Q & A
Request for Grant Applications (RFGA)
The Digital Literacy (DigLit) Initiative
[UPDATED 11/1/2024]

Q: What will a program receive if selected to participate in the Digital Literacy Initiative?

This opportunity aims to build capacity and enhance the quality of digital literacy instruction in occupational skills training or job readiness programs, directly benefiting participants by strengthening their digital skills for employability in high-demand industries.

Selected grantees will receive twofold support: (1) expert technical assistance and professional development from an OWD-sponsored consultant, and (2) an award of $30,000 to $40,000 in flexible funding to help achieve these goals.

Q: My organization's Adult Basic Education (ABE) program participated in the first round of the Digital Literacy (DigLit) Initiative. Are we eligible to apply for this second round?

Yes, any organization whose ABE program participated in the first round of DigLit that has an occupational skills training or job readiness program is eligible to apply to the second round, this time for the occupational skills training or job readiness program, as long as the program meets the other criteria outlined in the RFGA. There is no exclusion for organizations that participated in the first round.

Q. Our organization has not received funding from OWD, but we have received funding from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). Does this satisfy the eligibility criteria for the DigLit Initiative?

No, this opportunity is open to programs that have received [OWD](#) and/or [DESE MassSTEP](#) funding within the last three years. Having received funding from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) does not meet the eligibility criteria.

Q. Our organization has not received funding from OWD, but we have received funding from another City of Boston office. Does this satisfy the eligibility criteria for the DigLit Initiative?

No, this opportunity is open to programs that have received [OWD](#) and/or [DESE MassSTEP](#) funding within the last three years. Having received funding from another City of Boston office does not meet the eligibility criteria.

Q. Our organization has not received OWD funding but recently applied for a different OWD funding opportunity. We will not know that decision for a few weeks. Can we apply for the Digital Literacy Initiative before hearing back?

This funding opportunity is open to programs that have received [OWD](#) and/or [DESE MassSTEP](#) funding within the last three years, starting from the release date of the RFGA on October 17, 2024. If a program was not receiving OWD on October 17, 2024 or three years before, the program would not be eligible for this opportunity.

Q. Our organization is a Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT) grantee. Is my program eligible?

Yes, NJT is administered by OWD, so your program would be eligible.

Q. OWD has funded one of our organization's programs, but our occupational skills training programs are funded by other sources. Would those programs funded by others sources be eligible to apply?

Yes, other programs within the organization are eligible to apply.

Q: My organization offers several occupational skills training programs and/or operates programs across multiple sites. Can I apply for all of them?

Yes, we will consider applications from any organization operating more than one eligible program. Organizations may apply for multiple programs but should submit a single application. The application should provide details about each individual program, including program type and location, and prioritize these programs in order of preference.

Efforts will be made to maximize our limited resources and ensure impactful distribution across a diverse group of awardees. The number of awards—and whether multiple awards may go to a single organization—will depend on the total number of applications we receive.

Q. I offer ESOL classes/HiSET classes. I'm not sure my program would be considered an occupational skills training or job readiness program. Could you please elaborate on that?

For this funding opportunity, OWD is prioritizing programs whose primary focus is employment preparation. This may include skills like resume building, interview techniques, soft skills, understanding workplace norms, and basic entrepreneurship. The primary goal of the programs we aim to fund should be to help participants secure, improve, or maintain employment, navigate the job application process, or explore small business ventures, ultimately fostering their economic independence.

We're also interested in "bridge" programs, Integrated Education and Training (IET), or other models that integrate education with specific career readiness skills. However, a general ESOL or HiSET program focused primarily on language acquisition or earning a High School Equivalency would not meet the criteria unless it also includes significant career skill development.

Q. Can you say more about the requirement to have received previous funding from OWD/DESE?

The funding available for this opportunity is valuable, but it's not extensive. To make the most of our limited resources, OWD has restricted eligibility to organizations that have received funding from [OWD](#) and/or [DESE MassSTEP](#) within the last three years.

If you're interested in future funding opportunities, we recommend subscribing to [our funding announcement list](#).

Q: What are allowable uses of these grant funds? Can grant money be used for an organization's Salesforce subscription, internet bill, or to pay stipends for training participants?

Allowable uses of grant funds include:

- Compensation for staff participating in professional development coaching and the community of practice
- Technology purchases to enhance digital literacy instruction (e.g., laptops, smartboards, curriculum materials, software, tablets, hotspots)
- Local conference, seminar, or training attendance related to the program

The primary purpose of this funding is to build capacity and improve the quality of digital literacy instruction within occupational skills training or job readiness programs, directly benefiting participants by enhancing their digital skills essential for employability in high-demand industries.

In this project, grantees will work with the consultant, World Education, to assess needs and prioritize the use of funds. All fund usage must align with the project's goals and support the implementation of an action plan developed in collaboration with World Education. Applicants intending to use funds for organizational expenses or participant stipends would be required to clearly demonstrate how these expenses will help build capacity and improve the quality of digital literacy instruction in their programs. This alignment must be established before any funds are utilized later in the project.

Q. Can funds be used to purchase technology for program participants?

Yes, technology purchases are an allowable use of grant funds. Purchases of equipment over $5,000 will not be allowed.

Q. Will you consider smaller grants?

For this opportunity, grant amounts will be flat-funded 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 dependent on the total number of successful applicants.

Q. Will initial funds be made available before the completion of the action plan?

Yes.

Q. We are considering applying and have some digital literacy routines in mind that could benefit our training participants, like email management and using Zoom for interviews. How can we confirm if these routines will be allowed under this grant?

The digital literacy routines you've suggested are well aligned with the project goals. One point of clarification, selected programs don't need to develop or finalize any routines before applying. Once selected, you'll receive technical assistance from

our consultant, World Education, who will help create or adapt these routines as part of participating in the project.