

Digital Poverty Funding Criteria

Purpose

Following the impact of the Covid19 on the Leicester and Leicestershire economy the Leicestershire and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) Board agreed to repurpose £1.6m of the Growing Places Fund to support the local economy. £300,000 of this fund has been allocated to addressing Digital Poverty across the Leicester and Leicestershire region.

The coronavirus and the subsequent lockdowns highlighted the digital divide. Digital poverty can be defined as the inability to access or utilise digital technologies effectively.

Following a call for evidence, the LLEP has identified several key issues across all age groups.

[Paper-C-Appendix-2-LLEP-Digital-Poverty-Call-for-Evidence-Analysis.pdf](#)

The LLEP now seeks projects, to address the issues raised by the call for Digital Poverty call for Evidence analysis. We envisage that projects will come forward to seek funding of between £5,000 and £100,000

Projects

Within the Digital Poverty call for evidence, partners identified several areas that could help address digital exclusion. The list below are suggestions that could form the basis for project ideas.

Ability to access the internet for free

- Via public buildings e.g. libraries, clubs and other public buildings
- For school aged children
- Provision of data for those who need it to access services

Skills and training

- Basic training available on how to access services and socialise online
- Community courses and bespoke 1-2-1 help where required
- Targeted towards job seekers, parents of school aged children, job seekers
- Support, rather than training, to help with basic digital tasks

Access to equipment

- Equipment loan schemes for students and job seekers
- Laptops and equipment provided at no cost or low cost
- Better use of 'old' equipment via refurbishment and recycling

We are inviting relevant organisations to bid for grant funding to provide the following in support of the projects aims:

- Essential ICT training for 200 people
- Support at least 5 community hubs
- Provide a number of internet ready devices.

Bids may cover more than one target area. The final selection of projects will ensure coverage of city and county as much as is practicable.

Criteria

The following assessment criteria will be applied. Where demand exceeds funds available a competitive evaluation process will be undertaken before the awarding of grant.

Business cases must clearly demonstrate:

- The minimum grant projects is £5k and the maximum £100k.
- Projects must be located within Leicester and Leicestershire
- Whilst match funding is not essential, all projects that can provide it will be viewed favourably. Cash match is preferred however the costs of verified assets (land/buildings) used solely for the project and private sector leverage, will also be acceptable. Match funding in the form of officer time of up to 50% of total project costs would be eligible.
- Contribution to the delivery of the issues identified in the Digital Poverty Call for evidence:
 - Internet and data access
 - Access to devices
 - Ability to be able to use digital devices / software
- The demand and need for public sector intervention, including full justification of the amount applied for and explanation of what other funding routes have been explored.
- You must define the potential economic impact of the project with measurable outputs, outcomes and impacts, that can be evaluated.
- The project must demonstrate value for money, with a full breakdown of expenditure.
- Understanding that retrospective costs are not eligible
- Projects must be completed by 2023 and must not run for more than two years after the issuing of the grant funding agreement.

- The business case must demonstrate an exit strategy, as there is no guarantee of future funding.
- The LLEP is committed to reducing the carbon footprint of the area. Low carbon projects, including those that support the circular economy, will be viewed favourably

Activity Timetable

The key milestones and indicative dates for the funding is as follows. This timetable is provisional and may be subject to change.

Activity	Timescale
Criteria and business case issued	w/c 06/09/2021
Last day for clarification queries	01/10/2021
Deadline for submission of bids	15/10/2021
Bid evaluation and moderation panels	29/10/2021
Grant Panel approval	05/11/2021
Projects notified of approval	10/11/2021