CITY OF BOSTON WORKER EMPOWERMENT CABINET

Request for Grant Applications (RFGA)
The Digital Literacy (DigLit) Initiative
Issue Date: October 17, 2024

Information Session: October 28, 2024 [Registration Link]

Inquiries Due: November 21, 2024 by 5 p.m. to
brooke.machado@boston.gov

Applications Due: November 26, 2024 by 5 p.m.

Michelle Wu, Mayor
Trinh Nguyen, Chief of Worker Empowerment,
Director, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development

Grant Program and Details

Background

The City of Boston Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (OWD) administers funding to support services such as education and job training. OWD has secured funding through the Department of Labor's FY 2023 Community Project Funding, authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023. This funding will be used to expand the **Digital Literacy Initiative (DigLit)**, aimed at enhancing digital skills among individuals facing employment barriers.

A 2021 OWD survey revealed significant challenges in digital infrastructure, internet access, and digital literacy skills training among its workforce development training and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. In response, this opportunity aims to build capacity and enhance digital capabilities, equipping occupational training providers with skills and capacity to increase and improve the quality of the digital literacy instruction offered to their training participants within their training programs. Following [a successful pilot](#) in collaboration with the City of Boston's [Adult Literacy Initiative (ALI)](#) involving 25 ABE providers, this round of the DigLit Initiative is poised to improve training participants' employability and support their personal and professional development.

This round of Digital Literacy Initiative (DigLit) funding will target <u>15–20 occupational training providers</u>, enabling them to deliver high-quality digital literacy instruction within their programs. A total of $1,000,000 has been allocated to: (1) fund World Education, the consultant providing technical assistance and professional development in digital literacy instruction, and (2) provide training programs with flexible funds for staff compensation for participation in professional development coaching and the community of practice and technology purchases (e.g., laptops, smartboards, curriculum materials, software, tablets). Funding may also cover resources such as Wi-Fi access and hotspots to strengthen digital literacy and technology-based learning capacity. The final grant amounts will be determined based on the total number of selected awardees. Awards will range from approximately $30,000 to $40,000, with the specific amount allocated to each grantee contingent on the total number of successful applicants. This approach allows us to maximize the impact of the available resources across a diverse group of awardees.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Programs must offer **occupational skills training or job readiness training** and have either received funding from **OWD** **and/or** **DESE MassSTEP funding** within the last three years.
- Funding is targeted at occupational skills training or job readiness training serving **Boston residents 18+**. Organizations must be either **Boston-based or serve significant numbers of eligible participants**. Fully remote programs with no local base are not eligible to apply.
- **Currently provide occupational skills training or job readiness training**, including "bridge" or Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that combine Adult Basic Education and workforce training for specific occupations. Preference given to programs that integrate additional reading, writing, math, language skill development and personal and workplace success skills (aka "soft skills") into the occupational skills training.
- **Non-profit organizations**, holding 501(c)(3) status or with a fiscal sponsor holding 501(c)(3) status.

With this funding, OWD is seeking proposals from established occupational training or job readiness programs that serve marginalized populations facing employment barriers. These barriers may include limited literacy, numeracy, English proficiency, technological skills, or lack of a high school diploma. Eligible organizations must have a mission and proven history of serving:

- Low-income populations
- Returning citizens and justice-involved individuals
- Housing-insecure individuals

The purpose of these funds is to provide individuals from these priority populations with enhanced digital literacy training within their occupational training programs. This training will strengthen connections to potential employers and build skills needed for employment in high-demand industries. Preference will be given to programs that offer academic and wraparound supports, combining occupational training with language, literacy, or other services to help participants achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Grant Program Details

City Department: Office of Workforce Development (OWD)

Program Manager: Brooke Machado, (617) 918-5272, brooke.machado@boston.gov

Funding Source: Department of Labor's FY 2023 Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending, Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

Total Amount Available for Grant Program: $603,269

Award Amount per Grant per Organization: $30,163 - $40,217 (flat funding based on the number of awardees)

Grant Eligibility: Organizations applying to this opportunity must be non-profit organizations (holding 501(c)(3) status or with a fiscal sponsor that holds 501(c)(3) status) and have an established, high-quality job training program that is currently or was previously funded by OWD and/or DESE MassSTEP within the last three years.

