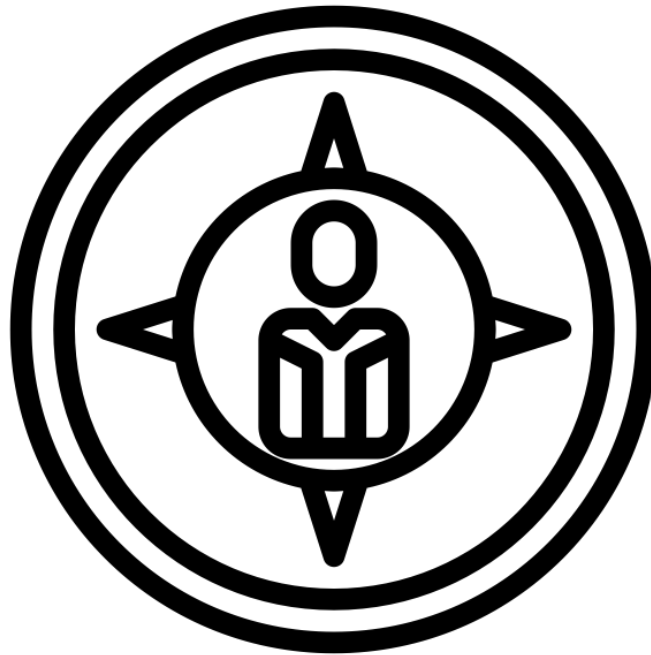# Notice of Funding Opportunity



## Texas Digital Navigator

## Grant Program Guidelines

**Application Due Date:**
Friday, October 1, 2021

## Table of Contents

Comments regarding the programs and services of the
Texas State Library and Archives Commission can be addressed to:
**Director and Librarian**
P. O. Box 12927 ◆ Austin, Texas 78711-2927
512-463-5460 ◆ 512-463-5436 fax

# A. Program Description

Responding to the emergent community needs identified by Texas libraries in the areas of digital inclusion and access to resources and services, the **Texas Digital Navigators grant program** funds libraries **to develop and implement a unique Digital Navigator program with the help of a trusted community partner to close the digital divide in their area in a measurable way**. Selected libraries will be provided with full funding for navigators and devices, provided digital equity training from national experts, receive support from a community of practice, and be assisted with collecting and communicating the results of their project to other library staff, stakeholders, and funders.

**Digital Navigators are individuals who address the whole digital inclusion process — home connectivity, devices, and digital skills — with community members through repeated interactions**. A trained Digital Navigator will be able to assess a community member's need, and competently guide them towards resources that are suitable both for their skill level and lifestyle. Digital Navigators are familiar with resources that relate to digital equity such as Internet services providers and devices, and they help residents learn to use critical online services that provide guidance with food support, rent, education, employment, childcare, government benefits and more. They recommend resources and check back with the client.

Additionally, this project seeks to build the "**Connectivity Literacy**" of Texas public library staff by developing their critical understanding of the Texas internet connectivity landscape through community engagement, data-driven decision making, and a deeper understanding of approaches, providers, devices and educational resources available to assist with digital inclusion.

The Texas Digital Navigators grant program is designed to help communities respond directly and immediately to the pandemic as well as to related economic and community needs through equitable approaches. Spending priorities are as follows:

a)       Enabling Texas libraries to reach residents through digital inclusion efforts, particularly in support of education, health, and workforce development needs.
b)       Equipping Texas libraries to safely respond to the pandemic by implementing public health protocols.
c)       Supporting Texas library services that meet the needs of communities, including costs such as personnel, technology, training, materials, supplies, equipment, and associated indirect costs.

 Programs should meet the following LSTA goals as identified in the 2018-2022 LSTA 5-Year Plan (https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/pubs/lstaplan/LSTA 2018-2022-final plan FINAL.pdf).

*Needs*
- All Texans and Texas communities need access to Internet-connected resources and services and support to use the resources and services to meet individual and community needs.
- Texans of all ages need access to resources and services that promote and enhance literacy and further formal and informal learning.
- Texans need access to resources and services for workforce development in order to prosper and enhance the economic development of their communities.

*Goals*
- Texans and Texas communities will have access to Internet connected resources and services through Texas libraries to meet community and personal goals and the support needed to use the resources and services successfully.
- Texans will receive library services that effectively respond to community needs.

