



GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Digital Opportunities

*Sustaining Momentum for Digital Opportunities
Open from April 20 to May 18, 2026 at 5PM EST*

What We are Funding

Dogwood's Digital Opportunities Initiative supports local leaders and organizations in making high-speed internet available, affordable and useful for everyone in our region. Dogwood's 2026 Digital Opportunities Initiative Grant Opportunity focuses on sustaining momentum on impactful digital opportunities programming and engaging new partners. This funding opportunity will support programs, projects and skill development that helps organizations and communities:

- Gain access to resources and tools that reduce the "digital divide"
- Distribute devices and other technology for using the internet
- Offer digital skills training and technical support that helps people connect to resources for their day-to-day needs (health, education, employment, housing, etc.)
- Develop supportive digital applications and content that expands access to housing resources, education, economic opportunity and health & wellness
- Increase access to affordable broadband

Grant Details

Grant Pathway 1: Digital Navigation (By Invitation Only)

Dogwood will offer one-year program grants of \$20,000 to support organizations integrating digital navigation into their existing programs and missions. Grantees will participate in the WNC Digital Navigator Network with learning events and training designed to equip staff with practical strategies to help clients overcome barriers to meaningful internet access and use. Grant funding may be used to support staff time to participate in training and network events; purchase equipment; and pilot or test new programs and strategies that advance digital access and use. This application pathway is by invitation only.

Grant Pathway 2: Expanding Digital Opportunities (2-Stage Application)

Program grants ranging from \$20,000 to \$500,000 (minimum of \$20,000 per year; maximum of \$250,000 per year) for 1-2 years will support projects and programs that sustain or expand digital opportunities in Western North Carolina. Grantees will participate in the WNC Digital Navigator Network, which includes events and training designed to equip organizations with practical strategies to help clients overcome barriers to internet access and meaningful use. Due to anticipated demand, this pathway will utilize a two-stage application process. Organizations will first submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). A subset of applicants will then be invited to submit a full application.

Who Should Apply:

- Organizations based in WNC that are already working to expand digital opportunities

- Organizations based in WNC that wish to pilot or test approaches for integrating digital opportunities into their existing work or organization.
- Organizations not based in WNC. As part of their application, these organizations must:
 - 1) demonstrate expertise in working to expand digital opportunities.
 - 2) demonstrate existing relationships or partnerships with organizations or communities in Western North Carolina and
 - 3) Propose evidence-backed approaches which fill demonstrated gaps in WNC's digital opportunities ecosystem.

This funding opportunity does not seek to support organizations outside Western North Carolina who have no existing relationships, partnerships or connections to organizations or communities in the region.

Eligibility:

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charities serving the Qualla Boundary and/or the 18 counties of Western North Carolina; fiscally sponsored organizations; government, quasi and non-governmental organizations; faith-based organizations; or K-12 schools, colleges and universities. Please refer to [our FAQs for a comprehensive list of the 18 qualifying counties](#).

Both new grant seeking organizations and current Digital Opportunities Initiative grantees are encouraged to apply.

Eligible organizations should have an annual operating budget of at least \$50,000. Dogwood typically does not fund more than 25% of an organization's annual operating budget within a single year.

Who is Not Eligible:

This funding opportunity is intended to support organizations seeking to support programs, projects, and skill development to sustain momentum on impactful digital opportunities programming.

Organizations that do not have an established presence in or ongoing work serving the Qualla Boundary or the 18 counties of Western North Carolina are not eligible.

Individuals and for-profit businesses are not eligible.

Religious organizations without 501(c)(3) determination or individuals.

Application Process

Grant Pathway 1: This application pathway is by invitation only.

Grant Pathway 2: This grant opportunity will proceed in two stages. In Stage 1, interested applicants should submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). Dogwood Health Trust will review submitted LOIs and determine which applicants will move forward to Stage 2 to complete a full application. Stage 2 applicants will complete a full application in early summer, which may include an additional formal application, site visits, and conversations to better understand the proposed project. Final award decisions will be made after review of the full applications.

LOIs are accepted from April 20 to May 18, 2026. All LOIs must be submitted through the Dogwood Health Trust website at dht.org/grantmaking.

