

January 13, 2026 Meeting - Seattle Community Technology Advisory Board

Topics covered included: Digital Equity State Legislative Update and Digital Equity Learning Network of Seattle-King County Update; 2026 Technology Matching Fund Grant Process Update (Seattle IT and Department of Neighborhoods)

This meeting was held: January 13, 2026; 6:00-7:15 p.m., via Webex and in City Hall Room 370

Attending:

Board Members: Phillip Meng, Aishah Bomani, Omari Stringer

Public: Dorene Cornwell, Rahul, Rajat Aggarwal, Zack Stark, Chris Cooper

Staff: Tara Zaremba, Jenny Crooks, Meira Jough, Jon Morrison Winters, Vinh Tang, Cass Magnuski

21 In Attendance

Phillip Meng: Hi, everybody. Good evening, and welcome to the January meeting of Seattle Community Advisory Board. I hope you've had great holidays and to the extent possible, a break. That was probably a little difficult for our employees in the City, given the Mayoral transition. Let's start with a round of introductions. I will start in the order listed online.

INTRODUCTIONS.

Phillip Meng: We have a really great agenda today with a couple of topics that have been discussed in the last few meetings. . First, we have a digital equity State legislative update and an intro-update to DELN, and then we will have a discussion of the TMF grant process from the Department of Neighborhoods. As we get started, can I get a motion from a board member to approve the minutes of the November 18 CTAB meeting

Omari Stringer: I so move.

Aishah Bomani: Second.

Phillip Meng: All in favor? Motion carries. And can we get a motion to approve the agenda for this meeting?

Omari Stringer: I will make a motion to approve the agenda.

Aishah Bomani: Second.

Phillip Meng: All in favor? Let's get started.

(NEITHER MINUTES NOR AGENDA WERE APPROVED, AS THERE WAS NO QUORUM.)

Phillip Meng: Sabrina, thank you again for joining us today. As you all might know, CTAB recently rejoined the DELN last year. Aishah has been our incredible leader, so we are looking towards an update on digital equity, State legislative work, as well as a broader update on DELN. I know that Vinh Tang has the documents up, but since he is out of the room for a moment, I can pull it up.

**DIGITAL EQUITY STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND DIGITAL EQUITY LEARNING
NETWORK OF SEATTLE, KING COUNTY, Sabrina Roach, Chair, Washington State Digital
Equity Partners Coalition**

Sabrina Roach: All right. I'm a big fan of CTAB. I've been coming to CTAB meetings since I don't know, 2007? 2008? I don't know. I didn't figure it out before I came here tonight. But, community technology is super close to my heart. I come from a public and community media background. I'm very interested in how community folks get out and learn these tools and trainings. A community of learners. So, as in my work, I worked at KUOW, and I got involved in local art shows, so that we could highlight the local arts business. And then, I worked at KDCS, community radio as their (unintelligible) . They couldn't afford an

experienced one. I was there to learn. And I go so interested in how do we pay for the media we want, how do folks access that media? The internet comes up in that question right? I'm not going to go through all of my specific jobs, right, or anything like that. But CTAB has been very supportive of the low-powered end of the movement. CTAB has historically written a letter of support for Communications Commission, and that was part of the greater Seattle area getting a handful of neighborhood radio licenses. And I can tell you all about that some other time, if you haven't heard about those. They're really great.

So, to show where I work, in 2012 I was visiting some Seattle folks , and we were talking about what we called digital inclusion at the time, and we were putting together what we call a Washington Digital Inclusion summit. We held it at South Seattle College in the really awesome banquet room there. And I remember at the time thinking that some of these folks are statewide. But are we really statewide here? No. We're King County folks. How do you do this work where there is no money to pay for the work. Sounds where organizing come into play. an intersection of what it does for grassroots organizing if you can collaborate with the state legislature. So, I do not Representative Mia Gregerson from the 33rd Legislative District in the summer of 2019, one of those low power community radio stations with a license owned by One America. a local immigrant rights statewide organizing project that got a license from the top of the library in the 33rd Legislative District and Highline College. So, we were getting to know Representative Mia Gregerson through that. And we had more of a conversation about the relationship between community development and communications infrastructure, about the interplay between cable franchise agreements, negotiations, and renewal, money that the City of Seattle pays for as part of Seattle IT's work. Right? It pays for the digital equity team and I believe, the Seattle Channel. That model of doing that and developing a body of community technology and digital equity support, and City of Seattle staff, like David Keyes, really instrumental. So we went around the country a bit, and he was very much a part of getting funding legislation passed. The fun part was meeting Patty Murray. So, I was just doing a lot of national, state, and those kinds of cross (unintelligible) if you will, but basically, by working with the (unintelligible) and learning to do grassroots organizing, and making relationships across the state with those who are invested in this work. That work now is called Digital Equity Partners Coalition. And we have a cute logo. I want you to see it.

