



Committee: Directly to Council
Staff: Dr. Costis Toregas, Council IT Adviser
Purpose: Public Hearing/Action – to receive testimony;
vote expected
Keywords: #digitalequity, #montgomeryconnects

AGENDA ITEM #16
June 13, 2023
**Public
Hearing/Action**

SUBJECT

Supplemental appropriation for Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants, \$6,771,332

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Members of the public

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS

Whether or not to approve the Resolution for Supplemental Appropriation #23-105.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Supplemental Appropriation #23-105 requests a supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Operating budget for the Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions department that will enable the County to provide services for residents including computers, enrollment assistance for broadband subsidy programs, and broadband infrastructure at low-income residential buildings. The source of these funds will be State and Federal grants.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

The council will receive testimony from members of the public before taking final action on the resolution.

This report contains:

Transmittal memo
Resolution
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice Memorandum

Pages

© 1-13
© 14-15
© 16-18

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OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

May 9, 2023

TO: Evan Glass, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive 

SUBJECT: Supplemental Appropriation #23-105 to the FY23 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants, \$6,771,332 and
an amendment to FY23 Operating Budget Resolution 19-1285, Section G, FY23
Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status

I am recommending a supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget of the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) in the amount of \$6,771,332 for TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants. This appropriation will fund services for low-income residents including computers, enrollment assistance for broadband subsidy programs, and broadband infrastructure.

This supplemental appropriation request is funded by thirty-five grant awards totaling \$6,771,332 in State and Federal grants received by the County. See funding amounts below. No additional match is required.

- \$1,345,377 MEER Computers for Organizations (8 State Grants) - The Maryland Emergency Education Relief (MEER) Grant for Organizations provides funding for laptop computers for use by County departments and community organizations that support K-12 students and their families.
- \$4,009,755 MEER Computers for Organizations (21 State Grants) - The Maryland Emergency Education Relief (MEER) Grant for Students provides funding for Chromebook laptops for K-12 students in Montgomery County.

Supplemental Appropriation #23-105, Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants, \$6,771,332 and
an amendment to FY23 Operating Budget Resolution 19-1285, Section G
May 9, 2023
Page 2 of 3

- \$961,000 MD-GAPS Broadband in Affordable Housing (4 State Grants) - The MD-GAPS Broadband in Affordable Housing provides funding for four MoCoNet construction projects.
- \$205,200 Connected Maryland Devices (Computers for ACP Households) (1 State Grant) - The Connected Maryland Devices grant provides funding for computers for 34,200 low-income Montgomery County households who qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- \$250,000 FCC ACP Navigator Pilot Program (1 Federal Grant) - The FCC ACP Navigator Pilot Program provides funding for ACP enrollment outreach for enrollees in SNAP and Pell Grant benefit programs, and on-site assistance at 110 affordable housing developments.

An amendment to the FY23 Operating Budget Resolution 19-1285, Section G, and FY23 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award, is also requested to enable TEBS to establish a new contract with My Active Senior, Inc. in the amount of \$100,000 for the following purposes: “Provide outreach and education at senior residential buildings and developments, and senior centers to assist residents in enrolling in broadband subsidy and computer distribution programs, provide associated support to set up computers and access digital resources, and provide education about County programs available to seniors.” The Chief Administrative Officer has recommended this action and stated that this action serves a public purpose and is in the public interest.

I recommend that the County Council approve this supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$6,771,332 and specify the source of funds as State and Federal Grants.

I appreciate your prompt consideration of this action.

