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| **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)** |  |
| ADVERTISED DATE: September 2, 2020 |
| RFA Title: | DIGITAL EQUITY FOR ADULTS WITH BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND SERVICES |
| Due Date: | **September 22, 2020 by 5:00pm** |
| Procurement Lead: | Shannon Harris- digital.equity.grants@kingcounty.gov  |
| Purpose: | Solicit applications from an organization or organizations to provide internet access, wireless enabled technology, and/or digital literacy services to adults who are seniors, limited-English proficient, experiencing homelessness and/or unemployed. |

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| Submitting an ApplicationA request for applications is hereby solicited and will be received via email no later than 5 p.m. on the due date noted above. The scope of work outlined in this RFA shall be provided in accordance with the following and the attached requirements and specifications.**Email proposals to:****digital.equity.grants@kingcounty.gov** | QuestionsApplicants will be required to submit any questions in writing prior to 5 p.m. on **September 9, 2020** in order for staff to prepare any response required to be answered in an FAQ document emailed to all candidates. Questions should be sent to the Procurement Lead noted above. |
| **Community Information Session for the RFA: Digital Equity for Adults with Barriers to Access and Services**Time: Sep 8, 2020 02:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)Join Zoom Meetinghttps://kingcounty.zoom.us/j/93445587879Meeting ID: 934 4558 7879Passcode: 447799 |

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND – KING COUNTY**EQUITABLE DIGITAL SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH BARRIERS TO ACCESS *Due September 22, 2020*

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# **Introduction**

King County Council has allocated a total of $695,000 to support a digital equity program for **seniors**, **limited-English-proficient residents, unemployed residents, and those experiencing homelessness** (target beneficiaries) who face barriers to accessing digital services during this period when there is an increased reliance on the Internet to access public services and economic relief resources available in response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This RFA seeks applications from organizations who will be able to provide digital access through technology, internet connectivity, and/or digital literacy support to one or more of the target beneficiary groups.

# Strategy

### Background

**COVID-19 and Digital Equity**

In King County and across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the myriad problems associated with the digital divide. While most people in King County can access the Internet from the comfort of their own homes, a large number of residents do not have this ability. Within King County, 16% of residents do not have Internet access at home. Residents who earn less than $50,000 each year are over five times less likely to have Internet access at home. Research from the Pew Center reveals that nationally, Black and Hispanic/Latinx Americans are twice as likely to lack internet access. Additionally, 27% of Americans over the age of 65 do not use the internet. Additionally disparities are revealed as lower income groups, those living in rural areas, and residents with lower educational attainment are far less likely to have access to the internet.

New to the coronavirus pandemic is that residential options for accessing the internet are the only way people can work, access government and job search services, or interact with their doctors, among others. Target beneficiaries may have relied on public spaces such a libraries, community centers or coffee shops for their internet access – locations that are now inaccessible due to COVID-19 closures. In this public health crisis, broadband is critical infrastructure and foundational technology for a functional society.

Ensuring equal access to the Internet for all residents, regardless of age, income, or ability will allow them to connect to important online resources. Increased digital access may take the form of assistance navigating online resources for health, economic, or other basic needs, providing technology for individuals to access the internet and online resources and services, and classes on digital and online literacy. Increasing access to these critical resources will help vulnerable King County residents recover from the health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19.

### Scope of Work

The objective of the program is to increase digital literacy and provide the technology and internet connection that enables beneficiaries to access web-based platforms and applications for housing, economic, health or other basic benefits, needs, or information necessitated by COVID-19. King County will partner with community-based organizations that currently serve seniors, limited-English proficiency, unemployed, and/or homeless adults to improve access to online resources and improve digital literacy.

Primary beneficiaries of the program qualify if they are:

* 1. Unemployed
	2. Seniors
	3. Limited English proficiency
	4. Experience homelessness

And:

* 1. Have a lack of internet connectivity, a lack of access to broadband-enabled devices, or a lack of digital literacy.

In order to verify eligibility, beneficiaries will complete a self-certification that attests that they fall within an eligible population and need the goods or services offered by the program.

Within the target beneficiary groups, grantees should serve those who are the most affected by the outbreak of [COVID-19](https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/race-ethnicity.aspx), including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Native American/Pacific Islander, and other disadvantaged communities. Grantees are expected to address language access for adults with limited English proficiency and ensure accessibility to the program for adults with disabilities.

Activities allowed under this grant include providing:

* Broadband enabled devices like refurbished laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots and/or other computing devices;
* Technical assistance and training, in-language as needed, to help participants use the devices and other resources;
* Other assistance that will help achieve the intent and objectives of this grant program. Goods or services that fall under this heading will need King County pre-approval.

The following list outlines expenditures eligible under this grant program:

* Buying broadband enabled devices like refurbished laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi hot spots, and/or other computing devices to bridge the gap.
* Technical assistance and training, in-language as needed, to help participants use the devices and other resources.
* Purchase of services from community-based organizations to leverage the unique expertise and ties to communities of interest to support digital equity objectives of this program.
* Translation of resources, training guides and materials to help beneficiaries’ access to technology or gain other related information.
* Other assistance and direct program administration costs that will help achieve the intent and objectives of this grant program. Items that fall under this heading will need King County pre-approval.

