

# New York Digital Inclusion Fund FAQs

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## Digital Inclusion Coalition Planning Grants FAQs

### **Who is eligible to apply for the Digital Inclusion Coalition Planning Grants?**

The lead proposer must be a 501(c)3 organization. Proposal partners can include: Community-based organizations, digital inclusion advocates, digital literacy skills platforms, and community anchor institutions (i.e., library, school, medical facility, housing, etc.) that work with any of the following priority populations:

- Immigrants/refugees/English language learners
- Formerly or currently incarcerated individuals
- Housing insecure/individuals experiencing homelessness
- Low-income households
- People with disabilities
- Job-seekers
- Older adults (65 years+)

### **What are the goals of the Digital Inclusion Coalition Planning Grants?**

To increase the number of digital inclusion partnerships across New York state that are prepared to take advantage of the new influx of federal funding for digital inclusion. Specifically, grants are intended to:

- Form coalitions between diverse groups of local digital inclusion stakeholders
- Research and define community digital inclusion needs and design implementation plans to provide comprehensive local solutions in anticipation of funding availability through available state funding
- Build relationships with local and state-based digital inclusion stakeholders (municipal and state government, education dept, state library, and national organizations)
- Identify long-term state-based or other institutional funding sources to support digital inclusion work

**I am interested in addressing digital inclusion in my community. However, I am new to this and don't know where to start.**

Check out NDIA's [Digital Inclusion Startup Manual](#) to guide you.

**I am interested in addressing digital inclusion in my community and want to help establish a coalition. However, I am new to this and don't know where to start.**

Check out NDIA's "[Building a Coalition - Tips for Getting Started](#)" to guide you through your planning process for submitting an RFP for funding.

**I am already part of a digital inclusion coalition. Can I still apply for funding?**

While Schmidt Futures would not fund an additional coalition in your community/region, you could apply for funding to expand your efforts. This could include funding to (1) define local digital inclusion needs (broadband access, adoption, affordability gaps, device penetration gaps, digital literacy skill gaps, etc.) through a research process, (2) prepare implementation plans to tackle these gaps and expand digital inclusion resources in your region, and (3) create a targeted plan for which sources of incoming federal/state/private funding they will use to fund regional digital inclusion initiatives.

**Are the Digital Inclusion Coalition Planning Grants designed to support regional efforts?**

Recognizing the importance of working regionally to develop an infrastructure to create Digital Equity Ecosystems, Schmidt Futures would like to seed or support at least one digital inclusion coalition in each economic development region in New York state. Regions include: Western NY, Finger Lakes, Southern Tier, Central NY, Mohawk Valley, Capital Region, Mid-Hudson, New York City, Long Island, and North Country.

**What is the purpose of Letters of Intent?**

If you are interested in applying for a Digital Inclusion Coalition Planning Grant, we encourage you to submit a Letter of Intent detailing your interest, targeted community/area to serve, and goals. Letters of Intent were accepted from September 1-8, 2021. The submission period to submit Letters of Intent is now closed.

**Do I need to submit a Letter of Intent?**

Please submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) if you intend to apply for either the Coalition Planning Grant or the Innovation Grant. Please submit an LOI if you already know which organizations you would like to partner with and if you would like to be connected to other potential partners. If you are planning to apply for both the Coalition Planning Grant and the Innovation Grant, you should submit separate LOIs (it is unlikely that duplicative applications would be appropriate for both grants).

**Can applicants apply for both grants?**

Yes, however your applications should be tailored to the specific goals and intention of each grant as it is unlikely that the same application would be suitable for both grants.

**Does my organization need to have nonprofit status to apply for a grant?**

We require that the organization submitting the grant application, the Lead Applicant, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit or charity. However, any organization that meets the requirements described above is eligible to participate in a partnership.

**Do all partners need to apply for the grant or should one partner apply?**

No, only one application is needed per partnership. We suggest identifying a single point of contact, the Lead Applicant, to represent the partnership in the application.

**How will funds be dispersed if selected to receive a grant?**

Funds will be dispersed in one lump sum to the Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant will be responsible for any sub-grant disbursements to partner organizations (which should be outlined in the Budget portion of the application).