ME: mh

Enclosure: Supplemental Appropriation #23-105

cc: Gail M. Roper, CIO/Director, Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
Joe Webster, Chief Broadband Officer, Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
Mitsuko R. Herrera, Montgomery Connects Program Director, Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
Leny Bautista, Budget Manager, Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
Alison Dollar, Chief Budget Officer, Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
Michael Coveyou, Director, Department of Finance
Jennifer Bryant, Director, Office of Management and Budget

Supplemental Appropriation #23-105, Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants, \$6,771,332 and
an amendment to FY23 Operating Budget Resolution 19-1285, Section G
May 9, 2023
Page 3 of 3

Josh Watters, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget
Mary Beck, Capital Budget Manager, Office of Management and Budget
Seamus McNamara, Analyst, Office of Management and Budget

Resolution: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council President at the Request of the County Executive

SUBJECT: Supplemental Appropriation #23-105 to the FY23 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants, \$6,771,332

Background

1. Section 307 of the Montgomery County Charter provides that any supplemental appropriation shall be recommended by the County Executive who shall specify the source of funds to finance it. The Council shall hold a public hearing on each proposed supplemental appropriation after at least one week’s notice. A supplemental appropriation that would comply with, avail the County of, or put into effect a grant or a Federal, State or County law or regulation, or one that is approved after January 1 of any fiscal year, requires an affirmative vote of six Councilmembers. A supplemental appropriation for any other purpose that is approved before January 1 of any fiscal year requires an affirmative vote of seven Councilmembers. The Council may, in a single action, approve more than one supplemental appropriation. The Executive may disapprove or reduce a supplemental appropriation, and the Council may reapprove the appropriation, as if it were an item in the annual budget.
2. The County Executive has requested the following FY23 Operating Budget appropriation increases for the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$1,345,377	\$1,345,377	State Grant
\$0	\$4,009,755	\$4,009,755	State Grant
\$0	\$961,000	\$961,000	State Grant
\$0	\$205,200	\$205,200	State Grant
\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	Federal Grant

3. This increase is needed because the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions has received Federal and State grants to provide services for residents including computers, enrollment assistance for broadband subsidy programs, and broadband infrastructure at low-income residential buildings.

4. The County Executive recommends a supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget in the amount of \$6,771,332 for TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants and specifies that the source of funds will be State and Federal grants as stated in Section 2.
5. Notice of public hearing was given and a public hearing was held.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following action:

1. A supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget of the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$1,345,377	\$1,345,377	State Grants
\$0	\$4,009,755	\$4,009,755	State Grants
\$0	\$961,000	\$961,000	State Grants
\$0	\$205,200	\$205,200	State Grant
\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	Federal Grant

2. The Council approves an amendment to the Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award and thereby amends Resolution 19-1285, Section G, FY23 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award. The Chief Administrative Officer has recommended this action and stated that this action serves a public purpose and is in the public interest.

The FY23 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status resolution is amended to reflect that the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions will:

Establish a new contract with My Active Senior, Inc. in the amount of \$100,000 for the purpose: "Provide outreach and education at senior residential buildings and developments, and senior centers to assist residents in enrolling in broadband subsidy and computer distribution programs, provide associated support to set up computers and access digital resources, and provide education about County programs available to seniors."

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Judy Rupp, Clerk of the Council



LARRY HOGAN
Governor
BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor
KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary

August 29, 2022

Mitsuko Herrera, Program Director
Montgomery County, Montgomery Connects
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Request for Funding
Montgomery Connects Maryland Emergency Education Relief

Dear Ms. Herrera,


On behalf of Governor Larry Hogan and Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford, it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for funding for the Maryland Emergency Education Relief grant in the amount of \$1,345,376.40 has been approved for the following projects:

1. Department of Recreation - \$168,172.05
2. Linkage to Learning East Co Silver Spring - \$168,172.05
3. Linkage to Learning Upcounty Wheaton - \$168,172.05
4. Montgomery Virtual Academy - \$168,172.05
5. Disabled Parent Support Student Enrichment
6. HOC and Ethiopian Community and African Resource Centers - \$168,172.05
7. Homework Help and Student Learning - \$168,172.05
8. Positive Youth Development and Enrichment - \$168,172.05

This funding is conditional upon execution of a grant agreement between Montgomery County Montgomery Connects and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (“the Department”). On behalf of the Department, the Office of the Attorney General is preparing a draft MOU and the Office of Statewide Broadband will be in contact with your office in the near future to discuss the specific terms involved.

