



**Róinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil**
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment

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Digital Skills for Citizens Grant Scheme Statement of Requirements

1. Introduction

The Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (“the Department”), in line with the Government’s National Digital Strategy, is introducing a new Getting Citizens Online Programme which is focussed on encouraging and empowering citizens to participate fully in Ireland’s digital economy and society.

The Programme includes a grant scheme to fund the provision of basic digital skills training to citizens who have never used the internet with a view to removing a key barrier to digital adoption.

The Digital Skills for Citizens Grant Scheme replaces and builds on the Benefit Grant Scheme. Its overarching objective is *“To provide citizens who have never used the internet with the confidence, motivation and skills to reap the benefits of participating in today’s digital world”*.

Working in partnership with grant-aided organisations, the Department envisages that annually 25,000-30,000 citizens will be supported to move online.

2. Competitive call for proposals

Invitation to participate

The Department is inviting community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations to apply for grant assistance to address the basic digital literacy needs of citizens and actively encourage them to move online.

Grant assistance is being provided for the delivery during 2017 of digital skills training in a structured classroom setting. The Department may, subject to demand for training and the availability of adequate financial resources, decide to offer successful organisations grant assistance in respect of the period beyond 2017.

What organisations can apply for grant assistance?

Established organisations working in the community, voluntary and not-for-profit sector can apply as individual entities. Equally, organisations can collaborate and work together to submit an application form, in which case one organisation will act as the designated Lead Organisation.

The Lead Organisation is the entity which, in the event of this application being successful, will enter into a written and binding Grant Agreement with the Department, and will be recognised as the Grantee. The lead organisation will be responsible for the achievement of the agreed deliverables and adherence to the conditions of the Scheme by it and the other parties involved. In such cases, a signed letter from each of the participating organisations agreeing to the collaborative arrangement will be required.

For clarity, the term “Organisation” as it appears throughout this document will have the meaning of Organisation and Lead Organisation.

Who is a non-liner?

For the purpose of this Scheme, non-liners are defined as citizens who have not actively engaged with the internet and do not have the skills required to complete the tasks outlined in Programme A of the Training Course at Section 3.1 of the Statement of Requirements.

Who is the Scheme targeted at?

The opportunity to receive skills training is open to all non-liners. In particular, citizens within the following groups will be targeted to receive training under this call for proposals:

- Age profile 45+
- Farming communities
- Small business owners (<10 people)
- Unemployed persons
- Persons with disabilities, and
- Disadvantaged groups.

Where will training be delivered?

The Department aims to facilitate the delivery of training in numerous geographic locations dispersed across all Counties, encompassing citizens living in urban and rural areas, including all cities, towns, villages and the countryside.

Data available from the CSO at [Information society statistics-households 2015](#) provides high level information in relation to the distribution of non-liners on a regional basis.

Are organisations required to commit to train a minimum number of non-liners?

Organisations applying for grant assistance must be in a position to train a minimum of 1,000 non-liners within a 12 month period.

What supports will the Department provide to Organisations?

The Department will actively engage with other Government Departments, Local Authorities and representative bodies to promote the Scheme. It will collaborate with successful organisations in raising awareness amongst citizens of the benefits of digital inclusion. It will also make training course material available on the Department's website, along with interactive demos where possible.

How do organisations apply?

The Application Form for the Scheme is available to complete online at www.dccae.gov.ie.

Alternatively, it can be obtained by:

- I. downloading a copy from [Getting Citizens Online](#)
- II. emailing a request to: Gettingcitizenonline@dccae.gov.ie or
- III. phoning the Department's Offices at 01 678 2078.

Completed application forms, together with all relevant supporting documentation, should be emailed to Gettingcitizenonline@dccae.gov.ie or sent by post to:

Michael Spillane

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

29 Adelaide Rd

Dublin 2

D02 X285

**Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 5pm on 12th December 2016
Late Applications will not be accepted**

Training Course Specifications

3.1 Training Course Content

Training courses to be delivered under the Scheme comprise two core programmes, as outlined in the Table below. Relevant resource material and interactive demos will be made available on the Department's website, in conjunction with the training organisations.

In delivering the course content, trainers should have regard to the particular needs and preferences of the trainees in attendance, insofar as is possible.

It is expected that citizens will, following participation in the training course, be comfortable and confident to use the internet as part of their everyday lives.

Programme A – Productive Use of Digital Skills (6 Hours)	Programme B – Lifestyle Choices (4 Hours)
<p>All topics under Programme A are compulsory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Introduction to the internet➤ Internet safety & security➤ Email➤ Search engines and websites➤ Online government services➤ Conducting everyday transactions➤ Online voice and video calls➤ Use of “Apps”.	<p>Trainees should be given the opportunity to select a minimum of two topics from Programme B.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Specific government online services➤ Social Media➤ Video, TV and Radio➤ Shopping online➤ Instructional videos on YouTube➤ Online banking, including the process and security safeguards➤ Digital photography➤ Revision of one or more of the topics under Programme A.

3.2 Training Delivery Requirements

Organisations must comply with the following minimum requirements:

- a) Each trainee should receive not less than **10** hours training, in line with Programme A - **Productive Use of Digital Skills** and Programme B - **Lifestyle Choices**
- b) An internet-enabled device (i.e. tablet, laptop, computer, etc.) must be made available for use where trainees do not bring their own device to class
- c) Maximum class size should not exceed 10 persons
- d) Each class must not exceed 2 hours duration
- e) All training must be provided in a physical face-to-face environment
- f) All training must be provided free of charge to the trainee
- g) Training on or relating to gambling, betting, pornography or anything regarded as illegal or inappropriate must not be offered or facilitated
- h) Trainees should be encouraged to share at least one skill learned with a friend or colleague (details of which will be recorded as part of the online survey to be completed at end of training course).

