



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Requested Board Meeting Date: 8/15/2022

*\*= Mandatory, information must be provided*

Click or tap the boxes to enter text. If not applicable, indicate "N/A".

### \*Title:

Resolution to support Pima County's application to the Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure grant

### \*Introduction/Background:

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act authorized and funded several grant programs to expand the accessibility and availability of high speed broadband. The Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure (MMI) Program is one of the new programs, designed to provide federal funding for grants on a technology-neutral, competitive basis to eligible entities for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure

### \*Discussion:

Too many Pima County residents are cut off from the opportunities that high-speed internet makes possible. The MMI is one of the new programs created by the IIJA to expand middle mile infrastructure and reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas. This program is a one-time opportunity for the County to receive financial assistance to provide the middle mile infrastructure that is lacking throughout the community. Grants will range in size from \$5 million to \$100 million. A match of 30% is required. The County is interested in pursuing this grant opportunity, to construct a fiber optic ring connecting portions of Pima County and related jurisdictions. County anticipates that the grant budget will be approximately \$50 million, with a match requirement of \$15 million. This infrastructure will enable the development of available, accessible affordable, high speed local networks. The County would like to document the Board of Supervisors' support for this opportunity through a resolution. This link will provide more program details. <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/enabling-middle-mile-broadband-infrastructure-program>

### \*Conclusion:

It is in Pima County's interests to apply for this grant. The County has shown that it can be successful in receiving awards with the commitment of County leadership. This resolution would strongly demonstrate the County's commitment to ensuring Pima residents have access to affordable, resilient high-speed broadband.

### \*Recommendation:

Recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to support the County's efforts to apply for and receive an Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure grant from the federal government.

### \*Fiscal Impact:

Adopting the resolution itself will not have a fiscal impact. The application may have a negative fiscal impact given the costs of consultants that will be needed to help. If awarded, the grant will have a positive fiscal impact on the County.

### \*Board of Supervisor District:

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☒ All

Department: Pima County Information Technology

Telephone: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

Contact: Mark Hayes

Telephone: 520-724-7977

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Department Director Signature: Mark C. Hayes Date: 7/26/2022  
Deputy County Administrator Signature: [Signature] Date: 7/26/2022  
County Administrator Signature: [Signature] Date: 7/28/2022

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**RESOLUTION 2022-\_\_**

**PIMA COUNTY RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION FOR GRANT FUNDING FROM THE ENABLING MIDDLE MILE INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM**

**The Board of Supervisors of Pima County, Arizona finds:**

1. Access to competitive high-speed broadband is imperative for citizens to engage fully with online education, medical care, career development, and business services.
2. Communities without access are at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace and their citizens are at an even greater risk of disenfranchisement from societal, cultural, and economic systems.
3. Pima County includes many communities designated as unserved or underserved by high-speed broadband. According to the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA), approximately 12% of the County's population has no internet access; 8% lack access to a computer, smartphone or tablet.
4. Infrastructure improvement, including digital investment, is the County's second highest priority in improving the region's competitiveness, as identified in the County's Economic Development Plan (2019-2021).
5. Investment in "middle mile infrastructure," the physical mid-section of high-capacity fiber lines that carry large amounts of data at high speeds over long distances towards the end-user, has not kept pace with demands, largely because these investments are costly and complex to install.
6. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) passed into law November of 2021, provides a new grant program specifically intended to expand middle mile infrastructure and reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas. In June 2022, the Department of Commerce and NTIA announced the competitive Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure Grant Program.
7. This program will distribute \$980 million, on a technology-neutral, competitive basis to eligible entities for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure, with a secondary goal to create collaborative, public-private partnerships focused on middle mile infrastructure.
8. Grants are expected to be in the \$5 million to \$100 million range and applications are due by September 30, 2022.
9. Applicants are required to share at least 30% of the total project costs, which can include cash and in-kind contributions from partner organizations.
10. Pima County's vision is for all community members to have equitable access to affordable and reliable high-speed broadband internet. Accomplishing this vision is possible through strategic investment in middle mile infrastructure for now and the future.

11. Pima County is an entity eligible to apply for funding under the Enabling Middle Mile Grant Program, and has the capacity to create a partnership of critical County directors and stakeholders to prepare a competitive grant. Pima County would like to submit an application to this program to create an open access, fiber ring to provide middle mile infrastructure to large portions of the County, including unincorporated portions and local incorporated portions such as Marana, Oro Valley, and Sahuarita, estimated to cost approximately \$50 million.
12. An application submitted by the County is not guaranteed to receive funding but if a grant is awarded, it would substantially assist the County to meet its economic development, digital access, and equity goals.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that:**

- A. The Board of Supervisors approves the submission of a grant application on behalf of a public-private partnership lead by Pima County to the NTIA Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure Grant Program in the approximate amount of \$50 million; and
- B. Staff is directed to collaboratively work with interested Pima County departments and other stakeholder groups to prepare the documentation required for the submission, including obtaining required financial statements and bank letter of commitment.

Passed and adopted, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon Bronson, Chair  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

*Bobby Yu*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the Board

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Deputy County Attorney