

Education Connectivity for Rural Students

[Edit Request](#)

Requester Information

Legislator: Winterton, Ronald M.

Creation Date: 2024-01-23

Submission Date: 2024-01-23

Section 1: Request Details

Description:

Every day Rural Utah students fall behind their urban peers in the "digital divide" - those that have access to the internet and those that do not. Many rural students leave their schools with high speed fiber and head home to where their internet isn't strong enough to complete their homework, participate in virtual learning or otherwise supplement their education. Transcend is requesting funding for CBRS radio towers that boost the existing wifi and cellular signals to allow students to better connect from their after-school locations.

Legislative designee contact information:

- Name: Alexander Tarbet
- Organization: Transcend
- Position: Government Relations

Section 2: Funding Information

How will the appropriation be used?

	One-time	Ongoing
Personnel Services	2024: \$0.00 2025: \$0.00	\$0.00
In-State Travel	2024: \$0.00 2025: \$0.00	\$0.00
Out-of-state Travel	2024: \$0.00 2025: \$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies and Equipment	2024: \$0.00 2025: \$0.00	\$0.00
Technology Purchases	2024: \$0.00 2025: \$0.00	\$0.00
Infrastructure/Capital Investments	2024: \$0.00 2025: \$750,000.00	\$0.00
Other Charges/Pass Thru	2024: \$0.00 2025: \$0.00	\$0.00
Expenditure Total		

One-time 2024
\$0.00

One-time 2025
\$750,000.00

Ongoing 2025
\$0.00

Funding Sources:

General Fund

- Amount Requested 2024 (One-time) \$0.00
- Amount Requested 2025 (One-time) \$750,000.00
- Amount Requested 2025 (Ongoing) \$0.00

Revenue Total

One-time 2024
\$0.00

One-time 2025
\$750,000.00

Ongoing 2025
\$0.00

Should unused funding be returned to the state at the end of the fiscal year?

No

Is this project scalable if the Legislature does not fund the full requested amount?

Yes

A short explanation describing how the project might be scaled

If the full amount is not appropriated, we will scale the acquisition and implementation of signal-boosting towers will be purchased, thereby limiting the number of geographic regions where internet connectivity for rural students can be expanded

Section 3: Agency Information

Subjects:

Infrastructure and Mobility

Agency:

532 / Utah Education and Telehealth Network

Type of entity to receive pass-through funding

- Private Not for Profit
-

Section 4: Performance Outcome Measurement

Who would benefit from this request (who is the target audience)?

K-12 school kids in rural and super rural areas that need at-home internet access to complete school work; bridging the educational digital divide.

What is this project or program intended to accomplish?

The overall mission of Transcend is to close the digital divide. Transcend is starting with the most disconnected rural students with the plan to connect every K-12 student in the state of Utah to high-quality broadband. Specifically, this funding will allow Transcend to finish the successful pilot project in Beaver by purchasing X-net towers. Fully funding this request will also allow for Transcend to replicate what has proven to work in Beaver and in other rural and super-rural areas of the state.

How will the Legislature know whether the project or program achieved its intended purpose?

Transcend partners with rural school districts to identify students who need at-home internet access. The Legislature can determine the effectiveness of the funding appropriation through an increase in the percentage of students with at-home internet access, as reported by the LEA. As Transcend partners with

rural school districts, pre-post testing will be conducted to ensure that we are closing that gap in underserved areas.

Section 5: Other Supporting Documents

Intent Language

Previous State Funding