

DESIGNATING AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS TO BE USED BY THE BROADBAND COMMITTEE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM UNITED WAY OF THE GREATER CHIPPEWA VALLEY AND EAU CLAIRE COUNTY BROADBAND EXPANSION

WHEREAS, with the COVID-19 pandemic the lack of service through Eau Claire County and the need for broadband service in underserved areas has become more apparent as many people in those areas were not able to connect to work, school or healthcare services through the internet; and

WHEREAS, among other things, one of the permitted uses of ARPA funds is investment into Broadband infrastructure, that would help to expansion of broadband services to the rural areas of Eau Claire County; and

WHEREAS, Eau Claire County has already created a Broadband Committee that is charged with the mission of exploring ways to expand broadband services to the residents in rural areas of Eau Claire County that are not currently served by broadband services; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the Digital Equity and Inclusion Program and the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley and Eau Claire County is to bridge the digital divide throughout Eau Claire County, supported by the United Way's connecting with stakeholders in the community to promote digital equity and inclusion based on the four pillars of digital equity and inclusion:

- Access to high-speed internet service
- Access to internet capable devices
- Access to digital literacy training
- Access to quality technical support; and

WHEREAS, the collaboration between Eau Claire County and United Way will focus on the following priority populations and organizations:

- *Individuals and Community based organizations in “broadband deserts” or areas of limited broadband connectivity.
 - *Under-resourced schools in or near broadband deserts.
 - *Households with school aged children.
 - *Under-resourced schools or other education-focused community organizations.
 - *Persons seeking employment, especially employment requiring moderate to high digital skill and/or other opportunities for “up-skilling.”
 - *Vulnerable populations, such as those experiencing domestic violence or homelessness;
- and

WHEREAS, the estimated cost for the first year of the project is \$78,625. This project has been awarded a PSC grant that will provide \$58,968.75 toward the first-year funding; and

WHEREAS, to accomplish the goal of digital equity and inclusion, the Broadband Committee is requesting funding from Eau Claire County through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and other funding sources over a period two years. The request from Eau Claire County ARPA funding is:

- Year 1 – \$19,656.25
- Year 2 – \$79,920
- Total request – \$99,576.25

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors designates a total of \$99,576.25, consisting of a Year 1 contribution of \$19,656.25 and a Year 2 contribution of \$79,920.00 for a total of \$99,576.25, to be provided for through the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to be used as funding for the Digital Equity and Inclusion Program United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley and Eau Claire County Broadband Expansion project for the expansion of broadband service within Eau Claire County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the funds shall be administered by the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley and Eau Claire County.

ADOPTED: July 19, 2022

Sue McDonald
County Clerk