

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## An Act To Encourage Community Network Development

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

**Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-G, sub-§33-G** is enacted to read:

**33-G.**

Technology		Expenses Only	35-A MRSA §9152
	Education and Municipal Technology Advisory Committee		

**Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA c. 92** is enacted to read:

### **CHAPTER 92**

### **TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **§ 9151. Definitions**

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

**1. Advisory committee.** "Advisory committee" means the Education and Municipal Technology Advisory Committee established in Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 33-G.

**2. Community network.** "Community network" means a computer system within a municipality that provides free or low-cost access to information and services through a centrally managed network or intranet or Internet connection or any combination of network and connections.

**3. Fund.** "Fund" means the Education and Municipal Technology Partnership Fund established in section 9153, subsection 3.

#### **§ 9152. Advisory committee established**

**1. Members.** The advisory committee consists of the following 11 members:

A. The chair of the ConnectME Authority, as established in section 9203, or the chair's designee;

B. Three members representing postsecondary education, appointed by the Governor;

C. One member of a statewide association of municipal governments, appointed by the Governor;

D. Three members of the public, appointed by the Governor;

E. Two members representing a community that has an operational community network, appointed by the Governor; and

F. One member representing a provider of Internet service serving a rural area of the State, appointed by the Governor.

**2. Terms; vacancies.** Members of the advisory committee appointed by the Governor serve 3-year terms or until their successors are appointed. A vacancy is filled for the remainder of the term that is vacated.

**3. Chair; clerk.** The advisory committee shall annually elect a chair and a clerk from among its members at its first meeting of the calendar year.

### **§ 9153. Community network development**

**1. Technology partnerships.** The advisory committee shall provide oversight and advice to existing community networks and shall encourage and aid in the development of community networks by municipalities in partnerships with local schools in the municipalities. In performing these duties the advisory committee shall:

A. Coordinate with the University of Maine System and act as a liaison between the system and local community network partners to ensure that appropriate information technology training programs and courses are available to teachers from kindergarten to grade 12;

B. Provide ongoing expert advice and guidance for developing and established community networks; and

C. Administer a grant program pursuant to subsection 2.

**2. Grant program.** The advisory committee shall administer a grant program from the fund to provide grants to communities and schools partnering to develop community networks. The advisory committee shall by routine technical rule adopted pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A establish the process and criteria for grant application and distribution.

**3. Fund established.** The Education and Municipal Technology Partnership Fund is established as a nonlapsing fund administered by the advisory committee. The fund consists of money appropriated or allocated to it and may receive money from any source, including grants, gifts, bequests and donations.

**4. Annual report.** The advisory committee shall submit an annual report by January 31st to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utilities. The report must:

A. Identify community networks in the State with which the advisory committee has been involved and the status of their development;

- B. Provide an accounting of the grant program administered pursuant to subsection 2;
- C. Summarize the progress made over the past year in developing new community networks;
- D. Summarize the support provided to already existing community networks over the past year; and
- E. Outline proposals and plans for additional community networks.

**Sec. 3. Education and Municipal Technology Advisory Committee; staggered terms.** Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 9152, subsection 2, of the 10 initial members appointed by the Governor to the Education and Municipal Technology Advisory Committee, the Governor shall appoint 3 for 3-year terms, 4 for 2-year terms and 4 for 1-year terms.

**Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and allocations are made.

## **PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

### **Public Utilities - Administrative Division 0184**

Initiative: Provides one-time funds for initial funding of the Education and Municipal Technology Partnership Fund for the community networks grant program administered by the Education and Municipal Technology Advisory Committee pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 9153 and ongoing funds to pay expenses incurred by advisory committee members. Funds appropriated in this section do not lapse, but must be carried forward for the same purposes.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>
All Other	\$90,000	\$10,000
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<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

## **SUMMARY**

This bill establishes the Education and Municipal Technology Advisory Committee to aid in the development and maintenance of community networks by municipalities and schools within those municipalities working in partnership. Under the bill, a community network is a computer system within a municipality that provides free or low-cost access to information and services through a centrally managed network or intranet or Internet connection or any combination of network and connections. The bill makes a one-time appropriation for the purpose of establishing a grant program from a fund to be administered by the advisory committee to aid in the development of community networks and an ongoing appropriation for expenses of the advisory committee members.