Scope of Work
Participate in Required Technical Assistance Sessions and Project Activities: The applicant must designate a project team of 2+ staff members, including at least one administrator (i.e., director, coordinator) and at least one instructional staff member to participate in all technical assistance activities, including professional development webinars, program-based coaching, and community of practice sessions covering digital literacy, digital resilience, EdTech routine development, and evaluation activities January 2025 to June 2026. Evaluation activities may include completing surveys, individual and cohort meetings, and participating in interviews and focus groups as needed. Applicant organizations are required to compensate the designated staff for the time devoted to all project activities.
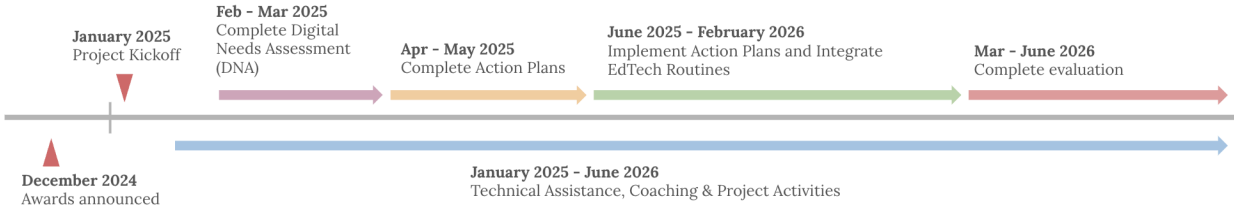
Complete Digital Needs Assessment (DNA): With the support of the World Education coach, complete a Digital Needs Assessment (DNA) to evaluate the program's strengths, gaps, and needs in technology integration, digital infrastructure, staff digital literacy, and practices that support students' digital literacy skill development.

Develop an Action Plan: Guided by World Education coaches, identify areas for enhancing digital literacy in the training program. Craft action plans and collaborate with the project team to integrate technology into training activities, defining short- and long-term goals, detailed steps, timelines, and resource needs.

Implement Action Plans and Integrate EdTech Routines: With ongoing support from World Education coaches and the broader community of practice, programs will implement their action plans and strategies. This phase will involve integrating technology into training instruction and focusing on developing EdTech routines to incorporate into the training curriculum and share in the Boston DigLit EdTech Strategy Routine Library. Participants will also share best practices and foster a community of learning and innovation.

Timeline

January 2025
Project Kickoff

Feb – Mar 2025
Complete Digital
Needs Assessment
(DNA)

Apr – May 2025
Complete Action Plans

June 2025 – February 2026
Implement Action Plans and Integrate
EdTech Routines

Mar – June 2026
Complete evaluation

December 2024
Awards announced

January 2025 – June 2026
Technical Assistance, Coaching & Project Activities

Important Dates

Grant Application Launch	Tuesday, October 17, 2024
Information Session	Monday, October 28, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. [Registration Link]
Inquiries Due	November 21, 2024 by 5 p.m. to brooke.machado@boston.gov
Application Deadline	Tuesday, November 26, 2024 by 5 p.m.
Awards Announced	Friday, December 20, 2024
Project Kickoff	Week of January 21, 2025

All applications and required documents are due by the deadline. (No extensions will be granted.)

For the full list of application questions, please refer to this document.

Applicant Organization Information

Organization Name:

Program Name (if different than Organization Name)

Organization Street Address:

Organization City:

Organization Zip Code:

Organization Annual Budget:

Number of Organization's Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employees

Name and Title of person completing this application/grant point of contact

Phone number of the person completing this application:

Demographic Information on applicant Organization's Leadership:
Please select all options that apply to the identity of your organization's President/Executive Director/CEO.

☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Hispanic or Latinx
☐ Immigrant
☐ LGBTQI
☐ Living with a disability
☐ Male
☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
☐ Non-binary, gender non-conforming, or genderqueer
☐ Older Adults (60+)
☐ Returning Citizen
☐ Veteran
☐ Woman
☐ White
☐ Youth
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ Other (write-in below)

Is your organization a registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit?
☐ Yes
☐ No, we will be using a fiscal sponsor

Additional Organization Information

Organization EIN Number:

Organization UEI Number:

Please upload a copy of your organization's most recent Form 990 that was filed with the IRS. If your organization is not required to file a Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N (e-postcard) please upload your most recent audited financial statements or annual report.