Again, congratulations on your award. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ronnie Hammond, Program Manager Digital Equity & Inclusion at 301-429-7514 or ronnie.hammond@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,


Kenneth C. Holt *Owen McFarley*
Secretary *Deputy Secretary*



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
7800 HARKINS RD • LANHAM, MD 20706 • DHCD.MARYLAND.GOV
301-429-7400 • 1-800-756-0119 • TTY/RELAY 711 or 1-800-735-2258





LARRY HOGAN
Governor
BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor
KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary

September 13, 2022

Mitsuko Herrera, Program Director
Montgomery County, Montgomery Connects
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Request for Funding
Montgomery Connects Maryland Emergency Education Relief (Project 2)

Dear Ms. Herrera,

On behalf of Governor Larry Hogan and Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford, it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for funding for the Maryland Emergency Education Relief grant in the amount of \$4,009,754.88 has been approved for the following projects:

1. Down County Bethesda - \$59,060.88
2. Down County Forest Glen - \$179,577.00
3. Down County Silver Spring - \$199,530.00
4. Down County Takoma Park - \$179,577.00
5. Eastern County Colesville - \$199,530.00
6. Eastern County Fairlands - \$199,530.00
7. Eastern County Hillandale - \$199,530.00
8. Mid-County Aspen Hill - \$199,530.00
9. Mid-County Glenmont - \$199,530.00
10. Mid-County Rockville - \$199,530.00
11. Mid-County Wheaton - \$199,530.00
12. Up-County Gaithersburg - \$199,530.00
13. Up-County Germantown - \$199,530.00
14. Up-County Kentlands - \$199,530.00
15. Up-County Montgomery Village - \$199,530.00
16. Up-County Redland - \$199,530.00
17. Virtual Academy Grade 2-3 - \$199,530.00
18. Virtual Academy Grade 4-5 - \$199,530.00
19. Virtual Academy Grade 6-7 - \$199,530.00
20. Virtual Academy Grade 8-9 - \$199,530.00
21. Virtual Academy Grade 10-12 - \$199,530.00



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(7)



LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor

KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary

This funding is conditional upon execution of a grant agreement between Montgomery County Montgomery Connects and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development ("the Department"). On behalf of the Department, the Office of the Attorney General is preparing a draft MOU and the Office of Statewide Broadband will be in contact with your office in the near future to discuss the specific terms involved.

Again, congratulations on your award. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ronnie Hammond, Program Manager Digital Equity & Inclusion at 301-429-7514 or ronnie.hammond@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth C. Holt".

Kenneth C. Holt
Secretary





LARRY HOGAN
Governor
BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor
KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary

June 8, 2022

Ms. Mitsuko Herrera
Montgomery County Government
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Request for Funding
Montgomery County Government Gap Network Project


Dear Ms. Herrera:

On behalf of Governor Larry Hogan and Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for funding to provide gap network broadband service to the HOC Georgian Court property in the amount of \$250,000.00 has been approved.

This funding is conditional upon execution of a grant agreement between the Montgomery County Government and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development ("the Department"). On behalf of the Department, the Office of the Attorney General is preparing a draft MOU and the Office of Statewide Broadband will be in contact with your office in the near future to discuss the specific terms involved.

Again, congratulations on your award. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ronnie Hammond, Program Manager Digital Equity & Inclusion at 301-429-7514 or ronnie.hammond@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Kenneth C. Holt
Secretary



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LARRY HOGAN
Governor
BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor
KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary

June 8, 2022

Ms. Mitsuko Herrera
Montgomery County Government
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Request for Funding
Montgomery County Government Gap Network Project

Dear Ms. Herrera:

On behalf of Governor Larry Hogan and Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for funding to provide gap network broadband service to the HOC Shady Grove Apartments property in the amount of \$250,000.00 has been approved.

This funding is conditional upon execution of a grant agreement between the Montgomery County Government and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (“the Department”). On behalf of the Department, the Office of the Attorney General is preparing a draft MOU and the Office of Statewide Broadband will be in contact with your office in the near future to discuss the specific terms involved.

Again, congratulations on your award. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ronnie Hammond, Program Manager Digital Equity & Inclusion at 301-429-7514 or ronnie.hammond@maryland.gov.

