



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: {{item.number}}

Agenda Date: May 24, 2022

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Office of Innovation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brian Dillard

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on City's current digital inclusion efforts and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds for Digital Inclusion/Digital Literacy.

SUMMARY:

This item is a briefing on immediate digital inclusion efforts City staff will undertake to address digital inclusion as well as digital inclusion/literacy strategies for Economic and Workforce Development Committee (EWDC) consideration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On March 11, 2021, Congress signed into law ARPA which included resources to support local government's response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of San Antonio was awarded \$326.9 million in State and local Fiscal Recovery Funds. As part of the FY 2022 Budget process, City Council approved \$97.50 million to support the city budget and address community needs. On November 18, 2021, Council approved an additional \$30.0 million for utility

assistance. The remaining \$199.4 million remained unallocated and was intended to be awarded following a community engagement process that began in the fall of 2021.

Following a community engagement process, on January 26, 2022, staff presented a recommended spending framework reflecting the Community and City Council Input. The final spending framework was approved by City Council on February 3, 2022. The approved spending framework included \$87.8 million recommended for programmatic funding with \$6.9 million dedicated to support Digital Inclusion.

In April 2022, the Department of Human Services presented to the Economic and Workforce Development Committee (EWDC) current investments and initiatives related to Digital Inclusion and reviewed the feedback received by City Council in March 2022. At this meeting the EWDC provided preliminary feedback on priorities for Digital Inclusion/Literacy investments.

According to the 2020 Digital Inclusion Survey and Assessment (DISA), about twenty percent of San Antonio households don't have access to reliable broadband internet in the home there by creating disparities between those that are connected and those that aren't. COVID-19 has only aggravated those disparities especially for traditionally underserved communities.

ISSUE:

This item is a briefing on immediate digital inclusion efforts City staff will undertake to address digital inclusion as well as digital inclusion/literacy strategies for Economic and Workforce Development Committee (EWDC) consideration.

City staff is currently working on digital inclusion efforts as well as shaping digital inclusion/literacy strategies for EWDC consideration based on Council feedback and priorities. Below is a brief summary of each item:

Emergency Connectivity Fund

- Eligible schools and libraries can apply to cover reasonable costs of laptop and tablet computers; Wi-Fi hotspots; modems; routers; and broadband connectivity purchases for off-campus use by students, school staff, and library patrons
- Library applied for \$150,404 in Emergency Connectivity Fund support
- Application opened April 28th, 2022 and proposals were due on May 13th, 2022

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Campaign

June-September 2022 Implementations in English & Spanish:

- Flyers and newsletters across City, County, community-based organizations, and Council
- Radio ads
- Door to door hanger campaign
- SAWS & CPS bill

Exploring Broadband Infrastructure Expansion for EWDC Consideration - \$6.9M

1st opportunity is through the Middle Mile Grant Program

- Applications are due September 30th, 2022

- Funds would come directly to City with a 30% matching requirement
- 2nd opportunity is through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program
- Timeline is tentatively late 2023 or early 2024.
 - Funds are first allocated to the State, the City would have to apply for funds with a 25% matching requirement

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.