This is just what I had on hand. The first day of the legislature, I just went around inviting legislators to co-sponsor House Bill 2365. Technically, we're calling it the opportunity bill,

or advancing digital opportunities for all. The words, 'digital equity' shows up a lot, and that's really what we are getting at.

So, I just wanted to give you a little bit of a sense of this work and how we relate to this work and how to be instrumental. There aren't a lot of entities around this state like CTAB; not a lot of City governments having advisory boards like this. Also, this digital equity work and in HB 2365, we built a grant program model after the Technology Matching Fund, with some more components about accountability and transparency guardrails for these things, as well as some things about the process where more folks could learn about what's happening on the stage while you are writing grant proposals and such.

So. those are a couple of ways that CTAB has impact on this current legislation.

Time check?

Phillip Meng: If I could jump in here, I did love the logo and this beautiful design. What are some ways in which folks in the room here, or CTAB and its subcommittees--what are some ways that people can learn more, and be supportive and just get more involved in this process?

Sabrina Roach: All right. That right there will take you to a survey. We're calling it a participation survey.. How do people want to participate in advocacy with partners this legislative session? Of course, any member of the public is welcome to organize whatever effort they want. There is this awesome public process. But this is just like if you want us to let you know when opportunities come up to support a bill, this gets you to our spreadsheet. 'this is the front door. There will be opportunities to sign in pro in support of this. It takes two or three minutes. So, that's going to be easy, hopefully. And should you want to encourage people you know to also sign in pro, folks from other committees that you might be on, any type of that support is great. Over the last few years, we've had about somewhere in the 500-800 folks signing in because a bill has the word 'equity' in its title. And we are able with our grassroots scrappyness to organize maybe 100, if not pro-signing. Right? Maybe I should just say, for a bill to get to the legislature, it absolutely starts in a committee, and then that committee votes it out of committee and you go on to the next

committee and you make your case. And you just go through a series of committees, and then the bill goes to the House floor, for example, because this bill starts in the House. And then it goes on to the next body, and then the situation and the next body. And the situation would be the Senate, where it goes through a series of committees to get out to the Senate floor. And then, the Senate votes on it, and then, it goes to the Governor's Office. And then, the Governor signs it or doesn't sign it. And that is how a bill becomes law.

So there will be opportunities to support the bill at each committee stop. You can sign in pro. You can write just a message of support for the bill. That will go into the public record. That's always great. You can sign it to testify. Two signs of testifying have been during a committee hearing. There are a number of people testifying that I coordinate. None of Sen. Gregors are testifying. Featured testimony. We work hard to coordinate with her strategic invite, and we coordinate and support. Any members of the public are welcome to sign up to testify. But there is this concept in the legislature I wondered about, called "Loving the Bill to Death." So, that's a number one priority, to get a lot of folks to testify for the bill. You really are supporting the bill by signing in pro.

So, those are a couple of pieces we didn't site there. On February 12, we will have our digital opportunity legislative day. That will be in person in Olympia, and that will be online also. So, depending on that day, through that participation survey--and I am happy to also share just the straight-ahead link to that Google form. There will be a link to indicate which legislative district your home is in or that you work in. Both are totally viable, and you could sign it to do both, and that basically will lead to you either in person, or with a little group of awesome digital equity supporters to go and talk, usually for ten or fifteen minutes with that legislator. If the legislator is busy, you will talk with a legislative assistant. And that's good, too. It's just building a relationship over time. And if that happens virtually, it will be a virtual aide with the legislation.

