

Internet Connectivity Kits

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| Date: | January 25, 2021 |
| To: | Toronto Public Library Board |
| From: | City Librarian |

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request Toronto Public Library Board approval to procure Internet Connectivity Kits with a total value of up to approximately \$1,600,000 using two existing vendor contracts: Rogers Communications for Wi-Fi hotspots and associated service plans up to approximately \$1,100,000; and Dell Canada for laptops up to approximately \$500,000.

Toronto Public Library's (TPL) new Internet Connectivity Kit service was designed to provide emergency relief to Torontonians in highest need of home internet access, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The service has attracted significantly more external donor and grant funding than anticipated at its inception in April 2020, with additional potential future funding, so authorization for procurement spending now requires Board approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves the procurement of Internet Connectivity Kits with a total value of up to approximately \$1,600,000, funded from external donations and grants, using existing vendor contracts for:
 - a. Wi-Fi hotspots and associated service plans from Rogers Communications with a value up to approximately \$1,100,000; and
 - b. laptops from Dell Canada with a value of up to approximately \$500,000.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

All Internet Connectivity Kits are supported solely by donations to the TPL Foundation, pandemic emergency relief fund grants, or from TPL partners donating equipment. The Internet Connectivity Kits program therefore has no impact on TPL's approved operating and capital budgets.

To date, \$995,000 has been received or pledged, which will support approximately 660 Kits, with \$303,000 allocated to procurements from Dell and \$692,000 allocated for procurements from Rogers.

Board approval is also being sought for additional potential future funding of up to \$605,000 which brings the total value of approvals to \$1,600,000, of which \$1,100,000 would be for Rogers and \$500,000 for Dell.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Broadening Toronto's Digital Access & Inclusion - building on the continued success of TPL's Wi-Fi Hotspot Lending Program, TPL's Internet Connectivity Kits provide internet connectivity, equipment and supports to help families and individuals in most urgent need to remain connected in their communities and to provide equitable access to online resources and services.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Internet Connectivity Kits will have a positive impact on all equity-seeking groups, with a focus on low-income families, by providing opportunities for them to remain connected in their communities and to provide access to online resources and services.

BACKGROUND

Working with existing partner Computers for Schools/Renewed Computer Technology (RCT) in April 2020, TPL developed 100 Internet Connectivity Kits comprised of donated refurbished laptops from RCT and Wi-Fi hotspots with a 4-month data plan supported by donations to the TPL Foundation to provide to Torontonians experiencing the greatest need for home internet access early in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Internet Connectivity Kit model quickly drew the attention of external donors and emergency grant funders.

COMMENTS

Kits developed after the initial 100 Kits are now comprised of a new laptop and a Wi-Fi hotspot with two-years of unlimited data access. TPL has worked with the City's Community Coordination Plan, an initiative led by the City and United Way that works with local community organizations to identify urgent issues, to identify and distribute the kits to Torontonians in most urgent need. Existing vendor contracts will be used to supply these kits.

Since April 2020, TPL's Internet Connectivity Kits initiative has received or been pledged \$995,000 in support. In anticipation of continuing interest from external funders, Board approval is being sought for procurements of up to \$1,600,000.

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SIGNATURE

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