



Digital Impact Grants Webinar #2

[Introduction]

Hello and welcome to the Digital Impact Grants webinar. My name is Lucy Bernholz and I'm the Director of the Digital Civil Society Lab at the Stanford University Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society and delighted to be here to answer your questions, to orient you to the grants program, and hopefully to encourage you to submit an application.

So the way this will work, everybody who is listening in is currently on mute. I'll take a little bit of time to go through a number of slides that have the basic information about the grants program. You have on your laptop or desktop screen there a place where you can enter specific questions, type in specific questions. Those will be relayed to me and I will begin answering them as soon as I get to the end of the slide deck. And we'll stay on the line for an hour or until I get all the questions that are asked, answered. And here we go.

[Digital Impact Grants Program Overview]

So, let me give you a little bit of background if I can. Digital impact is an initiative of Digital Civil Society Lab, which is part of the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society as I just mentioned.

Our goal for the grants program and for all of our Digital Impact initiative is to improve the digital infrastructure for civil society to help practitioners and policy makers use digital resources safely ethically and effectively. And we do that in a number of different ways. There's a robust online community that you can join in at digitalimpact.org, which is 10 years of experience. People around the world sharing information, questions, case studies, stories. We're doing our best to engage more and more scholars, funders and policymakers in that community; so we hope you can join us there. We host a number of in-person events that support knowledge sharing, research and cross sector collaboration including 10 events in cities around the globe that began in February of this year and will continue until March of 2018.

We use the grants program, which is what I'm here to talk about, to help spark new research and practice. It's specifically about strengthening the infrastructure for civil society, the digital infrastructure for civil society; so we'll get to the focus of that grants program in a minute. And we have an online tool kit, digitalimpact.io which provides ready to use tools, policies and resources for non-profit organizations, information associations, foundations, to improve their data governance practices. So, all of that together makes up the Digital Impact initiative out of Stanford PACS and the grants program is a part of that.

[Grant Program Focus]

This is the second year we've run the grants program. As I mentioned, and I want to reiterate the grants program is very much focused on the role of digital data and infrastructure in civil society and philanthropy. We're particularly interested in research or projects that focus on improving the way, or learning about the ways that individual donors are using digital data and digital infrastructure. And all of this is about the social sector or civil society at large. What the goal of the grants is to support research and prototypes as well as I mentioned before share learning and improve the community's understanding of how donors and social sector organizations can use digital data safely, ethically and effectively. I want to pause here for just one second.

The distinguishing characteristic of these grants and this grants program, we think the distinguishing characteristic of the grants program, is that we're very much focused on sector wide initiatives. We're not - these grants dollars are not used to support organizational level activities. But those kinds of activities and/or research that is designed with the sector as the core user or core audience for what's being learned or created. We've divided the grant funds into two kinds of grant applications because we're really - a goal of the whole Digital Impact initiative is to strengthen the connections between researchers and practitioners. So we have grants available for academic research and grants available for sector wide practice; so let me describe each of those in turn.

The research grants are for academic teams from any scholarly discipline or a multiple, multitude of different disciplines. We actively encourage and seek out cross disciplinary research that have practical applications for the social sector or that are a scholarly review of existing practice. We're interested in and support as I say applications from any academic discipline or cross-disciplinary teams.

On the sector side of the grants we're making grants to non-profits or non-profit equivalents and their partners, who are focused on addressing sector wide challenges about digital data and its use. Again, the core users here, the intended beneficiaries are not individual organizations or even the collaboration itself that might be doing the work, but the broader community of non-profit social sector organizations, funders and the like. Priority for these projects goes to those that are examining and aligning with or pushing forward and improving the four principles for digital data use that you can learn more about at digitalimpact.io. Those four principles are consent, privacy, openness and pluralism. And again, all of this - there's more detail on all of it at digitalimpact.io, which is a toolkit linked off of digitalimpact.org.