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Kenneth C. Holt
Secretary



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LARRY HOGAN
Governor
BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor
KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary

June 8, 2022

Ms. Mitsuko Herrera
Montgomery County Government
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Request for Funding
Montgomery County Government Gap Network Project


Dear Ms. Herrera:

On behalf of Governor Larry Hogan and Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for funding to provide gap network broadband service to the MHP Hillwood Manor property in the amount of \$250,000.00 has been approved.

This funding is conditional upon execution of a grant agreement between the Montgomery County Government and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (“the Department”). On behalf of the Department, the Office of the Attorney General is preparing a draft MOU and the Office of Statewide Broadband will be in contact with your office in the near future to discuss the specific terms involved.

Again, congratulations on your award. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ronnie Hammond, Program Manager Digital Equity & Inclusion at 301-429-7514 or ronnie.hammond@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

6907D95F9A954ED
Kenneth C. Holt
Secretary



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LARRY HOGAN
Governor
BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor
KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary

June 8, 2022

Ms. Mitsuko Herrera
Montgomery County Government
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Request for Funding
Montgomery County Government Gap Network Project

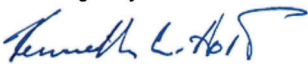
Dear Ms. Herrera:

On behalf of Governor Larry Hogan and Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for funding to provide gap network broadband service to the MNP N. Frederick property in the amount of \$211,000.00 has been approved.

This funding is conditional upon execution of a grant agreement between the Montgomery County Government and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (“the Department”). On behalf of the Department, the Office of the Attorney General is preparing a draft MOU and the Office of Statewide Broadband will be in contact with your office in the near future to discuss the specific terms involved.

Again, congratulations on your award. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ronnie Hammond, Program Manager Digital Equity & Inclusion at 301-429-7514 or ronnie.hammond@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

6907D95F9A954ED...
Kenneth C. Holt
Secretary



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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WES MOORE
Governor
ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor
JACOB R. DAY
Acting Secretary
OWEN MCEVOY
Deputy Secretary

February 8, 2023

Ms. Mitsuko Herrera
Montgomery County
100 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Request for Funding
Maryland Connected Devices Program

CONGRATS!
- JAKE

Dear Ms. Herrera:

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore and Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for 34,200 devices with a value of \$6,797,250.00 for distribution to eligible households throughout the Montgomery County Community has been approved. Also approved is your funding in the amount of \$205,200.00 to support the device distribution.

The Office of the Attorney General has prepared a draft MOU attached to this award letter. The acquisition of devices and stipend funding is conditional upon full execution of a grant agreement between Montgomery County and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development ("the Department").

Again, congratulations on your award. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ronnie Hammond, Program Manager Digital Equity & Inclusion at 301-429-7514 or ronnie.hammond@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Jacob Day
Acting Secretary



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Resolution No.: _____
 Introduced: May 16, 2023
 Adopted: _____

COUNTY COUNCIL
 FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council President at the Request of the County Executive

SUBJECT: Supplemental Appropriation #23-105 to the FY23 Operating Budget
 Montgomery County Government
 Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
 TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants, \$6,771,332

Background

- Section 307 of the Montgomery County Charter provides that any supplemental appropriation shall be recommended by the County Executive who shall specify the source of funds to finance it. The Council shall hold a public hearing on each proposed supplemental appropriation after at least one week’s notice. A supplemental appropriation that would comply with, avail the County of, or put into effect a grant or a Federal, State or County law or regulation, or one that is approved after January 1 of any fiscal year, requires an affirmative vote of six Councilmembers. A supplemental appropriation for any other purpose that is approved before January 1 of any fiscal year requires an affirmative vote of seven Councilmembers. The Council may, in a single action, approve more than one supplemental appropriation. The Executive may disapprove or reduce a supplemental appropriation, and the Council may reapprove the appropriation, as if it were an item in the annual budget.
- The County Executive has requested the following FY23 Operating Budget appropriation increases for the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$1,345,377	\$1,345,377	State Grant
\$0	\$4,009,755	\$4,009,755	State Grant
\$0	\$961,000	\$961,000	State Grant
\$0	\$205,200	\$205,200	State Grant
\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	Federal Grant

- This increase is needed because the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions has received Federal and State grants to provide services for residents including computers,

enrollment assistance for broadband subsidy programs, and broadband infrastructure at low-income residential buildings.