Please provide a signed IRS Form W-9 from your organization.
*If needed, a blank IRS Form W-9 can be filled out at this link: Form W-9 (revised March 2024).
Please make sure it is signed before uploading.

Please enter your organization's City of Boston Supplier/Vendor ID
*You must have a valid Supplier/Vendor ID number to receive a grant from the City of Boston. This also enables you to sign up for direct deposit!

If you do not have a Supplier/Vendor ID yet, please enter "Pending".

Supplier/Vendor ID is NOT required to apply for a grant, but the Supplier/Vendor ID MUST be established before a grant is approved and a payment is processed. Detailed instructions for first-time or returning users who need help can be found here: Supplier/Vendor ID Instructions.

Please email vendor.questions@boston.gov or call 617-961-1058 for additional assistance.

Fiscal Sponsor Information

Fiscal Sponsor Organization Name:

Fiscal Sponsor Organization Street Address:

Fiscal Sponsor Organization City:

Fiscal Sponsor Organization State:

Fiscal Sponsor Organization Zip Code:

Fiscal Sponsor Organization EIN#:

Fiscal Sponsor Contact Person Name

Fiscal Sponsor Organization Contact Person Email Address:

Fiscal Sponsor Organization Contact Person Phone Number:

Please upload a copy of your fiscal sponsor's most recent Form 990 that was filed with the IRS. If your organization is not required to file a Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N (e-postcard) please upload your most recent audited financial statements or annual report.

Please enter your fiscal sponsor's City of Boston Supplier/Vendor ID:
*Your fiscal sponsor must have a valid Supplier/Vendor ID number to receive a grant from the City of Boston. This also enables your fiscal sponsor to sign up for direct deposit if you are selected to receive a grant.

A Supplier/Vendor ID is NOT required to apply for this grant, but the ID MUST be established before a grant is approved and any payment is processed.

Follow the steps in the Vendor ID Instructions for City of Boston Grant Applicants (Non-Profits) in order to access the Supplier Portal, create a new vendor account, update existing vendor accounts, or create a User ID.

For additional assistance, please email vendor.questions@boston.gov or call 617-961-1058.

If your Fiscal Sponsor does not have a Supplier/Vendor ID, please enter "Pending" in your response below.

Program Proposal Section

Responses to all questions in this section should not exceed 10 pages, double-spaced.

1. **Program Description**
   a. Provide a brief description of the occupational training program proposed for this grant opportunity and describe relevant experience and history in providing the specific services proposed.
2. **Program Track Record**
   a. Provide the organization's track record of success for the proposed job training program, including program completion rate, job placement rate, job retention rate, and average wage earned by participants upon job placement.
3. **Target Population Overview**
   a. Describe the target population of the proposed services including participant geographic location and demographics (age, race, gender, employment status). Describe this population's main assets for and barriers to employment.
4. **Job Titles and Opportunities for Advancement**
   a. Describe the specific job title(s) with wages associated with those specific job title(s) that program participants might obtain upon successful completion of your program.
5. **Partnerships**
   a. Describe any existing relationships or partnerships between the program, local employers, and other education or training partners. Describe how through these partnerships, the program addresses employer and industry needs.
6. **Participants Placed and Served**
   a. How many participants are expected to be served and hired into employment through this job training program this year?
      i. Participants Served
      ii. Participants Employed in Targeted Position
7. **Support services**
   a. How do existing language, academic, and other wraparound support services help program participants persist in and complete the training program?
8. **Interest and Readiness to Increase Digital Literacy**
   a. Describe your program's motivation to increase training participants' digital literacy. This can include the interest to integrate digital tools into training, development of digital skills curricula, or initiatives to improve instructors' capacity to teach digital literacy, for example.
9. **Addressing Needs of Target Population**
   a. Describe how involvement in the DigLit Initiative will address the specific needs of the target population served through your proposed job training program. In

particular, discuss how involvement in the DigLit Initiative will promote job placement, retention and advancement for graduates.

10. **Staffing Strategy**
    a. Explain your organization's strategy to ensure that at the minimum 2 staff members, including at least one administrator (i.e., director, coordinator) and at least one instructional staff member can participate in the technical assistance activities that are offered. *Describe the staffing plan for the proposed program. *Identify by name the staff members responsible for participating in the initiative, as well as their roles and responsibilities.

