



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: July 16, 2024

08

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

AMEND PO#566069 AT&T WIFI SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On October 25, 2021, the San Diego County Library (SDCL or County Library) was awarded \$4.3 million from the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) program to provide equipment and wireless internet service to patrons who have limited access to the internet and internet-enabled devices. Under Board Authority 09-14-21 (4), \$1.4 million of the \$4.3 million was designated and used to purchase 7,000 AT&T Wi-Fi hotspot devices with corresponding data services. The remaining amount was used to purchase 7,000 Google Chromebooks. The County Library bundled the 7,000 Google Chromebooks and 7,000 AT&T Wi-Fi hotspots into what the Library called, "Tech Connect" kits for distribution. Devices were made available to members of the public with a library card to check out free of charge for up to one year. In May of 2023, SDCL added an additional 2,000 AT&T Wi-Fi hotspot devices with data services under BOS 05-23-23 (28), bringing the total amount of devices to 9,000. The ECF program is one of many ways the County works toward closing the digital divide.

Distribution of the Tech Connect kits began on June 15, 2022, throughout the 33 County branch library locations. To ensure that the Tech Connect kits are distributed equitably amongst communities with no access or limited access to internet-enabled devices and broadband services, SDCL and its respective branches have collaborated with more than 100 community-based organizations, tribal reservations, and county-wide partners such as Aging & Independence Services, Department of Child Support Services, and Library High School, where adults can earn their high school diploma online. County residents can also check-out Tech Connect kits at their local County branch library. The County Library closely monitors the check-out data of the Tech Connect kits and adjusts distribution accordingly. As of March 31, 2024, 92% of Tech Connect kits have been checked out month over month, and 40% of those were in rural, unincorporated, and economically challenged communities. The Wi-Fi hotspot services are currently provided by AT&T through a National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) cooperative purchasing contract between AT&T and the State of Utah. NASPO facilitates public procurement solicitations and agreements using a lead-state model. AT&T and Utah have recently extended the contract for an additional five years, ending on August 11, 2029.

SUBJECT: AMEND PO#566069 AT&T WIFI SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Today's request is (1) to amend the contract to extend its term for one year, beginning August 12, 2024, and four one-year option years through August 11, 2029, and (2) allow an estimated increase of \$50,000 per year for a new estimated total contract price of \$5,850,000.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, approve an increase in the AT&T contract award funding and authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to amend the contract with AT&T for Wi-Fi hotspot data services by an estimated increase of \$50,000 dollars in cost per option year for the remainder of the contract terms ending on August 11, 2029.
2. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to amend the contract during the extended term as needed to exercise each additional option and to increase the total contracted price if additional funds become available.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County Library provides equitable access to educational classes, opportunities to develop literacy, study materials, and recreational reading at no cost to the communities and customers we serve. The County Library also provides access to broadband internet and computers so that customers can access the digital services they need to meet their goals of learning, connecting, job seeking, and acquiring safety-net services. This amendment to the contract will enable the County Library to extend free digital infrastructure from library branches into the households of residents in need of this digital access. This program is an opportunity to provide resources for households impacted by the digital divide in the County Library service area.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's request to amend the contract with AT&T for Wi-Fi data services supports San Diego County's Sustainability Strategic Initiative by providing fair and equal access to broadband services for all residents. It also contributes to building resilient communities by bolstering internet services available to the public, particularly those impacted by the digital divide in the County Library service area.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Operational Plan for the San Diego County Library (SDCL). If approved, this request will result in an increase of the total contract price by an estimated \$50,000 per year for data services for up to five years ending on August 11, 2029. The funding source is the Library Fund. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years. Any future costs for this contract will be included in future Operational Plans.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

SUBJECT: AMEND PO#566069 AT&T WIFI SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On August 13, 2021, the San Diego County Library (County Library) applied for \$4.3 million in grant funding from the FCC’s Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) for the purchase of 7,000 Chromebooks and mobile internet hotspots. The purpose of the ECF is to provide funding to schools and libraries for the costs of \$400 per laptop and \$250 per Wi-Fi hotspot of eligible equipment and services that can be provided to students, teachers, and library patrons who lack connected devices, such as laptops or desktop computers, and /or lacked broadband access during the pandemic. On October 25, 2021, the County Library was notified by the FCC that the grant in the amount of \$4.3 million for Chromebooks and mobile internet hotspots, with internet content filtering meeting the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requirements, was awarded to the County Library. This was reported to the Board under BOS 09-14-21 (4).

In order to procure the Wi-Fi hotspots and data services, the County Library established a contract with AT&T via a piggyback on a National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) contract between AT&T and the State of Utah through August 11, 2024. This contract currently provides Wi-Fi connectivity for the Tech Connect kit for County Library customers. The use of this contract allowed the County Library to accelerate the procurement process without having to initiate the competitive bidding process and lose significant months that would be eligible for reimbursement. The County Library is now requesting the Board of Supervisors to grant permission to amend the contract with the ability to exercise the option years on a year-by-year basis, and to approve an increase in the total contract price by \$50,000 per year for every option year exercised.

On November 16, 2022, SDCL was awarded two additional grant funds from the FCC, via the Emergency Connectivity Fund, totaling \$1,317,400 (\$373,180 for the purchase of 2,000 Wi-Fi hotspots and \$945,00 for corresponding data services). Under Board Authority 05-23-23 (28), the grant funds also allowed the County Library to continue providing Wi-Fi hotspot service to the 7,000 Tech Connect kits and procure 2,000 Wi-Fi hotspots with unlimited data plans for customers to check-out. Nationally, many library systems offer Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout and during the Tech Connect kit program, the County Library received comments from customers who just needed access to data services and did not need a device to connect to the internet, i.e., a laptop or a tablet. The County Library qualified for the E-Rate program, which allowed the Library to receive discounted pricing through its contract with AT&T. This discounted pricing is considered one of the lowest in the nation as reported by the USAC’s Open Data portal. The ECF FCC Form 471 dataset from this portal includes applicant entity, services requested, the quantity of service requested and service provider, connection type, and monthly recurring unit cost, to name a few.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today’s proposed actions to amend the AT&T contract for Wi-Fi broadband access supports the Sustainability/Equity/Empower/Community/ and Justice. Strategic Initiatives within the County of San Diego’s 2024-2029 Strategic Initiatives by providing library resources for residents that enrich the lives of all people and, allow residents to be engaged within their community.

SUBJECT: AMEND PO#566069 AT&T WIFI SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Respectfully submitted,



AMY HARBERT
Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A