**Tay Cities Region Deal**
**Digital Skills Third Sector**

**Challenge Fund**

**Guidance and Application Form**

**Background**

The Tay Cities Digital Skills Project is part of the £20 million, Regional Skills and Employability Development Programme, funded by the Scottish Government. Approved in December 2022, the Digital Skills Project was awarded over £1.5m of government funding, over a 3-year period to support regional economic growth and the digital labour market throughout Angus, Dundee, North East Fife and Perth & Kinross.

The Digital Skills Project aims to address the digital skills gap in the Tay Cities Region to support regional economic growth. We are doing this through the delivery of a range of activities, initiatives and training programmes related to skilling, re-skilling and upskilling in digital and data skills. The aim of the digital skills project is to improve the effectiveness of the regional labour market by addressing the digital skills needs and reducing barriers to accessing employment across the digital economy.

The key outcomes for the digital skills project are to:

* Plug the digital skills gap in the region.
* Understand and satisfy business needs.
* Create unrivalled talent in the region.

**About the Digital Skills Third Sector Challenge Fund**

The Digital Skills Project is inviting proposals to help support individuals access digital skills training and support businesses to address their skills needs.

The Digital Skills Third Sector Challenge Fund is for new and innovative pilot programmes, activities, or initiatives to address the digital skills gap in the Tay Cities Region. Funding is available for third sector organisations from £5,000 up to the value of £45,000 to deliver digital skills training taking place between April 2024 - September 2025.

**Requirements of the Challenge Fund:**

* Partnership projects between third sector, public sector, education, training providers and businesses are welcomed; however, the lead applicant must be a third sector organisation or social enterprise.
* Participants engaging in the project must live or work in the Tay Cities Region (Angus, Dundee, North East Fife and Perth & Kinross) and aged 16 +.
* Activity must focus on advanced, intermediate, and professional digital skills. Basic digital skills such as browsing the internet, using email, accessing online training, or setting up online accounts such as online banking will not be considered. Please see guidance on skill level in the table below.
* Activity must focus on digital skills required for the workplace and the need for these skills must be evidenced.
* Activities should be piloted for a maximum of 6 months and are to be delivered between April 2024 - September 2025.
* Funding should not be used to replace or supplement existing funded programmes.

**We are particularly interested in responses that**:

* Address the underrepresentation of women, people with disabilities (including neurodiversity) and people from BME communities across the digital economy.
* Target individuals from remote and rural areas.
* Target individuals from low SMID areas.
* Target existing workers to upskill or reskill in digital areas.
* Demonstrate partnership working between third sector organisations, education or training providers and local employers to meet a specific skills gaps or training need.

**Skills level:**

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| **Skills Level**  | **Example of skills** |
| Basic | Accessing a computer, email, navigating the web, using word documents.  |
| Intermediate | Adopting and using digital tools such as e-commerce platforms, CRM systems, understanding the value of data. |
| Advanced  | Digital Marketing, website management, ability to use data visualisation tools etc.  |
| Professional  | Software development, cyber security, data analytics, cloud security |

The Digital Skills Project has identified the following success measures for a project:

* **An increase in the number of individuals with digital and data related skills and qualifications**.
* **Improved labour market outcomes** e.g. fewer digital skills gaps reported by employers, and an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education.
* **An increase in underrepresented groups (women, people with disabilities including neurodiversity and people from BME communities) accessing digital skills training.**

**Project outcomes**

You will be asked to outline the key outcomes for the project and estimate the number of beneficiaries you intend to work with, including whether any of the beneficiaries will gain a qualification.

**Evaluation:**

Proposals will be evaluated on:

1. Overall quality of the project proposal – how clearly defined are the project outcomes, deliverables, timelines and evaluation measures.
2. The evidenced need for the project or digital skills training.
3. Whether proposals meet the digital skills outcomes and success measures.
4. Evaluation and sustainability of project following pilot completion.

**Funding Package**

An allocation of £225,000 is available through the Challenge Fund. Organisations can apply for grants from £5,000 up to the value of £45,000. The Digital Skills Project expects to award between 5 – 7 pilot projects.

The funding will be available to deliver a pilot project between April 2024 – September 2025. We expect there will be an opportunity to apply for continuation or additional funding depending on project delivery and outcomes. This is dependent on Tay Cities Region Deal funding availability.

It is anticipated that a large proportion of project costs will relate to staffing to deliver training and support activities for beneficiaries. Funding for capital costs or overheads cannot be considered.

