

Dear Cleveland Heights City Council,

We were informed by Tanisha Briley on 5/28 that funding for the RFP for the Municipal Broadband study was put on hold due to COVID-19 budget constraints.

We believe that the City Council should approve the funding for this study. While we are sensitive to the events of COVID-19, we believe there is no better illustration for the need of this study than the societal changes occurring due to COVID-19.

The [CH-UH City School District Draft Reopening Plan](#), presented during the 7/7 CHUH Board of Education meeting, identifies a technology goal on slide 34: "Goal: Eliminate barriers for student success, while advancing digital equity in CH-UH".

According to personal communication on 7/9 with CHUH Board of Education President James Posch, when asked about data collected about COVID-19 Internet inequities across our city, Mr. Posch responded "The core statistic I *think* you're looking for is 95.8% of our families have told us they have 'reliable wifi access'. This is from our survey where 2/3 of families responded. I'm VERY worried about the 1/3 of families who haven't responded to the survey. Our admin team says we're getting hotspots for the balance of families that need them."

This [cleveland.com](#) article mentions 13.58% of Cleveland Heights homes are lacking Internet. We have also heard anecdotal evidence that faculty experienced a significant drop in class attendance over teleschool platforms.

Furthermore, we feel the city's response to Internet access during COVID-19, while generous in spirit, was void of a practical solution. The CH/UH Educational Services Team [suggests](#) "In addition, the Heights Libraries welcome families to use their library parking lots to connect to free WiFi." We fail to comprehend how a family can use their car, parked in a Library parking lot, to service the career needs of parents and the academic needs of their children in any meaningful, ergonomically sound, or otherwise productive manner.

Digital equity is a preeminent theme of Citizens for Heights Municipal Broadband. COVID-19 has convinced us that there is no better time to invest in the Municipal Broadband study, and we ask city council to please pass a resolution to fund this initiative.

If the council's decision is to not move forward, and the council does not share our level of appreciation for the timeliness of this initiative at this time, we please request a written explanation as to the specific decision(s) that delay this initiative so we can better understand your conclusions.

Thank you,

Citizens for Heights Municipal Broadband