So, we have here some sample grant ideas for people to consider. These are by no means exhaustive nor are they meant to suggest that these are the only things we'll fund. We have pulled these from research we've done on the state of the field, conversations with people in the field, questions that we know are unanswered or needs that we know that are there to be addressed. So they're really there as suggestions and samples, but let me just pick a few of them for you because you may be thinking about something that falls into one of these categories or is aligned or nearby.

[Research Grant Examples]

We're very interested in the role that - so on the research side very interested in the role that crowd funding and crowd funding platforms now play in civil society and philanthropy. There's numerous research questions that can be generated and answered looking at everything from the governance of those platforms to how much money really moves on them, that might otherwise be considered charitable or philanthropic in nature. There are a lot of questions about the reporting requirements, the public good reporting requirements that might be applicable to crowd funding platforms. So a number of possibilities looking at the role of crowd funding as part of the philanthropic eco-system, especially given our interest in a better understanding how digital data and infrastructure are changing the way individual givers operate, and the way they make decisions. This is a really wide open and very interesting space for research.

Another example from this list here, a couple of different kinds of governance questions that are being faced, being asked from the field, where there might be a good opportunity for scholars who are interested in thinking about what does it mean for a community to actually be able to govern and oversee the use of digital data that's generated from and about that community. So, we've seen lots of not for profit organizations and social sector organizations, struggling to create ways or experimenting with ways to engage the people who are represented in the data sets as decision makers about those data sets, and lots of research questions to be asked about what's possible there, what the limits are, what the legal requirements might be, all kinds of things.

Then just picking another once since I'm not going to read each of these to you. Many of you are well aware that the number of ways that individuals connect and share and talk about the ways they use their money for public good, whether that's charitable giving, political giving, impact investing, consumer choices or their investments, their activity and the political space there now, we live in a world in which there's an extraordinary amount of digital data from social media companies or credit card companies or payment processors that could help us understand that ecosystem of revenue flows more accurately than we currently do. So, scholarly research that uses any of those data sources to better articulate questions and answers about how, in fact, individuals in various parts of the world are allocating their money toward good are of great interest to this grants program. So, those are some examples of ideas on the research side.

[Sector Grant Examples]

Let's shift our attention over to the sector wide side. Hereto first bullet speaks to what I mentioned earlier that lots of organizations and associations and social movement leaders are trying to find ways to make sure that the people represented in the data sets that exist about their work actually have a governing say in how that data are used. So, we're interested in active experiments or pilot tests or proposals for, or best practices if there are any yet on social sector led, governance strategies that make sure that the voice of the people in the data is heard in the governing process whether that's at the non-profit level, the government level, industry level or ideally in the relationships

between those sectors. For this grant round in particular, as everyone on the call no doubt knows the GDPR passed by the European Union goes into effect about one year from today almost, a little less than one year from today because of the size of the EU as a market. The GDPR is going to have significant implications for not for profit organizations, social sector organizations and their funders around the globe. The - any best practices, again governing policies, fund raising, marketing practices that meet the EU GDPR requirements that can be turned into specifications for use and/or adaptation by the sector at large, of great interest and a very timely and pressing need for the sector at large. And because the GDPR focuses in specifically on digital data , particularly personal data this is going to have tremendous implications for organizations around the world, any and all that do work in the EU or have a digital presence facing people who live in the EU, so that's another great opportunity there.

And just picking another one of those here, we're also interested in tools and templates built, by and for organizations in civil society that improve and are leading edge innovations on data governance for organizational use of digital data, that can be used and broadly shared. So again these are just sample ideas.

I do want to emphasize a common element of each of these examples, which of course is also a key criteria for application consideration in the program is that whatever is being built or studied is of application and relevance beyond any particular single organization or collaboration that might actually be doing the work.

