HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

Office of Budget Management 1001 Preston; Suite 500 Houston, TX 77002 713-274-1135

Grants Coordination Section – Conveyance Form

Application [X] Award [ ]

Department Name / Number	DUNs	Grant Title
County Public Libray - 285	Not Applicable	Texas Digital Navigators '22

Funding Source: Texas State Library and Archives Commission: CFDA#	**Grant Agency:** Texas State Library and Archives Commission
Program Year: 1 st	**Program Ending:**
Grant Begin Date: 12/01/2021	**Grant End Date:** 11/30/2022
Grant Org. Key:	**If applicable, Prior Year Org. Key:** N/A

Grant Description:

Funded by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 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 within their community.

	Total Budget	Grant Funded	County Funded
Salary & Benefits	$291,200.00	$291,200.00	$0.00
Non-Labor	$8,800.00	$8,800.00	$0.00
Sub Tot. Incremental Cost	$300,000.00	$300,000.00	$0.00
Indirect Cost	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00*
TOTALS	$300,000.00	$300,000.00	$0.00

* under development

Full Time Equivalent Positions [4.00]

% of Positions Paid by Grant [100.00 %]

Date Guidelines are Available [ ]

Grant Submittal Deadline Date [10/01/2021]

Grant Discussion:

If awarded, this would be the first year for this project under this grant program. Grant funds would be used to employ four digital navigators, one for each Harris County Precinct, to highlight, assist, and communicate with marginalized residents within the County about resources available for their specific needs. Navigators would assist individual residents with device configuration, troubleshooting, online assistance with state forms related to benefits and other services, and serve as a resource for ideas navigators encounter while out in the community. The enclosed budget will cover navigator salaries, laptops, wifi hotspots, marketing materials, training, and needed supplies. There is no match requirement.

County Funded Cost Projection

Year	Required	Discretionary
2022	-	-
2023	-	-
2024	-	-
2025	-	-
2026	-	-

Completed by : *Michael Mattingly*   Mattingly, Mike   Date : 10/1/21

Reviewed by: _(signature)_   Date : 10/5/21

County Auditor's Form 1290
Harris County. Texas (02/03)

GCS285-6925

ORDER

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF HARRIS

On this, the 12th day of October, 2021, the Commissioners' Court of Harris County, Texas, sitting as the governing body of Harris County, upon motion of Commissioner _____, seconded by Commissioner _____, duly put and carried,

IT IS ORDERED that County Judge Lina Hidalgo or her designee be hereby authorized to approve, and on behalf of Harris County, Texas, to apply for, the following grant from Texas State Library and Archives Commission:

Texas Digital Navigators '22 – Public Library

Grant Funds: $300,000

Grant Period: 12/1/21 – 11/30/22

Actual Application Link Accessible at:

https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/ldn/GRANTS/FY22%20DigiNav%20Applicati
on%20-%20FILLABLE.pdf

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.

Information to be filled out by ADM:

Name of Library

Project Manager

Phone/Email

Name of Legal Entity.

DUNS#

Grant Proposal:

1. Needs Assessment (50 points): 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. (Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.)

Harris County Public Library (HCPL) began serving the public in 1921. What started as a collection of libraries with locations at homes, stores, and post offices eventually grew into a system of 26 branch buildings, 2 technology service centers, and 2 partner locations offering collection/circulation services. HCPL operates branches in unincorporated parts of Harris County and in several cities which do not have their own library systems. Harris County Public Library serves a community of 4.7 million residents.

A quick look at the most recent census profile for our community reveals the following data:

	County	Texas
Educational attainment: ≥25 years at least graduated HS	81.4%	83.7%
... less than high school diploma	18.6%	16.3%
... high school diploma or equivalency	23.4%	25.0%
... some college, no degree	19.8%	21.6%
... Associate's degree	6.7%	7.2%
... Bachelor's degree	20.1%	19.5%
... Graduate or Professional degree	11.4%	10.4%
People living in poverty and participation in government programs	15.7%	14.7%
... Children <18 years below poverty	23.4%	20.9%
... Over 65 years below poverty	11.3%	10.6%
... Households receiving SNAP assistance	12.6%	11.8%
Types of housing		
... single family houses	61.3%	67.7%

... apartments in multi-unit structures	36.0%	25.0%
... mobile homes	2.6%	7.1%
... boat, RV, van, etc.	0.1%	0.2%
Language other than English spoken at home	44.4%	35.5%
... Spanish	35.0%	29.3%
... Other Indo-European languages	3.1%	2.2%
... Asian and Pacific Islander languages	4.6%	3.0%
Misc. data helpful during COVID-19		
... Over 65 *(tip: to find total add up percentages by sex for 65+)*	20.4%	24.3%
... Over 65 and living with a disability	34.1%	37.3%
... Living alone	26.1%	25.1%

Harris County is the third-largest county in the United States and one of the most diverse, with more than 100 languages spoken throughout our community. The total size of the county, in square miles, is 1,703 miles. Harris County is also a county of need, as recent census figures indicate that 15% of the total population of Harris County is in poverty. Our community is behind in several key metrics, including educational attainment, people living in poverty, and single-family homeownership. Spanish is the second most popular language spoken in our community and is also a demographic that the library struggles to serve. Due to the county's size, providing library services equitably can be a challenge. Notably, access to some form of transportation (public or personal) is a requirement to move around adequately. Luckily, the library has a long history of going out into the community and providing service wherever the need is greatest.

With assistance from the Texas State Library and Archives digital navigator grant program, the Harris County Library could hire four navigators, one for each commissioner's precinct, to begin the work of highlighting, assisting, and communicating to the residents of those precincts that there are resources available for their needs. Navigators would work with community partners in their respective precincts to further enhance their impact all the while being supported by the Harris County Library System. Community partners would also be a source for identifying marginalized community groups within a respective precinct.

Navigators would help individual customers with device configuration, troubleshooting, online assistance with state forms related to benefits and other services, and serve as a sounding board for other ideas or issues that the navigators encounter while out in the community. Feedback generated from the public would be used to help shape the Digital Navigator program and facilitate the Harris County Library's commitment to providing equitable access to services to all residents.

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 one. Describe why this project is a good fit for your community. Describe who you might partner with to implement your project. Describe specific populations(s) you would assist with your project. (Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.)

The purpose of this grant application is to address the very real need for assistance with digital resource access in underserved areas of the county. By identifying the numerous pockets of underserved areas in the community, targeted outreach can be done to address access to services that are available to them.

By employing trained digital navigators, the hope is that the library system can do its part in providing access, along with knowledgeable staff to assist marginalized groups in the community attain benefits and services that would otherwise not be provided to them. The factors are many, access to technology, both equipment, and connectivity are huge challenges for many of the residents in this community. By marshaling both partners and the library systems considerable resources, it is believed we can challenge this persistent problem of access. Sending staff to where they are most desperately needed is one way the library can tackle this problem.

Computer and Internet Usage for our area is a bright spot for our county. Harris County Residents are slightly to the right of state averages on device ownership and internet access at home.

	County	Texas
Households with one or more types of computing devices	91.6%	91.0%
...with a desktop or laptop	76.2%	75.4%
...with a smartphone	84.4%	83.4%
...with a tablet or portable wireless computer	59.7%	59.4%
...with other	3.5%	3.9%
...with no computer	N/A	N/A
Households with a broadband internet subscription	83.6%	81.9%
...cellular data plan	70.7%	67.7%
...broadband such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL	67.6%	64.4%
...satellite	6.9%	8.2%
...dial-up alone	0.2%	0.2%

...other service alone	0.1%	0.2%

Some of the infrastructure is there, but spreading awareness is always a challenge. There are a lot of factors competing for an individual's time and that is where having advocates and allies in the form of community partners can be extremely helpful from a messaging and marketing perspective.