**Timeline**

The Digital Skills Challenge Fund will be launched on 12th February 2024, with a 5-week period to develop and submit applications. Following an initial eligibility check on proposals, an Assessment Panel will meet week beginning 25th March 2024 to assess and recommend projects to be funded. Projects will be notified of the decisions in April 2024.

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| **Date** | **Action** |
| 12th Feb 2024 | Launch Challenge Fund |
| 17th March 2024 | Deadline for submission of applications |
| Week beginning 25th March 2023 | Assessment panel meeting |
| April 2024  | Applicants notified of outcome |

**Reporting**

Successful applicants will be required to complete a monitoring return on a quarterly basis confirming the spend that has been incurred and progress made towards the outputs and outcomes agreed. A template will be provided for this purpose.

Regular monitoring meetings will take place for each funded project with the Digital Skills Project Management team. Evidence of spend is required to be presented at the monitoring meetings and to justify any claims made.

A final report will be required on completion of the project.

**Payment of Digital Skills Challenge Fund**

Payment of the funding will be made in arrears. Payment of the balance will depend on a satisfactory monitoring, evidence of spend and completion of quarterly monitoring forms as set out above.

**Submission**

To apply for funding please complete and return the application form below to digitay@fife.gov.uk by the deadline date of 17th March 2024.

Tay Cities Region Deal Digital Skills Project

Digital Skills Third Sector Challenge Fund 2024 - 2025

APPLICATION FORM

**Section 1 – Contact details**

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| **Project Name** |  |
| **Lead Partner Organisation** |  |
| **Additional Partner Organisation(s)** |  |
| **Contact Name** |  |
| **Contact Address** |  |
| **Contact Number** |  |
| **Contact Email** |  |

**Section 2 – Eligibility Check**

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| **Is the lead applicant a third sector organisation or social enterprise?** | YES/NO |

**Section 3 – Project Information**

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| **What is the project aim: what digital skills gap you are trying to address using this funding? (approx. 100 words)** |
| Ideally this will be measurable and will include: the skills gap you are trying to address, the target audience and how the target audience will benefit from the project.  |
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| **Please provide a brief project outline (approx. 500 – 600 words).** |
| This should include:* Who this project is aiming to help and why
* What will be delivered: how, where, when and by whom (give details on any and all partners involved)
* Any risks or challenges anticipated in achieving this – and how you intend to address these
* How the activity will address the digital skills gap in the Tay Cities Region
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| **Please provide more detail on the outcomes the project aims to support and evidence of need. (approx. 250 words), and provide the number of beneficiaries you intend to work with in the table below.** |
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| **Number of beneficiaries participating in project** | **Number of beneficiaries gaining qualification** | **Number of beneficiaries moving into education/ employment upon completion** |
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| **Do you intend to work with any of the following groups?** |
| Women People with disabilities (including neurodiversity) People from black, minority ethnic backgrounds People from low SMID areas People from rural or remote areasExisting workers to upskill or reskill  |

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| **Evaluation and sustainability: Please demonstrate the sustainability of the project. How will you capture, reflect on and share the impact of the project and any lesson’s learned? (approx. 300 words)** |
| Please include detail on: * Anticipated no positive progressions and anticipated outcomes
* Qualitative approaches to learning and measuring impact
* Plans for reflecting on findings and sharing them both internally and with others
* How sustainable the project is for your organisation upon project completion
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| **When will your project start and finish?**  |
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| **In which locality(ies) do you intend to be operating?** |
| Angus Dundee North East Fife Perth and Kinross  |

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| **Do you receive funding to delivery any other digital skills related activity? If yes, please provide details below.**  |
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**Section 4 – Budget Outline**

**Please provide a breakdown of how the funding will be used, including any partner costs.** These headings are intended to help you structure your budget, but you can delete or add lines and appropriate headings as required.

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| **STAFF/VOLUNTEER COSTS** (travel, training, sessional work costs etc.please add a row for each staff member) |  |
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| **VENUE HIRE COSTS** (room/venue/equipment hire etc)  |  |
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| **SUPPLIES & SERVICES** (training resources, publicity, etc)  |  |
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| **OTHER COSTS PLEASE SPECIFY** (events, engagement, research, evaluation, expenses for learners) |  |
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| **TOTAL** |  |

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| **If you have any match funding for this project please provide details below?**  |
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**Section 5 – Terms & Conditions of Grant**

