PHLCONNECTED CAREGIVER DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVE GRANT GUIDELINES

PHLConnectED – in partnership with the Digital Literacy Alliance (DLA) - is launching a grant cycle specifically geared to stand up digital literacy classes targeted to pre-K-12 caregivers. This opportunity aims to better support pre-K-12 student households by providing approximately $376,000 in funding for community-based organizations (CBOs) and / or local education agencies (LEAs), schools, or school-based networks to offer a suite of gateway digital literacy courses to caregivers.

BACKGROUND

Overview of the Digital Literacy Alliance

The Digital Literacy Alliance is a broad coalition of institutional stakeholders working to alleviate the digital divide in Philadelphia. We define digital literacy as "the ability to access technology and the Internet and use those tools to find, evaluate, share and create content." Our 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 policymaking

Since its foundation in 2016, the Digital Literacy Alliance has conducted four annual grant cycles – along with a fast-tracked emergency funding cycle in Spring 2020 in response to COVID-19 – and has funded a broad array of digital literacy and equity programs.

Overview of PHLConnectED

PHLConnectED is the City's initiative to help pre-K–12 families get access to a free and reliable internet connection. PHLConnectED's mission is to provide free, consistent and reliable internet access as well as digital support and resources to Philadelphia pre-K-12 students in need so they can fully participate in their education. Ensuring that our pre-K-12 caregivers are armed with the digital skills required to support their students and use the internet to its full advantage is a critical component to the success of PHLConnectED and toward achieving digital equity in the City.

GRANT GUIDELINES + ELIGIBILITY

As part of this funding opportunity, grantees will conduct digital literacy assessments using the Northstar Digital Literacy platform (*details below*) in order to identify skills where caregivers need more support AND offer a regular schedule of online, hybrid, and/or in-person classes to pre-K-12 caregivers.

The DLA anticipates awarding up to $376,000 in total for this grant cycle. Grant requests from individual organizations can be up to $62,000 for 18 months. [Please note, the DLA will fund at least 1- 2 organizations that have experience providing digital literacy courses to English Language Learners (ELL) and who can demonstrate that they are working with caregivers / schools in priority neighborhoods where there are high numbers of families for whom English is not their primary language.]

Scope of Northstar Digital Literacy Courses to Be Offered
Digital literacy gateway skills offered through this grant funding will follow Northstar's digital literacy standards, which include three core components: *1) Standards for essential computer skills, 2) Standards for essential software skills, and 3) Standards for using technology in digital life.* Northstar's standards and curriculum can be found here: https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/features#standards

All funded organizations will have full access to the Northstar system through the Office of Children and Families Adult Education contract. Please note, organizations that already use Northstar must transfer their account to be under the city umbrella for the full grant term.

Grantees are welcome to use any combination of Northstar's self-guided online student curricula, Northstar's teacher-led curricula, or use their own curriculum that follows Northstar's standards. All funded grantees are required to use the Northstar assessments. Northstar is written to support student reading at a CASAS reading level 211 or higher; for low-level English language learners, programs are encouraged to scaffold the teacher-led curricula material down to support English language learning and recommend having learners complete the corresponding Northstar online learning modules to reinforce concepts and vocabulary.

Grantees will have flexibility in how they offer their courses. Courses may be provided as stand-alone, one-time sessions on a particular topic OR may be delivered as a longer, multi-session course that covers a set of standards. Grantees may also offer topics beyond Northstar's standards as additional, specialized or value-added courses [i.e., a topic on digital storytelling using Facebook live]. However, these specialized courses *cannot* be in place of standard curriculum.

The DLA will consider proposals that meet the following guidelines:
- Proposals should clearly connect pre-K-12 caregivers to digital literacy courses. Only proposals that demonstrate a clear ability to serve caregivers will be considered.
- Proposals should be created for *18-month project period.* Organizations should carefully consider program needs and request an appropriate amount to implement the grant program.
- Proposals should demonstrate that applicants have outreach capabilities and robust engagement with PHLConnectED pre-K-12 schools, students and families.
  - Engagement with families may include being an out-of-school time (OST) provider, family social services support provider, etc.
  - Outreach capabilities may include direct phone calls, house-to-house outreach, text messaging, and/or other strategies to engage caregivers with digital literacy needs.

To be eligible for this grant opportunity, applicants must meet the following criteria:
- Applicants must be based in Philadelphia.

