

Good Things Foundation and Guide Dogs Pilot Project:

Bridging the digital divide for people with low vision¹

Grant Guidelines

About the Pilot Project

The challenge - While nearly 1 in 4 Australians are digitally excluded and less than 40% feel confident that they can keep up with technology, the situation for people with disability is often more challenging.

The Human Rights Commission describes digital exclusion for people with disability being due to multiple interlinking factors: lack of internet access, the high cost of assistive technology, digital ability, and socio-economic factors. Research has shown that People with disabilities use digital and social media less and are more likely to experience online safety issues such as cyber-bullying, harassment, image-based abuse and technology facilitated abuse.

For people with vision loss or low vision, there is an additional barrier to digital access beyond a lack of essential digital skills and an affordable internet connection – the technical accessibility of websites and apps. Many may also not know of the technology available to help them be independent and access the internet and information on their own terms.

This can create barriers for people in being able to communicate and equally access information online. Additionally, tailored supports and resources are needed for some People with disabilities participate equally in the digital world.

Our solution - Good Things Foundation Australia together with Guide Dogs are piloting this new project to build the digital literacy and skills of people with low vision. This will be achieved by building capacity and capability among community organisations and Guide Dogs staff and volunteers to deliver tailored digital literacy support.

¹ When clear vision cannot be obtained by using glasses, contact lenses, or other standard treatments like medicine or surgery. Low vision can make everyday activities such as reading, seeing the television or recognising people's faces harder. It typically includes blurry or cloudy vision, decreased side vision, difficulty in seeing clearly at night, changes in colour or the eye's inability to properly adjust to light, contrast or glare. People with Low vision often need adaptations in lighting and/or enlarged print to read something. Some common causes include eye conditions such as Age-related macular degeneration, Cataracts, Diabetic eye conditions and Glaucoma.

We are working with Guide Dogs to identify elements of Good Things Foundation's existing digital literacy programs that can be adapted/enhanced to support people who have low vision. Together we will develop a suite of updated digital mentor materials to support the delivery of the project, including session plans, tip sheets and links to resources to help Network Partners deliver accessible digital skills support for people with low vision.

On the ground delivery – Our Be Connected Network Partners are already working on the ground with a person centred approach and are community led. We want to scale that reach and increase accessibility of our programs by embedding the above digital literary materials and training into the current service delivery model.

This pilot project will explore how best to achieve this by **targeting 5 organisations** who can apply for this grant **based on their geographic location and the overlap with Guide Dogs' client base**.

Grant details:

\$5,000 grants will be awarded to **5 Network Partners** to deliver the project from **1 November 2023 to 31st October, 2024** in:

- a. NSW:
 - i. Parramatta
 - ii. Blacktown
 - iii. Newcastle/Central Coast
 - iv. Port Macquarie
- b. ACT: Canberra

Each partner will train 20 people with low vision (anyone aged 18 years and above) during the course of the project timeframe.

Wherever possible Guide Dogs will actively refer clients to each partner to help achieve the target of 20 people supported.

Eligibility - who can apply?

Organisations who would like to apply for this grant **must**:

- Be a registered Network Partner within the Be Connected Network
- Should be **located in any of the above geographic regions** and **already delivering a digital skills training project (not necessarily funded by Good Things Foundation)** to the community in the above geographic regions
- Have no outstanding acquittals from previous grant/s awarded by Good Things Foundation.

If you are not sure if you have an overdue grant acquittal, please contact Good Things Foundation to check.

If you are not yet a Network Partner, you can join using the [Joining the Network page](#) on our website. You can apply for this grant as soon as you submit the Join the Network form. Newly joined Network Partners will receive a phone call from one of our team members to welcome you to the Network and help process your application. There is no need to hold off on sending your grant application before this phone call.

Grant requirements:

Each Network partner receiving a grant will be required to:

- Ensure one or more Digital Mentors attend the online information/training session on the 10th of October 2023.
- Ensure that 20 people with low vision (**aged 18 years and above**) receive digital skills training either in one to one or group sessions. Participants could be referred by Guide Dogs or they could be people living in the community who identify as having low vision and/or would benefit from learning digital skills in a more accessible way.
- Keep a record of how many people with low vision have been supported during the grant period
- Participate in four group feedback sessions with their Staff/Volunteers/Digital Mentors involved in delivery in the months of Nov 2023, Mar 2024, Jun 2024, and Nov 2024.
- Provide 2 impact stories/case studies by the end of Nov 2024 along with their final report and financial acquittal.

