



DATE: April 14, 2026

TO: Mayor Malakoutian and City Councilmembers

FROM: Sabra Schneider, Chief Information Officer  
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SUBJECT: Innovation Forum Device Distribution

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The goal of the Innovation Forum is to advise city staff on strengthening Bellevue's capacity as a city where innovation advances opportunity, equity, mobility, and economic development. This topic was last presented to the Council on February 3, 2026.

In partnership with community members, non-profits, businesses, and residents, three primary focus areas were identified, along with a corresponding work plan, goals, and volunteer–staff subteams. These focus areas include:

- Advancing Digital Equity
- Establishing Prioritization and Policy
- Enhancing Innovation Ecosystems

As part of the Digital Equity work, the City launched a pilot device distribution initiative to expand technology access for residents with limited or no connectivity or equipment. According to State Broadband Office 2023 data, more than 1,200 Bellevue households lack either adequate connectivity or a working device, underscoring the digital equity gap within our community.

To address this need, the City of Bellevue implemented a Digital Equity Device Pilot Program that provides eligible low-income households with refurbished laptops, essential accessories, and 12 months of hotspot connectivity. The pilot is designed to meet immediate access needs and help residents connect to jobs, education, essential services, and community resources. Through a partnership with PCs for People and support from Mini City Hall, the program is testing a scalable model to strengthen digital inclusion and ensure that everyone in Bellevue has the tools necessary to fully participate in today's digital environment.

To date, the pilot program has distributed 60 refurbished Windows 11 laptops, accessories, and one year of hotspot service to eligible households—targeting neighborhoods identified by the Washington State Broadband Office as having the highest need. The pilot seeks to evaluate operational logistics, user experience, and

program effectiveness to help inform potential expansion and to support the Council's vision for innovation, digital inclusion, and equitable access.

PCs for People supports application processing, device selection, distribution, and customer service, including a one-year hardware warranty and lifetime technical support. The pilot included three in-person application and distribution events at Mini City Hall on April 1, 3, and 8, 2026, during which all 60 available devices were distributed. The application process includes income and residency verification, with multilingual materials offered to ensure accessibility. The program's evaluation framework incorporates baseline surveys, as well as three- and six-month follow-up surveys, to assess usage patterns, connectivity barriers, and community impact.

Bellevue's outreach, Mini City Hall, communications, procurement, and legal teams have been essential partners in the development and launch of this pilot. Additional support and promotion were provided by the King County Housing Authority and the Innovation Forum's digital equity subteam.

Staff will share further results of this pilot with the Council during upcoming innovation briefings and at the next Innovation Exchange event on June 3, 2026, at the Meydenbauer Center.