

# Hamilton County Public Wi-Fi Grant Program

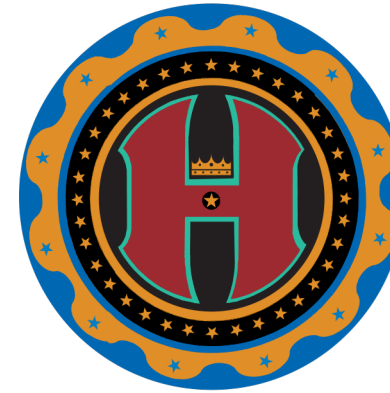
Request for Proposal — Information Session





# ARP Funding

- Hamilton County received \$158 million in federal support through the US Treasury from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF).
- The Board of Commissioners has set priorities and created programs and funds to address a wide range of relief services.
- The Commissioners allocated \$1.5 million to support increased broadband access through free public Wi-Fi in underserved areas of the County.



## Hamilton County





## Partners and Roles

### Hamilton County Board of Commissioners

- Created the fund
- Allocated ARP funding
- Defined fund priorities

### United Way of Greater Cincinnati

- Run proposal and selection process
- Subcontract with selected grantees and disburse funding
- Collect required expense source documentation and other reporting elements

### Selected Grantees

- Installation of free public Wi-Fi to benefit underserved populations

# Purpose



Organizations can apply for funding to install public Wi-Fi by providing expanded infrastructure to county residents and to expand affordable access to broadband internet.



Public Wi-Fi is defined as Wi-Fi service provided for use by consumers on a wireless device, and is password protected or has other secure authentication protocols established and managed by the owner. Public Wi-Fi networks are open to anyone who can access them.



# Basics

- The minimum grant request is \$10,000 and the maximum is \$200,000.
- The program will consist of two rounds of funding: 75% or \$1,068,750 is anticipated to be awarded in the first round and the remainder (about \$356,250) will be awarded in the second round.
- **Deadline for applications Round 1 is Friday, March 8, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**
- **Deadline for applications for Round 2 is Friday, April 5, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**
- Expect to communicate decisions by April.
- Contracts expected to end July 2025.

# Organizational Eligibility

*For profit companies, community organizations without 501(c)(3) status, individuals, internet service providers and schools are not eligible to receive funds.*

Eligibility Type 1: Local Government	Eligibility Type 2: Community Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Be a local government within Hamilton County, Ohio (township, village or city), <b>AND</b></li><li>•Not use Hamilton County American Rescue Plan funding in place of or instead of local, state, federal or other funds already designated for that purpose or activity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Be organized as a nonprofit entity under the laws of the State of Ohio and recognized as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service (this includes Community Development Corporations),</li><li>•Is operated for charitable or community benefit purposes,</li><li>•Its principal place of business and location(s) where services are rendered is in Hamilton County,</li><li>•Be registered and in good standing with the State of Ohio Attorney General’s Office (see Resource Section), <b>AND</b></li><li>•Not use Hamilton County American Rescue Plan funding in place of or instead of local, state, federal or other funds already designated for that purpose or activity.</li></ul>



## Other Key Criteria

- Must be able to provide evidence of organization's capability to sustain (pay for) infrastructure for at least 3 years after the end of the contract (~July 2025).
- Must provide expanded and affordable broadband infrastructure to an underserved population with an identified need for additional broadband investment. Examples of need include:
  - Lack of access to a reliable high-speed broadband connection
  - Lack of affordable broadband
  - Lack of reliable service





# Program Details

- 1. Experience*
- 2. Plan to Expand Broadband Infrastructure*
- 3. Budget*
- 4. Procurement*
- 5. Compliance & Monitoring*





# Experience

- Grant management history
- Construction Management experience
- Current free public Wi-Fi infrastructure
- Other relevant information including collaborations, if applicable



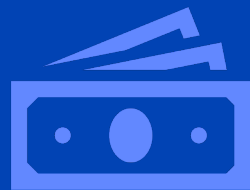


# Plan to Expand Broadband

- You will need to describe your plan to expand free public Wi-Fi access with specific details including locations, number, range, number of potential people served, etc.
- Your project must provide broadband infrastructure to underserved populations or areas of Hamilton County.
  - How to demonstrate?
    - Including but not limited to: documentation of existing broadband internet service performance, federal and/or state collected broadband data, user speed test results, interviews with community members and business owners, reports from community organizations
- You must be clear about how the public will be able to access the free Wi-Fi.