Support you'll receive from us:

As a funded Network Partner you will receive the following support from Good Things Foundation and Guide Dogs:

- Ready-to-use digital skills training resources adapted to support the needs of people with low vision
- An online info session/training for Digital Mentors to learn how to support people with low vision
- Support from the Guide Dogs team to answer any specific queries related to improving the learning outcomes for people with low vision.
- Process to refer people who have severe vision loss or blindness to the Guide Dogs team for more specialised support.
- Final report template

Use of funds

You are required to clearly outline your proposed expenditure in the budget you submit with your grant application. Budgets must be realistic i.e. funding is spent on activities that can be justified as supporting your project, such as:

- Digital Mentor/staff costs
- Project management costs
- Marketing or promotional expenses
- Internet fees
- Catering
- Room hire
- Printing of resources
- Equipment hire
- Travel

Exclusions:

- Funding cannot be used for capital works (building or construction materials)

Notification and payment

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email by 22nd September 2023.

If your application is successful, the full amount of the grant, \$5,000 (+ GST if applicable), will be transferred to you from 2nd October 2023, once a contract has been accepted online and an invoice has been emailed to connect@goodthingsfoundation.org

Retention of records

All grant recipients are required to keep original receipts or other documents, which account for the expenditure of the grant, for up to five years after the grant was awarded.

Project timeline

The key dates are:

Activity	Date
Launch of application	4th September 2023
Application closing date	15th September 2023
Communication of results to all applicants	22nd September 2023
Payment date	2nd October 2023
Digital mentor resources released to funded partners to pre-read, prior to online/info training session with grant funded orgs)	3rd October 2023

Online info/training session with the Digital Mentors of grant funded partners	10th October 2023
Project start and finish date	1st November 2023 to 31st October 2024
First Feedback session with participating NP staff and Digital Mentors	End of Nov 2023
Intermittent information and feedback sessions with participating staff/volunteers/digital mentors	End Mar 23, End Jun 24, Early Nov 24

Grant terms and conditions

Please ensure you have read the grant [Terms and Conditions](#) before you commence your application.

How do I apply?

The application period is open from 4th Sept to 15th Sept, 2023. Please log on to the [Network Partner](#) site and submit your application online. You can see an example of the form below.

Application form

Step 1 - Accessing application form

Log in to the Be Connected Network website and navigate to the 'apply for a grant' page.

Please select your organisation from the drop down box - the organisation you select is the organisation you are applying for funding for. In this section you should only be able to see the organisations that are attached to your account - *Please note that you need to have your browser set to accept cookies.*

Step 2 - Application questions

Organisation Details (this section will be pre-populated)

- Organisation ID:
- Organisation Name:
- ABN:

Contact Details (this section will be pre-populated)

- First Name:

- Last Name:
- Email:

How did you hear about this funding opportunity? (dropdown box, please select from the following)

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Google search
- LinkedIn
- Good Things Foundation (e.g. newsletter)
- Other funding site (e.g. Community Grants Hub)
- Other

Delivery

- **Outline your experience in delivering similar projects or working with people in similar places, or similar cohorts**

Please include evidence of your organisation's experience/capacity to provide ongoing digital literacy support

This question has a 100 word limit

- **Please outline the project's staffing and management, including key roles and responsibilities. Include information on how volunteers will be engaged in the project if applicable**

This question has a 100 word limit

- **Please outline the marketing strategies you will use to promote your project**

This question has a 200 word limit

- **Please upload a detailed Project Plan** (you can access a [project plan template](#) here)

Please provide us with an overview of what activities you will undertake to ensure your objectives are met.

This question has a 200 word limit

Impact and Assessment

- **Please describe what outcomes you hope to achieve and how you will measure them**

This question has a 100 word limit

Financial

- **Contract ID** (this section will be pre-populated)
- **What amount are you applying for?**
- **Please detail the full costs of your project and the items you would like this grant to fund. Please also include any match or in kind funding**

This question has a 100 word limit

- **Upload the completed Budget Template** (you can access a [budget template](#) here)

This question has a 100 word limit

Remember - Once your application is complete, please click **"Submit"** which will then allow you to review your application. Please note, the details of your application form will not be available to you on your Be Connected Network record so you are strongly advised to print a copy of this page for your records. **After reviewing your application, please click "Confirm" to finalise your grant application.**

Support

Remember, you can contact our Network Team at any time if you have any questions about the application process on **(02) 9051 9292** or by emailing connect@goodthingsfoundation.org