2022 Miami Connected Digital Equity Grant Guidelines

South Florida has had a significant technology sector for many years and the advent of the #MiamiTech movement over the last two years has accelerated the rate at which technology companies and talent are relocating to our coveted region. This growth of the technology sector and accelerated adoption of technology in day-to-day society has made way for many improvements, while simultaneously widening an existing digital divide in Miami-Dade County. Currently, more than one in five Miami-Dade County residents do not have broadband internet at home and, for some historically underserved neighborhoods, this number climbs to one in two residents. That's why several stakeholders from the private, public and philanthropic sectors came together to launch and invest in Miami Connected – a three-year collective impact initiative that seeks to make Miami-Dade the most technologically inclusive county in the nation.

Miami Connected is seeking applicants for its Digital Equity Grant Program to help expand programming and elevate Greater Miami's digital ecosystem for all. We are looking for partners who can translate their vision for a more connected Miami into direct services for community members in two core focus areas: Digital Literacy and Digital Navigation.

Please carefully review these guidelines, proposal questions, and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at the end of this packet. The guidelines explain the application process and how to connect with the Miami Connected team. These materials are also available in **Spanish and Haitian Creole** as an important way for nonprofits to engage diverse communities and those they serve and shape proposal plans. Applications will be submitted in English.

We look forward to working and learning together. **Proposals are due Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 4 p.m.**

FUNDING CATEGORIES

Miami Connected has identified two funding priorities – Digital Literacy and Digital Navigation – where additional resources are needed in our community. These priorities are the building blocks for ensuring digital equity and were guided by community input and partner feedback. Each applicant may apply to **one or both** categories.

Miami Connected will invest a total of $750,000 for the first year of this grant. Additional funding is allocated for renewal for a second year – invitations to renew the grant will be based on performance during the first year.

- **Digital Literacy |** Digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and relay information, requiring cognitive and technical skills. Digital literacy is not solely hardware and software skills but also building digital critical thinking skills, internet safety, ethics, and teaching individuals how to capitalize on these technologies to use them to develop their future. In turn, it provides access to better jobs, leading individuals to generate more wealth for themselves.

  Miami Connected Goal | Ensure all residents in Miami-Dade have the skills needed to use technology in their daily lives for full participation in educational, economic, civic, and social opportunities. Through this funding area, Miami Connected is seeking organizations to pilot or implement sustainable, replicable models for introducing digital literacy programming across Greater Miami that builds familiarity with technology and enables community members to use online tools and programs in their daily lives.

  Examples of this might look like:

    - Integrating digital literacy programming into existing community programming such as in schools, community centers, or health programs.

    - Train-the-trainer programming for nonprofit staff focused on improving digital literacy.

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FUNDING CATEGORIES

- Professional development programming focused on the empowerment of existing digital tools .

- Tapping the potential of youth to lead digital literacy approaches for older generations.

- Implementing national digital literacy programming such as Northstar Digital Literacy for low-income and underserved populations across Miami-Dade.

- Tailoring existing curricula or developing new curricula to be geographically specific to Greater Miami, particularly culturally and linguistically inclusive.

Curricula | The use of existing curricula or the creation of new curricula is entirely up to applicants. Miami Connected is partnered with **Northstar Digital Literacy**, and organizations that choose to use this curriculum will have their license and basic training costs covered directly by Miami Connected.

About Northstar Digital Literacy:

- In use by over 2,500 nonprofits and library systems.

- Includes a full suite of assessments, self-guided online modules, and an in-person curriculum.

- Aims to build basic to intermediate skills with adult and young adult learners, including topics such as basic computer skills, career search skills, and proficiency with Microsoft Word.

- Currently available in English, and the Spanish version is expected to be available in Summer 2022, with the Haitian Creole version coming shortly thereafter.

- **Digital Navigation |** Digital navigators are trusted guides who assist community members in the full spectrum of digital equity, with a focus on internet access, devices, and digital literacy. Navigators serve in a capacity similar to resource navigators, community health workers, and natural helpers, but with a concerted focus on resources related to digital equity. Digital navigation continues to grow as an area of programming nationwide based on the realization that the gap between community members' needs and existing resources can be best bridged with hands-on support and technical assistance.