This reimbursement grant program will fund operating expenditures such as library supplies and materials, technology, furniture, and contractual services. To be eligible, grant expenses must be reasonable and in accordance with appropriate state or local operating policies and procedures.

# B. Award Information

At least $800,000 available for TSLAC Digital Navigator Grant Program. Funding is provided by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2) and the Library Services and Technology Act.

Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN): LS-250239-OLS-21

Assistance Listing Number/Title: 45.310 State Library Program

## Maximum Award

Libraries with a single location may apply for a maximum of $70,000. Multi-branch libraries may add $10,000 per branch. Total grant award may not exceed $300,000.

*Example: If a library has a main location and two branch locations, they may apply for the base grant amount of $70,000 and add an additional $10,000 for each branch location for a total request of $90,000.*

## Length of Funding

The Texas Digital Navigator Grant Program will open for application in September 2021 with an award date in November 2021. All funded projects must be completed by November 30, 2022. All grant funds MUST BE OBLIGATED by October 31, 2022.

# C. Eligibility Information

Through their governing authority, accredited public libraries, local public library systems, libraries that are members of the TexShare Library Consortium, or non-profit organizations that are applying on behalf of accredited libraries and/or TexShare members, are eligible to apply for funds. Public library applicants must be accredited by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission for the fiscal year in which the grant contracts are issued.

There is no requirement for cost sharing, matching funds, or cost participation with this grant program.

## Eligible Activities

This grant program will fund projects focused on implementing a Digital Navigator program within the library's community. Suggested supplies, materials, and services are listed below. This list is not exhaustive and is provided to aid your planning process:

- Project management of the pilot project (using Software As Service {SaaS}*, consultant, or contract help) SaaS - Software as a Service (this grant award will only cover SaaS from 12/1/2021- 11/30/2022)

- Digital Navigator fees (salaries, wages and/or benefits for contract temporary help)

- Marketing the availability of Digital Navigators to target communities (may be print or digital and includes postage, printing, signage

- Refurbished laptops or tablets for distribution to identified underserved community members

- Digital literacy databases or assessments (dissimilar to TexShare or TexQuest offerings)
- Training – patron and/or staff
- Professional services (workshop speakers, graphic design, etc.)

The grant may also cover indirect costs as permitted in 2 CFR 200.

## Ineligible Activities

This grant program will <u>NOT</u> fund the following costs:

a) Capital expenditures related to the purchase of real property, buildings, or motor vehicles
b) Capital expenditures related to the construction or expansion of facilities, including fixtures and services

c) Capital expenditures related to renovation costs, including fixtures and services
d) Food, beverages, or food delivery equipment or services
e) Awards, honoraria, prizes, or gifts
f) Equipment or technology not specifically associated with pandemic services and programs.
g) Transportation/travel for participants or library personnel
h) Databases currently offered or similar to ones offered by the agency (i.e., a magazine index database may not be purchased if a comparable one is provided by the agency)
i) Collection development purchases not specifically associated with pandemic services and programs
j) Advertising or public relations costs not specifically associated with the pandemic services and programs
k) Performers or presenters whose purpose is to entertain rather than to educate
l) Staffing or fringe benefit costs
m) Other expenses as excluded in the guidelines

# D. Application and Submission Information

## Application Components

The grant application consists of the following components:
1. Application Certification Form signed by appropriate signing authority

2. Program narrative and budget

3. Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) certification form

## Grant Management System (GMS) Access

TSLAC uses a grant management system or GMS that enables applicants to apply for grants electronically through a web portal at https://grants.tsl.texas.gov. Applications and required documents must be submitted in GMS by the due date to be eligible for consideration. To submit your application online, you must have an active GMS account. To create or activate an account, please have your library director submit a contact import form (https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/funding/lsta/Contact Import Template.xls) to grants@tsl.texas.gov. The e-mail should reference "GMS Access" in the subject line. TSLAC staff will review the request and grant appropriate access.

If needed because of difficulty using the Internet or for other accessibility reasons, potential applicants may submit copies of materials to Bethany Wilson, TSLAC Grants Administrator, via e-mail at grants@tsl.texas.gov.

The fillable PDF version of this application and all other application components can be found at: https://tinyurl.com/sfrwtzv3

## Other requirements

Before submitting an application, the applicant organization must have a current and active D-U-N-S® Number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number may be found on D&B's website (https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html). Obtaining a DUNS number is free.