**Funding requests are a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$200,000.**



**A match for the project itself, including construction, installation, etc. is OPTIONAL.**



**Grantees must provide free public Wi-Fi for 36 months after the end of the contract.\***

- Must describe how, including:
  - Funding source (whether projected or secured)
  - Timeline



*\*Expected July 2025*

# Budget

- Budget Narrative questions will include the identification of other funds if applicable, justification of each budget item, as well a timeline to demonstrate how your organization will ensure the funds are completely spent by July 31, 2025.
- You must not request or use funds for which you have funding another source (prohibition against supplanting).

Expanded Wi-Fi Expenses	Hamilton County Public Wi-Fi ARP Funds	Other Funds
Computer/Network Upgrades, Access Points, Hotspots, Mounting Materials, Etc.		
Simple Installation		
Activation Fees		
Construction		
Monthly Service Fees * Treasury Interim Obligation Rule		
Other – define		
Other – define		
<b>Total</b>		





# Subscription Commitment

- In order to receive a grant to provide or expand broadband infrastructure under this program, organizations must demonstrate how they will continue to fund the monthly costs of the infrastructure for at least 36 months after the contract term has ended (roughly August 2025 – July 2028).
- Insufficiently demonstrating the ability to continue maintenance of the infrastructure will result in disqualification of your application.



# Procurement



- All grantees must follow federal procurement policies and procedures, which includes a competitive bidding process. UW will provide guidance to grantees. You may **not** begin this process until after award.



- Projects must meet high-speed technical standards of 100 Mbps download and upload speeds. In cases where it is not practicable, because of the excessive cost of the project or geography or topography of the area to be served by the project, eligible projects may be designed to reliably meet or exceed 100/20 Mbps and be scalable to a minimum of symmetrical 100 Mbps download and upload speeds.



- Grantees must require the service provider for a broadband project that provides service to households to either: Participate in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or Provide access to a broad-based affordability program to low-income consumers that provides benefits commensurate to ACP.



# Required Uploads

## Local Governments

- Financial Duplication of Benefits Certification

## Non-Profits

- State of Ohio Attorney General Charitable Organization Registration
- 501(c)(3) documentation
- Financial Duplication of Benefits Certification



# Compliance and Monitoring

- Funding will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Grantees will need to submit procurement and related documentation as well as proof of expenses for reimbursement.
- Grantees will also need to report on demographics of those served as well as specific broadband related data for ARPA.





# Contacts

- Please contact an Internet Service Provider if you are interested in this program, but are not currently working on a plan to expand your broadband infrastructure.
  - *Please note, you will still need to comply with federal procurement guidelines, which likely means doing a competitive sealed bid process.*
  - *Also note, that neither UWGC nor Hamilton County endorses one internet service provider over another for the purposes of this program.*



# Scenarios & Examples



# Scenarios and Examples

## Scenario 1

My organization is a nonprofit that provides free Wi-Fi to community members who come in to receive services.

**Are we eligible to apply for funding?**



# Scenarios and Examples

## Scenario 1

My organization is a nonprofit that provides free Wi-Fi to community members who come in to receive services.

**Are we eligible to apply for funding?**

**YES... IF**

you can demonstrate that the Wi-Fi is free and accessible to the public. This will include an explanation as to how you inform community members how to access the Wi-Fi.





# Scenarios and Examples

## Scenario 2

We are a nonprofit located within the City of Cincinnati.

**Are we eligible to apply?**



# Scenarios and Examples

## Scenario 2

We are a nonprofit located within the City of Cincinnati.

**Are we eligible to apply?**

**YES**

Organizations and local governments anywhere in Hamilton County, Ohio may apply. For those located in two counties (ex: Milford), the Wi-Fi locations and infrastructure must all be located within Hamilton County.



# Scenarios and Examples

## Scenario 3

We run a digital skills training program to help underserved populations successfully explore and apply for job opportunities. This includes using devices and internet for email and online applications.

