

## Introduction

Funding is often one of the biggest hurdles an organisation faces to getting a digital inclusion project off the ground and also to keeping one going. In this guide you'll find advice and tips to help you create a budget for your project, so you can find or apply for funding.



## Defining your digital inclusion project

Digital inclusion projects can take many different forms, from small informal sessions in a community space with a handful of volunteers, to larger multisite projects across regions.

If you're not sure what to include in your digital inclusion project, we have [case studies](http://www.digitalunite.com/case-studies) ([www.digitalunite.com/case-studies](http://www.digitalunite.com/case-studies)) on our website that may provide inspiration. This guide from the Local Government Association is also be useful: [www.local.gov.uk/our-support/cyber-digital-and-technology/four-essential-steps-digital-inclusion](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/cyber-digital-and-technology/four-essential-steps-digital-inclusion).

## Creating a budget

To prepare a budget for funders you'll need to itemise the various elements of your project and estimate each cost. The [National Lottery Community Fund](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/full-cost-recovery) ([www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/full-cost-recovery](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/full-cost-recovery)) has some clear guidance and useful examples for working out the various costs of a project.

## Estimating costings

There is no perfect way to work out what your costs will be, and it's ok to estimate. But to get more accurate estimates it could help to:

- Get no-obligation quotes.
- Take a similar project budget and use the costs in it to predict yours (don't forget to add a little for inflation, if relevant).
- Ask advice from other organisations, networks or the funders themselves.

Project costs can be broken down into the following types:

Core costs:

- Staff and office costs.
- Insurance.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

*Note:* Many funders will prefer you to have included options for making your project sustainable and will look for information on how you plan to support and maintain the project after funding ends.

Revenue/direct project costs:

- Marketing (for e.g. finding volunteers and/or learners).
- Costs of running sessions such as venue hire, refreshments and learning materials.
- Travel and training for staff and volunteers.

Capital costs

- Equipment- the cost of this could be reduced by looking for donations of free devices, see our guide on [Finding Affordable kit and connectivity](http://www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/using-internet/connecting-internet/finding-affordable-kit-and-connectivity) ([www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/using-internet/connecting-internet/finding-affordable-kit-and-connectivity](http://www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/using-internet/connecting-internet/finding-affordable-kit-and-connectivity)). Some funders may require you to have looked at options for using existing software and tools before deciding to build or buy anything new.

## Collaboration and Partnerships

To increase the reach and reduce the cost of your project, it may be good to partner with other organisations. They might offer, for example, free digital services, information, or complimentary resources. One organisation may have space but no volunteers, whilst another have volunteers but nowhere to hold sessions. Partnership working requires flexibility, accountability and patience. So, although partnership can be very effective, it can affect the speed of getting a project going. There are many specialist organisations with a wealth of experience in digital inclusion who actively welcome a collaborative approach, so do some research and reach out on social media or through local networks. We have case studies on our website with a focus on working in [partnership](http://www.digitalunite.com/top-tips-public-private-partnerships) ([www.digitalunite.com/top-tips-public-private-partnerships](http://www.digitalunite.com/top-tips-public-private-partnerships)).

## Links and further resources

Planning a project and case studies

- Digital Inclusion Toolkit advice for councils  
<https://digitalinclusionkit.org/category/starting-a-digital-inclusion-programme/investment-and-finance/>
- Four essential steps to digital inclusion, Local Government Association  
[www.local.gov.uk/our-support/cyber-digital-and-technology/four-essential-steps-digital-inclusion](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/cyber-digital-and-technology/four-essential-steps-digital-inclusion)

- Mapping Digital Inclusion Toolkit, LOTI <https://loti.london/resources/mapping-digital-exclusion-toolkit/>
- NHS Digital – an overview of organisations working in digital inclusion <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/corporate-information-and-documents/digital-inclusion/who-to-work-with>

#### Budgeting

- Finding affordable kit and connectivity, Digital Unite [www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/using-internet/connecting-internet/finding-affordable-kit-and-connectivity](http://www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/using-internet/connecting-internet/finding-affordable-kit-and-connectivity)
- Funding guidance, National Lottery [www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/full-cost-recovery](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/full-cost-recovery)