## Who can submit the application?

Any individual authorized to use GMS and having the correct security role will be able to submit the application in GMS. Applicants will be required to submit the signed application certification. The application certification must be signed by an individual authorized to enter into contracts with the State of Texas (e.g., county judge, city manager, etc.).

## Deadline and Submission

Completed applications and _**all**_ required documents must be submitted **by 11:59 p.m. Central Time, Friday, October 1, 2021.** *Please be advised that technical support will not be available after 4 p.m., Friday, October 1, 2021.*

If you are unable to submit your application and/or required documentation via GMS, you may submit documents via e-mail to grants@tsl.texas.gov with subject line, **Texas Digital Navigators Grant**. Please send mail submissions to:

<div align="center">

Texas Digital Navigators Grant
Texas State Library and Archives Commission
Library Development & Networking Division
PO Box 12927 (1201 Brazos St.)
Austin, TX 78711 (78701)

</div>

## Program Timeline

| | |
|---|---|
| **August 2021** | Guidelines released |
| **September 2021** | Applications open |
| **October 1, 2021** | Applications and required forms due |
| **October 2021** | Application packets evaluated by Grant Review Panel |
| **October 2021** | Applicants notified of Grant Review Panel recommendations |
| **November 2021** | Commission meets and approves projects |
| **November 2021** | Contracts issued to grant recipients |
| **December 1, 2021** | Projects begin |
| **October 31, 2022** | All project funds obligated |
| **November 30, 2022** | Projects end |

# E. Application Review Information

## Criteria for Award

This grant program is competitive. Agency staff will score proposals on the four criteria listed below. The maximum number of points for each category is listed.

The detailed scoring rubric that will be used is provided below.

### 1. Needs Assessment (50 points)

Provide details about the community you serve, including information about vulnerable community members. Describe identified community needs related to digital inclusion, Internet access, or digital literacy that could be addressed by a Digital Navigators project.

- Use the TSLAC Community Profile Data worksheet (.docx) to find demographic information, computer and internet usage statistics and assistance identifying potential community partners for this project.

### 2. Project Purpose (25 points)

Describe how you might implement a Digital Navigator project and how it would meet the needs of vulnerable community members described in the response to question 1.

- Describe why this project is a good fit for your community.
- Describe who you might partner with to implement your project.

- Describe specific population(s) you would assist with your project.

### 3. Sustainability (20 points)

Provide details about the support you will have to implement and maintain this project.

- Describe the financial and managerial resources that will be used to support the Digital Navigators project beyond the end of the grant.
- Describe the library's existing and potential partnerships that would support this project.
- Describe how this project aligns with the library's mission.

### 4. Personnel (5 points)

Provide details about who will participate in the Digital Navigator project.

- Identify who will attend the training and participate in the Digital Navigators project.
- Describe why they are a good fit for this project.

## Funding Decisions

(a) The agency staff will submit a recommended priority-ranked list of applicants for possible funding. Final approval of a grant award is solely at the determination of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

(b) Applications for grant funding will be evaluated only upon the information provided in the written application.

(c) The agency staff may negotiate with selected applicants to determine the terms of the award. To receive an award, the applicant must accept any additional or special terms and conditions listed in the grant contract and any changes in the grant application.

(d) The agency staff will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing.

## Awarding of Grants

The commission has the right to reject applications or cancel or modify a grant solicitation at any point before a contract is signed. The award of any grant is subject to the availability of funds.

## TSLAC Staff Responsibility

Agency staff will review each application packet for the following:
· Legal eligibility of the institution to participate in this grant program and appropriate authorizing signature
· Conformance to the federal and state regulations pertaining to grants
· Inclusion of unallowable costs
· Errors in arithmetic or cost calculations
· Submission of all required forms
· Compliance with submission procedures and deadlines
· Relevance and appropriateness of the project design and activities to the purpose of the grant program

Agency staff will raise issues and questions regarding the needs, methods, staffing, and costs of the applications. Staff will also raise concerns regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the project design and activities to the purpose of the grant program.

Applications with significant errors, omissions, or eligibility issues will not be rated. Applications in which the project design and activities are not relevant and appropriate to the purpose of the grant program will be ineligible.

