

CASE STUDY

The City of Hopewell wanted to better serve its community by making high speed Wi-Fi accessible to low- and moderate-income students and residents in the area.

Local Government



Their willingness to work within the tight timeframe, ability to move quickly and willingness to accelerate implementation confirmed they were the right partner for the City of Hopewell.”

*Dr. Concetta Manker
IT Department Director
City of Hopewell*



Approximately 25 miles southeast of Virginia’s Capital of Richmond sits the City of Hopewell, which is home to ~4,000 low- and moderate-income students spanning three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and one learning center (Preschool – Adult). Two years ago, City of Hopewell’s IT Department Director, Dr. Concetta Manker, set out on a mission: Make the downtown area accessible via Wi-Fi for residents. An ambitious goal, Dr. Manker developed a plan to make it a reality by accomplishing it in a series of small steps, including securing City Council approval and budget. In March 2020, the world changed, and the COVID-19 pandemic forced nationwide state-by-state lockdowns and put state, local, and tribal governments under unprecedented strain. 📍

PROFILE

The City of Hopewell is located 25 miles from Richmond, Virginia and overlooks the James and Appomattox rivers

CHALLENGE

Within a three-week timeframe, architect and craft a solution to provide Wi-Fi access to 3,000+ families across five City of Hopewell communities

SOLUTION

A flexible and agile partner who understood the City of Hopewell’s vision and was able to execute, providing managed networks, managed firewalls and wireless access points

BENEFITS

Secure and reliable Wi-Fi enabled quickly for residents and accessible 24/7

RESULTS

Provided Municipal Broadband access to nearly 3000+ low- and moderate-income families within the City of Hopewell

The best-laid plans could have been all but forgotten. For the City of Hopewell, they were accelerated to better serve its community.

The CARES Act: Making it Possible

Through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, the CARES Act provides payments to State, Local, and Tribal governments navigating the impact of COVID-19. Part of the CARES Act funding, the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CCPF) addresses the challenges from the pandemic, especially in rural America and low- and moderate-income communities, helping to ensure that all communities have access to the high-quality, modern infrastructure needed to thrive, including internet access.

The City of Hopewell was able to secure funding through the CARES Act to enable students of low-income housing to have much needed internet access for remote learning. With schools shut down nationwide, many students were being left behind, especially in Hopewell where the majority of students reside in low-income housing with no internet access necessary for remote learning. Many students would go outside their homes, find a hot spot, download their assignments, go back inside to complete the assignment, then back outside to find a hotspot and upload to the school. This was not sustainable.

In October, Dr. Concetta Manker contacted TPx through one of its channel partners. The City of Hopewell needed a partner that could move quickly as they needed to have the CCPF grant submitted by first week of Nov. (2020) to meet deadlines and secure necessary funding. As a leading nationwide managed services provider delivering managed IT, cybersecurity, connectivity and cloud communication, TPx was an easy choice.

Why TPx


In the height of COVID precautions, TPx had to act quickly without a customary site visit to provide an accurate scope on requirements and resources. Yet, as a customer-first company, TPx was able to produce an accurate quote, sight unseen, using satellite imagery and a deep understanding of the community's time constraints and needs.

"TPx understood our vision and delivered against it with precision and velocity," said Dr. Manker. "Their willingness to work within the tight timeframe, ability to move quickly and willingness to accelerate implementation confirmed they were the right partner for the City of Hopewell. The TPx team was confident and eager to deliver, which is what we needed in an IT partner."

Timing was critical because — as part of the CARES Act — cities receiving the grants had to spend the money before the end of the year. Within a three-week timeframe, TPx architected and crafted a solution necessary to provide Wi-Fi access to 3,000+ families across five city of Hopewell communities. Part of TPx's winning solution incorporated local partners to deploy the network and assess the wireless architecture. TPx also partnered with two local companies that provided cabling and wireless site surveys, helping make this a reality.

Enabling Connectivity

Upon gaining funding, the necessary equipment (e.g., firewalls, circuit, switches, wireless access points, etc.) was ordered and fiber and circuits were installed. TPx created a new network to extend Wi-Fi into five public housing communities: Freedman Point, Kippax, Davisville Bland Court, Thomas Rolfe and Summit Apartments. The new network now provides public access to reliable and secure Wi-Fi 24-hours a day. With a combination of interior and exterior access points, residents have uninterrupted access and don't have to worry about bottlenecks, whether inside or in the common areas of each complex.

"This is an excellent example of local government, private sector and the housing authority coming together quickly to benefit the community," said Jonathan Goldberger, Vice President Security Solutions at TPx. "We are extremely proud of our ability to move quickly to provide much needed internet access for hundreds of Hopewell residents." 





Freedman Point, an unsubsidized community located less than a mile from City Hall was the first location deployed. Kippax Place was the next location deployed and is live and currently undergoing testing. More than 200 families reside across the two communities. With both sites running smoothly since the end of April, the final locations are on track for completion by mid July 2021.

When all five locations are deployed, over 3,000 total families will benefit from Municipal Broadband access, enabling remote learning or working opportunities.

In times of COVID, where we've all had to create new solutions to related challenges, TPx is enabling customers and municipalities to solve challenges in a creative manner. In March 2021, the Commonwealth followed up with an inspection to see what had been done thus far. They were pleased with the progress and the potential, with the City of Hopewell being the only success story with active deployments five months after funding approval.

As students begin to return to the classroom, this project will have lasting implications for distance learning, remote work and even local business support.

