Town of Dillsboro Downtown WiFi

Debbie Coffey

Submission Date	Sep 9, 2022 1:30 PM
Name of Initiative	Town of Dillsboro Downtown WiFi
Contact Person	Debbie Coffey
Title	Town Clerk
Address	PO Box 1088
City	Dillsboro
State	NC
Zip Code	28725
Primary Phone Number	828-596-1439
Email	info@dillsboronc.info
Organization Type	Government
Organization Tax ID	56-1189222
Time of Year of Initiative	Off Peak (Dec - March) preferred

Describe the timing of the initiative in as much detail as possible (please list key project dates, milestones, timeframes, etc.)

The timeline for this project is as follows:

Create RFP to Solicit Provider
10/15/2022
Select Provider for Project
12/1/2022
Equipment Installed
1/31/2023
Service Available to Town of Dillsboro
2/15/2023
Year 1 Complete
2/15/2024

| Describe your initiative | This project will consist of providing public access Wi-Fi to the downtown area and two nearby parks in the Town of Dillsboro. These areas do not currently have a public Wi-Fi system, and cellular service in these areas is inconsistent. The program would include the installation of high-speed wireless internet infrastructure in the downtown area and the local parks to offer free, open access internet to visitors, vendors, and residents alike by February 2023. The project will also include the installation of security cameras in the downtown as well as the parks. The cameras will provide additional security for tourists and business owners.

The Town of Dillsboro will work with project partners, including Jackson County Economic Development and the Southwestern Commission, to release an RFP to select an Internet Service Provider to complete the installation of the public Wi-Fi system. The Town has requested funding for equipment and installation for this project through the Appalachian Regional Commission, but the Town is requesting additional funding from Jackson County TDA to cover the costs of providing fiber backhaul for the project for the first year. |
|---|---|
| Describe what previous experience applicant has in successful execution of similar endeavors | The Town of Dillsboro has the capacity to undertake this project, along with project partners at the Southwestern Commission, Jackson County Economic Development, and the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. The Town Clerk, Debbie Coffey, will, along with the Dillsboro Town Board, lead this project for the town. Ms. Coffey has extensive experience managing the Town of Dillsboro and has managed a number of projects, including funding from both the state and federal governments, over the course of her many years of service. |
| Website | https://www.dillsboronc.info/ |
| Social Media Channels - paste URLs below | https://www.facebook.com/DillsboroNC/ |
| Amount of Funds Requested? | $12,000 |
| Date Funds Needed | Jan 1, 2023 |

Give a narrative description of how this project will increase tourism and visitation in Jackson County

Tourism is a main economic driver in Jackson County. Visit North Carolina data showed that 2019 Traveler Expenditures totaled $207,480,000 and led to $51,850,000 in payroll for the county's workforce. Dillsboro, specifically, sees thousands of visitors during the peak summer months, many of whom travel via the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. In addition to these visitors, Dillsboro hosts several seasonal craft shows and multiple festivals throughout the year. The two most attended festivals alone likely draw in more than 2,000 participants, both tourists and entrepreneurs. Public Wi-Fi in Dillsboro would encourage visitors to stay longer by allowing them to connect virtually to everything that Dillsboro has to offer. In an area with poor cellular service like Dillsboro, public Wi-FI offers guests the opportunity to research, review, and book experiences within the community, incentivizing them to stay and spend their money at local businesses. The Town of Dillsboro firmly believes that this access to the Internet will spur additional economic activity.

Entrepreneurs also need reliable internet access to make sales and process transactions. Dillsboro is home to close to thirty different businesses, most of which market themselves to tourists. Beyond the in-house businesses, there are also local entrepreneurs who sell their products at the numerous festivals and craft shows that occur throughout the year. Public Wi-Fi would allow these businesses to better serve their customers and would decrease the burden on sellers who might otherwise struggle to use devices like digital card readers or cash-transfer apps. By benefitting entrepreneurs, this program also benefits their customers by making it easier to make purchases which then encourages them to buy more and browse longer. Ultimately, this program benefits everyone and offers opportunity for growth and advancement on several different fronts.

If this initiative has occurred before, what is new that differentiates it from prior years?

This initiative has not occurred before.

What is your advertising and marketing plan for your initiative?

The advertising and marketing plan for this initiative includes promotion and advertising through social media, advertisements in printed tourism brochures, and signage posted in businesses and in public areas of the town.

Do you agree to acknowledge the 'Jackson County TDA' in materials as required? Any releases or ad placements should have a statement that "the event was made possible, in part, by the Jackson County TDA." Print ad placements, where/when possible should include the JCTDA logo.

Yes

Total anticipated cost of initiative

135689

Total funds your organization will provide toward total cost?	61844

Detail funds requested from other sources and note commitments or anticipated receipt of funds from other sources

Appalachian Regional Commission, $61,844.50
Town of Dillsboro, $61,844.50
Total, $123,689.00

Please upload your detailed budget, including event or initiative expenses and revenue. You can attach a spreadsheet (Excel), PDF, or Word Document.

[XLSX] [Dillsboro Downtown WiFi 2023 - TDA Budget.xlsx](#)

Anticipated Attendees from Jackson County:

The anticipated outcomes of this project are to serve at least thirty-five businesses/entrepreneurs and thirty households within Jackson County.

Anticipated Attendees from outside Jackson County:

We anticipate that this project will serve at least 5,000 visitors.

Anticipated overnight stays generated:

Anticipated overnight stays generated: While this project is not directly related to creating overnight stays, it certainly offers an indirect benefit that might contribute to visitors extending or planning a longer-term stay within the Town of Dillsboro. This initiative gives visitors the ability to access information about additional activities that are available in the area. This incentive might also lead to an increased number of return visits.

How did you determine audience/attendance numbers and where do they come from?

The anticipated numbers for this project were generated from information provided by the Town of Dillsboro concerning the number of businesses within their town limits, the number of residents also within their limits, and an estimated number of visitors. The visitor numbers were determined from estimations of festival and event attendees and from Great Smoky Mountains Railroad data concerning the number of passengers they have on a regular basis.

How will you measure success of your initiative?

The success of this initiative will be measured through evaluation of the number of users and by testimonials from users of the service within the town limits. Additionally, the Dillsboro Merchants Association provides a survey to vendors after each festival for feedback and this survey will be used to measure the usefulness of this service to vendors.

Signature:

Dillsboro Downtown WiFi - Detailed Budget

	Federal (ARC)	Local Funds	TDA
Equipment	$56,844.50	$61,844.50	
Monthly Service Fee (12 months)			$12,000
Administration	$5,000.00		

Total Cost	135,689.00