**Does the content I submit in the Letter of Intent need to exactly match the final application?**

No. The LOI will not be compared against the final application. Any necessary changes (e.g. to partners, proposal, etc.) can be finalized in the application.

**Where can I watch the recording of the webinars if I was unable to attend?**

The webinars can be viewed at <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/nydifund/>. Please email us at [nydifund@digitalinclusion.org](mailto:nydifund@digitalinclusion.org) if you would like us to email you a contact list of potential partner organizations that self-identified in the chat of the webinars.

**How long is the Digital Inclusion Coalition Planning Grants Period?**

Grant goals must be achieved and funds spent within 6 months of when the grant funds were awarded.

**What will the application require? How will applications be evaluated?**

Please see the [RFP Guidelines for the Coalition Planning Grants](#) for details on what to include in your application and the rubric that the panel will use to evaluate each application.

**When are applications due?**

October 15, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. EST

**When will successful grant applicants be notified?**

You will be notified of the status of your grant application by December 22, 2021.

**How can I find potential partnerships for my application?**

All applicants who submitted an LOI were emailed a list of other applicants who notified us of their intent to apply for a Coalition Planning Grant or Innovation Grant.

If you have any other questions, please contact NDIA at [nydifund@digitalinclusion.org](mailto:nydifund@digitalinclusion.org).

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## Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants FAQs

### **Who is eligible to apply for the Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants?**

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### **How long is the Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants period?**

Grant goals must be achieved and funds spent within 24 months of when the grant funds were awarded. Applicants can define their grant period as 12 or 24 months.

### **What are the goals of the Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants?**

The goal is to use funding to bring together diverse sets of local organizations who have a stake in providing digital inclusion resources to their constituents.

Successful applicants will demonstrate the extent to which these funds support innovative partnership collaborations between digital inclusion stakeholders within local communities.

We are looking for:

- Partnership-based pilot initiatives to expand existing digital inclusion programming or create new initiatives that meet the needs of more residents than the community had prior through strategic partnership collaborations.
- Innovative partnership approaches to increasing the number of people connected to broadband, equipped with the devices they need to participate in digital life, digital literacy resources, technical support, and more.

### **Are the Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants designed to support regional efforts?**

The Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants will not be explicitly tied to specific economic regions in New York state. Grants will be awarded to funding the most innovative initiatives across the state, regardless of where they come from.

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**How many stakeholder partners should be involved for the smaller scale partnerships supported by the Innovation Grants?** 2-5 organizations will probably work best, however, the number of partners involved depends on your community needs and the goals outlined in your grant application.

**What is a Long Term Sustainability Plan?**

The Long Term Sustainability Plan is your long-term plan for how to continue offering your project services after the grant period has ended. The Innovation Grant is an initial investment that is intended to support pilot projects that will secure funding after this grant period has ended to continue offering the services of the project.

**How much funding is available for the Innovation Grant?**

Grant applications can range from \$50,000-\$250,000 for either a 12-month or 24-month grant. The Innovation Grant is competitive and will fund the best proposals that identify needs and effective solutions. The budget you propose should explain and justify the total funds requested for the timeline of the proposed project.

**Will there be a second round of funding?**

Yes. A second round of funding will be available in Fall of 2022. The second round will prioritize applicants who did *not* receive funding in round one.

**Can I use the Innovation Grant for project planning?**

No. The Innovation Grant is intended to support projects that can be implemented as soon as possible (planning can be a component but not the full focus of the grant). If planning is the focus of your project, consider if it would be appropriate for the Coalition Planning Grant application.

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**Do all partners need to apply for the grant or should one partner apply?**

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**How will funds be dispersed if selected to receive a grant?**

Funds will be dispersed in one lump sum or multiple sums to the Lead Applicant and dissemination of funds will be based on the grant deliverables and timeline. The Lead Applicant will be responsible for any sub-grant disbursements to partner organizations (which should be outlined in the Budget of the RFP).

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**What will the proposal require? How will RFPs be evaluated?**

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