



Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Public Schools IT Digital Equity Collaborative

2022 Trailblazer Application - Indicator 6

Your local government is taking steps to increase affordability of home broadband service.

Checklist (Must meet 1 of 4)

- Your local government has implemented ordinances or processes to increase broadband competition with at least one end goal being reducing household broadband prices.
- Your local government owns a broadband network and creates one or more broadband service tiers that are more affordable than existing offers.
- Your local government offers or sponsors free broadband service for the use of residents within their homes, at speeds sufficient to accomplish tasks such as distance learning or teleworking.
- Local government provides payment assistance for broadband services.

Supporting documentation (Must meet 1 of 4):

1. The local ordinance or document of processes to increase broadband competition with at least one end goal being reducing household broadband prices.
2. Documentation of the municipal broadband network's tier offerings
3. Materials describing or promoting free broadband service for the use of residents within their homes.
4. Materials describing or promoting payment assistance for broadband services.

The local ordinance or document of processes to increase broadband competition with at least one end goal being reducing household broadband prices

In 2006, the City of Minneapolis contracted with USI Wireless of Minnetonka to provide Minneapolis with cutting-edge broadband technology. USI Wireless is a private company that owns, builds and manages the wireless network.

The wireless network covers all 59 square miles of Minneapolis providing residents, businesses and visitors with wireless broadband access anywhere in the City. The network allows the City to deliver services more efficiently and effectively, and provide residents and businesses a local, alternative internet service provider.

The contract is still in effect and includes these community benefits

- A low-cost home Internet option



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- Free outdoor hot spots
- Free accounts for community technology training locations

More information

- [Minneapolis City Council approval of Minneapolis Wireless Broadband Initiative](#)
 - Includes reference about providing affordable broadband internet services to City residents and businesses.
 - Council Action Date: 02/24/2006; Action Number: 2006A-0168
- [Minneapolis Internet Services](#)
- USI Wireless website
 - [About USI](#)
 - [USI residential wireless internet](#)

Materials describing or promoting payment assistance for broadband services

Minneapolis Public Schools

24,000 checked-out devices

3,500 hotspots actively being used

[Internet Resources — The Source \(mpls.k12.mn.us\)](#)

Hennepin County Board Action Request, July 20, 2021

21-0263 Connectivity: A combination of wired and wireless partnerships to address rural connectivity barriers and affordability issues among low-income residents. Partnerships with internet service providers are being pursued to bridge gaps in home and mobile internet access. The county would not become an internet service provider.

City of Minneapolis - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds

The City of Minneapolis is directing \$2 million of its ARPA funds to digital equity services.

[City Capacity and Performance \(opengov.com\)](#)

City funds are being directed to the County to provide payment assistance for broadband services, such as:

- Provide eligible households within the service area with assistance in accessing the network. This assistance may include: subscriptions to the network (or vouchers/subsidies to reduce cost); receivers, routers, or similar in-home devices; laptops or other connectivity devices needed to access the network; technical assistance; and programs to help persons within the service area gain digital literacy.
- Broadband vouchers: The Program may include use of City Funds to purchase internet vouchers for use by economically disadvantaged households.
- Hotspots: The Program may include use of the City Funds for purchase of and provision to economically disadvantaged residents of internet hotspots.



- Equipment, technical assistance, digital literacy: The City Funds may also be used to provide recipients of vouchers or hotspots with receivers, routers, or similar in-home devices; laptops or other connectivity devices needed to access the network; technical assistance; and programs to help recipients gain digital literacy. The City and the County will collaborate in selecting the types of assistance that will be offered.



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June 30, 2022