

JOINT RESOLUTION 2020-01

A JOINT RESOLUTION BETWEEN THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF RUSH AND THE RUSH COUNTY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE RUSH COUNTY DIGITAL INCLUSION PLAN 2020-2025

WHEREAS, Rush County is a Broadband Ready Community; and

WHEREAS, given that information technology is becoming an asset for communities that wish to strengthen and expand their economic opportunities, having access to broadband and enhancing people's knowledge and application of this valuable resource is vital to the social and economic well-being of this community. Any community that finds itself on the wrong side of the digital divide is risking being left behind and facing a deteriorating quality of life; and

WHEREAS, for these reasons, Rush County formed a Broadband Task Force in the Spring of 2019. This Task Force delineated the following vision and mission to help guide its work:

- Vision: Every home/business in Rush County, Indiana has affordable, adequate, and reliable internet access and be able to fully participate in a digital economy and society.
- Mission: Work with all providers, community leaders, organizations and residents to improve internet access and digital literacy throughout Rush County, Indiana.

WHEREAS, the Rush County Broadband Task Force is comprised of nineteen (19) members representing city and county government, schools, local economic development organizations, community foundations, farm organizations, utilities, banks, students, private citizens, nonprofit and social service groups, and attorneys.

WHEREAS, as a product of its work the Rush County Broadband Task Force produced a Plan that encompasses the following goals and objectives, which are hereby adopted by the Board of Commissioners of Rush County, Indiana, and the Rush County Council.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF RUSH COUNTY, INDIANA that the following DIGITAL INCLUSION PLAN 2020-2025 is hereby adopted and supported by the government of Rush County, Indiana:

1. GOAL: IMPROVE AND UPGRADE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS THROUGH RUSH COUNTY, INDIANA IN MULTIPLE PHASES.

- a. Gather relevant data to assess broadband infrastructure in Rush County, Indiana.
- b. Analyze data gathered and, in concert with stakeholder input, identify broadband investment priority areas (BIPAs) in Rush County, Indiana.
- c. Draft a request for qualifications (RFQ) or request for proposals (RFP) from providers that includes BIPAs, level of service expected, and discounted or tiered services.
- d. Analyze responses to RFQs or RFPs, identify and align potential government incentives to support the provider responses.
- e. Announce RFQ or RFP that will move forward; establish a clear timeline for buildout or upgrade. Repeat process as needed until this Goal is achieved.

f. Install free Wi-Fi hotspots in strategic community areas – downtown, parks, etc., in addition to mapping existing Wi-Fi hotspots (e.g., fast food restaurants, bookstores, etc.).

g. Start a hotspot lending program coordinated by the library or other nonprofits in the community, targeting areas most in need in addition to other BIPAs.

2. GOAL: IMPROVE QUALITY AND OWNERSHIP OF COMPUTING DEVICES THROUGHOUT RUSH COUNTY, INDIANA.

a. Inventory businesses and organizations in the community that would be interested in donating equipment.

b. Identify an organization or organizations that would be willing to manage both the equipment and the volunteers to implement a device loan/sale program. This loan/sale program should also require the completion of digital literacy workshops prior to receiving digital equipment.

c. Recruit and maintain a core group of tech-savvy volunteers willing to help reformat donated equipment.

d. Target previously identified BIPAs in the community that would benefit the most from a device loan/sale program. In addition, with proper safeguards in place, reach out to organizations that administer social programs in the community to help identify residents in the community that may benefit from a device loan/sale program.

e. Research and apply for grants to supply devices to underserved in the community.

3. GOAL: IMPROVE DIGITAL SKILLS AND LITERACY AMONG MULTIPLE GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY.

a. Inventory anchor institutions and other relevant organizations (e.g., libraries, bookstores, schools, community colleges, churches, etc.) with access to fast internet and devices that could be positioned to host digital literacy workshops and/or provide access to devices and internet.

b. Inventory existing digital literacy workshops ongoing in the community to identify gaps and niches to be filled, including but not limited to efforts conducted by schools, nonprofits, community colleges, local economic organizations, etc.

c. In partnership with other stakeholders involved in digital literacy or skills training (e.g., community colleges, workforce development programs, schools, churches, etc.), draft a plan that, among other things, identifies additional curriculum to be taught, locations to be used, frequency of the training offerings, along with volunteers and/or instructors available who can conduct the trainings.

This Resolution shall become effective on the date of final board passage.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE COUNTY OF RUSH, INDIANA

Mark Bacon
Mark Bacon

Paul Wilkinson
Paul Wilkinson

Bruce W. Levi
Bruce W. Levi

ATTEST:

Jodi Harr
Jodi Harr,
Rush County Auditor

Date: 2-3-2020

COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE
COUNTY OF RUSH, INDIANA

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Charles A. Smith

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Ralph Adams

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Carl Harcourt

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Warren L. Norris

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Janet D. Kile

Scott D. Barnes
Scott D. Barnes

ATTEST:

Jodi Harr
Jodi Harr,
Rush County Auditor

Date: 2-12-20