Digital Inclusion/Literacy

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MAY 24, 2022

BRIEFING BY BRIAN DILLARD,
CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER

Council Priorities

Overview of City's Digital Inclusion Efforts

Recommendations for EWDC Consideration

Council Input

Next Steps

Presentation Overview

City Council Priorities:

- Digital Inclusion and Literacy
  - Seniors
  - Youth
  - Workforce Development
  - High Need Communities in D1, D2, D3, D4 & D5

- Initiatives to address barriers to access, including availability, affordability, and adoption

Current Digital Inclusion Efforts and Alignment

- Affordable Connectivity Program Awareness Campaign

- Emergency Connectivity Fund

- Meetings with Internet Service Providers (ISP)

- GIS map w/ equity and digital divide layers

- Partnership with Bexar County

- Shared alignment with Digital Equity Roadmap

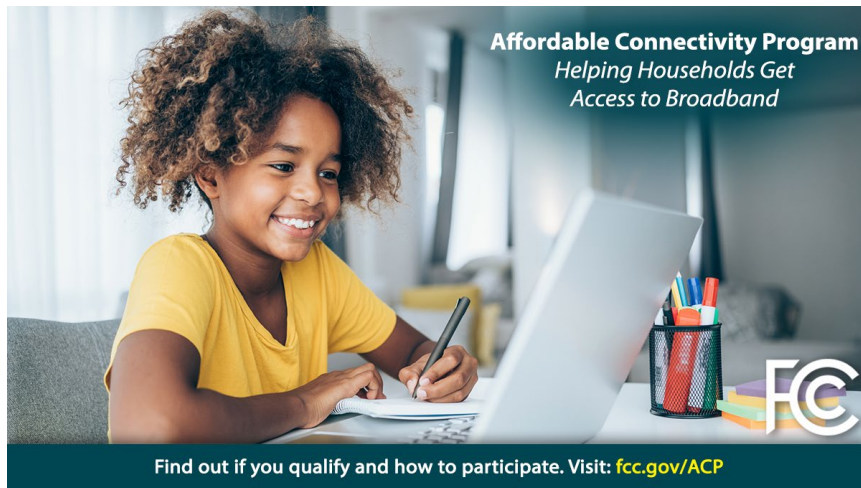- Texas Collaborative – shared aspirations, collaboration, and best practices

Affordable Connectivity Program - $14.2B

Program's Objective

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare and more.

Affordable Connectivity Program
Helping Households Get Access to Broadband

Find out if you qualify and how to participate. Visit: fcc.gov/ACP

Program Benefits

- Provides a discount of up to $30 per month toward cell phone or household internet service for eligible households
- Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers
- As of May 9th, three local providers are offering ACP-eligible households internet plans at $30 per month, which would result in no cost to the customer

Affordable Connectivity Program Awareness Campaign

Strategies currently being deployed:
- Promotional flyers to distribute to City Departments, Council Offices, Bexar County, & community-based organizations
- Radio ads (English & Spanish)
- ACP webinars and community events
- Door hanger campaign
- SMS campaign
- Social media promotion

Emergency Connectivity Fund

Program & Alignment

- Application opened April 28th, 2022 & proposals were due on May 13th, 2022
- SAPL submitted a proposal for $150,404 to sustain work being done with OATS and OASIS

Recommendations for EWDC Consideration

- Middle Mile Grant Program

- Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) Program

Middle Mile Grant Program - $1B

PROGRAM OVERVIEW FEATURES

OTHER KEY

- Expand middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas.
- Funds can be used for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure, to include:
  - Construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment
  - Engineering design, permitting and work related to project reviews
  - Personnel costs

Matching requirement
Eligible entities must provide at least 30% match

Middle Mile Grant Program

Strategy for EWDC Consideration:

- Funding Timeline: applications due September 30th, 2022
- Selections by February 16, 2023
- Funds would come directly to City, but with a 30% matching requirement
- Matching can potentially take $6.9M to $23M for middle mile infrastructure

Project Timeline:

- Selected entities agree to complete the buildout described in the application by no later than five (5) years after the date on which amounts from the grant are made available

Consideration: Hold $6.9M for IIJA Middle Mile Grant Program matching?

Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment - $42.45B

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

1 Unserved locations
No access to 25/3 Mbps

2 Underserved locations
No access to 100/20 Mbps

3 Community anchor institutions
Without gigabit connections

OTHER KEY FEATURES

Quality requirements

Specific network requirements are included e.g., speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps

Matching requirement

Eligible entities must ensure that they or a subgrantee provide at least 25% match *(unless waiver granted)*

Low-cost plan requirement

Required to offer a low-cost plan to eligible subscribers
(to be determined by NTIA)

Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment

Strategy for EWDC Consideration:

- NOFO Timeline: TBD, but tentatively late 2023 or early 2024

- Funds go to state's BDO 1st and then City applies to state, but with a 25% matching requirement

- Matching can potentially take $6.9M to $27M for broadband expansion

Consideration: Hold $6.9M for IIJA BEAD matching?

Plan Components for Discussion

Collect EWDC feedback for digital inclusion/literacy priorities

COVID-19 Impact	Program/Strategies	Equitable Outcomes	Performance Indicators	Amount
Digital Divide	Infrastructure/Middle Mile Alignment/Matching	Priority: D1, D2, D3, D4 & D5	# of middle mile infrastructure # of ISP partnerships Cost reduction for last mile	$6.9 Million
Digital Divide	Infrastructure/BEAD Alignment/Matching	Priority: D1, D2, D3, D4 & D5	# of Households connected # of ISP partnerships # of City facilities connected # of anchor institutions connected	$6.9 Million
Digital Divide				
Digital Divide				
Digital Divide				
Digital Divide				

Next Steps:

- **With today's feedback from EWDC**
- **Staff will develop a plan that:**
  - Identifies COVID-19 Impact
  - Responds to impact, benefits those impacted, and promotes equitable outcomes
  - Define key outcome goals & performance indicators
  - Includes a four-year implementation plan
    - (funds committed by December 2024 & spend by December 2026)
- **Secure plan approvals from:**
  - Economic and Workforce Development Committee
  - City Council

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-Digital Inclusion/Literacy

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