    Miami Connected Goals |

    - **Ensure all residents in Miami-Dade have the skills needed to use technology in their daily lives for full participation in educational, economic, civic, and social opportunities.** Through this funding area, Miami Connected is seeking organizations to pilot or implement sustainable, replicable models for training and utilizing digital navigators to increase community members' access to internet services, devices and digital literacy programming. Navigators should also work to curate and compile resources for shared use. Digital navigator training should cover cultural and linguistic barriers.

    - **Ensure that families signing up for no-cost or low-cost internet through Miami Connected have the needed support to activate their internet service or apply the discount/sponsorship to their existing service.** All organizations applying for this funding category are expected to work toward this goal as part of their overall proposed programming. Referrals will be provided from the Miami Connected website and hotline as families request additional support. Specific training will be provided by Digital Navigators who have been doing this work over the past year.

Examples of this might look like:

- Development of digital navigator training using existing best practices such as the Digital Navigators Toolkit.

- Implementation of trained digital navigators in the community at accessible, frequented locations to conduct intake and provide one-on-one support for community members.

- Establishment of methods for community members to access digital navigators via telephone or online to increase accessibility of services.

- Establishment of referral pipelines with other organizations that identify community members who request or would benefit from digital navigation support.

EXPECTATIONS

All partners funded through this grant program are expected to participate in the **Digital Equity Impact Collective**, a community of practice intended to increase collaboration, elevate best practices, and share resources for digital equity. The Digital Equity Impact Collective will include workshops hosted by Miami Connected, and a peer learning community to build knowledge and share best practices across Miami-Dade. This group will also serve to elevate community priorities and concerns in order to inform digital equity strategies being developed by county and municipal governments.

Miami Connected will support this community of partners by leveraging its existing reach and partnerships to drive referrals to programs, bring low- or no-cost resources, and help solve for other collective needs that may arise.

PRIORITIES

Our priorities mirror the values we hope to model together with our nonprofit partners. Our priorities also guide application review, so we encourage you to review this section as you develop an application.

- **Advance Equity |** We exclusively support work with individuals and communities facing marginalization to tackle disparities around race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and other lines of difference.

- **Build solutions |** We prioritize work that pursues long-lasting change for individuals and communities. Organizations should identify how to address the underlying barrier(s) or challenge(s) so that individuals can pursue their greatest potential. Strong approaches will strive to improve individuals' current lives while preparing them for the long-term.

- **Collaborate with community |** We prioritize organizations with leadership that represents the communities they serve and organizations that intentionally gather community feedback to guide their work. We believe authentic community relationships and resident leadership are essential for effective work.

- **Focus on progress |** We support work guided by clear goals for the growth of individuals and communities. All partners will have a strong potential to create timely, impactful opportunities for individuals and communities to advance and thrive.

- **Sustainability |** We support high-quality, viable work while investing in what each organization needs to be strong and healthy. We will look for proposals that reflect how the organization will use awarded funds to power progress while strengthening capacity and expertise.

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ELIGIBILTY

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) public charities and government entities with an active IRS status that are serving Miami-Dade County. Projects with an established 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor are also eligible. All applicants should have a strong track record of providing quality programs that reflect the aforementioned focus areas, or show strong potential to develop them.

Additional information:

- **Location |** The proposed work must primarily serve Miami-Dade County residents. While we will give preference to local applicants, organizations do not have to be based in Greater Miami.

- **Compliance |** If you have a current grant through any Foundation program, you must be in compliance with that grant to apply. Please contact your grant manager with any questions.

- **Number of Applications |** Each applicant may submit only one application. Colleges, universities, and local governments may submit up to three applications, each from a different department or college.

- **Partnership Applications |** We welcome collaboration. For collaborations between two or more nonprofits, the partners should select one nonprofit to serve as the lead applicant. Any awarded funds are to be used for the sole purpose of the partnership's work, and the lead applicant will be responsible for managing the funds on behalf of the partners. The lead applicant organization may also submit a separate individual application for its own work.

USE OF FUNDS

Grant Size | The maximum grant award is $75,000 per year. Grant award amount may vary depending on the number of funding categories applied to and scope of proposed work. This is a one-year grant, with potential for renewal for a second year. Invitations to renew the grant will be based on performance during the first year.