Phillip Meng: So, this is super helpful, right? One of the questions that I honestly ask myself, too, is what are the lengths involved in this project? Signing in pro, and just to clarify, this is done on the site of the Washington House or Senate room. So, that is an option. It's more virtual in engagement.

Sabrina Roach: Yes. It's basically a State legislative circle. and it handles both parties. There is a lot of great information on it, and each bill has a page. Often, the way I access the bill page that I'm working on, I just type into a search bar HB2365 and it takes me to the bill page. That's an easy way to get there. And on that bill page--we will be sending out directions if you sign up for the participation form to do this stuff. We will send you a section for how to find the link, to sign in prof. Because it's confusing. But what I love about the legislative process is there are so many ways to plug into it, various models of engagement, so you can do what you feel like doing and then we will only ask you for those things. This is a short session. It started yesterday and it goes through March 12. We try every year to set up an action alert list of people for text messages or email, because we will sometimes get a request that says we need phone calls to this office, because we need to request that this legislator uses one of their polls to pull it out of this committee and put it on the House floor. It's like a technical thing. I don't quite understand it all. But those moments can be really fast turnaround. But also, I love how sessiosn can be like homecoming week. I'm not a high school football person, but I understand that there are things like homecomings. And there are a lot of people who come back from someplace that they've been from. Right?

Phillip Meng: I'm not much of a high school football person either....

Sabrina Roach: Maybe like a family picnic or something. Anyway, it's a good place to touch base with folks, and then I also love learning who is into this work. I love finding ways that we can work together and maybe to being a small budget request to their city or county government process. Ad usually in those processes, you have to get working on that in the late spring or summer, or by October/November those jurisdictions are going through their budgeting processes. And again, it is bringing this kind of work to their attention, because ultimately, we are trying to weave something that through market forces doesn't get handled. And it's kind of like a social service more than it is a technology. But we want to weave this into human services, community of public health, education, while research is making sure that K-12, technical colleges and university students have access to the internet and the tools, like a laptop, instead of writing essays from a phone. It matters a lot. So, those are the kinds of things we are up to.

Phillip Meng: Not to go into too much of a tangent, but if we bring up HB 2365, tell us a little bit more. I know we have followed some legislation in this area.

Sabrina Roach: How does it work? Basically, I did not get this myself when we started working with Fred (unintelligible), it took us two years to get the state digital equity act passed in 2022. By June 2023, it was time for a (unintelligible). We've learned some things implementing, now we have to adjust and take RCW, the State laws to make some changes. So, we started a process with lots of different community folks, and folks in local government or libraries, just anybody who cared about it. What are your ideas for making this work more smoothly, better, be more accountable, be more community centered. And that resulted in a trailer bill by next session. So, that was 2024. And we also tried a revenue bill for the first time, because we are trying to figure out how to pay for this, because we keep going back to the State government funds. It's a precarious thing. You can get cut so easily. But if you don't, then you are golden over time.

Sometimes the 2024 bills are right under me, but it might have been 2013 or something like that. And then, there was the 2025 bill, which was HB 1503. And then, there is this one. So, basically in 2024, and 2025, we tried to fix the state establishing legislation. Neither of those passed for various reasons. This one, we hope will pass. We have gone through even more process, like I worked in the Governor's Office of Equity for ten months. I really wanted to understand, first hand, what were the blocks that implement in this bill. What was going on. And so I learned a lot. And I encourage folks to talk to me about that.

We also host some regional coordination sessions across the state that were virtual. So, we did eight regional ones, and we did one statewide one. Heard a lot about that from folks who don't participate in the advisory group, we put in place a group called the Digital Equity Forum. But we also got input from them because some of us were in there with them. And we paid attention to the recommendations that were published in December. But we really took in all of this feedback and poured it into our new 2365. Is that helping?

Phillip Meng: Absolutely.

Meira Jough: Sabrina, do you want to talk a little bit about the revenue stream, and then what does it actually fund? And how will that money be channeled through?

