

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU FISCAL ANALYSIS

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

ITEM 21, FILE #070962

DECEMBER 5, 2007

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File Number 070962 is a resolution relating to the creation of a Digital Inclusion Initiative.

Background

1. As part of the Facilities Use and License Agreement with Midwest Fiber Networks (MFN), access is provided for Milwaukee citizens to 60 free websites. The Milwaukee Digital Divide Fund was created with \$150,000 contribution from MFN.
2. In early 2007, Mayor Barrett and Rep. Jason Fields requested a pilot project, the Milwaukee Digital Inclusion Initiative Project, to initiate some of the functions and processes of the digital inclusion program. Digital inclusion is the process of bringing the benefits of technology to underserved communities, to improve their access to information that will help them be successful.

Discussion

1. This resolution authorizes the Department of Administration (DOA) to coordinate a Digital Inclusion Initiative to promote affordable Internet access and training to all citizens of Milwaukee, especially low-income and disadvantaged citizens. DOA will also coordinate creation of a Digital Inclusion Fund, to be managed by the Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). DOA is authorized to accept contributions of usable technological equipment to support the initiative. DOA will also submit a biannual report to the Common Council on the Initiative.
2. The project will be coordinated by the following partners:
 - The Department of Administration will provide overall project coordination and direction for the Mayor and the Common Council.
 - One Economy Corporation of Washington D.C. will provide planning and assistance for setting up the pilot project, as well as building the Milwaukee "Beehive" website to support the needs of participating households.
 - AT&T, through its "Access All" initiative will provide 500 free DSL accounts with 2 years of access for participating households in the project.
 - Neighborhood community centers in each area will be invited to participate from a training and support perspective.
3. Two pilot areas have been selected, one on the north side, Berryland Housing Development; and one on the south side, Weed & Seed Historic Clarke Square. A total of 500 households will be targeted to receive equipment and services to help them gain productive access to Internet-based information resources in their homes. Neighborhood community centers in each area will provide training and support to participants.
4. Estimated Initiative costs are as follows:

Computer hardware and software	\$100,000 (estimated 500 @ \$200)
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Milwaukee “Beehive” content	\$125,000 (One Economy quote)
DSL Accounts	- (AT&T “Access All” accounts)
Training through local partners	\$35,000
Ongoing Support through local Partners	\$35,000
ESTIMATED BUDGET TOTAL	\$295,000

Fiscal Impact

1. This resolution has no tax levy impact. It does authorize DOA to accept financial contributions that can be used to support digital inclusion activities.

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