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Authorizing the Saint Paul Public Library and the Office of Technology and Communication (OTC) to jointly apply with Ramsey County for the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program via the United States Department of Commerce to fund city initiatives to ensure residents have the access and skills to fully participate in the digital world, regardless of their background or circumstances with a match from city funds of \$500,000.

..Body

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Public Library and Office of Technology and Communications would like to apply, in partnership with Ramsey County, to the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program from the United States Department of Commerce to fund city initiatives to ensure residents have the access and skills to fully participate in the digital world, regardless of their background or circumstances and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Saint Paul Public Library, Office of Technology and Communications and Ramsey County partnered on release of The Connectivity Blueprint, a community-guided roadmap for achieving digital inclusion; and

WHEREAS, this Blueprint continues to guide City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County digital equity initiatives and priorities; and

WHEREAS, if successful, this would permit the Saint Paul Public Library to expand their digital navigator program to support residents in getting connected, staying connected and learning how to use the connection; and

WHEREAS, the funding would permit the Saint Paul Public Library to further build out technology infrastructure in all library locations, as part of the vision for Transforming Libraries; and

WHEREAS, the funding would permit the Hayden Heights and Rondo Library locations to be identified as “technology hubs,” with additional support offering for residents, city partners and community organizations, and

WHEREAS, the funding would permit the Office of Technology and Communications (OTC) to enhance and expand Wi-Fi and cellular connectivity within and surrounding city-owned facilities, directly impacting the connectivity gap experienced by residents; and

WHEREAS, the maximum grant amount is up to \$8,500,000 total among all partners, with up to \$5,000,000 of the request from the City of Saint Paul, with a grant term of 2025 to 2029; and

WHEREAS, the grant requires 10% in matching funds from each partner, with \$500,000 committed from the City of Saint Paul, and the source for these funds is a

combination of existing resources on hand from both departments, including staff time, and funds available for Transforming Libraries initiative specifically; and

WHEREAS, the City certifies that it will comply with all applicable laws and regulations as stated in the grant agreement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Council authorize the Saint Paul Public Library and Office of Technology and Communications to apply for the Digital Equity Competitive Grant program.