What Low-Income Residents Need from a Citywide Broadband Network

Compiled by

The following recommendations have been developed by a diversity of stakeholders, including local community residents and leaders (as articulated at the Digital Junction conference and C-CAN/Alliance for Metropolitan Stability roundtable meetings), and community leaders active in Digital Divide efforts—informed by representatives from other cities undergoing similar networki buildouts.

This is a preliminary document, intended to stimulated discussions with Broadband vendors about community development needs and the needs of low-income residents.

Our objective is to negotiate a community benefits agreement between our colaition of local non-profits, and the selected City of Minneapolis broadband vendor. Our goal is to insure that new broadband network and services (using City assets and rights of way) adequately addresses-- and helps reduce—the gap in technology access and literacy in low-income and new immigrant populations.

Desired Community Benefits from Broadband/IP Contract between the City of Minneapolis and Selected Vendor

Access Issues: Requirements

1. Lowest cost basic consumer rates, in the range of $14.95-$21.95/mo.
2. Minimum of 1MBPS consumer service over 100% of city addresses, prefer up to 3MBPS service
3. Free 60 day service, to test drive the system.
4. Must be easy for residents to both sign up for and cancel subscription.
5. Subsidized accounts for up to 7,000 low-income city residents, qualifications to be determined by Digital Inclusion advisory board (see #6 below)
6. Subsidized **or free** accounts for all registered 501c3 non-profit organizations ($19.95/mo- at higher bandwidth, 5-10 mbps)
7. Free Zones: free 5-10 MBPS service to community technology centers, City parks and City libraries inside the Empowerment Zone boundaries
8. Digital Inclusion Investment; $250K up-front to fund a "Minneapolis Digital Inclusion Fund". This fund will be managed by a community foundation, with a diverse advisory board of representatives from the City, **the Vendor**, **small businesses**, and local Non-Profit organizations. Funds will support one full-time Digital Inclusion program officer, and provide support for focus groups, constituent outreach and education efforts during the network build-out phase (year one). Board will also oversee revenues from monthly surcharge (see below) and oversee/allocate mini-grants for demonstration and tech literacy projects.
9. Monthly surcharge on all accounts, (2% On all business and consumer accounts), to continue funding the Digital Inclusion Fund.
    ***Earthlink agreed to provide 5% of their revenue to purchase computers for 10,000 families**

10. $75K annual support for the AmeriCorps Community Technology Empowerment Program (CTEP), placing 15 full-time AmeriCorps members in Minneapolis CTC, libraries and NPO agencies to build technology literacy capacity and programming (=$5000.00 each member) Funds could come from Digital Inclusion Fund after year 2.
11. **Participation in Digital Inclusion Advisory Board by 1 company representative at the most and 1 city representative at the most. The remaining members will be from the community.**

Content Issues: Requirements

12. In-kind support for designing localized "start page" templates, content author/publisher training, and website hosting.
13. Initial or network login page information should be available to anyone who can find and choose this network: no login or access permissions needed to view the following "walled garden" content (available in

multilingual, A/V forms as needed).

- Critical Public Health & Safety Information- Bulletins
- Notice of Public Meetings, City and Neighborhood, NRP, etc.
- How to sign up for an account
- How to qualify for a subsidized account
- School closings notices
- Snow Emergency Information
- Critical Street Closures, detours
- Police, Fire and Safety numbers, 311 Directory?
- Other critical information (?)

Other Requirements

14. Local preference in hiring regarding wiring and installation crews and support center staff (vendor).
15. Subsidized CPE hardware to consumers and small businesses
16. Vendor would allow businesses to share their signal with surrounding area via Hot Zones.
17. 25 free standing, full service Internet Kiosks located in public buildings, airports, libraries, etc; (illustrating visitor, public health and other relevant information on start screens, depending on location).
18. Create Partnership with specific hardware companies to provide lowest cost WIFI cards, hardware upgrades and replacement laptops to qualifying consumers, small businesses, and Non Profit Organizations.