



Tech Executive Leadership Initiative

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A Robust Internal System for Successful Broadband Implementation

Using five priorities to guide New York City's management of new
broadband contracts

Photo by Thomas Jensen via Unsplash

BACKGROUND

As part of their 10-week policy training, the leaders of the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative spent 6 weeks working on a real-world government challenge. In teams of 4-5, the leaders proposed ideas to help the City of New York ensure that vendors awarded contracts through its record-setting investments in broadband infrastructure – which are further detailed in the City's [Internet Master Plan \(IMP\)](#) and [request for proposals](#) for broadband expansion – go beyond lip service and adhere to City's digital inclusion principles to meaningfully close the digital divide. Each team narrowed its focus to a specific part of the problem, conducted research, and developed solutions. Below is an overview of one team's solution: A new performance management system to organize the City's broadband contracting process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York City's Mayor's Office of the CTO should couple its Universal Solicitation for Broadband RFP with a robust internal performance management system for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) awarded contracts through this process. This system should be anchored by five main priorities, including: well-defined metrics for digital equity; a regular performance review schedule; and mechanisms to reward or penalize vendors based on performance. Though the City may carry out some of these functions, consolidating them into a formal system would help the City keep broadband projects on track amidst its many other initiatives.

To learn more about this
project, please visit
aspentechpolicyhub.com/teli



Tech Executive Leadership Initiative

ABOUT TELI

This project was completed as part of the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative (TELI), a 10-week skills-building initiative that prepares experienced technology leaders to engage effectively with public sector challenges. Learn more at aspentechpolicyhub.com/teli.

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PROBLEM

As part of its Internet Master Plan, the City of New York launched the [Universal Solicitation for Broadband](#), a citywide request for proposals (RFP) to bring connectivity to 600,000 New Yorkers. While the RFP holds enormous promise, it also presents a large operational challenge for the City. It requires extensive coordination and management between stakeholders in the public, private, non-profit sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the RFP is successful, the City should formalize its internal operations for managing this initiative via a robust performance management system. To create and maintain an effective ISP performance management system, the City of New York should be guided by five main priorities:

- 1. Defining digital equity metrics to measure ISP performance.** These criteria can include metrics such as the number of newly-connected households, the price of broadband service, the speed of service, and the number of blocks newly outfitted with fiber.
- 2. Conducting quarterly performance evaluations of ISPs using the digital equity metrics.** The City should then convene quarterly meetings of representatives from the City and the ISPs to assess vendors using these metrics.
- 3. Using the outcomes of quarterly performance evaluations to award future contracts.** By making future contracts contingent on good performance, the City can bolster or curtail ISPs' access to future monthly subscribers – a metric that most ISPs are keen to optimize.
- 4. Ensuring that established digital equity metrics are included in future ISP contracts and by other government agencies.** ISPs should be required to use one standardized reporting process for all City agencies.
- 5. Communicating the impact of digital equity broadband initiatives to the Mayor and to NYC residents.** To help drive broadband adoption, the City should publicize stories about how these broadband investments have meaningfully benefited residents.

For more details on each of the five priorities, please see: (1) an [operational plan](#) describing how to implement this initiative; (2) an [infographic](#) that describes the main functions of the performance management system.