- 4. The County Executive recommends a supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget in the amount of \$6,771,332 for TEBS Montgomery Connects Digital Equity Broadband Grants and specifies that the source of funds will be State and Federal grants as stated in Section 2.
- 5. Notice of public hearing was given and a public hearing was held.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following action:

- 1. A supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget of the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$1,345,377	\$1,345,377	State Grants
\$0	\$4,009,755	\$4,009,755	State Grants
\$0	\$961,000	\$961,000	State Grants
\$0	\$205,200	\$205,200	State Grant
\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	Federal Grant

- 2. The Council approves an amendment to the Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award and thereby amends Resolution 19-1285, Section G, FY23 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award. The Chief Administrative Officer has recommended this action and stated that this action serves a public purpose and is in the public interest.

The FY23 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status resolution is amended to reflect that the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions will:

Establish a new contract with My Active Senior, Inc. in the amount of \$100,000 for the purpose: “Provide outreach and education at senior residential buildings and developments, and senior centers to assist residents in enrolling in broadband subsidy and computer distribution programs, provide associated support to set up computers and access digital resources, and provide education about County programs available to seniors.”

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Judy Rupp, Clerk of the Council



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

June 7, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-105
Digital Equity Grant Funding (\$6,771,332)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriations #23-105 *Digital Equity Grant Funding* is likely to advance racial equity and social justice in the County. This funding will target resources to households most burdened by the digital divide by increasing access to computers and connectivity. State and Federal funds will be used to fund services for low-income residents including computers, enrollment assistance for broadband subsidy programs, and broadband infrastructure.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #23-105 is to add funding for the Montgomery Connects digital equity program to deploy computers and increase broadband access for low-income households. The County recently received 35 grant awards totaling \$6,771,332 in State and Federal funds for five digital equity programs in the County.
1. Maryland Emergency Education Relief (MEER) Computers for Organizations provides funding for laptop computers for use by County departments and community organizations that support K-12 students and their families. (8 State Grants – \$1,345,377)
 2. MEER Computers for Students provides funding for Chromebook laptops for K-12 students in Montgomery County. (21 State Grants – \$4,009,755)

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-105
Digital Equity Grant Funding