- Applicants must have existing 501(c)(3) status OR be classified as a Local Educational Agency (LEA), school or school-based network.
  - For LEAs applying for funding, we encourage partnerships with experienced community based organization digital literacy providers or demonstration of ability to work with more than one school community.
- Applicants must serve caregivers in one (or more) of the following priority zip codes: 19104, 19120, 19121, 19122, 19124, 19131, 19132, 19133, 19134, 19139, 19140, 19141, 19142, 19143, 19149, 19151
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have delivered digital literacy courses for the past two years, including during the pandemic.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an existing relationship with a minimum of two local schools (or set of schools) and must include letters of support from *a minimum* of two principals from participating PHLConnectED schools within their geographic range committing to work with the applicant to connect caregivers to appropriate digital literacy classes and services (*see Appendix for Letter of Commitment Template).*
- Applicants must be able to implement digital literacy courses within one month of receiving funding and must agree to meet regularly with the project team during the grant period.
  - If funded, grantees will need to provide the DLA with a three-month course schedule 30 days in advance to ensure that there is sufficient time to market the available courses widely to the community.

CORE DELIVERABLES

Funded grantees are responsible for carrying out the following core deliverables:
- Conduct outreach activities targeting pre-K-12 households to identify and refer learners for digital literacy assessments and courses.
- Provide a three-month calendar of digital literacy courses to be offered every quarter for caregivers that would ensure days/times that could work for caregivers.
- Assess caregiver learners using Northstar digital literacy tools and curriculum.
- Enroll caregivers into specific digital literacy courses, provide high quality instruction that demonstrates improvement using Northstar assessments, and track and monitor progress.
- Submit quarterly data and progress reports (*see Appendix for list of Key Performance Indicators*).

DLA GRANT PROCESS & TIMELINE

The DLA has created a transparent and ethical process for grantmaking. For this cycle, we will use a modified fast-track grant making process (*see timeline below for dates*). Applicants will need to complete an online form with an Intent to Apply by November 22, 2021 at 5pm. Applicants will have approximately one month from the public grant announcement to submit a full proposal. Submissions will be evaluated by a review committee of DLA members and non-members who will meet and reflect on applications using an evaluation matrix (*see Appendix for proposal evaluation criteria*). After evaluation, the review committee will make final grant recommendations to the full DLA membership.

Application Details and Timeline

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).

Timeline:

November 8, 2021	Grant opportunity released.
November 17, 2021 2:30pm – 3:30pm AND November 18, 2021 10:00am – 11:00am	<optional> Grant Informational Webinars For Nov. 17th webinar, join HERE For Nov. 18th webinar, join HERE
November 22, 2021	Applicants should complete THIS online form notifying us of Intent to Apply **by 5pm.**
December 6, 2021	Full Narrative Proposal due. Please email the grant proposal document with all attachments in PDF form to Stephanie Orlando (stephanie.orlando@phila.gov).
December 9, 2021	Review committee begins evaluating submissions.
January 3, 2022	Applicants are notified of funding decisions.
February 2022	Digital literacy assessments and courses begin.

FINAL PROPOSAL

Please be as succinct as possible in your answers and submit a proposal no longer than 5-6 pages.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY *(no more than one paragraph)*
   - Explain what you hope to accomplish and why your organization is the right entity to execute this project. Please include your organization name at the top of your proposal.

2. PROGRAM NARRATIVE
   - In which Philadelphia priority neighborhood(s) and zip code(s) will your organization's work primarily take place?
   - Please identify which pre-K-12 schools you will work with for this proposal and a brief description of your history working with each of these schools. *You must attach a letter of commitment from the principal of each school you want to work with to demonstrate that they are willing to work with your organization (see Appendix for sample letter template).*
   - *(Only for organizations who will work primarily with ELL caregivers):* Please describe your history working with ELL families and specifically your competency providing programs in multiple languages.
   - Please describe your organizational history working with pre-K-12 families. What programs or services do you currently offer this population? How many caregivers does your organization serve on a yearly basis?
   - What outreach capabilities do you already have and can employ immediately that will help you connect with underserved pre-K-12 families? Specifically describe how you intend to work with your identified schools to enroll caregivers in digital literacy classes.
   - Please describe any digital literacy programs that you have offered in the past two years. Please include information about digital literacy programs you have offered during the pandemic. As part of your answer, please tell us:
     - Were the classes in person, hybrid, completely remote?

- o How did you enroll learners? How many learners completed your programs in one year?
- o Your experience using Northstar, if any.
- o How your classes will support caregivers to improve their digital literacy skills so they can better support their students learning.
- Please provide a sample one-month schedule of digital literacy courses that you intend to offer through this grant and how many learners can attend each course based on your capacity.