[Program Size and Key Numbers]

We have a grant budget of \$200,000 US dollars for this cycle. The grants will be made for a yearlong period. That period is set to begin in the Fall of 2017. And depending on the number of applications we receive and their alignment with the goals, we expect that there will be between five and 15 grants awarded in the coming year.

[Open Access Policy and Other Requirements]

There are a couple of requirements that all applicants, all successful grantees must meet regardless of whether it's a research or a sector grant, regardless of whether it's a US based organization or an organization outside of the US. First and foremost is that the work that is produced must be made by publically available within the requirements of the open access policy of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which is the primary supporter of the digital impact grants program. You can find out more information about this open access policy at the link on this page, at the Gates Foundation website. And the first place to point anyone who's got questions about what might fit in terms of open sharing, proprietary work, anything you're going to try to charge money off of would be to point you to this URL. If it doesn't fit these within the bounds of the open access policy of the Gates Foundation, it won't fit within the Digital Impact Grants program. So, that's first and foremost. We'll encourage you to please check that out before you spend any time putting together an application. Because as I mentioned at the top, the grants program is part of a larger community building effort.

I also want to point to some of the engagement opportunities that we make available for the successful grantees, and hope people will participate in. Let me talk a little bit about

the engagement possibility. There is a conference in February 2018 at Stanford where we'll bring the grantees together to participate in that conference, meet each other, meet the previous grantees. We'll be looking for an opportunity for folks to present their work to each other, and to a community at Stanford. We, there's a grant report that's required a year after the grants are made. That's not too unusual with any kind of grant making, but it does have to meet some certain requirements of the university, so we will work with selected grantees at the beginning of the grant period to make sure that they're in a position to meet those requirements. And we also encourage and hope that all successful applicants who were funded as grantees will contribute to the Digital Impact community either via blog post or participating in some of those in-person events.

I do just want to highlight again, because the audio may have cut out as I was saying this, that all successful proposals, all of the grants will be made through the digital impact grants program do need to fit within the open access policy of the Gates Foundation. You can see that entire policy and what it requires at the URL that's on your screen, gatesfoundation.org/howwework and so on. This slide deck, I should say will be available off of the digitalimpact.org website; so you can find that URL easily by just downloading the slide deck. It will be available very shortly after the end of this webinar.

[Grant Program Timeline]

So, timeline - key questions on timeline? The deadline for the applications is June 12, so it's coming up, 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. We have a two-tier review process that involves a number of different people from across the university world as well as our broader community, so it takes us a little while to run that review process but we anticipate notifying successful grant recipients in early August. We will hold the conference at Stanford in February of 2018 and then grantees selected in this round will be invited to present their work at Stanford one year following the making of those grants; so sometime in Fall of 2018. If you have questions you can contact us, here's the email address, hello@digitalimpact.org. The RFP with all of its requirements and the application form are at the URL above. I'll leave this slide up here for a little bit and I'm going to start answering questions because I think this is the end of the slide deck.

[Attendee Questions]

So, let me turn to the first questions we've already received.

[Would you consider a proposal that aims to develop a platform/web app that aims to show to investors and potential donors what the situation on the ground specific territories/jurisdictions is at the moment? It involves making open data available in an understandable way to make enable donors make more efficient contributions.]

I have a question about proposals that aim to develop certain kind of platforms or web apps to help grant donors understand what I take to be a broader social situation in certain parts of the world; so as they're considering making grants in particular parts of the world, a proposal that would make data available so that you could contextualize your decision making. Very interesting idea. This is one of those questions that's hard to give too many specifics on a call with 50 other people, but I would say that the number one thing for this applicant to consider is are you, is your process for creating this and

maintaining it and sustaining it over time going to stay within the bounds of the open access policy of the Gates Foundation? If there's anything proprietary or closed off in a possibility like this; this is probably not the funding opportunity for you. So that's what I'll say to that.

[Can one organization submit 2 different grant applications?]