3. Selection Process

4.1 Qualification Criteria – PASS or FAIL

Applications will either pass or fail the selection criteria outlined at paragraphs 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 below. Only applications which receive a pass in both will proceed to the award stage.

4.1.1 Organisations must have a minimum annual turnover of €100,000. Evidence of turnover for each of the previous two years, or pro-rata if more recently established, should be submitted with the application form. Such evidence may comprise either a statement from the auditor or the latest audited financial statement.

4.1.2 Organisations must demonstrate that they have satisfactorily managed a project of a similar scale within the past 5 years. Supporting documentation should include a description of previous experience of project implementation, including, but not limited to, relevant details relating to project value, time frame for delivery and key outputs.

4.2 Award Criteria – 1,000 Marks

Applications which pass the qualification stage will be assessed in accordance with the criteria and marking scheme outlined below.

4.2.1 Geographic reach and numbers trained (200 Marks)

Organisations are required to clearly specify on the application form the locations within individual Counties, viz. city, town, village, where training will be facilitated.

The minimum number of non-liners to be trained is 1,000. Applications which do not meet this requirement will not be processed. Additional marks will be awarded to organisations who train in excess of 1,000 in accordance with the following matrix:

Number of Trainees	Marks Awarded
1,001– 2,500	150
More than 2,500	200

4.2.2 Your Organisation's detailed Training Proposal (300 marks)

Organisations should outline the proposed methodology to be used to achieve the objective of the Scheme. *“To provide citizens who have never used the internet with the confidence, motivation and skills to reap the benefits of participating in today’s digital world”.*

Marks will be awarded in respect of the following elements:

- Approach to creating demand and motivating non-liners to participate in skills training (100 marks)
- Detailed training and implementation plan, including training schedule, sourcing of trainers, course material and hardware, ratio of trainer: trainee (100 marks)
- Rationale used in selecting the training locations and groups of non-liners to be trained (100 marks)

4.2.3 Cost (500 marks)

Organisations should specify the cost per trainee in their request for an all-inclusive amount of grant assistance under the Scheme.

The amount of grant assistance awarded to successful organisations will be calculated on the basis of the number of non-liners to be trained by reference to the cost per trainee identified by the organisation. (Based on previous grant-aided initiatives, it is expected that the cost per trainee would be in the range of €80-€100).

The following formula will be used to calculate the marks awarded for cost:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Marks Available} \times \frac{\text{Lowest Cost per Trainee (based on all applications received)}}{\text{Cost per Trainee (identified in the application under evaluation)}}}{}$$

4. Conditions

General

- Organisations must provide proof of their status e.g. Certificate from Revenue Commissioners showing CHY number, copy of the organisation's Constitution etc.
- Organisations must in all its communications relating to the training courses clearly acknowledge the Department's role in funding the Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme and display the Department's branding on all marketing materials.
- Funding received under the Scheme cannot be used to fund existing training programmes.
- Organisations must not seek grant aid from any state agency or other source in respect of the delivery of commitments under the Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme.
- Organisations should be aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, information provided by them, may be liable to be disclosed.
- Organisations will be required to comply with the requirements of Data Protection law and such guidance as may be issued by the Data Protection Commissioner from time to time, including but not being limited to Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003.
- All grant payments will be paid by electronic fund transfer (EFT) to the bank account of the successful organisation.
- Successful organisations will be required to supply their Tax Clearance Access Number and Tax Reference Number to facilitate online verification of their tax status.

Financial Governance

- Successful organisations (Grantee) are required to sign a Grant Agreement with the Department (Grantor) under the provisions of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Grant [Circular 13/2014 - Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds.](#)
- The Grant Agreement will, with a view to ensuring that all grants are accounted for and properly managed, specify relevant administrative, governance and financial arrangements. It will include, but is not limited to, details relating to the following:
 - Amount of grant awarded
 - Details of the organisation's training commitments viz. numbers of non-liners to be trained, training locations and delivery dates
 - Training course delivery and implementation arrangements
 - Grant payment schedule
 - Obligations relating to acknowledgement of funding from the Department and use of its branding on advertising and promotional material etc.
 - Administrative responsibilities e.g. record-keeping, provision of training schedules
 - Co-operation with the Department regarding monitoring, evaluation and audit arrangements, and
 - Procedures relating to the refund of grant assistance in cases where targets are not met.
- In the event of a Grantee not being in a position, for whatever reason, to deliver the committed training targets within the period specified (or such an extension as the Department may, at its sole discretion agree), the Grantee will be required to repay to the Department an amount to be determined by the Department which is proportionate to the underperformance.
- If Grantees are found to have submitted false or fraudulent documentation or purposefully mislead the Department in any way, funding will be withdrawn and all necessary actions to recover monies will be taken.

The Department reserves the rights, to exercise at its sole discretion, the ability to:-

- a) enter into discussions with organisations, with a view to agreeing a modified proposal in order to ensure a comprehensive dispersal of training locations nationwide
- b) vary grant amounts, if circumstances so warrant
- c) decide not to award a grant to any applicant(s)
- d) extend the terms of any Grant awarded under Digital Skills for Citizens Grant Scheme for a period of up to 6 months with a maximum of four such extensions, subject to satisfactory delivery of all training targets and availability of funding.