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Governor

## STATE OF NEVADA

### GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF SCIENCE, INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

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### Nevada Capital Projects Fund- Low-Income MDU Program FAQ

**Program Objective:** To increase internet connectivity and available speeds through construction of last mile fiber to Nevada's Public Housing Multi Dwelling Units (MDUs).

**Total Funding Allocated:** \$55,164,890

**Funding Source:** Capital Projects Fund, American Rescue Plan Act, US Treasury

**Estimated Number of Residential Units to be Connected:** 40,000

**Project Timeline:** 2023-2026

**Why Focus on Low-Income MDUs?** Nevada's broadband vision is universal access to high-speed internet that is affordable, reliable, and scalable. Low-income MDUs are located throughout the State- in rural and urban communities. The project will impact communities across the entire state. Additionally, low-income communities are especially vulnerable to the digital divide. Research indicates that income, more so than any other demographic factor, including gender, race, ethnicity, and community (urban, suburban, rural) drives differences in broadband adoption. The Pew Research Center [found that only 1% of adults](#) with annual incomes over \$75,000 do not use the internet, yet 14% of those with annual incomes under \$30,000 are not online. And although only 8% of adults with annual household incomes of over \$75,000 do not have a home broadband subscription, 43% of adults with annual household incomes under \$30,000 do not have a broadband subscription. Residents of low-income MDUs are among the most affected by the digital divide and are more likely than the population as a whole to face multiple barriers to access. Without access to affordable broadband services and devices, these populations are unable to take advantage of information technology, skills and capacities needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. These populations are deprived of access to important day-to-day functions and services that affects their overall quality of life. Workers cannot expand job searches or engage in on-line education. Students cannot participate in on-line education or testing. Caregivers and seniors cannot utilize telehealth services, manage finances, participate in on-line banking or otherwise participate in community, social and civic engagements. By focusing efforts to improve connectivity to low-income residence in public housing MDUs, OSIT believes this Program will be a major step towards addressing digital inequities.

**How Were Low-Income MDUs Identified?** OSIT met with the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority (SNRHA), the Reno Housing Authority (RHA), and the Nevada Rural Housing Authority (NRHA), County and municipal governments, community leaders and County Broadband Action Teams. Discussions centered on identifying community needs, existing infrastructure, and how best to address access and adoption-related barriers. Through these community conversations, OSIT learned that

modern, scalable broadband infrastructure to and within many low-income MDUs is sorely lacking. During outreach and field examinations, OSIT discovered that despite close proximity to fiber in some cases, many MDUs are unable to offer residents the speeds they need in order to do basic web browsing, much less work, education, or health monitoring. Additionally, concerns with affordable access to the Internet are intertwined with the lack of modern infrastructure. Low-income residents are more likely to consider a home broadband service a luxury and are even less likely to pay to subscribe when the product is slow and unreliable.

**What about Affordability and Devices?** OSIT understands the importance of pairing an affordability strategy with its infrastructure program. Residents of low-income MDUs are eligible for [the Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (ACP). Internet service provider partners will be required to participate in the ACP. OSIT will work with its community partners to coordinate ACP enrollment and other digital equity events and supports to ensure residents have a connected device, and to design and tailor digital literacy programs to meet the needs of the distinct populations living with the MDUs. Additional information for providers about affordability requirements will be published on the OSIT website in the future.

**Approach for Carrying out the Program:** The Governor’s Office of Science, Innovation & Technology (“OSIT”) will coordinate with state and local housing authorities to develop a competitive program that will identify eligible low-income MDUs and competitively solicit through Request for Proposal (RFP) internet service provider (ISP) partners to construct last mile, fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) solutions that are affordable, reliable, and scalable beyond 100Mbps symmetrical wired broadband service.

The RFP will request services including design, installation, deployment of FTTP, and all components necessary for providing fully operational internet services to Nevada’s low-income MDUs. Eligible entities will be any MDU owned or operated by a State or local housing authority or that receive public subsidies for housing. Privately-owned MDUs will be subject to a scoring criterion for prioritization of projects based, in part, on the percentage of units that receive subsidies. This Program will directly address digital inequities, support work, education, and health objectives, and provide a secondary means to collect data to assess the efficacy of improved broadband access, adoption and utilization.

**How Can I Get Involved or Stay Up to Date?** More information about the Capital Projects Fund can be found on OSIT’s website, <https://osit.nv.gov/Broadband/Broadband/>. Additionally, stakeholders can email [highspeedNV@gov.nv.gov](mailto:highspeedNV@gov.nv.gov).