Different question here about whether an organization can submit or be part of two different grant applications. Yes, you can be - you can do that. You will not receive two grants. No single organization will be funded twice. The resources are too scarce, but if you're part of two initiatives that's fine, we won't remove you simply for that reason. But it's highly unlikely, if not - not enough resources.

[Are there any specific requirements or limitations for international/regional projects, developed out of US HQ?]

Specific requirements or limitations for international, regional projects developed out of US Headquarters? We are excited to be able to make grants outside of the United States this grant cycle. Those organizations and any funds that will be traveling internationally do need to comply with international law, both - as both US law and the law of the country they're going into. You need to fit within the bounds of those international laws, nothing out of the ordinary for any US funder making grants outside of the US. But you do want to make sure that everything is legal within the bounds of US international grant making regulations.

[The Open Access Policy requires: All publications shall be published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Generic License (CC BY 4.0) or an equivalent license. Would be a slightly different CC license be possible as well? E.g. Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial No-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license?]

There's a question about the specifics of the Gates licensing requirements. I'm not in a position to change the Gates Foundation licensing requirements, so you need - the proposals do need to fit within the bounds of the open access policy of the Gates Foundation requires. We do need to abide by the parameters of the open access policy as written by the Gates Foundation. There's information available in the actual RFP, which will point you to some other resources, so I do want to suggest folks take a look over there.

[Our potential project does not focus on philanthropy data, but on the use of open data to promote community engagement. Will this be within the scope of this grant?]

Question about what data is being used. We have a proposal that's not focused on philanthropy data. That's fine, if it's helpful to civil society and philanthropic action and you can make that case to the grant reviewers. That certainly meets the opening criteria.

[You probably can't answer really specifically, but... how about a database geared toward assisting researchers in developing countries? and, yes, open access!]

Very broad question about assisting researchers in developing countries, open access research from folks in developing countries. Again, there the specifics are going to matter greatly to the review committee as in terms of researchers doing what for whom on what issues and how does that relate to philanthropy and civil societies. So, that's the best I can provide you with there.

[Hi! I am interested in this opportunity related to a collaborative learning project. This is a collaboration between City of Oakland, a non-profit, and University partners. Do these type of projects qualify, which entity is best to apply and qualify for this grant? Do all parties have an equal basic eligibility? Related to Pay for Success research used for community development...]

Okay a great question about proposal or possible proposal between a municipality, a not for profit and university partners. Long question: do these type of projects qualify, which entity is best to apply and do all parties have an equal basic eligibility?

The answer to that question is it matters what the proposal is. All partners do have an equal basic eligibility as long as it's a part of the city itself that can receive grant funds, not for profit 501C3 they can receive grant funds and universities they can receive grant funds. They are all equally eligible so I can't pick one over the other, it's going to be based I would argue on what it is you're trying to do, who is going to be in the best position to keep the work going over time or share the learning. And then those unfortunate things like overhead rates and things like that will probably factor in as well. But in general, absolutely collaborations that cut across sectors include different institutional partners are absolutely welcome. *[Editor's note: Digital Impact does not provide grants to governments; they can be a partner on a collaborative project but not the recipient of funds or the lead organization on the project.]*

So again, if you're waiting to submit a question, now is the time to do it. You can do it using the question box on your go to webinar control panel. Try to answer as best we can.

On the collaboration its most likely of the different kind of partners, the not for profits and the universities generally, certainly always delighted to have municipalities in those mixes. In general probably better for one of the two other partners to be the applicant.

If you miss something the recording of this webinar, the notes from the webinar, the slides from the webinar as well as that from our previous webinar are all going to be posted on digitalimpact.org sometime later today; so you can always follow up with us that way? We do want to be as helpful as we can. So I'm just waiting for some more questions to come in. You still have visible on your screen the contact email for us. You can find the RFP, which also has some additional information in it; I'm going to wait a little longer for other questions. Let me just flip back a page for folks to be able to see the timeline again. As I mentioned there will be two rounds of review between June 12 and August 7. We'll be notifying people in early August. The RFP has additional information attached to it. Let's see if there's anything else in these questions that I was asked already. Just a reminder that the open access policy of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is an important thing to check. That's linked off of the

digitalimpact.org website. The RFP is linked off of the digitalimpact.org website and it has additional information for international projects.

