

CITY OF PORTLAND BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY

SMALL BUSINESS DIGITAL NAVIGATOR GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Deadline for Applications: 11:59pm, Monday, March 10, 2025

WELCOME

The Small Business Digital Navigator Grant Opportunity is made possible with federal dollars provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration FY2024 Congressional Community Projects as approved by Congress.

The City of Portland, through the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Community Technology Digital Equity Program, applied for funding in support of Portland's locally owned small businesses, which are the driving force behind the city's dynamic, sustainable future economy. As Portland re-envision its identity post-pandemic, a greater appreciation for small businesses as the cornerstone to Portland's economy and cultural identity becomes more evident. Though barriers persist, the continued growth of small businesses makes Portland a more inclusive place to live and work and inspires household wealth building. Ensuring that all local entrepreneurs have equal access to resources that support launching and maintaining a successful business means removing barriers to participation and competitiveness in the digital marketplace.

Portland has the largest share of employees who work for small businesses among peer cities. At 28%, it exceeds the national average and significantly surpasses metros like Salt Lake City or Indianapolis. This reflects Portland's vibrant small business ecosystem and relative lack of large anchor employers.¹

Through [Ordinance 191804](#), the Portland City Council accepted the \$500,000 grant award from the U.S. Small Business Administration FY2024 Community Project Fund and authorized the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) Community Technology Digital Equity Program to launch a \$465,000 competitive Small Business Digital Navigator grant opportunity and invest \$35,000 in program evaluation and impact reporting.

¹ "2023 State of Small Businesses" Portland Metro Chamber, September 2023.

This grant opportunity supports the policy and goals of the City’s Digital Equity Action Plan, specifically those related to workforce development, education, and economic opportunity.

SECTION 1 - OTHER INFORMATION

Important Public Records Law Notice. The City of Portland (“City”) is subject to Oregon public records law. All documents and information submitted by applicant to City may be deemed public records subject to public disclosure pursuant to Oregon public records law.

Applicant acknowledges by its signature on the application that all documents and information submitted to City by applicant may be subject to public disclosure upon City’s determination that applicant’s documents or information are subject to disclosure under public records law, upon an order of the Multnomah County District Attorney, or upon an order of a court. Applicant is advised to consult applicant’s legal counsel regarding the applicability of Oregon public records law.

Pre-Award Activities. Applicants are hereby notified that, notwithstanding any oral or written assurance that they may have received, there is no obligation on the part of the City to cover pre-award costs.

Final Grant Awards. Applicants are hereby notified that the City is under no obligation to award any grant funds to an applicant and grant awards are not final until grant agreements are authorized and signed by both parties. Being invited to apply for grant funds through the application process does not guarantee an award.

The city reserves the right to revise, suspend, or cancel this application solicitation process at any time at City's sole discretion.

SECTION 2 – Statement of Purpose

These guidelines outline the eligibility requirements and procedures to apply for awards under the Small Business Digital Navigator Grant Opportunity, a competitive program that will support the implementation of digital navigator projects within community-based organizations. These projects will offer a range of services designed to support underrepresented small business owners in leveraging digital technologies to drive growth and success. Services may include but are not limited to:

- **Group Training and One-on-One Consultations:** funds can be used to support curriculum development, digital navigator salaries, hardware and software for computer labs and/or virtual engagement platforms to support business owners in attaining foundational digital business skills in areas such as:
 - Digital marketing - Helping businesses digitally brand the business and connect with their target audience and find more customers online.
 - Website development – Helping businesses create a search-friendly website that drives user action and using e-commerce tools to boost sales.

- Cloud computing - Moving business online, which can improve operational efficiencies, save time and money, and enable remote work.
- Social media - Building a social media presence to help businesses stay up to date with online trends.
- Data science - Helping businesses use data science and analytics for innovation, decision-making, product development, and building stronger customer relationships.
- Expert and Technical Support Services: funds can be used to provide business owners with direct access to expert and technical support services such as website designers, social media experts, online marketing experts, and computer/software technical support.

The goal of the Program is three-fold:

1. Increase digital skills of underrepresented small business owners / entrepreneurs.
2. Enhance competitiveness and sustainability of small businesses in Portland.
3. Establish long-term capacity for digital equity through community-based services.