The use of funds must comply with all federal requirements set for the Treasury’s Coronavirus Relief Fund (detailed in Attachment A “Federal Terms”). Expenditures must be incurred in the period from August 1, 2020, through December 30, 2020 and must be recorded and documented using the generally accepted accounting principles and the provisions of Title 2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements*.*

The grantee will track any assets acquired with this grant in accordance with its accounting policies and, as part of the program closeout, will propose how to dispose those assets.

### Disbursement Process

1. Organization will submit a Payment Request Report, with attached receipts and other supporting documentation for eligible expenditures, to digital.equity.grants@kingcounty.gov.
2. King County will review Payment Request Report to confirm eligible expenditures and process payment via method selected by organization during intake process.
3. If an advance of funds is needed to implement the scope of work, the organization can request a grant drawdown request. The grant drawdown process requires the organization to list upcoming expenses and submit estimates or other supporting documentation. Funds are provided and the organization submits a report and receipts or other proof of payment showing how funds were actually spent.
4. **Grant Documentation & Reporting**

| **EXHIBIT #** | **Form/Report**  | **Short Description** | **Submit by** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | RFA Response | * Completed RFA application
 | With RFA application |
| **2** | King County RFA – Digital Equity Questionnaire | * Document that captures organization information, budget for program, and risk assessment.
 | With RFA application |
| **3** | KC-W9 Vendor Registration Form | * Form required by King County finance department to process payments/ disbursements
 | With RFA application |
| **4** | SAM.gov Registration | * Any grantee receiving $50,000 or more in funding must register with SAM.gov
 | With the signed agreement  |
| **5** | Subrecipient Agreement | * Agreement between the grantee and King County
 | With signed agreement |
| **6** | Federal Terms and Conditions | * Standard federal terms
 | With signed agreement |
| **7** | Certifications | * Certifications of appropriate use of funds
 | With signed agreement |
| **8** | Self-certification for beneficiaries | * A template for grantees to use to certify that those served are within the target beneficiary group.
 | Kept in grantee files for up to 6 years |
| **9** | Monthly reimbursement report | * Provides documentation of all expenses sought for reimbursement
 | Monthly |
| **10** | Grant drawdown request | * Lists and substantiates expenses grantee plans to spend funds on in the coming month
 | Allowed once per month |
| **11** | Monthly progress summary | * Provides updates on how many beneficiaries have been served per month
 | By month end following agreement signing starting with 10/31/2020 |
| **12** | Final expenditure report | * A report detailing all expenditures up to the grant amount
* Can be a compilation of prior month reports
 | Within 30 days of final payment utilizing grant funds |
| **13** | Grant Closeout Report | * A report that summarizes the activities under the grant and provides basic demographic information for who benefitted from this program
 | Within 30 days of final payment utilizing grant funds |

# Eligibility

As part of this program, King County will issue grants to organizations that serve the target populations and meet our eligibility requirements. Organizations are eligible to apply if they:

1. Have an existing relationship with at least one of the target populations;
2. Have competency in providing technology access, offering technology resources, or digital literacy assistance.
3. Will address language access for adults with limited English proficiency and ensure accessibility to the program for adults with disabilities.
4. Can meet Federal terms and conditions, including record keeping requirements.

# Timeline

The following timeline represents the tentative schedule of the entire RFA process, from solicitation to implementation. The dates listed here are subject to change.

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| **RFA release date** | September 2, 2020 |
| **Final day to submit questions**  | September 9, 2020 |
| **Applications due** | **September 22, 2020** |
| **Applicants notified of decision** | **October 2, 2020** |
| **Program Period** | **August 1 – December 30, 2020** |

# Application Form and Submission Process

A request for applications is hereby solicited and will be received via email no later than 5 p.m. on Friday September 22, 2020. Applicants shall submit a clear, concise response to each of the seven questions below and complete the Grantee Questionnaire Excel file, which includes questions about the applicant’s information, budget, and risk assessment. Please submit a KC-W9 with application materials.

Applicants may request awards between $25,000 and $500,000. The application review panel will determine how to fund applications so that the maximum number of target beneficiaries will have improved digital access and may offer awardees less than the amount requested.

**Mission and Program**

1. Briefly describe your organization and its mission. In the case of a collaborative application, please outline: each organization, its role in the collaborative, and who would serve as the lead applicant.
2. Briefly describe the experience your organization or organizations have in supporting adults in the target beneficiary groups: seniors, limited-English proficiency, unemployed, or experiencing homelessness. Applicants do not have to serve all of the target groups and can focus their application on one or more of the target beneficiary groups.
3. Briefly describe your proposed activities including your capacity to provide and/or develop digital literacy and the connectivity or technology to assist beneficiaries in accessing online resources. If you currently provide services similar to those outlined in this RFA, please describe them.
4. Briefly describe how you will provide multi-lingual support to the intended beneficiaries and ensure accessibility of services for those with disabilities.

**Operational Considerations**

1. The timeline for implementation of this contract is rapid. Describe how your Agency will utilize existing staff to implement and expedite this work quickly and/or if hiring new staff, how the hiring process will be accelerated to ensure rapid implementation.
2. Tracking data elements is a requirement of this contract. Describe your Agency’s experience in quality data collection and reporting.
3. Describe your Agency’s experience with tracking financial assistance and submitting accurate billing invoice packages for financial reimbursement.