

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## **Valencia County Announces Partnership with Facebook to Provide Free Internet to Local Disadvantaged Communities**

*Los Lunas, NM— Date* — Valencia County announced the partnership with Facebook to provide free, reliable broadband internet to approximately 800 households within the disadvantaged communities in Valencia County. Facebook has awarded Valencia County \$225,000.00 to partner with Lokket Inc. (Wireless Internet Provider) and provide free internet access to those in need. The Valencia County Broadband Initiative aims to achieve the goal of connecting those that are struggling with affordability and allow community youth the ability to connect to digital opportunities.

### **Empowering Local Change**

Many customers have already benefited from deploying Lokket Inc. wireless internet. Santa Fe and Socorro Public Schools recently committed to deploying internet to up to 1,800 students. Lokket Inc. is also currently working with Los Lunas and Belen Public School District to implement that same technology and connect as many students to digital opportunities. Valencia County will be able to make an immediate impact due to the simplicity of this program and be able to connect eligible participants sooner than later.

### **Valencia County Broadband Initiative Deliverables**

Lokket Inc. has designed a solution that beams the internet from the top of buildings, schools and other community locations to receivers directly into homes with download speed of 30 mpbs and upload speeds of 5mbps. Antennas are mounted to transmit internet across to residents up to 50 miles away from the distribution point. Lokket Inc. deploys wireless technology that operates in free unlicensed bands delivering fiber-like speeds. Wireless alternatives provide fiber-like connectivity at a significantly lower cost and is also much faster to deploy and connect people within a matter of weeks. As the project advances and more County owned facilities become equipped with distribution antennas, the stronger the internet signal will be.

Valencia County is currently conducting a County wide survey to gage exactly where the need for this free internet service can best be implemented. Once the survey is complete, Valencia County will then make an application available no later than January 1, 2022 to residents and allow the opportunity for justification of hardship. The County will determine eligibility on a case by case scenario and give serious consideration to those who can justify hardship. The County believes the inclusion of this initiative will set the conditions for Valencia County residents to be successful, have job opportunities and economic prosperity.

# MEDIA PRESS RELEASE

**For more and information and project specifics please contact:**

Tesa Mast – Valencia County IT Director

505-916-7209

[Tesa.mast@co.valencia.nm.us](mailto:Tesa.mast@co.valencia.nm.us)