BPS Community Technology Digital Equity Program anticipates awarding grants to three entities at \$155,000 each to support the creation or expansion of Small Business Digital Navigator projects.

SECTION 3 – Eligibility

A. Eligible Applicants

Applicant must be an organization located in the City of Portland, OR. Applicants will demonstrate that they are an organization that can easily work with underrepresented small business owners and entrepreneurs that face barriers to engaging with digital technology to support and grow their business.

Successful applicants will have the managerial, financial, and technical expertise to design and implement a digital navigator project that benefits underrepresented small business owners and entrepreneurs who operate their business out of Portland.

B. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects under this program will include setting up digital training labs, classes, workshops and/or virtual platforms to engage with small business owners and can use grant funds to support Digital Navigator staff, curriculum development, outreach and engagement of small business owners in the project, hardware and software to support digital skills training and technical support service delivery, and in-house or contracted expert and technical support services that support one-on-one consultation with digital marketing, e-commerce, website and social media, and technical support experts.

Successful applicants will have a total of 24 months to deliver on the project with all projects, including reporting requirements, completed by June 30, 2027. Following the application, selection, and contracting process, successful applicants can expect to begin implementing their projects no sooner than May 1, 2025.

SECTION 4 – Program Requirements

A. Access to Digital Skills Training

Successful applicants will provide culturally and community responsive digital skills training programs to underrepresented small business owners.

This grant opportunity emphasizes direct assistance to underrepresented small businesses in the form of one-on-one advising, cohort training, classes, workshops, etc. The source of grant funds does not permit funds to be used for direct payments to or purchases on behalf of business participants.

B. Access to Expert and Technical Support

Successful applicants will develop in-house or contract for expert and technical services in order to be able to provide program participants with one-on-one consultation with digital marketing, e-commerce, website and social media, and technical support experts as needed.

SECTION 5 – Application Evaluation

This grant program is competitive. Applications that meet baseline eligibility requirements, will move forward in the process to be reviewed by a selection panel using an evaluation matrix that includes the following criteria:

- Project need, purpose, and benefits (40 points)
- Strength of Applicants Organizational Capacity (25 points)
- Strength of project implementation plan and budget (25 points)
- Project results and evaluation (10 points)

SECTION 6 – Award Timeline

February 7: Grant Application Opens

March 10: Grant Application Deadline, 11:59PM

March 11-12: Applications reviewed for baseline eligibility

March 13-18: Applications reviewed by Selection Panel

March 19: Selection Panel convenes to decide awards

March 24: Applications selected to receive award announced

March 25-April 18: Grant Agreement finalized with successful Applicants

May – June: Grant projects launch

SECTION 7 - Reporting Requirements

Quarterly progress and financial reports will be required to document project implementation progress, impact, challenges, adjustments, and expenditures.

Applicants should build sufficient staff and administrative capacity into their applications to meet the reporting requirements. Late reports may result in a temporary suspension of reimbursements or a freeze on advance expenditures until corrected.

SECTION 8 – How to Apply

Applications must be submitted through the City’s online portal*. A summary of the application sections and instructions on how to complete an application is provided below. To access the portal, please visit cityofportlandgrants.net.

Completed applications must be submitted no later than 11:59pm on March 10, 2025.

*If submitting an online application poses an undue hardship on your organization, please contact us at connectingportland@portlandoregon.gov to discuss alternate options.

For more information or to discuss an application, please contact Rebecca Gibbons, Digital Equity Manager, at 503-823-5515 or Alonso Melendez, Digital Equity Coordinator, at 971-678-3008 or send us an email at connectingportland@portlandoregon.gov.

Thank you for your time and interest.

SECTION 9 – Application Instructions

Please review the instructions below to ensure you submit all the required information in your application for grant funding. All fields are required.

Organization Overview

1. Organization Name

Applicant organization name

2. Organization Address

Applicant organization principal physical place of business.

3. Organization Web Address

Applicant organization web address.

4. Legal Status - Tax ID

IRS Federal EIN Tax-ID Number and description of legal status of the organization (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc.) and the year the entity was organized to do business as the entity now substantially exists.

If your organization operates using a fiscal sponsor, please include the fiscal sponsor's registered name, EIN number, and a contact name and email address in the field provided.

5. Federal Unique Entity ID "UEI"

Provide your Federal Unique Entity ID "UEI" number. If your organization is not yet registered and assigned an UEI through [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov), please state "none". If selected for award, the organization will be required to register and provide a UEI number to receive funding.

