



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: INFORMATION SERVICES

File #: 20-788

Board Meeting Date: 10/20/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael P. Callagy, County Manager
Jon Walton, Chief Information Officer

Subject: Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project Funds Allocation Revision

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to adopt a resolution:

A) Approving the reallocation of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, And Economic Security (CARES) Act funds within the Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project budget; and

B) Authorizing:

1. An amendment to the agreement with Kaizen Technology Partners, LLC for project management, data analysis and application development, increasing the agreement amount by \$81,600 to an amount not to exceed \$ 576,600; and
2. An amendment to the agreement with Strategy of Things, LLC for outreach and coordination services, increasing the agreement amount by \$36,000 to an amount not to exceed \$136,000.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, as well as local and state shelter-in-place orders, families and students began working and distancing learning from home over video conferencing platforms. The proliferation of students engaged in distance learning revealed significant internet connectivity challenges, especially those serving students in vulnerable communities.

During the 2020-2021 school year, it is anticipated that San Mateo County school districts will continue to use distance learning until the risk of COVID-19 has been abated. The effective implementation of distance learning requires access to reliable and fast internet service, which not all San Mateo County students currently have.

On August 4, 2020 your Board adopted Resolution No. 077629 authorizing the use of \$2,879,010 of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds for the purposes of funding the “Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project” to establish and/or improve high-speed internet access for disadvantaged families and students faced with imminent distance learning.

Original Project components and the allocation of funds included in Resolution No. 077629, as approved on August 4, 2020:

Expansion of San Mateo County Public WiFi (Smartwave Technologies - \$1,916,585)

Provision of Mobile Wireless Access Points (Smartwave Technologies - \$250,620)

Project management, data analysis, and data modeling services (Kaizen Technology Partners - \$495,000)

Data Collection/Analysis Services & Outreach Communication Services (Strategy of Things - \$100,000)

Provision of Mobile “Hotspots” (T-Mobile - estimated at \$78,000)

Provision of In-Home Internet Access (Comcast - estimated at \$38,805)

DISCUSSION:

To enable students to effectively engage in distance learning, the County launched a pilot project in partnership with the San Mateo County Office of Education, La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District, Ravenswood City School District, Redwood City School District, and Sequoia Union High School District to improve high-speed internet access for disadvantaged students in those districts (the “Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project” or the “Project”). The Project will provide up to 12 months of internet access for more than 1,200 students living in East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and unincorporated San Mateo County in the communities of La Honda, Loma Mar, Pescadero, and San Gregorio.

The scope of the Project includes a variety of internet access solutions to provide and improve internet service including expansion of the County’s Public Wi-Fi network and in-home internet access as well as the distribution of mobile hotspots and mobile wireless access points. The primary goal of this phase of the project is to build out the County’s Public WiFi to expand coverage in communities where there is a dense population of students. The current solution will allow an estimated 972 students and their families to connect to the internet via Public WiFi. These students attend the Ravenswood, Redwood City Elementary, Sequoia, and La Honda/Pescadero school districts.

The Project has made great progress since the Board approval on August 4, 2020. The following adjustments have been made to the allocation of funds while remaining within the approved budget of \$2,879,010:

- (a) Decrease the allocation of budget by \$633,838 for Expansion of San Mateo County Public WiFi (Smartwave Technologies) to an amount of \$1,282,747.
- (b) Increase the allocation of budget by combined total of \$633,838 for Outreach and Communication (Strategy of Things), ISD staff costs, Project Management (Kaizen Technology

Partners), and Internet Service Provider upgrades.

Specific components that are required to continue with the success of the project:

Project Management, Data Analysis and Development. (Increasing the agreement amount by \$81,600 to an amount not to exceed \$576,600).

Kaizen Technology Partners has been providing project management, data analysis and application development for the Internet Connectivity pilot project. The original scope of the budget covered the two initial pilot sites. The expansion by two additional pilot sites has required that we allocate further funding for Kaizen to cover project management and application maintenance to a total of four sites. The funds to cover this additional cost do not require an increase in budget and will be allocated from the reduction in costs of the WiFi expansion (discussed in (a) above).

Outreach and Communication coordination. (Increasing the agreement amount by \$36,000 to an amount not to exceed \$136,000). Strategy of Things has been providing the outreach and coordination services for the Internet Connectivity pilot project. The original scope of the budget covered the two initial pilot sites. The expansion to the additional two pilot sites has required that we allocate further funding for Strategy of Things to cover outreach and coordination. The funds to cover this additional cost do not require an increase in budget and will be allocated from the reduction in costs of the WiFi expansion (discussed in (a) above).

County ISD Department Staff (\$253,838). Funds have been reallocated to cover the costs of the County staff that are working on and supporting the Internet Connectivity pilot project and to support the two additional pilot projects that were added. The funds to cover this additional cost do not require an increase in budget and will be allocated from the reduction in costs of the WiFi expansion (discussed in (a) above).

Internet Service Provider Upgrades (\$120,000). Funds have been reallocated to cover the County costs of upgrades as required by Internet Service Providers to support the Public WiFi expansion across all pilot sites. Examples of upgrades include new internet data lines (referred to as “Backhaul”) and upgrade of existing lines to support higher bandwidth. The funds to cover this additional cost do not require an increase in budget and will be allocated from the reduction in costs of the WiFi expansion (discussed in (a) above).

The recommended changes to these components will enable ISD, and the ISD contractors, to continue to work with the four pilot school districts to provide connectivity options to over 2,000 of the 5,000 students identified by the school districts as needing internet connectivity for distance learning.

This Resolution contains the County’s standard provisions allowing amendments of the County’s fiscal obligations by a maximum of \$25,000 (in aggregate) to both Agreements.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the amendments and resolution as to both form and content.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact on the County General Fund associated with approving this allocation of \$2,879,010 of CARES Act funds to the Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project.