Sabrina Roach: So, the unsuccessful revenue bill, you might have heard (unintelligible). Ultimately, that's not an idea whose time is now. As I go on tour with this, I thought it was important to have a placeholder, so that the legislature knew that we were trying to figure out how to pay for it. Even if the solution to our offering wasn't going to work for people, and wasn't -- they got two hearings. When we first introduced it, it got a hearing. I don't think it got a hearing the next year. We were able to invite folks in to testify and educate them about things. I felt like it was not good to let time run out again. There is another bill which has not been filed yet. It does have a revenue part of it. And that bill has to do with public media and digital equity, but it hasn't been filed yet. I am happy to share about that.

Meira Jough:

What will this bill fund?

Sabrina Roach: This bill? Great point. Thank you for asking. I take it too literally, but what I really should say is this bill does not currently have a fiscal act. It doesn't have that because of the federal government and the state government. where the federal administration cancelled \$53 million in digital equity dollars coming to Washington State. We did all of the stuff necessary to earn that money, and it was cancelled a few months ago. We put together a letter to the Attorney General asking him to pursue that. And they have a lot of things on their plate right now. But as an example of things the partnership does, it's important to send a letter. We should take a look at this. It's \$53 million. Also, Governor Ferguson and the Legislature confirmed \$5 million, a grants program. He zeroed that out, signing off on everything during last session. So, basically, all of this money connected to digital equity work in the state has been just zeroed out. You can maybe find pieces of it, and holding it aloft for these five or six years in this grassroots effort, we blew \$100 million of state money to digital equity programs. And that is significant. I know this time, this year, it's time to fix the container. So, this bill fits in the container and everyone can feel good about putting money into the container to get granted out to programs, and the container has to get there.

The trajectory of these funds are higher. The pandemic was a hectic time. Governor Inslee put a digital navigator budget line together. The Department of Commerce created a digital navigator grant program, but it wasn't *in statute*. The 2022 Washington State Digital Equity Act had a grant program in it. Again, it was early and based on the Tech Matching Fund. It's the one that we built. The one in this bill is awesome. We just improved it a little bit more.

But we don't know for what reason the state kept putting money in the Digital Navigator Grant program pot of money, and didn't put it in this one, with guard rails and accountability. We're expecting a report from the State Auditor that talks more about what happened with that Digital Navigator grant program funding. But we really want to say that we've thought about this grant structure. We think it's a good way to go. The more equitable distribution of funds, the more accountability and transparency.

Meira Jough: Seattle IT did partner on a digital grant from Washington State. And we did partner with (unintelligible) Development Council, so they were able to secure funds to implement the Digital Navigator program in Seattle and King County. So those funds were able to have an impact on our local area. It's really important, the work that Sabrina is doing in terms of creating this so that those funds get channeled down to this local Seattle/King County area.

Sabrina Roach: There are some really great partnerships that are evolving out of some of that work. Again, with City Council and Seattle/King County and the Digital Equity Learning Network that we will talk about next. And the City of Seattle, back in 2023 when they worked on that Digital Navigator program grand experiment/thing that actually does things, which is good, with 12 community based organizations, because really, what we are trying to figure out how state, county, and City governments fund community based organizations doing this work. because oftentimes, community based organizations can do stuff that is culturally more relevant, maybe, to different groups, and there is possibly some trust there. And that's a really good way to implement it.

Phillip Meng: I want to talk to you for just a moment or turn it over to the room for a full welcome. Does anyone have any questions or any response to what has been discussed before? I will add here, too, that it is really important to know that we have multiple points of entry, because clearly, based on this, you can go very, very deep into the minutiae. But I will open it to the floor for a moment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Phillip Meng: Please feel free to either speak up or raise your hand.

Rajat Aggarwal: What I'm understanding is this is staged. We only have some provisions to get low cost internet, and how is the City of Seattle going to add up to this?

Sabrina Roach: I'm not going to get into too much minutiae. This bill requires the broadband office to gather information on what internet service providers are charging, especially for the low-cost programs. New York State was able to portable broadband and they are regulated for what internet service providers can charge community members. Nationally, that has not gone over well with internet service providers. We researched doing it, though, but for a number of reasons, we decided not to go in that direction right now. It is a high priority to figure out a solution of some sort to get free internet to folks who really cannot afford to afford it in other way. And the folks who make the decisions, we are trying to surface more information. It's really hard for folks to find out what the details are of their service plans, and how much they cost and where that is happening. So, we are going to establish a data set. Right? Over time, who knows what can happen? I don't know. But it's important to me to be fair to companies and fair to communities and to figure it out.

