



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ISSUES RFI TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN CHICAGO**

*City takes steps to improve access to high-quality internet for residents living in historically underinvested communities*

**CHICAGO** — Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot issued a Request for Information (RFI) to gather recommendations and ideas for how to provide affordable, quality, and reliable internet service options that meet the needs of communities most burdened by the digital divide. Through the RFI, the City seeks ideas for increasing broadband access and adoption in communities with low rates of internet adoption. The City is particularly interested in hearing ideas on how to leverage its physical assets (such as light poles and rooftops) in this effort. The intent of this initiative is to ensure people living in historically underinvested communities receive access to affordable, high-quality internet so they can fully participate in an increasingly digital world.

“Today marks an important milestone in our commitment to ensuring all Chicagoans have affordable, quality broadband options that work for them,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Through the Chicago Recovery Plan, I committed to expanding upon Chicago Connected and increasing broadband affordability and accessibility in communities. Now, I am thrilled to be collaborating with mission-aligned City departments and sister agencies to elicit innovative digital equity recommendations and bring this vision to life.”

Responses are encouraged from internet builders, operators, and investors, in addition to non-profits and philanthropic foundations interested in supporting innovative broadband connectivity solutions. The City also welcomes joint responses between private sector and non-profit organizations that identify creative ways for different sectors to solve for the shared goal of ending the digital divide.

The RFI can be viewed [here](#). RFI responses must be submitted by Monday, November 7, 2022, to [BroadbandEquityRFI@cityofchicago.org](mailto:BroadbandEquityRFI@cityofchicago.org). Those interested in receiving updates about the RFI, including webinar details and responses to questions, should complete [this form](#).



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Additionally, Chicago's Digital Equity Council is currently seeking feedback from community members on their experience with internet, devices, and digital support through a survey, available [here](#). Feedback from the survey will inform a citywide digital equity plan.

This RFI builds on the work of [Chicago Connected](#), a first-of-its-kind broadband program which provides no-cost Internet to qualifying Chicago Public Schools (CPS) families for four years. Chicago Connected has also made digital learning resources available to families for free, through partnerships with more than 20 community-based organizations. In May 2022, Mayor Lightfoot launched the [Chicago Digital Equity Council \(DEC\)](#), a cross-sector, community-driven effort to understand and overcome the nuanced barriers to digital equity by engaging those most burdened by digital inequities.

The City's broadband consultant, the Broadband Equity Partnership, advised the City on issuance of the RFI and will help analyze responses.

To learn more about the City's commitment to digital equity and to join the Digital Equity Council in its mission to close the digital divide, please visit [Chicago.gov/digitalequity](https://chicago.gov/digitalequity).

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