All awards will be for general operating support to be used at the organization's discretion to support the proposed program goals. Funding is also intended to cover staff time and other costs related to the expectation that partners will participate in the Digital Equity Impact Collective.

Approaches | We welcome a variety of approaches within the funding categories, including direct services, advocacy, community organizing, partnerships, and others as appropriate to your mission.

Restrictions | As required by IRS rules, grant funds may not be used: a) to carry on lobbying activities as defined under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; b) for partisan political activities that are prohibited under Section 501(c)(3); c) to make a grant to any individual for travel, study or other similar purposes or to make a sub-grant to any other organization unless the grant complies with Section 4945(d)(3) or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code and the grant is part of the approved purpose; or (d) to undertake any activity for any purpose other than the charitable and educational purposes specified in Section 170(c)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants must apply through the Foundation's Submittable platform (themiamifoundation.submittable.com), where they will select the "**Miami Connected Digital Equity Grant 2022 Proposal.**" Sign in with an existing Submittable account or create a free account by providing a name and email address.

Applications will be evaluated according to review criteria aligned with the Miami Connected Digital Equity Grant priorities. We consider applications on both their individual strength; in the context of other submissions; as well as those who display the strongest potential to build community resources, opportunities, and progress in the specified funding area(s).

CONNECT WITH US

Office Hours | All organizations considering a proposal, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to sign up for an optional 20-minute meeting with Miami Connected staff to learn more about the funding opportunity, share their work and impact, and discuss any questions they may have. Click here to schedule through Calendly.

Informational Webinar | The Miami Connected team held an *optional* informational webinar for interested applicants on Friday, April 15, at 10 a.m. Watch the recording here.

Timeline |

- Application Release Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2022
- Proposals Due: May 18, 2022
- Estimated Notification of Grant Awards: July 1, 2022
- Grant Period: August 1, 2022, through July 31, 2023
- Year 2 grant renewal announcements, estimated May 2023

Program Contact | Xavier Richardson, Miami Connected Fellow - Senior Associate, xrichardson@ miamifoundation.org

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2022 MIAMI CONNECTED DIGITAL EQUITY GRANT PROPOSAL

Share your plan to achieve your goals. Include information about implementation, target populations, outcomes, budget, and sustainability. Below are the full proposal questions:

Short Summary | In one or two sentences, please provide us with a brief overview of your proposal. Please note this may be used publicly.

Proposal Narrative Questions |

1. **Proposed Project- Digital Navigation |** Only for organizations applying for this category. Describe what your organization proposes to implement for digital navigation and how it aligns with the Miami Connected goal to ensure that residents who need more support have access to trained digital navigators who can help connect them to resources and solve access issues. (500 words)

2. **Proposed Project- Digital Literacy |** Only for organizations applying for this category. Describe what your organization proposes to implement for digital literacy and how it aligns with the Miami Connected goal to ensure all residents in Miami-Dade have the skills needed to use technology in their daily lives. If supporting more than one target population, describe the approach across different groups (500 words)

3. **Implementation |** What is your work plan? Describe the main program activities and timeline. (450 words)

4. **Outreach & Engagement |** Describe your target population(s) and the main outreach strategies to engage them in the proposed work. (300 words)

5. **Activities Measures |** For all activities your organization proposes to implement, include the estimated numbers for each that are expected to be reached in year 1 (in the table below) and provide an overall narrative. (150 words)

Activities	Estimated # of Participants
Digital Literacy Instructors	
Digital Literacy Train-the-Trainer Sessions (provided by program)	
Digital Literacy Sessions	
Digital Navigators	
Digital Navigation Train-the-Trainer Sessions (provided by program)	
Digital Navigation Referrals to Resources	
Digital Navigation One-on-One Support Sessions	
Other Activity:	

6. **Outcome Measures |** The two main outcomes measures that will be used to measure the impact of programming are:

   1. Participant satisfaction with each service accessed.

   2. Participant increase in skills and/or confidence using technology (for digital literacy funding category) and/or accessing digital equity resources such as internet services, devices and digital literacy programming (for digital navigation funding category).