Projects that involve municipalities, probably best if the applicant is a - not a municipality, not a government agency, it makes things smoother on this end.

[Can I just check overall funding? 200k, over say 10 projects, ie. 20k per project? Roughly...]

Someone asking overall funding \$200,000 over say 10 projects, i.e. 20k per project. We try to avoid giving that range, but there is \$200,000 available. We anticipate that you know it won't work out and evenly divided by 10, nor is it easy to say there will be exactly 10 projects funded. It really does depend on the quality of what comes in and it's alignment with the guidelines. Last year I can say on the first round of grants the range of grant sizes, there were a total of eight grants made. But there was a low grant size of \$12,000 and then there was a \$100,000 grant made to a collaboration of four different organizations. So, averages are not all that helpful. It really does depend what comes in.

[Is there an interview opportunity or engagement opportunity with the judges between review rounds?]

Good question coming in about speaking with the reviewers. The answer to that is yes, we will try to after we make the first round of selections and have a short list, the reviewers will try to be in touch for an online or telephone conversation with potential applicants; so that would be happening in those weeks right before the August 7 announcement. And we'll be in touch with folks who make it to that level. Those are likely to be done virtually and not in person, and not likely to require more -- there.

Thank you for your questions. Happy to stay on the line while people type.

[Would you fund working on the release of data as open data? I.e. hard to obtain data, that is philanthropically valuable?]

A question about funding the release of data as open data, i.e. hard to obtain data that is philanthropically valuable. Now that is, what a great question. That is an impossible question to answer without knowing more about what it would mean to "work on the release" of that data, which is going to depend on who has it and what that release would look like. Certainly there is an awful lot of data in the world that has implications and is of interest to the philanthropic and civil society community, so in the great abstract, in fact I'd say that's part of why there's such an interest among the review group in the crowd funding data. An enormous amount of crowd funding data right now, the vast majority of it in fact, is locked up behind proprietary platforms who have no reporting requirements that would allow us to understand what's actually happening. Of course there are few exceptions that prove that rule, who do share that data, their data but most of them don't. So the answer to this question about the release of open - of data, is open data is really the devil is in the details question. So hard to give a more specific answer to this broad question. That's the best I can do for that.

I can say based on the experience of last year most applications for data portals were not funded. There was research, there is a research grant that was made for using, it's for creating a data portal that was built off of an existing set of opportunities that's actually really a grant about trying to use open 990 data. And share with the world the opportunities and ways to make that data available. So, it's a little tricky, happy to be in touch to talk about that in more detail.

If applying through an initiative at a university do we need PI's?

Probably. Every university is different than what they'll allow you to do, so I would, my answer here is going to be yes, you're going to need principle investigators who are in a position to have the university be recipient of funds; so yes you'd need PI's at the university.

Are we required to do data collection?

Not knowing what it is you want to do, I - the answer to that question is no, probably not. Although if you're doing research you might just have a different name for data collection than what people might have in mind. But no, there's no requirement that you be doing your own data collection if you're doing a review or building a tool. You're - no, let me give this a short answer, no you're not required to do data collection.

Okay let me go back to how to get in touch with us. Questions are starting to slow down again.

What is the action step and funding opportunity after the Stanford presentations?

So, those organizations and applications that are awarded grants and that are invited to join us in February, the expenses of that participation are paid for separately from the grant. Participating in presenting your work at Stanford is meant as a contribution to the community at large. There are not, the grant funds are very limited. We do anticipate running one more round of this grant program and we'll continue to be seeking support to run future ones. But other than that we don't have an ongoing source of funds beyond the next calendar year. So we're not anticipating making continuing grants to projects.

