

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE May 9, 2025

TO Honorable Chair and Members of the Workforce, Education and Equity Committee

SUBJECT **Upcoming Agenda Item from Office of Community Care and Empowerment to Accept a Grant from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for the Digital Navigator Program**

On May 28, 2025, the following Office of Community Care and Empowerment item will be considered by City Council:

File ID: 25-1590A: That the City Manager is hereby authorized to accept a subaward agreement from the FY25 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Grant Fund, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in the amount of \$50,000.00 for the period September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025, and execute the grant agreement with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and all terms, conditions, and documents required by the agreement, approved as to form by the City Attorney.

## **Background**

On September 10, 2024, the Office of Community Care & Empowerment (OCCE) was informed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that the City of Dallas has been selected to receive technical support from J-PAL North America staff and \$50,000 in funding to design a randomized evaluation to review the impact of the Digital Navigators Program operated by Dallas Innovation Alliance.

## **Main Objective:**

Design a research-based evaluation of the City's Digital Navigators Program through a randomized research framework, assessing the program's impact on Dallas residents.

## **Targeted Goals:**

- The evaluation and research design will help improve the program's impact on digital literacy and enhance economic resilience among vulnerable communities in Dallas.
- Through its Digital Navigators Program partner, the Dallas Innovation Alliance, the project will build consensus for the randomized evaluation among all program implementers, including community anchor centers, nonprofit partners, and others.
- Evaluation design will include the selection of a comparison group, the randomization design, the identification, and selection of key outcomes of interest, and the exploration of opportunities to integrate community-engaged practices into the evaluation design

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The Digital Navigators Program focuses on the four pillars of digital access: Access, Affordability, Devices, and Literacy skills for Dallas residents. This program is financed through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. In FY24, Dallas Innovation Alliance served 5,543 residents through the Digital Navigators program at their four anchor sites.

The Dallas Innovation Alliance (DIA) executes the Digital Navigators scope of work through its Connected Dallas 'Digital Ambassador' Program. This program is built on the National Digital Inclusion Alliance's (NDIA) Digital Navigator model. Connected Dallas provides a comprehensive range of digital access points to meet community members where they are—whether through phone, text, chat, online, or in person. This ensures community members are well-informed, trained, and connected to all services requiring digital connectivity.

The administration and implementation of the program align with the City's intent to close the digital divide. The program's goal is to improve the quality of life for residents by providing access to essential services, including devices, affordable internet plans, basic skills and technical support, education, job training and applications, transportation, telehealth, and other fundamental services.

The Digital Navigators Program serves within the Dallas city limits, focusing on low-income residents, defined as households earning at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact myself or Jessica Galleshaw, Director of Office of Community Care, at 214-670-5113 or [Jessica.Galleshaw@dallas.gov](mailto:Jessica.Galleshaw@dallas.gov).

Service First, Now!



M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira  
Assistant City Manager

c: Kimberly Bizar Tolbert, City Manager  
Tammy Palomino, City Attorney  
Mark Swann, City Auditor  
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary  
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge  
Dominique Artis, Chief of Public Safety  
Dev Rastogi, Assistant City Manager

Alina Ciocan, Assistant City Manager  
Donzell Gipson, Assistant City Manager  
Robin Bentley, Assistant City Manager  
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer  
Elizabeth Saab, Chief of Strategy, Engagement, and Alignment (I)  
Directors and Assistant Directors