For each, indicate your targeted goal (i.e., what percent of participants will achieve the desired result) and how you would measure results. If there are additional outcome measures you plan to use to measure impact, please include related description, targeted goal and method of measurement. (300 words)

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7. **Qualifications & Sustainability |** Describe how your organization is well-positioned to implement the proposed work, including relevant partnerships, existing work, and/or staff expertise. (250 words)

8. **Digital Equity Impact Collective |** Describe how your organization would benefit from participating in the digital equity impact collective and how your organization can contribute to the community collaboration. (250 words)

9. **Advancing Equity |** How is your organization's work advancing equity of people and communities that have been historically marginalized? (250 words)

10. **Financial Narrative |** Describe your financial plan to achieve the proposed work, as shown in your attached budget. How will the proposed use of funds support your organization and your identified goals? (250 words)

11. **Supplemental Information (Optional) |** Is there anything else you would like to share about your organization or the proposed work? This may include information about long-term goals, anecdotes from past related work, or the impact of COVID-19 on your work. (250 words)

Proposal Required Attachments |

- Completed Proposal Budget Form (click to download)
- Current Annual Operating Budget
- Current Board of Directors List

Review committees composed of community members will evaluate full proposals with support from internal staff. This ensures rich perspectives from people with personal and professional experiences related to each funding category.

Thank you for your interest in the Miami Connected Digital Equity Grant.

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Where does the funding for Miami Connected grants come from?

These funds have been contributed by 13 funding partners that are invested in bridging the digital divide. Fundraising was spurred by Ken Griffin's, Citadel CEO, matching grant challenge; other funding partners include The Children's Trust, Samvid Ventures, The Miami Foundation, Leslie Miller Saiontz, and Helios Education Foundation.

What organizations are eligible to apply? Does location matter?

Eligible applicants are all 501(c)(3) public charities and governmental entities with an active IRS status that are serving Miami-Dade County. Projects with an established 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor are also eligible. The proposed work must primarily serve Miami-Dade County residents. Your nonprofit itself does not have to be headquartered in Miami-Dade County, but we strongly encourage organizations based outside Greater Miami to collaborate with local partners to be most effective.

What types of work will you consider?

We welcome a variety of approaches within the funding categories including direct services, partnerships, and others as appropriate to your mission and vision. IRS restrictions on the use of 501(c)(3) funding still apply.

APPLICATION AND GRANT DETAILS

How do I submit my application through the Submittable platform?

All applications will be submitted online through the Foundation's Submittable platform (themiamifoundation. submittable.com). Please select the "Miami Connected Digital Equity Grant 2022 Proposal" form. Each applicant will sign in with an existing Submittable account or create a free account by providing a name and email address. If you need technical support, please visit Submittable's Help Center.

The Submittable platform allows applicants to save their progress and return later, so you do not need to complete the application in one sitting. Please make sure you are signed in to your Submittable account so your information saves properly. As you are drafting your application, we strongly recommend saving a backup of your responses in a separate file to prevent technical issues.

How do I know which funding category my organization should apply to?

Organizations may apply to Digital Literacy, Digital Nativation, or Both. Please apply to the funding category, or categories, that is/are most aligned with the goals of your proposed work. If a submitted application would be more competitive in a different category, the Foundation will work with the applicant to recategorize. This is also an excellent question to bring to office hours with the Foundation team – please click here to sign up for office hours through Calendly.

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Why does the Foundation ask for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) information?

Equity is a core value of The Miami Foundation. We are always learning and improving our practices so that they reflect equity. We will use the DEI information gathered to advance our understanding of who we are and are not reaching, the equity of our funding patterns, and the overall diversity within Greater Miami's nonprofit sector. We ask about the executive leader, senior leadership (director level and above), and board members since they influence an organization's direction. We hope this will also prompt nonprofits to examine how diversity, equity, and inclusion are reflected in their organizations.

Through the Miami Connected Digital Equity Grant application process, you will be asked to share how your proposed work seeks to advance equity with communities facing marginalization, and you can indicate the geographic locations where your work takes place. The DEI information will complement this by helping us understand who is leading the nonprofit's mission and direction. While we encourage you to provide this information, we have provided an option for Prefer Not to Answer.

What is the review and selection process?

Full proposals are evaluated by review committees made up of of community members with support from Miami Foundation staff. This ensures rich perspectives from people with personal and professional experiences related to each funding category. Reviewers will consider applications on their individual strength and alignment with the Miami Connected priorities, as well as in the context of other submissions.

