Livingston County Information Technology Department

Report

To: Livingston County Board of Commissioners, Livingston County Administrator - Nathan Burd, Livingston County Deputy Administrator & Chief Financial Officer - Cindy Catanach

From: Kristoffer Tobbe
Livingston County Chief Information Officer

Date: July 28, 2021

Re: Livingston County Information Technology Department: Broadband speed & services survey to be performed by MERIT Networks

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Request for approval of Citizen Enabled Broadband Data Collection for Livingston County

The Livingston County Information Technology Department in conjunction with Livingston County Administration are requesting Livingston County Board of Commissioners approval to move forward and begin a Livingston County wide broadband data collection project.

This project will begin to assess the full aspect of the need for broadband service for Livingston County residents and businesses. An accurate assessment of the current service levels of our current broadband environment must be done. Current Federal Communication ~~Commissions~~Commission's maps and data that are supplied by the carriers or broadband services are known to contain inaccurate data. This assessment will deliver an accurate data set for current broadband access for our Livingston county residents and businesses. With the help and contribution of our residents and businesses this data set can become a foundation in Livingston County's broadband planning process.

Our Livingston County Team has collaborated with current organizations like Lyndon Township, Washtenaw County, SEMCOG, and MERIT Networks, to set up a countywide digital survey that will deliver a data set that measures internet speed of those surveyed, gauges the levels of internet service that may be needed and the address of those taking the survey. This will

develop an image of what internet speed is available and what internet providers are providing service in specific areas of Livingston County.

This project would take an estimated 18 to 32 weeks from start to finish.

The Summary of the services contained in the proposal

Pre-Survey Consulting Scope of Work

- Standardized survey and speed test – design, deploy, maintain
- Customized website design & deployment
- Community communications materials development
- Supportive community partner engagement including strategy, planning & execution support
- Customized community marketing plan and asset development
  - Marketing plan
  - Press release
  - Consumer communications
  - Community partner communications
  - Web & social media assets
  - Local ad assets & ad buys
- 3-5 planning/work session meetings needed with local project leaders

Data Collection

- Following launch, KPI (Key Performance Indicators) checks will be implemented to monitor community response and responded accordingly (deploying additional assets as needed)
- Weekly community response dashboard updates
- Data collection typically runs 6 weeks

Post-Survey Consulting Scope of Work

- Executive Findings report
- Additional outputs & analysis: Visualizations via graphs, maps, charts (Qty 15-20)
- GIS files (can also support any integration to local instance or merger of local data into Merit analysis
- Fully merged and cleaned database
- Community Presentation

About our Partner Merit

Merit Network is a non-profit, Member-owned organization governed by Michigan's public universities. Founded in 1966, Merit owns and operates America's longest-running regional research and education network. After 50 years of innovation, Merit continues to provide high-performance services to the educational communities in Michigan and beyond.

Merit's Mission

Merit's mission is "connecting organizations and building community." We provide network, security and community services to member organizations that help make our society a better place to learn, discover, work and live – while upholding the principles of an open internet.

A sample listing of the questions is provided below. (These exact questions may or may not be used in the actual survey.

- Please indicate if this is a business or a residential property.
- Address line 1
- City
- State
- ZIP Code
- More people in a home can increase the need for faster Internet. How many people currently live at this address?
- Children who attend school often have an increased need for home Internet access. How many people currently living at this address are under the age of 18?
- How many people living at this address currently take college or university courses (even if those courses are not online)?
- In some situations, having a computer motivates the desire to have Internet access at home. If any, how many working computers/laptops/Chromebooks do you have at home?
- How many tablets do you have at home? (e.g., iPad, Kindle, Android tablet)
- Are you completing this survey over a Wi-Fi connection?
- To the best of your knowledge, how do you currently get Internet access at this property? Choose one.
- To the best of your knowledge, approximately what speed does your Internet service provider promise you?
- Overall – considering performance, cost, and any other factors – how satisfied are you with this Internet service provider? Choose one.
- Please provide your email address, so that we may follow up with additional information or questions if needed.
- TAKE THE SPEED TEST and submit the information

Other questions for consideration may include:

- Who is your current Internet provider?

