



City Council Report

Date: May 1, 2023
To: City Council
Through: Natalie Lewis, Deputy City Manager
Michael Kennington, Deputy City Manager/Chief Financial Officer
From: Polly Bonnett, Library Director
Travis Cutright, Chief Information Officer
Subject: Grant Award from the FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund – Home Broadband Routers for Distribution via Mesa Library

Purpose and Recommendation

The Library Services Department and Department of Innovation and Technology are requesting that the City Council authorize the City Manager or designee to enter into a Grant Award with the Federal Communications Commission Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF), to accept \$189,525 in grant funds for the purchase and distribution of home internet routers through the Mesa Public Library.

Background

The City is building a 10 square mile network of cellular and Wi-Fi broadband, targeting areas of West Mesa identified by federal maps and Mesa Public Schools surveys as the area of highest broadband internet need in the city. Mesa Public Schools (MPS) agreed to purchase routers for student need in this geographic area, however the community contains many households without MPS students including students who attend non-MPS schools and households with no school-aged children.

The FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund was created to help with the capital costs of delivering broadband access to households during the pandemic. This allocation of funds is only available through the end of June 2023, allowing the City to use these funds to purchase up to 500 home routers, usable on Mesa cellular and Wi-Fi networks. The devices selected are the same as those MPS will purchase for student families, with the internet protections and heat resistance appropriate for use in Arizona communities.

Discussion

The challenge of delivering broadband internet to Mesa's most underserved communities is as multifaceted as the diversity of our residents. The Mesa Public Library is already a hub where residents can come for internet access services via our Library patron computers. This investment extends that commitment to digital literacy and access.

Alternatives

If this Grant Award is declined, the Library Services Department and Department of Innovation and Technology will still support the City's efforts to distribute internet routers via Mesa Public Schools, however the City will not have additional hardware for families not enrolled in MPS.

Fiscal Impact

The award amount is \$189,525.00 and no match is required. The Library Services Department and Department of Innovation and Technology personnel will be responsible for purchasing the hardware and submitting invoices to the FCC ECF. The FCC will remit monies due upon receipt of the invoices.

Coordinated With

Library Services Department and the Department of Innovation and Technology.