Meira Jough: And there is, currently, an internet program, but not everybody can enroll in it. So, the City of Seattle, if you find the low income resident, and we can get you enrolled in low cost internet. But it is limited. So, having additional support, transparency around the cost of internet, and what is being charged, will go a long way in filling that gap.

Sabrina Roach: We are also looking at the Affordable Connectivity Programs, like Pilot. But details are not yet out about that plan yet.

Meira Jough: The Affordable Connectivity Program is!

Sabrina Roach: Oh! Thank you! The Affordable Connectivity Program, basically during the pandemic the Federal Communications Commission created the Emergency Broadband (unintelligible). That got free internet to folks, and then that evolved to something called the Affordable Connectivity Program (APP). And unprecedented things happened in the FCC with that. And we won't get into the minutiae. But, with that, I am happy to talk with you about it. That was a bust. That was \$7 billion. And from the

beginning, when Biden inherited the administration, they didn't want to just eternally subsidize internet service providers. In situations like that --I mean there are several situations where a county or a city can create a municipally-owned broadband network, but maybe they wouldn't if subsidies were intact. Some things like that. But we're going to watch that. but, the Lifeline program of the Federal Communications Commission is that low-cost subsidy that Meira Jough is talking about. I know that that is not how much my internet costs. Basically, at the national level, there is a committee evaluating modernizing the fund that pays for that, and it's called the Universal Service Fund.

Phillip Meng: That gained a great deal of interest at all levels of government. I definitely have a great level of interest in federal, state, and all areas, which is a good segue. Dorene, I saw that your hand was raised.

Dorene Cornwell: Thanks for this update, Sabrina. This is a little bit of a question from left field. but how do you see the Digital Equity piece getting incorporated into -- I have two specific examples. One is where there is lots of new transportation scheduling and access points where having access to devices and connectivity and all of that makes it really a lot easier for people to access transportation. So, this is also the plan about it. How does something like that fit into the thinking about this bill? And the other example I have about it. And the other example I have is language access and prescription labels. and small pharmacies where you want to be able to deliver in language, but you don't want to bankrupt the small pharmacies. That one probably should have a smaller conversation, but

something like that, where there is an innovation, and you can measure an impact, but the impact is not immediately obvious.

Sabrina Roach: Dorene, you know that for years I have appreciated your questions very much. So I love this question, so I have to answer. Representative Gregerson has been working with some State agencies on a language asset bill to approach language assets holistically at the State level. Right now, there are a lot of not-connected efforts, right? Greater coordination around it is a good idea for so many reasons. So, that's one thing. And then, when it comes to digital equity and transportation and technology in that niche, for example, should the digital opportunity grant program get funded, a pilot program or whatever, an entity could apply for funding from that program. And then there are also

various provisions in the bill --and I'm happy to talk with you about them. And each of you might read page details with the topics changed on what is in the bill.

Dorene Cornwell: Thank you. That's enough. We've got to leave questions for somebody else.

Phillip Meng: Anyone else want to speak up? If not, I want to make sure that we have enough time to also talk about (unintelligible). I will show you a picture.

Sabrina Roach: Oh! I haven't seen these slides yet. You can see here that there is a block of text talking about DELN of Seattle/King County. Maybe you know already, but this evolved out of Seattle IT. Basically, people like David Keyes, Vicky Yuki, and then Delia Burke. I don't know who else was in the mix on the origins of DELN. I think I merged into it during the pandemic, or maybe a little before. Whatever. I don't know what year it started, but Seattle IT money goes into the facilitation of this group, and it is basically a learning network, so entities in King County can amplify and raise all boats with digital equity work by coordinating, sharing knowledge with each other so that there is a lot of knowledge exchanged, does lead to a coalition of 250+ members.

Phillip Meng: (unintelligible) We can go to any of these pages.

