printers
- Assistive and adaptive devices
- Network routers, Wi-Fi access points, and repeaters
- Equipment to extend existing Wi-Fi outside of buildings
- Equipment to outfit a mobile Wi-Fi bus or van or other types of pop-up connectivity
- Indoor and outdoor free mobile internet solutions [for example, using public Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) spectrum].
- Internet service, including hotspots
- Software and online subscription services
- Multimedia production equipment (cameras, audio)
- STEM/Maker/robotic equipment

## PERSONNEL

- Professional services, such as outside instructors, technical support, or evaluators
- Staff costs to implement the project
- Intern costs to implement the project

## OTHER

- Warranties on equipment
- Insurance costs specific to the project
- Printing costs
- Project supplies
- Peripherals (headphones, mouse, cables)
- Fiscal agency fees up to 10% of the award
- Stipends for project-related work
- Food expenses limited to 20% of the award and not to exceed \$1,250 per project

## EXPENSES NOT ALLOWED

- An organization's operating expenses not directly related to the funded project
- Expenditures or financial commitments made before the organization is under contract with the City of Seattle
- Out-of-city travel expenses, or any lodging/hotel expenses
- Pay for private transportation expenses, including mileage, gas, insurance, car rentals, etc.

## PURCHASING TECHNOLOGY

When purchasing equipment, consider the following:

- Maintenance and technical support needs
- Name-brand vendor that offers equipment warranties
- Multiple bids from companies with a goal towards a single vendor
- Anti-virus software and public-computing protection solutions

## FISCAL AGENTS

Digital equity grant projects are required to have a fiscal agent. Organizations may act as their own fiscal agent or use another organization to manage the pass-through of grant funds. Individuals who obtain a tax identification number and comply with IRS rules can serve as fiscal agents. Fiscal agency fees are eligible project costs or can be applied to your match contribution.

## DISABILITIES

We encourage organizations to actively work to make programs and services inclusive. All projects must demonstrate a good faith effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 which extends civil-rights protection to persons with disabilities.