Target Community

Please describe the communities that your project will primarily serve. If you focus on specific neighborhoods, please mention which. If your proposal aims to outreach to communities not primarily served by your organization, please outline your strategy to do so. (200 words max)

Neighborhoods Served

- ☐ Allston
- ☐ Brighton
- ☐ Charlestown
- ☐ Chinatown/Leather District/Bay Village
- ☐ Dorchester
- ☐ Downtown
- ☐ East Boston
- ☐ Back Bay/Fenway-Kenmore
- ☐ Hyde Park
- ☐ Jamaica Plain
- ☐ Mattapan
- ☐ North End/West End/Beacon Hill
- ☐ Roslindale
- ☐ Roxbury (including Mission Hill)
- ☐ South Boston/Seaport District
- ☐ South End
- ☐ West Roxbury
- ☐ Other

Service Population - Please select which populations your project will serve.

Will your project primarily serve any of the following races?
- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ White
☐ Other (write-in)

Service Population
*Will your project primarily serve people who identify with any of the following Hispanic or Latinx/-a/-e/-o communities?

☐ Brazilian
☐ Colombian
☐ Cuban
☐ Dominican
☐ Mexican
☐ Puerto Rican
☐ Salvadorian
☐ Other (write-in)

Service Population
*Will your project primarily serve people of non-Hispanic and non-Latino ethnic groups common in Boston?

☐ Cape Verdean
☐ Chinese
☐ Haitian
☐ Indian (not American Indian or Alaska Native)
☐ Jamaican
☐ Middle Eastern or North African
☐ Vietnamese
☐ Other (write-in)

Service Population
*Will your project primarily serve people of the following gender identities?

☐ Men
☐ Women
☐ Non-binary, gender non-conforming, or genderqueer
☐ Other (write-in)

Budget

For this project, applicants do not need to submit a project budget or budget narrative with their initial application. However, selected grant recipients will be required to submit both a project budget and budget narrative, following the successful completion

of a Digital Needs Assessment (DNA) and Action Plan. This DNA and Action Plan will be developed with support from the project consultant, World Education.

Final grant amounts will be determined based on the total number of selected awardees. Individual awards will range from approximately $30,000 to $40,000, with the specific amount allocated to each grantee contingent on the total number of successful applicants.

Once the DNA and Action Plan have been successfully completed, applicants will be required to submit a budget and narrative. This narrative should outline how the grant funds will be spent and how the budget supports the implementation of the action plan. A budget template will be provided.

Allowable uses of grant funds include:
- Compensation for staff participating in professional development coaching and the community of practice
- Technology purchases (e.g., laptops, smartboards, curriculum materials, software, tablets, hotspots)
- Supplies and/or materials associated with the action plan
- Local conference, seminar, or training attendance related to the program

Uses Not Allowed:
- Alcoholic beverages
- Gift cards
- Fundraising activities (This includes salaries or associated benefits for fundraising staff)
- Lobbying services
- Rent and utilities for the non-profit
- Salaries and associated benefits of staff not directly involved in delivering the program
- Equipment with a cost greater than $5,000 or non-local travel

Submission Certification

Grant Agreement and Terms

By submitting this application, I certify that I accept the terms of the grant program and the City of Boston's CM-20 & CM-21 Standard Grant Agreement and Terms. I understand that if selected for an award, I will be required to have knowledge of this document and may be required to complete and sign it before receiving funding.

☐ I agree
☐ I disagree

Notice to Beneficiaries

By submitting this application, I certify that I accept the terms set forth in Form B-1 Notice to Beneficiaries. I understand that if selected for an award, I may be required to have knowledge of this

form and may be required to take further action to comply with the Boston Jobs, Living Wage, and Prevailing Wage Ordinance before receiving funding.

☐ I agree
☐ I disagree

Nonprofit Standing

By submitting this application, I certify that the organization I represent, or the organization serving as a fiscal sponsor, is in good standing with both the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and the IRS.

☐ I agree
☐ I disagree

Conflict of Interest

By submitting this Application, I certify that there is no conflict of interest within the meaning of the Conflict of Interest Law, Ch. 268A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

☐ I agree
☐ I disagree

By entering your full name below and submitting this application, you accept and agree to the terms described above and to the terms of the grant program, and you certify that all information contained in the application is correct.
[*Enter Full Name*]

Process Notes.