



Project Description

Project Name:

Hidalgo County Wi-Fi Project

Project Number:

ARPA-22-200-076

Department Name:

Information Technology

ARPA Expenditure Category:

5: Infrastructure

ARPA Eligibility Category:

5.21 Broadband: Other projects

Project Description:

In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the purpose of the Hidalgo County Wi-Fi Project is to increase connectivity to assist citizens with distance learning while seeking to improve technological improvements as well as telework capability. In an effort to comply with COVID-19 health and safety guidelines, this project will work with County functions to continue an established lease with the Radio Tower, leasing spaces to serve the community, replace damaged or weather wif-fi poles, provide technical support and by mounting equipment of Wi-Fi connectivity in order to effectively and efficiently assist citizens. This project will provide the minimum level of service which will include but not limit to, maintain a level of service that will meet applicable health-based standards and establish or improve broadband service to unserved or underserved populations that were impacted by COVID-19 public health emergency.

The COVID–19 public health emergency has underscored the importance of universally available, high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband coverage as millions of Americans rely on the internet to participate in, among other critical activities, school, healthcare, and work. Recognizing the need for such connectivity, SLFRF funds can be used to make necessary investments in broadband infrastructure that increase access over the long term, as well as the necessary supports to purchase internet access or gain digital literacy skills needed to complete activities of daily living during the pandemic.¹ These commenters recommended that Treasury permit, as assistance to households for internet access, investments in public wi-fi networks, free wi-fi in public housing communities, and other equipment that offers internet access to end users by utilizing existing broadband networks.² Treasury has determined that these services,

¹ Department of the Treasury. (2022). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Federal Register, 87(18), p. 4361

² Department of the Treasury. (2022). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Federal Register, 87(18), p. 4362



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American Rescue Plan Act 2021

which expand internet access without constructing new networks, are an appropriate enumerated eligible use as assistance to households to respond to a negative economic impact, and they are permitted under the final rule.³

Fiscal Impact: \$4,529,642.23

FAQ 17.16:

- *Recipient may use SLFRF funds to cover increased costs attributable to pre-existing obligations to accommodate the change or contingency prior to December 31, 2024.*
- *Recipients may also cover contract cost increases after December 31, 2024, using SLFRF funds that the recipient does not use as initially reported to cover particular projects.*
- *Recipients may cover cost of amendments to contracts if the amended contract is within substantially the same scope and for substantially the same purpose as the contract incurred by December 31, 2024.*

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Compliance and Reporting Guidance, December 19, 2024:

While recipients may not incur new obligations for the use of SLFRF funds after December 31, 2024, recipients may reclassify SLFRF funds from a reported activity to another project that would be eligible under the program rules.

³ Department of the Treasury. (2022). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Federal Register, 87(18), p. 4362