

**Request for Action
By
Board of Commissioners**

Approval of Bridging the Digital Divide Program Funding Awards

1. Summary of Request

This Request for Action (“RFA”) is for approval of grant funding under the Bridging the Digital Divide Program (“Digital Divide”). The Board of Commissioners of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) approved up to \$450,000 in Digital Divide funding as part of the program budget for fiscal year 2022.

The RIHousing Digital Divide program provides funding for organizations expanding or providing low-cost internet access for low- and-moderate income Rhode Islanders.

RIHousing issued a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for awards of Digital Divide funding in December 2021. The RFP was posted on the RIHousing website, the State of Rhode Island Division of Purchases website, social media, and sent directly to approximately 850 organizations, municipalities, property managers, developers and interested parties via an email announcement. A press release was also issued to local media outlets. RIHousing received 10 proposals in response to the RFP from 10 applicants representing housing developers, property owners and managers and public housing authorities. Funding requested totaled \$494,594.21.

A committee consisting of the Deputy Executive Director and staff from the Executive Division, Development Division, and Leased Housing and Rental Services Division conducted a review of each proposal in accordance with the ranking criteria set forth in the RFP. The committee is recommending funding be awarded to the projects and programs described at [Attachment A](#).

2. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the resolution authorizing Digital Divide funding in the amount of \$450,000 for the projects and programs set forth at [Attachment A](#) be approved.

3. **Attachments**

- A. Recommended FY2022 Bridging the Digital Divide Program Funding Awards
- B. Resolution

Attachment A

Proposed FY 2022 Bridging the Digital Divide Program Funding Awards

Organization	Program or Project	Location	Grant Term	Award
AS220	System improvements and 1 year of resident service costs.	Providence	1 year	\$39,480
William J. Canning Management, LLC	Devices and Wi-Fi for community rooms; digital literacy training	Providence and Hopkinton	1 year	\$29,959.21
Church Community Housing Corporation	44 hotspots and 3 years unlimited internet service.	Newport County	3 years	\$18,469
Central Falls Housing Authority	Hire staff to help residents sign up for Verizon and Cox Affordable Connectivity Program plans	Central Falls	1 year	\$75,000
Crossroads Rhode Island	Parts, labor and installation of technology for in unit internet at Summer Street I & II	Providence	1 year	\$61,940
Fifty Square L.P.	Labor, install, access points for free wireless	Newport	1 year	\$20,000
McAuley Ministries	Internet access; Computer, monitor, printer in each apartment; and internet in common areas.	Providence	2 years	\$56,765.79
POAH, Inc.	Startup costs for providing free wifi to all units at Oxford Place & Gardens	Providence	1 year	\$75,000
Providence Housing Authority	High speed internet to community rooms and digital literacy training; 107 residents get devices and internet access	Providence	1 year	\$73,386
		TOTAL		\$450,000

Attachment B
Resolution of the Board of Commissioners
of
Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation

WHEREAS: Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) created the Bridging the Digital Divide Program to expand internet access for low-and-moderate income Rhode Islanders; and

WHEREAS: RIHousing issued a Request for Proposals under a competitive process to seek applications for Bridging the Digital Divide Program grant funding; and

WHEREAS: RIHousing received ten (10) complete proposals for Bridging the Digital Divide Program funding; and

WHEREAS: staff reviewed the proposals according to the ranking criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals and have determined that nine (9) of the proposed programs best fit the criteria of the program.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:

RESOLVED: that the programs set forth at Attachment A be, and hereby are approved for grant funding under the Bridging the Digital Divide Program in up to the amounts specified at Attachment A, subject to any administrative adjustments as the Executive Director determines to be in the best interests of RIHousing, provided that the total amount awarded to all recipients shall not exceed \$450,000.

RESOLVED: that all funds awarded hereunder shall be funded out of the FY 2022 budget.

RESOLVED: that the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director, each acting singly, be and hereby are authorized and empowered to take any and all actions necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolutions.