

Digital Navigators / Digital Literacy Proponent Q&A

Category	Question	Answer
NOFA #3 (DN)	<p>Established Presence Requirement: The NOFA specifies that Regional Digital Hubs should be organizations with an established presence in the region, with access to locations where people gather for digital support and literacy programs. If our organization has provided virtual training in the region or partnered with a local organization for in-person training (though the location provided by the partner was specific to a previous project and is not available for this program), would this arrangement satisfy the established presence requirement? Would a formal commitment from a new partner be required before applying, or can the partner be identified once the program begins? Additionally, must Digital Navigator services provided by Regional Digital Hubs take place in pre-established community anchor institutions (e.g., in the region)?g., libraries, community centers, MICs), or can other locations be used?</p>	<p>The goal of the Regional Digital Hubs project in the Digital Navigator NOFA is to ensure digital equity services and resources are easily accessible by communities (both digitally and in person) in each of the Smart Island Zones. Thus, while organizations with previous virtual trainings or in-person partnerships will be considered, priority will be given to organizations that have a current physical presence or formalized partnership in the Smart Island Zone. If formal commitments or existing partnerships are not in place by the time of submission, please provide information regarding the partners and the path to finalize the formal commitment to ensure locations and staffing coverage.</p> <p>The selected subgrantee will work with PRBP to ensure Digital Navigator provides coverage of regional Community Anchor Institutions and Multipurpose Training Centers and Internet Community Centers, but other locations can also be used (and are encouraged if accessible locations to communities) to host Digital Navigators services.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	<p>Use of Funds and Allocation for Targeted Population Specialists: Will the use of funds for Targeted Population Specialists follow the same guidelines as those for Digital Navigators? Furthermore, how many Targeted Population</p>	<p>Yes, subgrantees selected for the Targeted Population Specialists project must follow the same allowable use of funds as the Regional Digital Hubs project defined in the NOFA. PRBP reserves the right to award multiple subgrantees for the Targeted Population Specialists,</p>



	<p>Specialists will be allocated per Smart Island Zone?</p>	<p>depending on the quality and volume of applications received.</p> <p>PRBP does not have a minimum or maximum Target Population Specialist per Smart Island Zone, but will evaluate based on quality and volume of proposals. While this project is focused on specific populations across the island, please include information about the targeted locations as requested in the Appendix.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	<p>Target Populations - Students/Children: For Target Populations such as students or children, could you please confirm if there is a minimum age for eligibility?</p>	<p>While there is no minimum requirement, Target Population Specialists that focus on students in grades K-12 will be prioritized.</p>
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	<p>Curriculum for Targeted Population Specialists: Are Targeted Population Specialists expected to design their own unique curriculum tailored to their specific population needs, while the Regional Digital Hubs use the Digital Literacy Program Coordinator curriculum?</p> <p>Additionally, could the Targeted Population Specialists be considered as tutors or mentors within the Digital Navigators programs if we are considering applying to both grant types?</p>	<p>Targeted Population Specialists are expected to have experience and capabilities to deliver digital equity resources to the target population. They will be trained on the overall Digital Literacy Program Coordinator curriculum, and can supplement this curriculum with any of their own unique resources that have been successful with the target population. Yes, tutors or mentors from the Targeted Population Specialist project can receive the same Digital Navigator training, and subgrantees are eligible to apply to both NOFA projects. Please ensure personnel costs are clearly outlined in the NOFA appendix.</p>
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	<p>How long is the application, interview and final decision process for each project/fund likely to take?</p>	<p>For NOFAs 2 and 3, the application will be open until the deadline of November 10. The estimated date for announcing the winners will be late 2024/early 2025. These dates are subject to change at the discretion of</p>



		the PRBP. All dates and deadlines are listed in section 9 of the NOFA.
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	I am not an organization that works in broadband, but I do have prior experience providing support and services to the community in education and intervention across the island. Would I qualify for this competition?	Yes, you would qualify. While we value organizations with direct experience in broadband and digital equity topics, these NOFAs are also open to organizations that have broader training programs, connections and initiatives with direct impact on defined communities and populations, etc.
NOFA #3 (DN)	<p>Are the Multiservice Internet Centers (MIC) already established or are they part of the ones to be included? If they are already created, do they have basic equipment to train a group of people?</p> <p>Is it the proponent's responsibility to remodel them?</p>	<p>The PRBP's MIC program (which has specific funds, not related to this NOFA) is still in the planning and design stage. For example, we are currently analyzing more than 200 centers on the island, and the current plan considers both existing centers and the creation of potential new centers depending on the condition. It is estimated that MICs will be available by 2026. We will have Multipurpose Training Centers and Internet Community Centers.</p> <p>For NOFA 3: it will not be the responsibility of the proponents to remodel or equip them. The importance of these MICs for the Digital Navigators lies in the fact that, once they are created, it is expected that they can be integrated into the coverage plan and used for programs that will be provided by the Digital Navigators (as well as other centers and institutions in the regions).</p>
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	Are the Digital Navigators selected by the organization in NOFA 3 to be trained by NOFA 2, or does NOFA 2 hire them and provide a list of resources for NOFA 3 to choose from? To clarify, when applying to both programs, for	Digital Navigators (DN) are assigned and/or hired directly by the organizations that are selected in NOFA 3. The organization(s) selected in NOFA 2 for Digital Literacy (DL) are responsible for defining the standardized curriculum, providing



	<p>training and Digital Navigators, should it be done through NOFA 2, or do we need to apply to both NOFA 2 and 3?</p>	<p>the training to those Digital Navigators, and coordinating the program. This ensures that the training is uniform and levels the experience and type of offering in the different regions.</p> <p>Yes, to qualify for both Digital Literacy and Digital Navigators, you are required to submit proposals for both NOFAs separately.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	<p>Are hybrid strategies valid for HUBs? I mean we have spaces in the region, but it can be combined with some other strategies like mobile units? Or does the proponent only submit a proposal to install the HUB?</p>	<p>Yes, hybrid strategies are valid. While priority will be given to physical locations, as in-person access is expected to be beneficial for communities, it is possible to combine fixed spaces with mobile approaches.</p> <p>Organizations selected as Regional Digital Hubs should function as the key contact point and administrator of digital equity programs for the Smart Island Zone. In addition to having a physical presence in the region, the HUB should offer digital literacy programs and support through accessible locations where people already gather. It will also be responsible for hiring or appointing and managing Digital Navigators, ensuring coverage in key community institutions such as libraries Multipurpose Training Centers and Internet Community Centers of the Smart Island Zone.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	<p>Would the HUB be a space with computers to provide training?</p>	<p>The organizations selected as Regional Digital Hubs should function as the key contact point and administrator of digital equity programs for the Smart Island Zone. In addition to having a physical presence in the region, the HUB</p>



		<p>should offer digital literacy programs and support through accessible locations where people already gather. It will also be responsible for hiring or appointing and managing Digital Navigators, ensuring coverage in key community institutions such as libraries Multipurpose Training Centers and Internet Community Centers of the Smart Island Zone. Regarding the dedicated physical locations: we are open to considering proposals concerning the best designs for these venues and hybrid models that offer Digital Navigator services to the community.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	<p>Do we already have the space available or can we open new spaces and include the cost of the space in the budget?</p>	<p>We recognize that some organizations already have physical space in the communities, which should help with efficiency and sustainability of funds. However, if you do not have space available, you may include the costs in your proposal and we will consider it.</p>
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	<p>What are the maximum funds available for this NOFA?</p>	<p>We have not set a maximum number of funds available for this program. What we have included as part of this is the total number of Digital Navigators we would like to be contracted or assigned per region or per Smart Island Zone.</p>
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	<p>Will the funds be granted in advance?</p>	<p>To help establish operations at the start of the program, the PRBP may agree to make an initial advance payment of up to 10% of the total project cost.</p>
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	<p>Is the allocation of the funds for five years?</p>	<p>Yes, this is the current timeframe for the program. However, sustainability is incredibly important, so we are interested in evaluating your plans for continuity beyond the current timeframe.</p>



NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	Will the remaining payments be based on deliverables or through reimbursement?	<p>As mentioned above, to help establish operations at the beginning of the program, the PRBP may agree to make an initial advance payment of up to 10% of the total project cost.</p> <p>For the rest of the funds, we are evaluating based on the needs and objectives of the proposals. Payments may be based on deliverables and/or through reimbursement.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	The estimated funds per HUB range from \$100K to \$500K. Would this be for 5 years?	As outlined in the NOFA, the total estimated funds for the Regional Digital Hubs project range from \$1 to \$2 million over the 5 years for each Smart Island Zone, and for the Targeted Population Specialists, the estimate is between \$100,000 and \$500,000 total over the five-year timeframe.
NOFA #2 (DL)	Does the curriculum need to be available in both languages?	Yes, it is preferable that the digital literacy curriculum and relevant materials be available in both Spanish and English. It will be important that training sessions for Digital Navigators to be conducted in Spanish.
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	Does the budget include the hiring of employees?	Yes, employment costs are included in the allowable use of funds. The complete list of permitted uses of funds can be found in Section 3 of the NOFA.
NOFA #2 (DL)	What is the timeline for creating the curriculum? Can we develop it in stages by topic over the course of the five-year timeframe?	<p>For the PRBP it is important that the curriculum is developed as soon as possible, as we hope to launch the programs efficiently. However, this depends on your proposals.</p> <p>If you plan to do it in stages, include your rationale and plan for doing so. If you choose a phased approach, we suggest reviewing the NOFA to ensure that fundamental topics, such</p>