- What do you currently pay for Internet
- What does Affordable Broadband or Internet mean to you
- How far from your main Utility Power lines (Poles) or Road is your Residence or Business?

Survey Marketing

Successful education and marketing of the Broadband Survey along with the importance of broadband to our community is critical for ensuring sufficient data is collected from our residents. Many of our residents may not fully understand what broadband services entail and what benefits they may receive from its access. Plain language messages coupled with a focus on examples of improvements to daily life will motivate our public to complete the survey, thus giving us a better look at the current status of our County and evaluate what is possible.

Within Merit's Data Collection Scope of Work are a number of marketing efforts that are tried and true. Merit's customizable Communications and Promotions Plan will be utilized to maximize community reach. Items within the Plan include a customized website, local media advertisements and logistics, and postcard mailings. Allison Nalepa, Livingston County's Communication Manager, will assist Merit in the customization of marketing efforts and incorporate messages of the survey into the County's current communication avenues.

Additional marketing efforts paid for directly by the County would result in additional community reach and increased data collection. Up to $15,000 could be allocated towards local media advertisements, signage, or digital advertisements.

Useful links

About Merit

https://www.merit.edu/about/

THE MICHIGAN MOONSHOT- Expanding Community Networks in Michigan

https://www.merit.edu/community/moonshot/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnMn1GbPfCc

https://survey.michiganmoonshot.org/

Current purchase pricing

Livingston County Information Technology Pricing Summary Merit Broadband Survey Product				
	Quantity		**Final Negotiated pricing**	**Proposed CIP 2021 -2026 Budgeted Amount**
Data Collection & Marketing Support, Consumer communication & promotions plan, Community Partner Program, Logistics, Engagement coordination, weekly progress updates, Logistics, Engagement coordination, weekly progress updates, Output: Cleaned, Standardized Web Survey - Unserved Served (Mobile responsive) Standardized Web Survey - Served (Online) merged database, basic visualizations, Public Participation Digital Dashboard	1		$ 7,000.00	ARPA Funding
Customized Landing Page Website	1		$ 1,000.00	ARPA Funding
Marketing Support - Ad Placement logistics	1		$ 1,500.00	ARPA Funding
Local Media and Ad Purchases	1		$ 10,000.00	ARPA Funding
Postcards	1		$ 6,000.00	ARPA Funding
Additional Services - Survey Augmentation	1		$ 1,250.00	ARPA Funding
Data Collection Outputs: Executive Findings Report, Data Analysis findings, Full visualizations (Qty 15-20) maps, graphs, charts, Community Findings Presentation	1		$ 19,000.00	ARPA Funding
COMPANION SURVEYS				ARPA Funding

Mail Survey Qty 10,000: Setup & deployment	1		$ 11,000.00	ARPA Funding
Text Qty 10,000: Setup & deployment	1		$ 1,800.00	ARPA Funding
Phone Survey Qty 0: Setup & deployment	1		$ 5,000.00	ARPA Funding
Livingston County Merit Partnership Discount	1		$ (8,000.00)	ARPA Funding
Merit Survey Subtotal	**1**		**$ 55,550.00**	ARPA Funding
Additional recommended costs				
Additional Livingston Engagement and Marketing	1		$ 15,000.00	ARPA Funding
Totals			**$ 70,550.00**	ARPA Funding

Recommendation

At this time, we are recommending that the Livingston County Board of Commissioners authorize County Information Technology Staff and Administration to move forward with the attached MERIT proposal for a citizens and business broadband survey, to gage broadband speed and access throughout Livingston County for its citizens and businesses.

Funding Recommendation:

It is recommended that funding for this project come from the Livingston County American Recover Plan Act funding, as Broadband is an acceptable allocation of those dollars.

Optional funding recommendation

Livingston County has the option to apply for the 2022 SEMCOG FY22 Planning Assistance Program. This grant if awarded could be a maximum of $40,000.00 (reimbursable)

- SEMCOG would issue a call for projects in July, with applications due in August/September; and awards in October of 2021

- If funds are provided, the planning work could begin immediately (following a signed contract/agreement)

- The funding would be from Oct 1, 2021 – Sept 30, 2022 (This coincides with our Broadband survey)