



Legislation Text

File #: 1443-2024, Version: 1

This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Department of Technology to enter into a \$15,705,443.00 Grant Agreement (Agreement) with the Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio to support the program goals of the Franklin County Digital Action Agenda and take actionable steps to make meaningful progress toward ensuring people have access to affordable broadband. This ordinance repeals and replaces ordinance 3089-2023, which passed on December 4, 2023.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Columbus worked with the Columbus Metropolitan Library, the Columbus Foundation, Jewish Family Services, YWCA as well as SMART Columbus and other non-profit organizations on making broadband accessible and affordable. An AECOM study done in 2020 provided that over 77,000 residents of Franklin County do not have access to affordable high-speed internet. Reliable internet should be as ubiquitous and affordable as water and electricity.

In addition to affordable, high-speed internet access, residents should have access to quality devices with screens large enough to do real work, and skills training to do what they want and need to do online. This partnership and the study started a comprehensive examination of affordable broadband and inclusion in our community and produced the Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda which identifies the following program goals:

- Support the Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition
- Create a dedicated program office
- Provide devices and digital skills training for 9,600 households
- Create a digital community anchor force and digital coaches
- Provide continued outreach and adoption efforts for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Explore and seek opportunities to establish partnerships to extend city fiber for fiber connectivity opportunity
- Fund the assessment of ongoing research and affordable broadband, equity and inclusion outcomes to measure and demonstrate value based outcomes for program activities
- Create a program library of shared resources content, curriculum and support that ensures high-quality services to program participants across multiple anchor partners.

The above-referenced Agreement authorizes the City of Columbus to provide a total of \$15,705,443.00 to the Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio to assist in the efforts stated herein. These funds will be encumbered for three years with passage of this ordinance and released over that same time period.

This ordinance also authorizes the transfer of \$15,705,443.00 within the general fund, from the Finance Department's general fund citywide account to the Department of Technology. These funds will then be subsequently appropriated to the Department of Technology. Additionally, the total expenditure of \$15,705,443.00, over a three year period, for the above described purpose from the appropriated moneys is authorized.

Finally, this Ordinance repeals and replaces Ordinance 3089-2023.

FISCAL IMPACT

\$15,705,443.00 is available and budgeted in the Finance Department's general fund citywide account to accommodate the requested transfer and appropriation to the Department of Technology.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE

Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio

Vendor no. 021589

EMERGENCY

Emergency designation is requested to ensure that the needed funds are released to the Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio on the earliest possible date so that the noted project can begin.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Technology to enter into a Grant Agreement with Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio; to authorize the transfer of \$15,705,443.00 within the general fund, from the Finance Department's general fund citywide account to the Department of Technology; to authorize the subsequent appropriation of \$15,705,443.00 to the Department of Technology; to authorize the expenditure of \$15,705,443.00; to repeal and replace Ordinance 3089-2023; and to declare an emergency. (\$15,705,443.00)

WHEREAS, the Franklin County Educational Service Center is working to support the program goals of the Franklin County Digital Action Agenda and take actionable steps to make meaningful progress toward ensuring people have access to affordable broadband; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus wishes to provide funds to assist in the above-described efforts; and

WHEREAS, funds totaling \$15,705,443.00 are budgeted and available in the city's general fund citywide account for the purpose described above; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to transfer \$15,705,443.00 within the general fund, from the Finance Department's citywide account to the Department of Technology and to then appropriate the same amount to the Department of Technology; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance repeals and replaces Ordinance 3089-2023; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Technology in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to enter into a Grant Agreement with Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio and to transfer and appropriate \$15,705,443.00 to accommodate this Agreement so that the needed funds are released and the noted project may begin on time, all for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; and **Now, Therefore;**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of the Department of Technology be and is hereby authorized to enter into a Grant Agreement with Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio for a period of three years at a total cost of \$15,705,443.00

SECTION 2. That the transfer of \$15,705,443.00 within the general fund, from the Finance Department's citywide account to the Department of Technology is hereby authorized, as shown in the attachment to this ordinance (see 1443-2024)

SECTION 3. That the aforementioned \$15,705,443.00, having been transferred to the Department of Technology, is hereby appropriated to the Department of Technology, as shown in the attachment to this ordinance (see 1443-2024)

SECTION 4. That the expenditure of up to \$15,705,443.00 is hereby authorized from the General Fund appropriation in

the Department of Technology, as shown in the attachment to this ordinance (see 1443-2024)

SECTION 5. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

SECTION 6. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 7. That Ordinance 3089-2023 is hereby repealed and replaced with this Ordinance.

SECTION 8. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.