



November 2, 2021

For Immediate Release

Contact: Rick Szabrak, 740-652-7162 / rick.szabrak@FairfieldCountyOhio.Gov

Fairfield County Pledges Support for Broadband Expansion

Lancaster, Ohio - Under the auspices of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Fairfield County Commissioners have allocated up to \$500,000 to support winning bidders of the Ohio Residential Broadband Grant Program.

A study conducted in 2017 in partnership with Connected Nation showed that 13 percent of households in Fairfield County did not have access to internet at a speed in which they would be able to work productively. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for reliable internet service at home as more employees work remotely and children need online access for their education.

“It is important for residents throughout our county to have equal access to internet service,” said David Levacy, president of the Fairfield County Commission. “More people are working from home and more kids are doing online learning than ever before. They need reliable internet to do that effectively and we hope that these funds help provide more service throughout the county.”

The Ohio Residential Broadband Grant Program awards grants to internet service providers to fund the construction of broadband projects in unserved and underserved areas of the state. The program is administered by BroadbandOhio, a division of the Ohio Department of Development.

The funds that Fairfield County is allocating to internet service providers will increase the likelihood that projects in Fairfield County will be selected. To be eligible, projects must serve at least 1,600 residences in the county and the project cost must be at least \$8 million. Any internet service provider will be eligible for these funds, as long as they meet the criteria and are selected to receive an Ohio Residential Broadband Grant.

“We felt this was a great way to help stretch our ARPA funds to serve more people throughout the county,” said Rick Szabrak, Fairfield County Economic and Workforce Development Director. “We hope this incentivizes more providers to apply for projects in Fairfield County and increases the likelihood they will receive grant money from the state.”

For more information contact Rick Szabrak at rick.szabrak@fairfieldcountyohio.gov.

###