3. BUDGET NARRATIVE
Please note: *Organizations' budgets should reflect a ratio of $250/unique learner enrolled in your classes. For the full amount of $62,000 over an 18-month period, your organization should be able to enroll 248 unique learners and should plan accordingly. Budgets can include staffing, outreach and marketing materials, administration, any lab equipment, incentives, or distribution of devices to learners if necessary, among other identified needs for carrying out the grant.*
- How many pre-K-12 caregivers do you intend to serve through this grant?
- What is the total funding amount that you are requesting?
- Please provide a detailed budget narrative, which must include 1) a line-item breakdown of the costs for specific services proposed, and 2) a statement of staff hourly rates. *Please use the budget template (found at www.phila.gov/documents/phlconnected-grant-documents/) to complete your budget narrative.*

4. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY
- Please explain how your organization has the capacity to roll this project out in a timely manner, your organization's experience to successfully implement this project, and your ability to both work in person or remotely with clients if necessary.
- Please describe your staffing plan and the team that will implement this project. Briefly list their roles and qualifications.
- Describe the annual income of your organization and how your organization manages finances, including any financial management software and accountability standards used.
- Optional: Outline any partnerships necessary to implementing your project.

5. By checking this box, you are certifying that your organization has identified existing team members who will be responsible for implementing this initiative.
   __ I certify that my organization has existing team members / leadership who are committed to implementing this project if chosen to receive funding.

APPENDIX

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Grantees will be required to report on their activities on a quarterly basis (frequency of submission may change, as needed) and provide a narrative report at the end of the grant period. Data and classes will be reported to the City of Philadelphia's Office of Children & Families (OCF) Adult Education through the myPLACE database, the Northstar database and to the Mayor's Fund which houses the DLA and PHLConnectED programs.

Grantees should expect to submit the following KPIs, however, these are also subject to change / adapt throughout the grant window as necessary.

Caregiver Outreach and Engagement [Reported quarterly]
- o <u>Number and type of outreach activities</u> (i.e., meetings with school officials, distributing flyers, tabling, planning / attending events with school communities, neighborhood events with caregivers)
- o <u>Number of direct 1:1 engagement with caregivers</u> (any 1:1 phone calls, texts, communication with specific caregivers to help them enroll in courses or support them along the way)

Digital Literacy Assessments
- o Number of Northstar digital literacy assessments delivered
- o Number of Digital Badges obtained and skills improved over time

Digital Literacy & Skills Development Training [Reported quarterly]
- o Number of unique learners served (assessed or attended a class)
- o Number of digital literacy class sessions offered + total number of attendees per session
- o Number of learners completing curriculum and/or a set of standards (i.e., graduates)
- o Referrals to 211 hotline, Digital Navigators, Adult Education programs and / or workforce training programs
- o Demographics of learners (race, gender, age, zip code, school(s) children attend, income, level of education, internet access, relationship to students, etc.)

All courses will be listed in the myPLACE database and on a public website and updates or changes will need to be communicated in a timely manner.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Experience in communicating with and serving pre-K-12 families and/or caregivers through social services and/or special programs	1-3 points
Demonstrated experience working with identified schools or English Language Learner caregivers	1-3 points
Proposed schedule of digital literacy courses	1-3 point
Capacity to stand up courses by February 2022 and provide a continuous schedule of programming through an 18-month period	1-3 points
Demonstrated experience providing digital literacy training over the past two years	1-3 points
Organizational capacity and program budget	1-3 points

SAMPLE LETTER OF COMMITMENT FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

 [**PUT ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD**]

Dear [**NAME OF CBO CONTACT**],

[**NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL/SCHOOL NETWORK**] is pleased to provide this Letter of Commitment to [**NAME OF CBO**] in their application to the Digital Literacy Alliance for the "PHLConnectED Caregiver Digital Literacy Initiative Grant." This grant will significantly help our families improve their digital literacy skills and help their students improve their performance at school.

[**CBO - Put in any detailed history the school has working with the CBO. For example, "CBO partner has been working with our families for over X years and is a regular presence in our school and has provided the following supports or activities..."**]

As part of this grant, I agree to:

1) allow [**CBO**] to engage with student families through events or programs held at my school or in collaboration with my school at offsite locations provided they have the credentials to do so.
2) ensure that materials provided by [**CBO**] are sent home to caregivers to inform them of the available digital literacy programs;
3) designate 1-2 contacts among my school staff to help [**CBO**] set up events or distribute materials and to ensure school staff know how to refer families to the digital literacy services provided by [**CBO**].

[**CBO - ADD IN A FEW SENTENCES ABOUT THE CBO AND ITS WORK IN DIGITAL LITERACY OR WITH pre-K-12 FAMILIES**]

[**NAME OF SCHOOL/SCHOOL NETWORK**] is supportive of this project to increase the digital literacy skills of our caregivers and encourages the DLA to fund [**NAME OF CBO**].

Sincerely,

[**NAME AND SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL**]