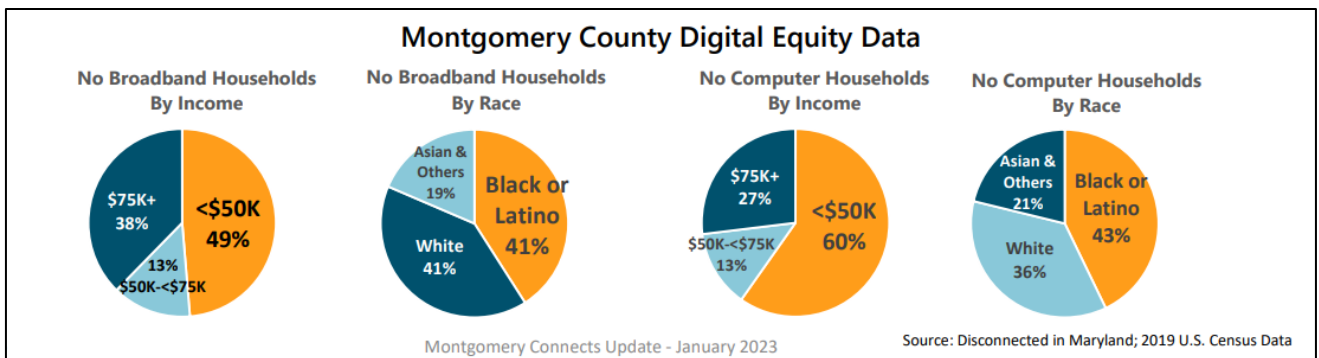
June 7, 2023
Page 2 of 3

3. MD-GAPS Broadband in Affordable Housing provides funding for four MoCoNet construction projects, which include Housing Opportunities Commission and Montgomery Housing Partnerships properties. (4 State Grants – \$961,000)
4. Connected Maryland Devices Computers for Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Households provides funding for 34,200 computers for one computer per address for low-income Montgomery County households who qualify for the ACP. (1 State Grant – \$205,200)
5. FCC ACP Navigator Pilot Program provides funding for ACP enrollment outreach for enrollees in SNAP and Pell Grant benefit programs, and on-site assistance at 110 affordable housing developments. This is 1 of 9 national pilot programs. (1 Federal Grant – \$250,000)

III. **ANALYSIS:** ORESJ has previously analyzed a program offered through Montgomery Connects, the County’s digital equity and inclusion program, in REIA #22-94, Montgomery Connects Computer Grant Funding. The supplemental funding was used to purchase 40,048 computers for distribution to low-income households through the Computer for You program. This REIA examined the funding’s ability to reduce opportunity and achievement gaps in education such as the Homework Gap. Our full analysis can be found at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-94.pdf>.

The following charts show the percentage of households with no broadband and no computer by income and race. Households earning less than \$50,000 are the majority of homes not having broadband or a computer. Black and Latino families make up the majority of households with no computer and are at the same level as Whites for not having broadband service in the household.



Source: Montgomery Connects Update, January 2023. Available at:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2023/20230216/20230216_ECON3.pdf

Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) provided updated information during the review of the FY24 Operating Budget request on progress made in reducing the digital

divide¹ and targeted programs and services. According to TEBS, “the metrics for success include reviewing federal and state data, and implementing whenever possible, additional means to track progress to provide devices, expand broadband access, and provide digital skills training to low-income residents, Black, Latino, and senior residents, and to identify additional support provided to immigrant communities, job seekers, and youth STEAM programs².”

TEBS computer distribution data shows that out of 50,000 computers, 81% were provided to families earning less than \$50,000 a year. Distribution data by race and ethnicity shows that 56% of computers were provided to Black, 19% to Latino, and 12% to Asian residents. Additionally, 65% of computers were distributed to Black and Latino households earning less than \$50,000 a year. Under the ACP Broadband Subsidy Program, 17,182 families enrolled in the \$45/month ACP broadband discount program, with direct enrollment support provided to 1,200 families. MoCoNet Residential Broadband is projected to be in 5 residential affordable housing communities.

In March 2023, the County Council adopted Bill 4-23E-Special Projects Manager, which created a central point for the coordination and oversight of digital equity initiatives. The Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement (RESJIS)³ examined the digital divide and racial equity in the County. The RESJIS found that allocating a dedicated staff person for coordinating digital equity efforts in the County would likely not be enough to affect the digital divide by race and ethnicity. The RESJIS for Bill 4-23E also observed that the position could have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) if there were more funding for targeted programs and services and more RESJ focus on the responsibilities of the new staff person. TEBS FY23-24 Strategies will focus on expanding partnerships, implementing a media outreach campaign, and targeting on-site programs geographically⁴. Pursuing additional funding opportunities and centering RESJ, as these grants have done, is likely to advance racial equity and social justice for households and individuals most burdened by the digital divide.

cc: Gail Roper, Director, Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions
Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive

¹ The National Digital Inclusion Alliance defines the digital divide as the gap between those who have affordable access, skills, and support to effectively engage online and those who do not. As technology constantly evolves, the digital divide prevents equal participation and opportunity in all parts of life, disproportionately affecting people of color, Indigenous peoples, households with low incomes, people with disabilities, people in rural areas, and older adults.

² Torgas, C. FY24 Operating Budget for Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions, April 26, 2024. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2023/20230505/20230505_GO11.pdf.

³ REIS Bill 4-23- Special Projects Manager – Digital Equity. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/resjis/2023/Bill4-23E.pdf>.

⁴ Montgomery Connects Update, January 2023. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2023/20230216/20230216_ECON3.pdf