



City of East Providence
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East Providence to receive up \$376,000 to provide Wi-Fi access to residents

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – The City of East Providence will receive up to \$376,000 to provide Wi-Fi access to the community, Gov. Dan McKee announced on Wednesday.

East Providence is one of many communities in Rhode Island who will receive support to fund internet access for low- and moderate-income households, helping to bridge the digital divide.

The City of East Providence is seeking to leverage planned municipal infrastructure improvements such as new LED streetlights to provide open access Wi-Fi in targeted Census tracts, largely overlapping with the City’s designated Opportunity Zone. This project will also support digital literacy trainings in partnership with East Providence Housing Authority, the East Providence Library, EBCAP, the Boys and Girls Club, and the senior center as well as device access for households through the East Providence School District.

“It is important to our administration that all segments of our community have access to Wi-Fi,” Mayor Bob DaSilva. “This initial project places us on the right path to providing Internet access to all members of our community.”

Working with our Community Development Director David Bachrach, the city has identified low- to moderate-income residential areas that could benefit from the connectivity.

In Rhode Island, 49,573 families or 12.2 percent of households, are not connected to the internet and another 34,936 families or 8.6 percent only have access via a smartphone and data plan, making nearly a quarter of Rhode Islanders under-connected, according to the 2019 US Census's American Community Survey.

“Our Administration is committed to boosting internet connection throughout the state,” said Governor Dan McKee. “Today’s awards will help Rhode Islanders better access reliable and affordable high-speed internet and the valuable resources it provides. This funding will complement additional awards and investments that will be made in this area in the near future, and I thank President Biden and our federal delegation for their continued support of this important funding.”

The awards are funded by Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and managed by the state’s Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD). Winners were selected following an RFP process operated through OHCD.

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