## Grant Review Panel Responsibility

Agency staff will review and score grants based on established criteria under an expedited process.

## Decision Making Process

To be considered eligible for funding by the commission, any application must receive a minimum adjusted mean score of more than 60 percent of the maximum points available. To reduce the impact of scores that are

exceedingly high or low, or otherwise outside the range of scores from other reviewers, agency staff will tabulate the panel's work using calculations such as an adjusted mean score.

(1)  Applications will be ranked in priority order by score for consideration by the commission.

(2)  If insufficient funds remain to fully fund the next application, the staff will negotiate a reduced grant with the next ranked applicant.

(3)  If the panel recommends funding an application that, for legal, fiscal, or other reasons, is unacceptable to the staff, a contrary recommendation will be made. The applicant will be informed of this situation prior to presentation to the commission and may negotiate a revision to the application. A positive recommendation to the commission will be contingent upon successfully completing these negotiations prior to the commission meeting.

(4)  If the panel is unable to produce a set of recommendations for funding, the agency staff will use the same evaluation procedures to develop recommendations to the commission.

## Scoring Rubric

| Project Scoring Total in Four Areas: 100 points | | |
|---|---|---|
| Relevance and appropriateness of the project design and activities to the purpose of the Texas Digital Navigators grant program will be considered in the scoring of all criteria. Staff may score each criterion as follows:<br><br>**0-1 points:** Project does not meet the purposes of the grant program.<br>**2-3 points:** Project partially meets the purposes of the grant program.<br>**4-5 points:** Project is a clear fit for the purposes of the grant program. | | |
| **1)       Needs Assessment (Points: Raw score = 5 max, weight = 10; Final score = 50 max)** | | |
| Describe identified community needs that a Digital Navigators project would address and include how participation in the grant would benefit vulnerable community members. | | |
| 0-1 points | 2-3 points | 4-5 points |
| • Audience is not described.<br>• Does not describe community need<br>• Does not describe how the project would benefit vulnerable community members. | • Audience is described but does not use data or statistics.<br>• Provides partial description of community need.<br>• Provides partial description of how the project would benefit vulnerable community members. | • Audience is defined with specific examples and statistics.<br>• Clearly describes community need.<br>• Clearly describes how the project would benefit vulnerable community members. |
| **2)       Project Purpose (Points: Raw score = 5 max, weight = 5; Final score = 25 max)** | | |
| Describe the specific Digital Navigators project you are planning and how it can meet the identified community needs described in the response to question 1. | | |
| 0-1 points | 2-3 points | 4-5 points |
| • Provides no evidence of need for Digital Navigators in community.<br>• Project purpose is unclear. | • Provides some evidence of need for Digital Navigators in community.<br>• Project purpose is defined and has some relationship to community needs. | • Provides clear evidence of need for Digital Navigators in community.<br>• Project purpose is clearly defined and is strongly related to community need. |
| **3)       Sustainability (Points: Raw Score = 5 max, weight = 2; Final score = 10 max)** | | |
| Describe the financial resources and partnerships that will be used to support the Digital Navigators project in the future, beyond the end of the grant. | | |
| 0-1 points | 2-3 points | 4-5 points |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Description of resources used to support and sustain the project after grant completion is vague and unspecific. | • Some evidence of future support and sustainability described. | • Clear evidence of sustainability described.<br>• A written commitment of future support from governing bodies is provided, if applicable. |

| 4) Personnel (Points: Raw Score = 5 max, weight = 1; Final score = 5 max) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Provide details about who will participate in the Digital Navigator project and their qualifications for doing so. | | |
| 0-1 points | 2-3 points | 4-5 points |
| • No description of key personnel and their qualifications to perform these duties. | • Some description of key personnel and their qualifications. | • Describes qualifications of key personnel in detail, including how they will contribute to the project's success. |

# F. Award Administration Information

## Notice of Award

Applicants will be notified of the funding decisions via e-mail. The notification will include an award letter and protest procedures, which are also included in this notice.

Once the awards have been awarded, successful applicants will receive instructions on how to proceed. TSLAC will provide mandatory training for successful applicants.

## Protest Procedure — Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 13 TAC §2.55

(a)  An aggrieved person who is not satisfied with a decision, procedure, or service received from the staff of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission or who is an actual or prospective bidder, grantee, or contractor aggrieved in connection with a solicitation, evaluation, or award may file a protest with the Director and Librarian in accordance with this rule.

