

Digital Growth and Innovation Grant – Applicant Scoring Rubric

How to Use This Rubric

- Review** the scoring criteria before submitting your application.
- Self-score** your responses using the right-hand column.
- Make improvements** where necessary before submitting your final application.

Need Assistance?

If you identify challenges in digital literacy or infrastructure, contact Billie Roberts, Community Solutions Advisor, broberts@locusimpact.org, to explore training and support resources available to help you strengthen your business.

Instructions for Applicants:

This rubric outlines the criteria used by judges to assess digital growth and innovation grant applications. Use this as a self-assessment tool before submitting your application to ensure your responses align with the grant’s goals.

Scoring Criteria & Self-Assessment Guide

Category	What Judges Are Looking For	Max Points	Self-Assessment Score (0-10)
Business Eligibility	Must be a registered business in Tazewell or Buchanan County, VA. Preference for tourism, retail, food, and service-based businesses.	10	___ / 10
Foundational Knowledge & Investment	Business has participated in workshops, business training, or planning including meetings with SBDC, business challenges via the Chamber of Commerce or others...	10	___ / 10
Demonstrated Need for Digital Support	Clear digital readiness assessment showing a need for improvement. Identifies gaps in website, e-commerce, marketing, cybersecurity, or business tools. Strong justification for why funding is needed.	10	___ / 10
Project Feasibility & Sustainability	Well-defined project plan with clear goals. Feasible timeline within grant period. Business shows the capacity to implement and sustain digital improvements after the grant.	10	___ / 10
Potential Impact on Business Growth	Demonstrates potential to increase revenue, reach new customers, or improve efficiency. Addresses economic resilience and community impact.	10	___ / 10

	Clear explanation of how the grant will support long-term business growth.		
Budget Justification & Alignment	Budget is clear, reasonable, and aligns with project goals. Each cost is explained and supports digital growth (website, e-commerce, cybersecurity, etc.). Avoids unnecessary or unrelated expenses.	10	___ / 10
Digital Literacy	Business owner/team demonstrates the ability to manage digital tools. Identifies any training needs and how they will be addressed. Stronger digital skills lead to better sustainability of digital solutions.	10	___ / 10
Digital Infrastructure Readiness	Businesses have reliable internet access, computers, and software. Businesses with gaps may receive additional support if they are actively working toward improvement.	10	___ / 10
Applicant's Goals: Short-Term & Long-Term Viability	A well-defined short-term and long-term goal structure ensures the applicant has a clear vision for immediate implementation and sustained digital growth. Strong goals indicate that the applicant has a thoughtful plan for leveraging the grant both now and in the future.	10	___ / 10
Overall Proposal Quality	The application is well-written, clear, and structured. Responses are detailed and directly answer all questions. Avoids vague or incomplete answers.	10	___ / 10
TOTAL SELF ASSESSED SCORE			

Scoring Guide

- **90 - 100 Points:** Strong application, well-justified need, feasible plan, and high impact.
- **75 - 89 Points:** Good application, with minor gaps or areas needing more detail.
- **60 - 74 Points:** Fair application, but may lack clarity, feasibility, or alignment with grant goals.
- **Below 60 Points:** Weak application, missing critical details, or lacks alignment with funding purpose.

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