



Wisconsin Broadband Summit

November 16, 2021

Community Development Institute
Division of Extension
University of Wisconsin-Madison



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COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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Expanding Private Philanthropy Funding for K-12 Student Internet Access in Wisconsin

Steve Goldberg

Executive Director

WEA Member Benefits Foundation





Expanding Private Philanthropy Funding for K-12 Student Internet Access in Wisconsin

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We Are a Catalyst

- ▶ Bringing more philanthropy to the table
- ▶ Major “missing piece”
- ▶ Statewide funding model
- ▶ Pilot project

K–12 Student Internet Access

- ▶ Partners: Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Public Service Commission (PSC), Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA Purchasing)
- ▶ Affordability gap
- ▶ PSC grant

Pilot Project: Sept. 2021-Aug. 2022

- ▶ PSC grant
- ▶ WEA Member Benefits Foundation
- ▶ Alliant Energy Foundation *
- ▶ Goal: 210 student households
- ▶ Five pilot school districts

Five Pilot School Districts

- ▶ Janesville, Menasha, Shawano, Beaver Dam, Sheboygan Falls
- ▶ DPI/CESA Digital Learning Bridge

The Impact of “Bulk & Batch”

- ▶ Group purchasing power/pricing
- ▶ Upfront, lump sum payment for full 12 months of access
- ▶ ISP cooperation

The Appeal to Funders

- ▶ Uses an established funding vehicle: “plug & play”
- ▶ Opportunity to adopt specific school districts
- ▶ We are the matchmaker

Early Learnings from Pilot

- ▶ Interest from potential funders
- ▶ Wisconsin Philanthropy Network
- ▶ On the right path
- ▶ Impact on student remote learning & telehealth



WEA Member Benefits™
FOUNDATION INC.



weafoundation.org
steven.goldberg2016@outlook.com



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