Waiting for some more questions to come in. We have about 20 more minutes scheduled if folks have more questions, happy to try to answer them. Skimming back through to see if I missed any. I'll wait quietly while folks think about if there's any more questions. Again encourage you to check out the RFP document, which has some more answers, the Gates Foundation open access policy, which has some more answers. This year you can also go to digitalimpact.org and look at the map and, of all of, of last year's applicants. 98% of last year's applicants and the grant, the awarded grantees; so you can see what came in last year and what was successfully funded. We will include the RFP. You'll notice does request that you share, that you opt in to sharing the name of your project, a little bit of location data and a very brief description so we can continue to build that map. That map of applicants and ideas is intended actually to inform other funders who may have broader or complimentary grant guidelines, bigger than, or just simply a bigger pool of funds than the small pot that we have. So, we encourage you to opt into that so that we can continue to learn from and show the world

what folks are interested in and what the experts in the field, which are you all, think is needed.

[Are other Stanford Research departments available for participation in this grant opportunity?]

One more question, other Stanford research departments are absolutely available to participate in this grant opportunity, but the grant funds are by no means limited to Stanford University. Accredited universities are encouraged to apply and that includes other colleagues on the Stanford campus.

What municipality relationships/partnerships are established with the program?

Not sure I understand the question. Again, just because of legal difficulties usually in making grants to cities, it's generally both more efficient and easier for all involved if grants funds are actually distributed to a partner that has a relationship with the city. I have a sense that that's not the question that's being asked here; whoever submitted that question wants to give me a little more detail I can try to give you a better answer.

[Is there an opportunity to work with a municipality after the program is over? We want to implement solutions.]

Is there an opportunity to work with municipalities after a grant is made to implement? Absolutely, if municipalities are partners in design or partners to non-profits who receive the funds, partners for implementation, absolutely. All good, no issues with that.

[In the excel budget template the presentation at Stanford is itemized but in the call for proposals it says this should not be part of the proposal budget.]

Okay a question about budget templates, so this is now really in the details. It has to do with a question about the budget template for the application as well as a question about travel to the Stanford events. Do not put the Stanford travel in the budget, that's separate from the grant dollars, it may not be - It may not be as clear as it could be on the budget template. But the travel to Stanford to awarded grantees will be covered separately from the grant dollars; you do not need to pay for that travel to Stanford out of the grant funds. It's possible that there will be proposals, particularly I imagine from researchers who have as part of their project budget other conference travel and that may be what is implied on the budget template, but successful grantees who are invited to the Stanford conference, we cover all of the costs for the conference, for the travel for all of that; don't - that should not be included in your budget. If your project, your research requires participation in another conference, that - and that's a legitimate expense of getting the work done, that's what should go into the budget template.

[Do we need to implement the programming and data collection if we propose to do so?]

Another question here, again maybe part of a previous question, do we need to implement the programming and data collection if we propose to do so. Yes, if that's your project, what you're proposing - Let me put it this way, we're trying to focus these dollars on actionable or either research that's going to get done and shared, or prototypes that are going to get built and tried.

[Conclusion]

Scrolling back up, make sure I didn't miss anything. Thank you very much. These are great questions. I should let you know that these will be shared. The questions and the answers again, will be shared broadly with other potential applicants. This will all be posted up to the website digitalimpact.org later today along with the slide deck and what I hope is a useful recording of this call. Let's see, it looks like we're slowing down; so again one last time. Thank you for participating in this call.

Information is at digitalimpact.org. You can get the RFP there. The RFP itself has more information. I do apologize for any audio issues that people may have had. Please follow up with any questions to hello@digitalimpact.org; thank you very much for taking the time. I do hope you'll submit a proposal and join our community and enjoy the rest of your day. That's it for me. I'm Lucy Bernholz from the Stanford PACS Digital Civil Society Lab, thank you very much.