The program will focus on identifying and assisting the underserved residents of Harris County. This population includes veterans, economically disadvantaged, recently unemployed, students, minority communities and the elderly.

Harris County Public Library works with numerous partners in the county. These partners include Workforce Solutions, local school districts, Project GRAD, Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation, and the community college systems in the area. Partnerships are a remarkably effective way to increase the library's reach and success when offering new services and initiatives to our community. Harris County Library System is no stranger to partnerships and actively seeks out willing collaboration both inside and outside of the county.

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. (Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.

Harris County Public Library operates 26 libraries throughout the county. The library is a part of a much larger entity, Harris County itself, which has several agencies within that could be a source of support for the long-term success of this grant funded initiative. If the library can demonstrate value to the Commissioners Court and County Judge, and show that the program addressed issues of access and equity in underserved parts of the county, then it is possible it could be a funded initiative at the county level.

Our partners within the community could also be a source of support as well. The library system has successfully partnered with outside agencies on past programs to much success. An example includes our mobile literacy outreach efforts in partnership with the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation. Another example includes our ongoing partnership with Project Grad to provide programs and services throughout the community.

The Harris County Public Library is committed to providing innovative services in a continually changing landscapes. Digital literacy and access are priorities for the library and is consistent with our mission to provide services to all residents of Harris County to the best of our ability. The key to making this project sustainable will be in getting firm commitments from a partner agency to provide funding support at the conclusion of the grant period. The library intends on identifying an ally among our partners to help ensure the sustainability of this desperately needed service.

Ultimately, the Digital Navigators would create and host training for county library staff, so that the service can be duplicated at the local level. That way, there's a sustainable alternative to continue the work of the digital navigator program in the community for the foreseeable future.

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 Navigator project. Describe why they are a good fit for this project. (Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.)

The positions would be grant funded. The library would utilize a contracted staffing agency to help with candidate selection. The ideal candidate would have the TSLAC specified components:

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.

Additionally, the employee(s) who would also align with Harris County Library Star Values. Those values are:

- Creativity and Innovation,
- Open Communication,
- Integrity,
- Fun.

The candidate would need to be enthusiastic, open minded, flexible, and able to work independently and part of a team when required. Bilingual (Spanish) is also preferred. A functioning vehicle would also be a requirement. Digital Navigators would be expected to train Harris County Library Staff in addition to assisting the public. Training should focus on digital inclusion and equity issues that staff are likely to encounter in their libraries and in the community.

5. Budget: Please indicate what items and/or services the library will purchase. Provide justification for purchases and provide relevant documentation verifying stated costs. If exact quantity and/or cost information is unavailable, please provide an estimate. (Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.)

Harris County Public Library is asking for grant assistance in the amount of $300,000.00

The anticipated use of the awarded grant funds would breakdown along the following cost lines described below:

Description	Quantity	Amount
Digital Navigator Salaries	4	$ 291,200.00
Laptops	4	$ 3200.00
Hotspots	4	$ 1440.00

Marketing Materials	Varies	$ 1600.00
Training Resources	Varies	$ 1500.00
Miscellaneous supplies	Varies	$ 1060.00
	Total	$300,000.00

Much of the grant would be used to pay the salary of the Digital Navigators. Harris County Library system would contract with an authorized staffing agency to identify and select suitable candidates. The staffing agency would make sure that qualified candidates would be selected for interview with Senior Administrative Staff with the library system. Equipment needs would be handled by the Technology Team at Harris County Library. Continued field support would be provided by Branch Administrative Services and individual Harris County Library Location. Ongoing marketing support would be in conjunction with our Programming, Partership, and Outreach Team and individual Harris County Library locations, broken down by county precinct lines.

CERTIFICATION: I certify, to the best of my ability, that the statements made in this application are true, that the information provided is correct, and that I am authorized to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organization. (To Be Done at ADM)

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Certification for Federally Funded Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Competitive Grants (September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2022) (To Be Done at ADM)