



City of Gary Broadband Strategy

Addressing the issue of digital equity in the City of Gary was determined a priority by the administration of Mayor Jerome Prince as Covid-19 put the City's existing digital infrastructure under the microscope. Data from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) shows that across Gary's 12 census tracts, the percentage of residential users not subscribed to a broadband service range from 26.2% to 50.5%. The lack of broadband availability and adoption is especially noticeable in minority and high-poverty communities in Gary.

Mayor Prince's administration is looking to leverage a portion of the City's ARPA funding to tackle these digital equity issues and to equip the City with future-proof broadband infrastructure. This project is driven by a strategy to deploy modern and scalable digital infrastructure throughout the City to serve government, residential, business, and community anchor institutions (Schools, Libraries, Non-Profit/Public Healthcare providers) needs. There is also a desire for the City to offer free WiFi in six select City parks, through their service or the partner's service.

The City is looking to partner with a provider(s) to help deploy ubiquitous, accessible and affordable high-speed broadband to every home and business within the City. The goal is to partner with a broadband service provider(s) (BSPs) who will leverage the City's \$4.5M in ARPA funds to build, operate & maintain a government middle mile fiber ring while committing to serve all residential and business locations with last mile fiber.

The City of Gary plans to work together with the chosen provider(s) to apply for last mile residential and business broadband grant funding through Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) funding from the US Treasury and Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Both of these sources of funding are administered by the State of Indiana. Funding from these grant applications will help BSPs make the business case for addressing the full scope of the project and extend their service to Gary residents and businesses.