Sabrina Roach: We can go right there through QR codes. Join DELN. You can also go on the web site, and there is a membership page. You can see some of the folks on the steering committee, and some of the active members. At least once a year, DELN has an in-person event. I am on the steering committee for that, and we have just had a meeting just looking at what we have been doing, how it can be different with current resources and whatnot.

Phillip Meng: Can you talk about what exactly it is doing?

Sabrina Roach: Yes, we can. So the statewide coalition, the Digital Equity Partners Coalition, the Digital Equity Learning Network is one of the regional networks and coalitions participate through that. Something I seek or value about DELN is the communications and

relationship. It takes communications and relationship infrastructure to get this stuff done. Because when you don't have money, you do have relationships and a network, you get so much done. I think that if you have money, and you have relationships, it is even better. That's a really great thing. There are regular learning workshops so that we are all continuously learning and developing our skills about what is going on where. Folks out of Chicago, there was lots of work that we did with Chicago Public Libraries. Nobody knows what I'm talking about because you weren't there. I'm just trying to remember. (unintelligible) And we actually won the most relevant training that helped us to understand the folks that we worked with and support, and what they will be encountering, and then what our organizations could do to help them grapple with these different new realities. DELN also convened some folks after a Goodwill AI work force panel because we saw some opportunity, because we already had these relationships, just because these entities communicate with each other around the work that they were doing, and it's in process with just more coordination.

Meira Jough: And if you go back to communication, there is a newsletter that goes out. So, if you go to the site, sign up for the newsletter, and there is what Sabrina is talking about, the communications pieces, etc. It is a lot of really good information. You regularly tap into a lot of things. So, please encourage everyone to go and sign up.

Sabrina Roach: And DELN initially worked with the City of Seattle and King County IT on the 2023 Broadband and Digital Equity Community Action Plan, which I am happy to show a link to an online box that shows the links. I think there are 59, If you can't sleep some night. We all love them. But what is so brilliant about those 59 plans, those are tribal organizations and tribal governments putting these together, digital equity assets mostly started at a local level, so it's kind of a starter thing. But you can put that on your web site, or you can print those resources out so people know where to find devices, look up plans, and things like that. And we're working on DELN's capacity to do more with the dynamics of a possible referral network, and then getting more DELN organizations into existing networks. Anyone familiar with HealthierHere in King County, it is one of nine regional, accountable communities of health organizations? Those are organizations around the state that coordinates communication and also look for communication between clinical providers and healthcare and community based organizations. They speak different languages. They do things differently. They convene those partnerships, and HealthierHere has a whole bunch of community partners like El Centro de la Raza. We all know this. El Centro is a TMF recipient, was part of that digital landscape program in 2023. What other

could HealthierHere partners learn from El Centro's work, and how could that be a model? Again, the further we grow digital equity programs and resources into these community-based organizations (unintelligible).

Phillip Meng: Thank you. It has been a very interesting discussion. Any other thoughts or questions? If not, let's get Sabrina back for the detailed legislative update, and honestly, for all of these discussions and topic starters. We would love to send out a mess of links and other items, so we will try to get that around to everybody. You have the contact information for DELN if you want to reach out and get involved. Moving onto our second and final agenda item for today. Late last year we had a presentation on the Technology Matching Fund. I will turn it over in a minute, and Jenny Crooks can explain it better than I can, but as you will remember, this year there is a new process for selecting grant recipients for the Technology Matching Fund, where Seattle IT is working in partnership with the Department of Neighborhoods. So, we will be hearing from the Department of Neighborhoods on what that process looks like this year Jenny, the floor is yours.

2026 TECHNOLOGY MATCHING FUND GRANT PROCESS UPDATE (Seattle IT and Seattle Department of Neighborhoods)

Jenny Crooks: Thank you! I think Jon is on the phone call here, and he shared a little bit about the partnership. So, I will go high level and leave more room for questions, just so I do not necessarily reiterate anything that you already know. I do have the PowerPoint just in case folks prefer the visual. It is kind of a rudimentary PowerPoint, so you may have already have seen it.