If awarded, will I get my full funding ask?

The maximum amount to be awarded to an organization that applies to both funding categories is $75,000 and organizations may apply for that full amount or a lesser amount. The amount of funding requested will not impact the review process. We will prioritize funding the full amount requested to support our partners with trust and stability, though grant award amount may vary depending on the number of funding categories applied to and scope of proposed work.

Will I be able to get feedback on my declined proposal?

Yes, organizations will have an opportunity to schedule time with Miami Connected staff to discuss proposal feedback.

If my organization receives a grant, what is the reporting process?

The Miami Connected Digital Equity Grant will request four reports: three interim, quarterly "updates" and a final written narrative report to be submitted at the end of the grant period. The Foundation shares reporting questions with partners at least one month in advance.

ELIGIBILITY

Does my organization need to be a certain size to apply?

No. We welcome applications from organizations of all sizes that meet our eligibility criteria and are working toward the goals identified in the program guidelines.

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I'm a college or university. Can I apply?

Yes. Colleges and universities are eligible to apply to Community Grants. You may submit up to three applications, and each should be from a different department or college.

I'm a church or faith-based organization. Can I apply?

Yes. We welcome applications from faith-based organizations that provide programs, services, or activities for the broader community that align with our guidelines. However, we do not fund work focused on spreading a particular religious belief or that is limited to serving members of your organization.

I'm a local government office. Can I apply?

Yes. Local government offices are eligible to apply. You may submit up to three applications, and each should be from a different department.

Can I apply in partnership with another organization?

Yes. We encourage and welcome collaboration. The partners should select one nonprofit to serve as the lead applicant to the program. Any awarded funding will be paid out to the lead applicant organization to manage on behalf of the partners. The lead applicant may also submit an individual application.

I have a current grant through another Foundation program. Can I still apply?

Yes. We do not limit nonprofits to receiving funding from just one program. You can apply as long as your current grant(s) is in good standing – please contact your grant manager if you have any questions.

Does my program or approach need to be "new" to apply?

No. Miami Connected will support both new and existing work to advance our shared goals for Greater Miami.

Does my program need to have other funding to apply?

No. Although we encourage you to share any other confirmed or potential funding sources to show the sustainability of your work, we recognize that not all work needs multiple funders. We do not require other funding or match funding.

How do I get in touch with the Foundation team if I have more questions?

All organizations considering an application, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to sign up for an optional 20-minute meeting with Foundation staff to learn more about the grant opportunity, share your work and impact, and answer any questions you may have. Click here to schedule via Calendly.

If you have unanswered questions after reviewing the guidelines, program webpage, and this FAQ in full, please reach out to Xavier Richardson, Miami Connected Fellow - Senior Associate, at xrichardson@miamifoundation.org

ABOUT MIAMI CONNECTED

Miami Connected is a three-year collective impact initiative that seeks to make Miami-Dade the most technologically inclusive county in the nation. The initiative counts on community partners across the county and is co-led by The Miami Foundation and Achieve Miami. In its first year, Miami Connected has successfully supported over 1,600 families with high-speed internet access, partnered with 25 organizations and funders, and piloted a digital literacy program for families. Miami Connected has also identified key priorities and needs that will help make South Florida a community that is synonymous with digital equity.

ABOUT THE MIAMI FOUNDATION

The Miami Foundation builds the philanthropic, civic, and leadership backbone for Greater Miami. Since 1967, the Foundation has invested $485 million to strengthen our community with partnerships and contributions from more than 1,000 fundholders and 35,000 donors. The Miami Foundation, which currently manages over $450 million in assets, mobilizes donors, nonprofits, leaders, and locals to set a bold vision for our community's future and to invest in a stronger, more equitable, more resilient Greater Miami.

ABOUT ACHIEVE MIAMI

Achieve Miami seeks to close opportunity gaps for students throughout Miami-Dade by providing meaningful educational and enrichment programs that demonstrate the power of students learning with and from each other. Achieve Miami was launched in 2015 with the purpose of increasing educational opportunities and outcomes for low-income youth and connecting diverse students from all parts of Miami in service of this common mission.