		as basic skills, online privacy, and security, are included.
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	Should the proposal be submitted in English or Spanish?	It is preferred that information and correspondence be in English for our review and to help comply with federal requirements associated with the NOFA. However, as mentioned in the NOFA, please contact the program at FAQ@smartisland.pr.gov for exceptions and to make the proposal in Spanish.
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	NOFA 2 will put pressure on the execution of NOFA 3 in terms of program schedule (contract).	In general, we understand that the connectivity and digital equity challenges we face are present at this time, so it is very important to launch all these programs quickly and efficiently to provide better service and support to the population. As you mentioned, NOFA 2 and NOFA 3 are connected and will require efficient execution with coordination of the selected organizations.
NOFA #3 (DN)	Is there a limit to the number of Digital Navigators that can be in each zone?	There is no limit to how many Digital Navigators can be assigned per zone or municipality. We also do not have a limit on the second project, which is the intervention for specific populations. However, we are asking that when you submit your proposals, please indicate which zones you can cover or plan to cover. This helps us ensure that there is coverage across the entire island level.
NOFA #3 (DN)	What is the difference between a Smart Island Zone and the HUBs?	<p>The Smart Island Zones are ten pre-identified zones in Puerto Rico. A map outlining the zones can be found within the NOFA.</p> <p>The organizations selected as Regional Digital Hubs should function as the key contact point and administrator of digital equity programs for the Smart Island Zone.</p>



		<p>In addition to having a physical presence in the region, the HUB should offer digital literacy programs and support through accessible locations where people already gather. It will also be responsible for hiring or appointing and managing Digital Navigators, ensuring coverage in key community institutions such as libraries Multipurpose Training Centers and Internet Community Centers of the Smart Island Zone.</p> <p>As mentioned above, we are open to considering different strategies where the vision is to defines locations/spaces where community members can access these services.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	Will the Digital Navigators being trained have access to computers and connectivity? In the Hubs? In personal devices?	<p>Yes, the Digital Navigators will receive personal devices for free as part of the Affordable Devices NOFA.</p> <p>It will be up to your organization, as the proponent, to determine what type of services and connectivity will be offered in the dedicated physical spaces. We understand that connectivity is an essential part for Digital Navigators to provide efficient services in the dedicated physical spaces.</p>
NOFA #3 (DN)	For each HUB, are you expecting to offer between \$1M and \$2M, and between \$100k and \$500k for its operation?	As outlined in the NOFA, the Regional Digital Hubs project is estimated to receive between \$1 and \$2 million total over the five-year timeframe for each Smart Island Zone, and for the Targeted Population Specialists, the estimate is between \$100k and \$500k total over the five-year timeframe.
NOFA #2 & #3	What is the page limit for the full proposal, if any?	Please limit your proposals to a maximum of 30 pages. For NOFA 3, please ensure you respond to all



(DN & DL)		questions in Appendix 1. If you are applying to both projects, please include responses focused on both projects for each question.
NOFA #3 (DN)	Can you elaborate on the responsibilities and tasks to be carried out in the Smart Island Zones?	<p>Within each Smart Island Zone, organizations selected for the Regional Digital Hubs project are responsible for: a) collaborating with community organizations to facilitate the implementation of digital equity initiatives; b) ensuring coverage of the Multipurpose Training Centers and Internet Community Centers in all municipalities and supporting organizations and populations with resources and technology; c) hiring at least 5-8 Digital Navigators per Zone to organize events and workshops, tailoring the program according to regional and demographic needs; and</p> <p>We expect this to create reliable, dedicated physical centers in the communities where the population can access services, employment and education</p>
NOFA #2 & #3 (DN & DL)	<p>How do we know if we comply with this requirement? What evidence should we present?</p> <p>"Proponents shall be companies properly accredited to provide services in the broadband value chain in Puerto Rico at the time of the submission of their Proposals and comply with all applicable Puerto Rico or U.S. laws and/or requirements."</p>	<p>Proponents must be companies properly accredited to provide services in Puerto Rico and/or the United States. As an applicant, you do not need to provide the documentation at the time of your NOFA submission. Detailed documentation required will be provided after subgrantees are selected. For future reference and need for contracting, proof of accreditation may include certifications issued by relevant Puerto Rican or U.S. authorities (e.g., Company Social Security Number, Registry of Professional Services Providers of the General Services</p>

		<p>Administration - (Registro Único de Proveedores [RUP]), professional or industry-specific licenses, and any other documentation demonstrating compliance with applicable local, state, or federal regulatory requirements.</p>
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Figure 1: PRBP Smart Island Zones