SPRING 2020 GRANT GUIDELINES – DIGITAL NAVIGATOR POSITION

To address some of Philadelphia's challenges that have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic – primarily the need to work and study remotely – the Digital Literacy Alliance (DLA) is launching a fast track grant cycle. This opportunity aims to better support our residents by providing funding to create one or more Digital Navigator roles that would reside in high-capacity community organizations.

"Digital Navigators" is an adaptation of traditional digital inclusion roles that will specifically provide remote one-to-one dedicated support to the community. Among other things, Digital Navigators will help citizens identify their internet, device, and training needs, walk them through their options, support them in filling out required paperwork or online forms if necessary, and provide warm handoffs for additional training or technical support as needed. This is an evolving role and the selected grantees will help develop and advance the concept of Digital Navigators moving forward.

Below is a short overview of the DLA, followed by an invitation to apply for funding to create a Digital Navigator role within your organization. To streamline our process and move funds to organizations as quickly as possible, the proposal solicitation and review timeline for this grant opportunity will be significantly shorter than usual. If you have any questions related to this grant opportunity and / or application process, please reach out to Juliet Fink-Yates (Juliet.Fink-Yates@phila.gov) or Stephanie Orlando (Stephanie.Orlando@phila.gov).

<u>OVERVIEW OF DIGITAL LITERACY ALLIANCE</u>

The Digital Literacy Alliance is a broad coalition of institutional stakeholders working to alleviate the digital divide in Philadelphia. The coalition develops strategy, manages an existing seed fund, oversees funded programs, and seeks additional funding with the assistance of relevant stakeholders and coalition members.

The goals of the Alliance are:
- To provide financial support to programs in Philadelphia that address issues of digital literacy and inclusion
- To serve as a convener of stakeholders and partners from diverse sectors who are interested and invested in closing the digital divide in Philadelphia
- To serve as a resource for best practices and innovations in digital literacy programming and policy-making

The Alliance defines digital literacy as "the ability to access technology and the Internet and use those tools to find, evaluate, share and create content." Now more than ever, the DLA is committed to providing financial support to organizations that can help people access the technology / devices they need to work from home or complete their school work during the COVID-19 crisis.

WHAT IS A 'DIGITAL NAVIGATOR'

Living in a time of 'social distancing' has elevated many conversations about digital inclusion and equity – on both a local and national scale – which is why the Alliance will focus this grant cycle on funding an innovative Digital Navigator position within a small number of selected organizations.

With the current COVID-19 crisis, saving lives means helping people get connected to the Internet so they can remain at home and perform a wide range of activities, from schoolwork to job searching to paying bills. With over 25% of Philadelphians lacking access to the Internet or a smart phone, getting connected to the Internet can be a highly stressful and difficult task for those who no longer have access to libraries, KEYSPOTS, or even friends and family to assist them. The Digital Navigator role is being developed with guidance from the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) to provide a new model that can remotely reach those without connectivity and walk them through how to get connected. Selected grantees will work closely together to coordinate a Digital Navigator network in Philadelphia and work with the NDIA to get training and support in the role.

OVERVIEW OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY

For this topic-specific grant cycle dedicated to helping organizations create a Digital Navigator role, the DLA will consider applicants that meet the following guidelines:

- The DLA anticipates awarding up to $80,000 for this grant cycle, and grants will be made for one year. The maximum grant award will be $25,000 for one organization.
- Organizations must be able to identify an existing employee who is prepared and qualified to take on the role of Digital Navigator and/or manage a Digital Navigator volunteer model. • Organizations must be able to articulate their specific community reach and explain how they are currently communicating with/reaching people in the community amid social distancing guidelines.
- Organizations must already be well-equipped and experienced in operating digital literacy programs and providing support to individuals in accessing internet or devices. • *Optional:* Organizations who are willing/have capacity to assist in equipment distribution efforts (i.e., providing computers) will be eligible to receive an additional $5k-$10k as part of their grant award. There will be an additional question on the application for those who would like to opt in.

OVERVIEW OF DIGITAL NAVIGATOR GRANT PROCESS

Grant applicants are required to fill out **THIS short online application** (which serves as an abbreviated Letter of Intent) and will be notified shortly thereafter with funding status; there will not be a full proposal required after the initial application.

In order to provide funding as quickly as possible, the timeline for this grant process is accelerated. Applicants will have until Monday, April 27, 2020 to complete the short online application form. Submissions will be evaluated by a small review committee of DLA members using an evaluation matrix that includes the following criteria: ***community reach, organizational capacity, capability for serving***

diverse populations, and existing digital literacy programs/infrastructure. You will receive notification of funding status by May 4th, 2020.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a grant from the Digital Literacy Alliance, applicants must meet the following criteria:

▪ Organizations and/or individuals applying for grants must be based in Philadelphia. ▪ Applicants must be able to implement the role within two weeks of receiving funding and must agree to meet regularly with the DLA network of Digital Navigators during the grant period. ▪ Applicants who are submitting a proposal must have existing 501(C)(3) status.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Monday, April 27th, 2020	Online grant submission form due. The application form can be found HERE.
Tuesday, April 28th, 2020	Review committee will begin evaluating submissions.
May 4th, 2020	Organizations are notified of funding decisions.