Just a quick, quick overview of this kind of partnership. We again want to emphasize that it is a pilot partnership for the program that we are doing. So, highlighting for the 2026 year, the Department of Neighborhoods has been working with Seattle IT to help its phased in conversation for this partnership, which case we are partnering with Seattle IT to administer the RFP or the application for the funds. A lot of the elements of the application and the product and the intention are all pretty much the same with the idea that hopefully, this partnership helps support some of the outreach, helps to perhaps align our processes when it comes to applications for communities. We notice that there were some overlaps in the communities and organizations in assessing the Technology Matching Fund, and we

are also accessing the neighborhood matching fund grants that the Department of Neighborhoods has. And so, is there a way that we can align our processes or align the applications and support, and see how this goes. Like I said, we really did use the foundation. It was not major changes. It was just to see where the partnership can support this. A lot of this rested on serving the work that was identified as part of the technology access adoption, a study of which many of you are familiar with the same program aspects, more of the same. So, in this round, as far as the RSP, we are looking to select projects that would total about \$455,000 available; the project maximum would still be \$45,000, which has been consistent with your years past, and we are providing a 25 percent match for them. But then again, once the projects are selected, that it would be able to need to be done with the new year. Then, the things that we are looking at are very recognizable solutions, so we weren't very recognizable, so we weren't necessarily reinventing the wheel. We are really focused on the relationship and partnership elements of this pilot year. So again, we are looking at projects that either supported Digital Navigator services, Digital Literacy projects, workshops, devices, technical support in internet connectivity. Again, the eligibility was very similar.

MACHINE: "Who should apply? We encourage applications from neighborhood groups, community organizations, informal or ad hoc groups, and business organizations."

Sorry about that. There are some high level pieces. My apologies for that. This is pretty much similar to your past. All projects have to occur within City limits. They need to be accessible, take place in locations that benefit Seattle, support activities that focus on contributing creative access to digital equity for most impacted communities. As you mentioned, they need to add 25 percent for the match, and be completed within one year.

Again, we looked at the eligibility for who should apply, connected to the organizations that are within City limits. We are looking at organizations that have nonprofit status or community groups or neighborhood groups that have fiscal sponsorship, tribal organizations, parent/teacher associations and nonprofit business associations. Again, a lot of these aligned with a lot of the types of groups that we work with for neighborhood matching funds as well, So, just finding that nexus there.

The application was also submitted on Flux, which the Department of Neighborhoods uses as well as Seattle IT. So, again, we have that alignment. Here is the high level timeline that we have. The application was open from November 12, and it closed today, right at 5:00.

And we are looking to basically have the decisions by the end of March. Again, talking about some of the outreach, relationship, partnerships that we are looking at, some of the elements that we added to this or worked with in partnership with Seattle IT and its Digital Equity Team. Shout out to Meira Jough for sharing and reviewing some of the documentation to make sure that it was in alignment with some of the work. Again, we were focused on looking at the RFP and were discussing what the whole group was looking like in 2026. We had two info sessions, one was virtual, and we actually returned to in-person at Douglas Street Library. So, I think that Meira had mentioned that this was the first in-person info session, which hasn't been done in quite a while. A lot of our Department of Neighborhoods programs are virtual, as well, so we had a chance to meet our grantees in the real world at one of the library locations here. We actually had a good showing of folks who were in attendance for that. We weren't sure if that would be receptive or not, so it was something we were able to try with this new partnership. And that we tested out. We also aligned with our community engagement coordinators as part of this work. They host the library hours at various locations across the City.

So, we worked with our community engagement coordinators. Partnerships are set up at the libraries or out in community space is where they are able to catch people as resources, answer questions that they might have. We decided to give this a try in alignment with their hours because a lot of these projects, in conversations with Meira Jough, we understood that there was kind of a nexus and the libraries created space for this type of work, as well. So, we were able to connect with some folks.

The four areas that we had -- you can see the list here -- and the central service area. In West Seattle, we were at Highpoint Library, in the north, Northgate Library, and for Southgate, we were at the Beacon Hill Library. In addition to these in-person info sessions, we also took the opportunity to translate a one-page info sheet about the guidelines and programming to the seven top languages. That was our starting point. So, we at least have that as our high level engagement in language, resources, for future use, as well.