(b)  A protest must be submitted to the Director and Librarian within 21 days after the person knows or should have known of the matter which is protested. The Director and Librarian has the discretion to allow a protest filed after 21 days if the protestant shows good cause for the late filing or if the protest raises an issue significant to the general policies and procedures of the commission.

(c)  The protestant shall mail or deliver a copy of the protest to all interested persons. The Director and Librarian will furnish a list of interested persons to a protestant. For protests of a competitive selection (bid, contract, or grant), interested persons shall include all persons who have submitted a bid, proposal, or application.

(d)  A protest must be in writing and identified as a protest under this section, and contain the following:

(1)     A description of the protestant's interest in the matter
(2)     The issue(s) to be resolved and remedy(s) requested
(3)     The protestant's argument supporting the protest, including a statement of relevant facts and applicable law, specifying the statutes, rules, or other legal authority alleged to have been violated
(4)     The protestant's affirmation that facts set forth in the protest are true
(5)     A certification that a copy of the protest has been mailed or delivered to all interested persons

(e)  Upon receipt of a protest conforming to the requirements of this section, the commission shall not proceed with the solicitation, award, or contract until the protest is resolved, unless the Director and Librarian makes a written determination that delay would harm the substantial interests of the state.

(f)  The Director and Librarian has the authority to decide, settle, or resolve the protest and will make a written determination. The Director and Librarian may solicit written responses to the protest from other parties. The Director and Librarian shall inform the protesting party and other interested parties by letter of his determination, and how to appeal the determination to the commission.

(g)  An interested party may appeal the determination of the Director and Librarian. An appeal must be in writing and conform to paragraphs (1) - (3) of this subsection:

(1)     The appeal must be received in the office of the Director and Librarian no later than 15 days after the date the determination is mailed to interested parties;

(2)     A copy of the appeal must be mailed or delivered by the appealing party to all interested parties and contain a certification of mailing or delivery;

(3)     The appealing party must state whether or not an opportunity is requested to make an oral presentation to the commission in open meeting.

(h)  The Director and Librarian shall refer the matter to the commission for their consideration at an open meeting.

(i)   The chair of the commission has the discretion to allow an appeal filed more than 15 days after the Director and Librarian's determination if the appealing party shows good cause for the late filing or if the appeal raises an issue significant to the general policies or procedures of the commission.

(j)   An interested party may file a response to an appeal of the determination of the Director and Librarian no later than seven days after the appeal is mailed or delivered.

(k)  Copies of the appeal and responses of interested parties, if any, shall be mailed to the commission by the Director and Librarian.

(l)   The chair of the commission has the discretion to decide whether or not a request for oral presentations will be granted and will set the order and amount of time for oral presentations that are allowed. The chair also has the discretion to decide whether presentations and written documents presented by Commission staff and interested parties will be allowed.

(m) The commission will determine properly filed appeals and make its decision in open meeting. The commission shall vote to uphold or reverse the decision of the Director and Librarian. Failing a majority vote of a quorum of the commission, the Director and Librarian's decision is upheld. The commission's decision is final and not subject to judicial review under the statutes governing the commission.

(n)  A decision issued either by the commission in open meeting or in writing by the Director and Librarian shall be the final administrative action of the commission.

(o)  Documentation concerning a protest of a competitive selection is part of the commission's records series for that selection and is retained in accordance with the commission's approved records retention schedule.

## Policy Requirements

TSLAC competitive grant recipients are subject to the State of Texas Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS) (*https://www.comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/docs/ugms.pdf*) and federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (also known as the Supercircular) *(https://federalregister.gov/a/2013-30465).*

## Reporting

Grantees must submit financial and performance reports at the end of the reporting period as will be outlined in the grant contract. Reports will be submitted electronically through TSLAC's Grant Management System (GMS).

# G. Contacts

TSLAC staff members are available via e-mail during regular business hours (8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Central) to assist with competitive grants.

Bethany Wilson, Grants Administrator
Phone: 512-463-5527, 800-252-9386 (toll free)
Fax: 512-936-2306
E-mail: bwilson@tsl.texas.gov

Erica McCormick, Program Coordinator
**E-mail: emccormick@tsl.texas.gov**