

Digital Needs Assessment

This Needs Assessment outlines effective program practices for integrating technology and building staff and student digital skills.

The Needs Assessment is designed for programs to use to identify, reflect on and assess your program's strengths, gaps and needs for increasing your capacity to implement these practices.

It is unlikely that any program is implementing all or most of the practices outlined below and some programs may be implementing very few of them. We encourage you to be frank in identifying and describing your capacity gaps and digital resource needs in this assessment, which will inform your action plan. Resources to consider in your needs assessment include technical assistance, professional development, digital devices, hardware and software, etc.

Digital literacy is the ability to actively utilize technology to find, evaluate, organize, create and communicate information. For definitions of program models and other terminology used in this Needs Assessment see [Chapter 1 Getting Started](#) of the IDEAL Handbook. If you want to get a jump start on professional development, check out [Transforming Distance Education](#) and other digital literacy professional development resources [from SABES Program Support PD Center](#).

The Needs Assessment is divided into five sections:

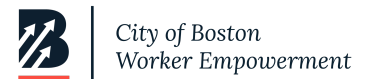
- I. Technology integration practices (for face-to-face and remote service delivery)
- II. Staff digital literacy and technology integration skills
- III. Program practices that support staff digital literacy and technology integration
- IV. Program practices that support students' digital literacy skill development
- V. Technology infrastructure needs

If you rely heavily on volunteers to provide instruction and coaching, consider including their perspectives in this process, especially in Section II (Staff digital literacy skills). Needless to say, staffing and programming may be in flux as you wrap up this current program year. Answer the questions based on the current staff capacity as well as your collective observations of overall trends.

I. Technology Integration Practices (for face-to-face and remote service delivery)

Consider your program's current use and capacity to use technology for service delivery

Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.		(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.	(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.
Technology Integration Practices	Rating 1-3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
1. We currently offer some type of remote and/or hybrid (combination of in-person and online) instruction and advising.			
2. We offer a blended model of instruction (some synchronous and some asynchronous instructional activities)			
3. We have a checklist or self-assessment to help learners determine whether online learning is right for them			
4. We use a commercial, paid-subscription curriculum (e.g. EnGen, Aztec, Essential Ed, Burlington English) for remote and hybrid instruction.			
5. We use an online learning management system (e.g. Google Classroom, Canvas for Teachers)			



Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.

(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.

(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.

Technology Integration Practices	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
6. We use video conferencing, text messaging apps,, and/or social media to communicate with students (e.g. Facebook group, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, Google meet, Remind.)			
7. We offer a student orientation that details the technology tools that will be used in instruction and advising.			
8. We assess students’ access to hardware, software and internet needed to complete program activities remotely and on site.			
9. We take time to onboard and train students to use technology platforms and tools used in their classes.			
10. We assess students’ digital literacy skills to determine what scaffolding and instruction they’ll need in order to use instructional technology.			
11. We have a staff person designated to assist staff and students with technical issues that they encounter in online instruction.			

II. Staff Digital Literacy and Technology Integration Skills

Ratings: (1) A minority of staff have these skills		(2) Some but not all staff have these skills	(3) A majority of staff have these skills
Staff Digital Literacy Skills	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
12. Staff have basic computer skills and knowledge needed to operate computers, teach and learn using technology, such as start-up steps, using the keyboard, printing, and trouble-shooting simple problems.			
13. Staff use productivity software to perform various tasks, including creating written documents, graphs and spreadsheets, and presentations, such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher) and Google Applications (Docs, Sheets, Slides).			
14. Staff use instructional software ranging from complete online curricula to those used for specific skill development, e.g., reading, writing, math, work skills, and ESOL (e.g. Burlington English, Essential Ed).			
15. Staff use online resources on a regular basis (e.g. websites, online forms).			

Ratings: (1) A minority of staff have these skills

(2) Some but not all staff have these skills

(3) A majority of staff have these skills

Staff Digital Literacy Skills	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
16. Staff are aware of and use assistive or adaptive technology to support learners with disabilities.			
17. Staff use a variety of online technology tools to communicate and collaborate. Some examples include e-mail, wikis, shared online documents, blogs, and social networking sites.			
18. Staff regularly evaluate and use new technology to choose what is best to use in the classroom and program.			
19. Staff use technology to solve problems and find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information.			

III. Program Practices that Support Staff Digital Literacy and Technology Integration Skills

Ratings: (1) Not a Program Practice		(2) Emerging Program Practice	(3) Established Program Practice
Consider staff and volunteers (if applicable)	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
20. We include requirements related to the ability to integrate technology and teach digital literacy skills in our hiring procedures – job postings, descriptions, interviews.			
21. We have a process in place for assessing the digital literacy skills and needs of staff. (If a standards framework is used, describe).			
22. Our staff performance review process progress towards technology integration and digital literacy skill-building.			
23. We provide in-house professional development to build staff digital literacy and tech capacity.			
24. We require staff to attend PD to address gaps identified in performance review, self-assessments, etc. and pay for their time to attend.			

Ratings: (1) Not a Program Practice		(2) Emerging Program Practice	(3) Established Program Practice
Consider staff and volunteers (if applicable)	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
25. We include progress toward building staff and student digital skills in our program’s annual continuous improvement plan or other goal-setting processes.			

IV. Program Practices that Support Students’ Digital Literacy Skill Development

Consider this definition of digital literacy as you evaluate your program practices: *Digital literacy is the ability to actively utilize technology to find, evaluate, organize, create and communicate information.*

Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.		(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.	(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.
Program practices that support student’s digital literacy skill development.	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
26. We have a process and tool in place for assessing the digital literacy skills and needs of students using a standards-based skills framework.			
27. We use digital skill assessment results to inform curriculum and instruction and to identify individual student needs.			

Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.

(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.

(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.

Program practices that support student’s digital literacy skill development.	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
28. We integrate digital literacy skill instruction into all instruction to enhance academic and language learning.			
29. We use a digital literacy curriculum that is aligned with a standards framework.			
30. We are aware of and connect students to program and community resources for sources of low cost or free technology devices.			
31. We are aware of and connect students to program and community resources for sources of low cost broadband access.			
32. We assess students’ technology and digital literacy skills to determine what scaffolding and instruction they’ll need to use instructional technology.			
33. Following initial onboarding, we continue to assess and build students’ digital literacy and technology skills.			

V. Technology Infrastructure Needs

Ratings: (1) We are minimally equipped		(2) We are somewhat equipped	(3) We are well-equipped
	Rating 1-3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
34. Our program owns or has easy access to projectors, smart boards and/or big screens			
35. Our program has a system for lending devices and hotspots to students who need them.			
36. Our program owns or has easy access to devices such as desktop and/or laptop computers or tablets for staff use.			
37. Our program owns or has easy access to devices such as desktop and/or laptop computers or tablets for student use.			
38. Our program owns or has easy access to sufficient webcams, printers, scanners, mouse, keyboard.			
39. Our program has a staff person whose duties and skill set include periodic tech inventory, software and security updates, and maintenance according to a set schedule.			

Ratings: (1) We are minimally equipped		(2) We are somewhat equipped	(3) We are well-equipped
	Rating 1-3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
40. Our program has a staff person whose duties and skills set includes updating, refreshing/replacing, purchasing hardware, according to a set schedule.			
41. Our program or facility has a dedicated staff person whose duties and skills set includes ensuring that device and internet capacity is sufficient to run the learning platforms and software.			
42. Our program has sufficient high-speed and reliable internet access that can support multiple classes, online learning platforms, advising sessions, administrative work simultaneously.			
43. Our program has a secure space to store technology equipment.			