6. Does your organization (or your fiscal sponsor) carry insurance coverage (i.e. general liability, worker's compensation, etc.)?

Answer Yes/No. This question does not impact your eligibility or chances of being selected. If selected for a grant award, city staff will explain insurance requirements during agreement negotiation.

7. Contact Name

Enter first and last name. The Contact Name is the person responsible for completing the Grant Application and may or may not be the same person as the Duly Authorized Official that signs the Application. The Contact Name is the person to contact for all questions regarding Grant Application information and will be a primary contact to negotiate a grant agreement with City staff if selected to receive a grant award.

8. Contact Title

The above Contact person's title.

9. Contact Email Address

The Contact person's email address.

10. Contact Phone Number

The Contact person's phone number

11. How many year-round, full-time staff does your organization have?

Total number of year-round, full-time staff.

12. How many part-time and/or volunteer staff does your organization have?

Provide total number of part-time staff and total number of volunteer staff separately.

13. What % of your organizational Leadership identifies as Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color?

Include the total number of Leadership staff and the percent of that total that identifies BIPOC.

14. What % of your Board members identify as Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color?

Include the total number of Board members and the percent of that total that identifies BIPOC.

15. What is your organization's annual operating budget?

Include your organization's annual operating budget for the past 3 years.

16. What is your organizational mission?

Share your organization's stated mission.

17. Have you received a grant from or entered into a service contract with the City of Portland in the past 24 months?

Yes/No.

Project Need, Purpose, and Benefits (40 points)

18. What do you know about the digital inclusion service needs of underrepresented small, emerging businesses and entrepreneurs?

Tell us how you have gathered evidence and what you know about the digital skills training needs of underrepresented small businesses and entrepreneurs.

19. How has your organization worked with and supported underrepresented small businesses and entrepreneurs in the past?

Tell us how you've engaged with underrepresented small businesses and whether you've provided formal or informal digital skills training and support services to this sector in the past.

20. Project Description

This is your opportunity to tell us how grant funds will help you build or scale Small Business Digital Navigator/training services specifically for underrepresented small, emerging businesses and entrepreneurs and to explain in detail what digital navigator/training services your will offer.

This grant opportunity is designed to allow you to expand your existing capacity and implement new forms of training and technical assistance based on your ongoing assessment of evolving small business needs, however anticipates the project will emphasizes direct assistance to underrepresented small business in the form of one-on-one and/or cohort training, classes, workshops, etc. This opportunity does not permit funds to be used for direct payments to or purchases of equipment on behalf of small business participants.

Use this section to provide:

- Detailed activities and interventions to be implemented, such as staff training, curriculum development, number and type of trainings to be provided, and a clear plan for outreaching, engaging, and sustaining project participants, etc.
- Describe your approach to working with expert and technical support service providers and how they will engage with the small business participants, if applicable to your project.
- Clear project objectives - what do you expect to change for the small businesses/entrepreneurs as a result of this project.
- Describe if and how you plan to sustain this work after the grant period ends.

21. Number of Individuals/Small Businesses Served / Key Characteristics

Estimate the total number of businesses/individuals you anticipate serving throughout the project period and detail any defining demographic characteristics or sectors (construction contractors, childcare providers, retailers, food-based, micro-enterprises, etc.). What eligibility criteria, if any, will you put in place to determine who may participate in the project?

In order to meet the purpose of the federal award, the project should ensure that the participating businesses are Portland-based businesses.

Organizational Capacity (25 points)

22. Organizational Capacity

Describe the organization's capacity to implement the proposed project including the programmatic and technical expertise of the implementation team. Organizational capacity can

be demonstrated through a description of the project team (i.e. project manager, digital navigator staff, financial analyst, etc.) and their responsibilities/duties related to implementation and monitoring and reporting of the project.

Project Implementation Plan and Budget (25 points)

23. Implementation Plan & Timeline

Projects must begin in June 2025 and be fully completed by June 2027.

The project implementation plan and timeline should outline key tasks, activities, events, and milestones related to project implementation and the realization of project goals. The implementation plan and timeline should also include project administration tasks, such as quarterly programmatic and fiscal reporting deadlines and strategies for assessing digital navigation effectiveness and adjusting strategies and activities based on lessons learned, obtaining input from participants to inform project adjustments, and maximize effectiveness and sustainability.

