



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF COVINGTON**

Joseph U. Meyer
Mayor

Covington City Hall
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**EXECUTIVE ORDER
CITY OF COVINGTON, KENTUCKY**

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 2020-EO-23

COVINGTON CONNECT INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, Mayor Joseph U. Meyer signed Executive Order 2020-EO-01, declaring a state of emergency in the City of Covington due to the outbreak of COVID-19 virus, a public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, applicable Kentucky laws authorize a mayor to exercise emergency powers to efficiently and effectively provide for the health, safety and welfare of citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress with overwhelming, bipartisan support and signed into law by President Trump on March 27th, 2020; and

WHEREAS, through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, the CARES Act provides for payments to State, Local and Tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 outbreak, Covington residents have experienced firsthand the effects of the digital divide, in particular the ability to conduct distance learning, access online job applications, access online health care resources, and many others; and

WHEREAS, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the sudden use of distance learning and the possibility of future remote learning highlighted the need to assure digital equity for elementary, middle and high school students; and

WHEREAS, the need for distance learning and other digital access requires the implementation of high speed internet and Wi-Fi as soon as possible; and

WHEREAS, through the Covington Connect initiative, the City of Covington, Cincinnati Bell, the Housing Authority of Covington, Covington Independent Schools, Blair Technology Group and ReGadget, and Comp-U-Do!pt will work together to expand the wireless infrastructure in low and moderate income

neighborhoods through the addition of approximately 125 public access points, the addition of fiber optic infrastructure primarily to the Eastside and Peaselburg neighborhoods, and provide free computers for up to 1,900 families of school-age children; and

WHEREAS, public Wi-Fi is currently available only in public areas of the downtown Renaissance District through Cincinnati Bell's partnership with the City and Renaissance Covington, and the Covington Connect initiative will facilitate the expansion of the Renaissance Wi-Fi network into Mainstrasse, Ritte's Corner, and the MLK Corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of Covington recently completed a procurement process seeking proposals for internet and Wi-Fi services for its biggest complexes (Latonia Terrace and City Heights) and Cincinnati Bell submitted the sole proposal;

WHEREAS, the Covington Connect initiative will be funded using CARES Act funds, in-kind contributions, donations, and funding from existing sources.

NOW and therefore, I, Joseph U. Meyer, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Covington, Kentucky by KRS Chapter 39A, KRS 39B, and in furtherance of the declaration set forth in Executive Order 2020-EO-01, hereby order:

1. City Staff shall proceed with the implementation of the Covington Connect initiative to provide free public Wi-Fi, additional fiber optic infrastructure, and computers to Covington residents through partnerships with Cincinnati Bell, the Housing Authority of Covington, Covington Independent Schools, Blair Technology Group and ReGadget, and Comp-U-Dopt.
2. The implementation of neighborhood Wi-Fi access shall aim to provide free public hotspots to reach as many Covington Independent Public School students as possible and shall prioritize the Eastside, Hellentown, Austinburg, Peaselburg, Levassor Park, Lewisburg, Latonia, Westside, Mainstrasse, and West Covington neighborhoods.
3. The implementation of additional fiber optic infrastructure shall include new access to the Eastside and Peaselburg neighborhoods.
4. City Staff are authorized to prepare all necessary documents and agreements to memorialize the partnerships envisioned by the Covington Connect initiative.
5. The City shall utilize CARES Act funding to contribute to the Covington Connect initiative, with the total amount of City funds available not to exceed \$1,250,000.00.
6. The Covington Connect initiative shall be implemented and all funding completed no later than December 31, 2020.

This Order shall remain in effect until terminated by the issuance of another Executive Order when I

determine that a state of emergency no longer exists and the exercise of extraordinary measures are no longer required for the protection of the public health, safety and welfare.

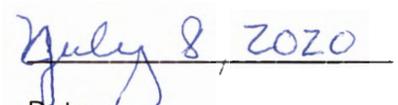
THIS ORDER IS EFFECTIVE JULY 8, 2020 AND SHALL REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL RESCINDED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER.

Signed on this the 8th day of July, 2020,


Joseph U. Meyer, Mayor

Attest:


Margaret M. Nyhan, City Clerk


Date