**TERMS & CONDITIONS OF FIFE COUNCIL GRANT**

1. The organisation must be prepared to submit their written constitution and equal opportunities policy, if requested to do so and agree to the organisation's main contact details being publicly listed on the FifeDirect website.
2. The organisation must have a bank account in the name of that organisation. There must be at least two authorised signatories to this account who are members of the committee or the organisation. The two signatories should not be related and all cheques must be signed by both. If the committee decides to operate all or part of its financial matters via online banking, it shall make provision to ensure that two of the designated signatories shall approve all online payments. This should be done preferably in conjunction with the bank or, if this is not possible, through a procedure agreed by the committee.
3. Provision must be made for up-to-date accounts to be kept and for those accounts to be certified annually by an independent accountant or an independent responsible person. Accounts must clearly show Fife Council’s contribution to the organisation. The most recent accounts must be enclosed with this application.
4. The grant must only be used for the purpose for which it was approved by Fife Council. No aspect of the activity being funded should be party political in intention, use or presentation. At the end of a project, or in any case where the organisation ceases to exist, or where there is a breach of any grant conditions, any unspent grant will be repaid to Fife Council. In respect of equipment purchased with grant assistance, satisfactory storage facilities should be provided.
5. All organisations who receive grant aid from Fife Council will be subject to the Council’s Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures. Failure to comply with these procedures will result in support being withdrawn. Monies from only one Fife Council grant scheme can be used for any project. The organisation must be open to inspection by official representatives on request. The organisation will provide such financial or other information as Fife Council may request.
6. The whole amount of grant or, at the discretion of the appropriate Council Committee, part of that amount, shall be repaid to Fife Council if any information given in connection with the grant is found to be false or misleading, or fails to disclose a material fact bearing upon the consideration of the application.
7. The Organisation shall not unlawfully discriminate either directly or indirectly on such grounds as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, sex or sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing the Organisation shall not unlawfully discriminate within the meaning and scope of the “Equality Act 2010” or other relevant or equivalent legislation, or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof. The Organisation shall take all reasonable steps to secure the observance of this Condition by all employees and representatives of the Organisation. “
8. All organisations working with children, young people or vulnerable adults should ensure that in carrying out their activities, they meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. In particular, for all activities involving children, young people and adults at risk, a protection policy and procedures should be in place, with staff and volunteers being members of the PVG Scheme and having had appropriate criminal records checks carried out by Disclosure Scotland.
9. By submitting your application, you agree to allow Fife Council to retain your personal data on its database in order to process your application. We will use the information you give us to help assess your application and administer any grant we award you. We will also use this information to send you information on relevant funding seminars/funding bulletins. We may share your details with Fife voluntary Action (FVA) the 3rd Sector interface who represent third sector bodies.

**I have read and agreed to comply with the above conditions and confirm the information given is correct.**

**Signed:**  **Date:**

**Position in organisation:**

**Dundee’s UKSP Fund and Tay Cities Digital Skills Fund**

Dundee’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Tay Cities Deal Digital Skills programme, DigiTay, are both launching challenge funds with a focus on intermediate and higher-level digital skills on the 12th of February. The Dundee UKSPF team and the DigiTay team are working together to ensure we can deliver a quality programme of digital skills across the region to make sure public money is spent efficiently and effectively.

There main differences between the funds are:

* The Dundee UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme has grants of between £10,000 and £100,000, with programme delivery to be completed by March 2025. Eligible applicants include any legally constituted organisations with experience of delivering higher level digital skills. Clients must come from within Dundee.
* The DigiTay, Digital Skills Third Sector Challenge Fund will provide grants of between £5,000 and £45,000, with programme delivery to be completed by September 2025. Lead applicants must be third sector organisations. Clients can come from across the Tay Cities Region – Angus, Dundee, North East Fife and Perth and Kinross.

As a result, by submitting a bid to either programme, you agree to basic information about your application being shared with the assessment panels to ensure no duplication of activity etc. The information to be shared is:

* Applicant organisation
* Brief project description
* Number of clients
* Specific client characteristics e.g. SME upskilling, women returners
* Cost
* Qualifications (if any) proposed
* Timescales

**Section 6 – Certification**

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| ***To be completed by applicant*****I have read and agree to comply with the details of this fund and confirm the information given in this application is correct.****I confirm I have the required authorisation to sign and submit this application on behalf of the applicant organisation.** **(Electronic Signature with confirmation email is acceptable)**  |
| **Name** |  |
| **Job Title** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |

Please also provide a copy of the following documents:

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| * Constitution or other governing document
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| * Recent bank statement
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| * Public liability insurance certificate
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| * Any other relevant policies/documents (state below)
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**Section 7 – Application submission**

Please send your completed application form and supporting documentation to digitay@fife.gov.uk, by the deadline date of 17th March 2024.