24. Project Costs

Attach a budget. The budget should identify the budget categories and detailed descriptions of what is included in each category to successfully implement the project. For example: Staff salaries, language translation, computer lab equipment and software, expert and technical support services, misc., etc. The budget should include the amount or the approximate percent of grant funds that will be applied to each category.

Grant funds cannot be used to distribute devices or other equipment to participants of the project.

Example Project Costs Supported by Grant Funds:

Budget Category	Details	Amount or Percent of total grant funds
Staff salaries	To include staff time to design and implement the project, implement and collect evaluation metrics and track project progress, compile and submit grant program programmatic reports, recruit small business participants, coordinate with and manage expert contractors, and deliver skills training.	50%

	Includes staff time to engage in project related professional development.	
Computer lab equipment and software	10 computer stations, printers, iPads and accessories, and Microsoft Office licenses directly related to the project	15%
Expert services and technical support	We will contract with a web designer who will work with select participants who need additional/specialized design assistance. While we will rely on digital navigator staff to provide basic technical support to project participants we recognize that some participants might require specialize support, therefor we will contract with technical support expert to help tackle complicated issues.	30%
Misc.	Misc. supplies and services to support classroom trainings and outreach to participants. This category also includes accounting staff time to track and report project expenses.	5%
	TOTAL	\$155,000

Successful applicants will enter into a not-to-exceed subrecipient grant agreement for \$155,000 that commits the organization to fulfilling the project as described. Successful applicants can supplement grant funds with other resources at their discretion.

Project Results and Evaluation (10 points)

25. Project Results & Evaluation

Describe your plan to evaluate the impact, reach, and success of your project. Your evaluation plan should outline strategies to measure and report both near-term and long-term outcomes.

We encourage applicants to refer to the **Attachment A: Evaluation Logic Model** as a framework for considering key metrics of interest to this grant opportunity. Please describe how your project’s evaluation approach aligns with or contributes to similar outcome areas. You may

propose additional metrics that you believe will effectively capture the impact of your project in relation to the purpose of this grant.

Your response should include:

- The specific outcomes you plan to measure and why they are important.
- The methods you will use to collect and analyze data (e.g., surveys, case studies, participant tracking, business growth indicators).
- Your approach to using evaluation data for continuous improvement.
- How you will report findings and share insights with stakeholders.

Signature of Duly Authorized Representative

For an application to be complete, the form must be e-signed by a Duly Authorized Representative of the applicant organization. The Application should be signed by someone, such as a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, President or Executive Director, who can commit the organization to undertake the project.

Date*

Name*

Title*

Phone*

E-mail*

Attachment A: Evaluation Logic Model

BPS Community Technology Digital Equity Initiative				
A Small Business Digital Navigator Grant Opportunity supported by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration’s FY2024 Community Project Fund				
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	LONG TERM OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Funding: \$500,000 from SBA Community Project Fund (\$465,000 for grants; \$35,000 for program impact report). ✓ People: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Navigators at participating community-based organizations (CBOs). • City of Portland staff (Digital Equity Manager, Digital Equity Coordinator). ✓ Technology: Training materials, hardware/software for training labs, and digital tools. ✓ Partners: Prosper Portland, Inclusive Business Resource Network, Black American Chamber, Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, IRCO, ONAC, and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity Building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train CBO staff to act as Digital Navigators. • Develop digital business training curriculum and resources. ▪ Program Delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct group training, workshops, and one-on-one consultations in digital marketing, e-commerce, cloud computing, social media, and data analytics. • Provide on-call expert technical support (e.g., website design, troubleshooting). ▪ Outreach and Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote services to underrepresented small business owners through community networks and events. • Host informational workshops and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Number of CBOs participating: 3 CBOs funded (\$155,000 each). ◆ Number of Digital Navigators trained. ◆ Number of workshops, classes, and consultations provided. ◆ Number of CBOs planning to continue digital navigator programs post-grant period <p>Business participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Number of small businesses and entrepreneurs served. ◆ Demographics of businesses served (e.g. BIPOC-owned, industry types). ◆ Types of digital tools and skills adopted by participants. ◆ Number of businesses accessing on-call technical support. ◆ Percentage of participants reporting improved digital skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased digital skills and confidence among small business owners. ➤ Improved digital presence and adoption of online tools (e.g., websites, social media, e-commerce platforms). ➤ Enhanced capacity of CBOs to serve underrepresented entrepreneurs. ➤ Strengthened partnerships between the City, CBOs, and small business networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greater competitiveness and sustainability of small businesses in Portland. ➤ Increased economic opportunities for BIPOC entrepreneurs. ➤ Establishment of a sustainable network of Digital Navigators. ➤ Enhanced digital equity across Portland’s small business community.