**Are we eligible to apply?**



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We run a digital skills training program to help underserved populations successfully explore and apply for job opportunities. This includes using devices and internet for email and online applications.

**Are we eligible to apply?**

**NO**

If you are only applying to support your services, you are **not** eligible for this grant. To be eligible, you would need to apply for resources to provide free and accessible public wi-fi.



# Scenarios and Examples

## Scenario 4

We are interested in applying but have not yet scoped out costs or we don't yet have a provider.

**Are we eligible to apply?**



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## Scenario 4

We are interested in applying but have not yet scoped out costs or we don't yet have a provider.

**Are we eligible to apply?**

**YES**

Please contact an Internet Service Provider to help scope out the project and costs (remember you will still have to go out to bid!). You may benefit from Round 2 with the later deadline.





# Proposal Selection

# Proposal Process



Details and requirements for proposals are explained in the Hamilton County Public Wi-Fi Request for Proposal at [www.uwgc.org/digital-equity](http://www.uwgc.org/digital-equity).

Once the online portal, e-C Impact, opens on February 8, complete the application:

1. Enter answers to application questions online.
2. Upload required documentation.

**Applications are due at 5:00 p.m. on Friday March 8<sup>th</sup> for consideration in Round 1**

Late applications will be considered during Round 2

**Applications are due at 5:00 p.m. on Friday April 5<sup>th</sup> for consideration in Round 2**

Late applications will be deemed ineligible and will not receive funding

# Selection Criteria



All applications will first be evaluated for completeness and eligibility.

Criteria	Evaluation	Scoring
Experience - Grants	Experience with federal grants and/or other grants that require significant documentation of expenses.	0 to 3 points
Experience -Construction	Experience managing construction projects, particularly involving competitive procurement.	0 to 7 points
Outcome and Residents Served	Plan to increase Wi-Fi service to include increased bandwidth, distance, speed, number of people served, etc.	0 to 20 points
Need for Service	Justification for the need of the service including service gaps in community	0 to 10 points
Budget	Budget justification and description of expenses; Can demonstrate the ability to pay for continued FREE public Wi-Fi services for at least 36 months after contract ends.	0 to 10 points
Sustainability	Clearly demonstrate ability to sustain free public Wi-Fi services for at least 36 months after ARPA funding ceases or actionable steps to be able to maintain the system.	0 to 10 points
<b>Max Total Points</b>		<b>60 Points</b>



# Additional Resources

- FAQs at [www.uwgc.org/digital-equity](http://www.uwgc.org/digital-equity)
- A Decision Tree/Flowchart to help organizations determine whether they should apply to this **Hamilton County Public Wi-Fi program** or **UWGC's Digital Equity Grant Program**, will be on our website along with more information about UWGC's Digital Equity Grant Program.



# UWGC Digital Equity Grant Program

## Separate opportunity for nonprofits!

- This request for proposals seeks programs that bridge the digital divide, fostering inclusivity and accessibility. We invite proposals for innovative digital inclusion solutions, empowering diverse populations to navigate the digital landscape with confidence and competence.
- Applicants must be a 501(C)3 and operate in UWGC's 9-county footprint.
- Applicants can apply for both programs, if both are a good fit.
- The program will run generally concurrently with the Hamilton County Public Wi-Fi program, with applications opening February 8th and due March 8th.
- Funding amounts are expected to \$25,000 - \$50,000.
- Visit [www.uwgc.org/digital-equity](http://www.uwgc.org/digital-equity) and navigate to the section for UWGC's Digital Equity Grant Program for more information, including a Decision Tree to help you decide which program is the best funding for your organization.



# Questions?

- Send questions to [impact@uwgc.org](mailto:impact@uwgc.org)
- Attend one of the upcoming Q&A sessions (links will be on our website)
  - Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 2:00pm: Q&A Session — Click [here](#) to register.
  - Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 2:00pm: Q&A Session
  - Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 10:00am: Q&A Session
  - Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 2:00pm: Q&A Session for Round 2 Applicants
- Access online materials at [www.uwgc.org/digital-equity](http://www.uwgc.org/digital-equity)





# Q&A