And then, just to give you the lay of the land of the program, we close our applications today, January 13, at 5:00 p.m. Just to give you a high level, we got a little over 60 applications submitted to this. We haven't done a full review around eligibility, so if folks might have submitted, we need to do an extra review of eligibility for events, but I just looked at it right before coming on, and we received a little over 60 applications. In the

meantime, I know that we do and we are also trying out the way that we do our community review process for this round with our processes that we use for Neighborhood Matching Funds, in which cases we use a smaller community review team. So, we request applications for community reviewers, and based on those applications, we select a team of between five and six members who have submitted interest or applications to the key review team, and then, they will review all of the applications. And then we have a comprehensive conversation with that. So, for this particular round, my understanding is that there has been some folks from CTAB who were curious about that process. So again, we will be having a slightly smaller group for this, which aligns a little bit more with our Neighborhood Matching Funds process. And then, we will be looking at sharing and they will have about a month to review who will sit on the review team. And then we will be shooting out those recommendations, coming back to the City, hopefully on March 10, to share those recommendations.

And currently --- Jon, you might want to speak more to this, but I just want -- the current agreement has us working with Seattle IT to deliver the application for the 2026 program, but we are currently in conversation to determine what the future of the 2026 program administration will be. That is still in negotiation. It is all in conversation right now.

Phillip Meng: Folks, any questions? I want to open it up to the group. I'll start with one. Indeed, I know that there are many on this call who have been with TMF for years. I am curious to know if, apart from the process, if any of the criteria appoints for evaluating the values in the grant applications -- has that changed going into this year?

Jenny Crooks: The criteria haven't changed. I don't think it has changed wholly. I have been working with Meira Jough. I think we tried to clarify, and helping to define the rubric of what are strong responses, or what are strong elements of projects, making sure that the design of the project, making sure that the feasibility and capacity of the project, who is delivering the project is supportive of the goals. I don't believe the criteria have shifted all that much, but again, we have just tried to refine it and clarify it. Similar to your past, the community reviewers will be going through an orientation process, so we will be going through those criteria more in depth than having a conversation around it, how those are interpreted, and how they are used.

Phillip Meng: Thank you for your comment, Dorene. I second that sentiment, that is a very rewarding process. For the number of applications, how does it compare with the number of applications over the last couple of years?

Meira Jough: Over the last couple of years, we have gotten anywhere from 45, from 50 to 60. So, it's a little higher this year. I think this is one of the highest. The first year that I managed in 2022, we did get 60 applications, but since then we have had maybe 5. So, that is really nice, and the outreach events have been really nice. I know Jenny and I have talked with a couple of (unintelligible). We also did our survey. I surveyed our reviewers from the last round, so Jenny was great in helping to incorporate CTAB, who gave us what was difficult about that, and what could be improved. There was some work around clarification and things like that. Jenny was really great in terms of inculcating that, so thank you, Jenny.

Phillip Meng: Thank you. Are there any other questions from the group? Once again, thanks for this brief update on a program that we care deeply about, and we look forward to hearing about the recommendations in March.

Jenny Crooks: Thanks. You are welcome to share my email address (jenny.crooks@seattle.gov) if you happen to have any follow-up questions, in the meantime. (meira.jough@seattle.gov)

Phillip Meng: Sounds great. Well, thank you very much. So, that was our last agenda item for today. We will go onto just quick committee updates and further public comments. On Committee Updates, I don't think that D has been able to join. So, I will just throw something out on the Digital Equity side. We continue to look for new members on the Digital Equity Committee. We are taking on the next Telecom Forum. If you are interested, please do reach out to me. As for public comment, is there anything that folks would like to introduce to the group....

Vinh Tang: Before we close, did you vote at the beginning? We have to cancel that because we don't have a quorum. We have to basically cancel the voting for the minutes, because of that, but everything else is fine. But before you can vote on anything, you have to have a quorum.

Phillip Meng: That's right. For both the quorum and the agenda. What would be the way to proceed, then?

Vinh Tang: Cass Magnuski would clean up the language on the minutes.

Phillip Meng: Okay. I can appreciate that. If there are no other public comments, thank you all for a great discussion on digital equity. Have a great evening, and we will see you again in February.

ADJOURNMENT 7:15