	<p>distribute digital adoption materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring and Reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect program data (e.g., attendance, satisfaction, digital adoption metrics). • Produce quarterly and final evaluation reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Percentage of participants implementing new digital tools ◆ Number of businesses reporting increased revenue or customer engagement ◆ Percentage of business creating or improving their online presence ◆ Number of business integrating digital marketing or analytics tools ◆ Participant satisfaction scores for training sessions and one-on-one consultations ◆ Testimonials of success stories highlighting program impact 		
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Impacts:

- Empowered and digitally proficient small business community in Portland.
- A more inclusive local economy with reduced barriers to digital marketplace participation.
- Systemic changes in addressing digital inequities in small business development.

Data Collection Method Examples:

Short-Term Outcomes

1. Pre- and Post-Training Surveys

- Administer surveys to participants before and after workshops or consultations to measure changes in knowledge, skills, and confidence in using digital tools.
 - Questions could cover topics such as familiarity with digital marketing, e-commerce, or data analytics.
2. **Attendance and Participation Records**
 - Track the number of participants in workshops, one-on-one consultations, and technical support sessions.
 - Record demographic data (e.g., ethnicity, business type) to understand who is being served.
 3. **CBO Reports**
 - Quarterly progress reports from CBOs summarizing the services provided, challenges encountered, and success stories.
 4. **Adoption Metrics**
 - Collect data on the number of websites created, e-commerce platforms launched, or social media accounts optimized.
 - Use simple reporting tools (e.g., online forms) for participants to self-report milestones.
 5. **Participant Satisfaction Surveys**
 - Use surveys post-training or consultation to gauge participant satisfaction, asking about the relevance, quality, and impact of the services.

Long-Term Outcomes

1. **Follow-Up Surveys**
 - Conduct follow-up surveys 6–12 months after program completion to assess sustained digital adoption, business growth, or revenue changes.
 - Include questions about challenges and additional needs for ongoing support.
2. **Case Studies**
 - Develop in-depth case studies of select businesses to showcase transformative outcomes.
 - Include qualitative interviews and data on digital tool usage, revenue growth, and customer engagement.
3. **Economic Indicators**
 - Collect data on participant businesses' financial performance (e.g., revenue changes, market share growth) over time, either self-reported or anonymized through tax records if feasible.

4. **Digital Presence Audits**

- Periodically review participants' online presence (e.g., websites, social media activity, and online reviews) to measure continued digital engagement.

5. **CBO Feedback and Sustainability Plans**

- Collect feedback from CBO staff on their capacity improvements and strategies for sustaining Digital Navigator services post-grant period.

Reporting Methods

1. **Quarterly Reports**

- Include quantitative metrics (e.g., number of participants, demographics, types of services used).
- Highlight qualitative insights (e.g., testimonials, case studies, success stories).

2. **Dashboards**

- Create a simple visual dashboard summarizing key performance metrics for internal and external stakeholders.
- Include real-time updates on outputs like participants served, tools adopted, and satisfaction ratings.

3. **Annual Impact Reports**

- Prepare comprehensive reports combining data from all CBOs, including success stories, participant feedback, and lessons learned.
- Share findings with stakeholders to demonstrate the program's value and outcomes.

4. **Infographics and Snapshots**

- Develop visually engaging infographics summarizing key metrics and outcomes for easy dissemination to leadership and the public.

5. **Presentations and Panels**

- Use findings to inform presentations for city leadership, funders, and community stakeholders.
- Include visuals like before-and-after snapshots of participants' digital transformations.

*****END APPLICATION*****

SECTION 10 - FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or to discuss an application, please contact Rebecca Gibbons, Digital Equity Manager, at 503-823-5515 or Alonso Melendez, Digital Equity Coordinator, at 971-678-3008 or send us an email at connectingportland@portlandoregon.gov.