Organizations may not receive funding through both pathways for the same scope of work. However, an organization may submit an LOI for Pathway 2 and may also be considered for Pathway 1 if invited and aligned with that pathway's purpose (as long as the work is distinct).

Criteria and Review Factors:

We support organizations whose work aligns with our [Purpose, Values and Guiding Principles](#) and [Commitment to Equity](#).

We are interested in organizations whose work, approach and presence in the region reflect a strong fit with Dogwood's long-term vision. We also consider the broader context, including community needs, the organization's role within the local ecosystem, and what we have already committed to in the region.

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following factors:

Clear purpose for strengthening organizational capacity

Applicants should clearly identify the area of organizational capacity they want to strengthen and explain why it matters for their effectiveness. Proposals should describe a focused effort to improve internal practices, leadership, governance, planning or operational systems that support the organization's mission.

Connection to mission and community impact

Organizations should demonstrate how strengthening their internal capacity will help them carry out their mission and core work more effectively and support work related to affordable housing, education, economic opportunity or health & wellness in Western North Carolina.

Community-based leadership and relationships

We are especially interested in organizations that are rooted in and accountable to the communities they serve. Strong applicants demonstrate a clear understanding of who they serve and maintain meaningful relationships with community members, partners or stakeholders.

Intentional progress and readiness to learn

Applicants should demonstrate readiness to undertake the proposed organizational strengthening effort and a clear understanding of what they hope to improve or change through the process. Strong proposals show a willingness to learn, reflect and strengthen organizational practices over time.

Contribution to regional wellbeing

We are interested in organizations that demonstrate how their work contributes to a Western North Carolina where people and communities can live, learn, earn and thrive with dignity and opportunity. Strong applicants show a meaningful connection between their mission, the communities they serve, and broader efforts to improve wellbeing in the region.

Established presence in Western North Carolina

Organizations should demonstrate an established presence and ongoing work serving the 18-county region of Western North Carolina and/or the Qualla Boundary. Organizations headquartered outside the region may apply if they have a sustained presence and track record of work in the region.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The following questions make up the Digital Opportunities grant application. The application questions are included here as a preview. All applications must be submitted through Dogwood Health Trust's website at dht.org/grantmaking.

Grant Pathway 1: Digital Navigation (*by invitation only*)

1. Tell us about the key aspects of your organization's work and how this project contributes to your organization's mission. In your response, please share how your work is helping to create a region where every generation can live, learn, earn and thrive, with dignity and opportunity for all.
2. Describe the purpose of your request. *Please address the following:*

Program Details: The details of the project, including the key activities of this work.

Mission Alignment: How this project fits within your organization's mission and priorities.

Target Population: Who this project aims to serve.

3. Please describe how you will know that your program or project has led to the overall results you want to see. Include three to five specific indicators of success you will use to understand whether this program or project is successful? (e.g., participation metrics, measurable quality improvements, or numerical measures). We encourage you to focus on the most important indicators, rather than listing every metric you track.

Grant Pathway 2: Expanding Digital Opportunities (*Letter of Intent*)

1. Tell us about the key aspects of your organization's work and how this project contributes to your organization's mission. In your response, please share how your work is helping to create a region where every generation can live, learn, earn and thrive, with dignity and opportunity for all.
2. Describe the purpose of your request. *Please address the following:*

Program Details: The details of the project, including the key activities of this work.

Mission Alignment: How this project fits within your organization's mission and priorities.

Target Population: Who this project aims to serve.
3. Please describe how you will know that your program or project has led to the overall results you want to see. Include three to five specific indicators of success you will use to understand whether this program or project is successful? (e.g., participation metrics, measurable quality improvements, or numerical measures). We encourage you to focus on the most important indicators, rather than listing every metric you track.
4. Please describe the opportunity in your community, how this project addresses that opportunity and how this project fits within the local and regional context. How will you know the community you serve is better off as a result of this work?
5. Please provide a brief narrative explaining the primary expenses of the project. If possible, describe current and anticipated sources of funding (committed or pending) that will support this work beyond this request.