Executive Summary

The Mississippi Authority for Educational Television (d/b/a Mississippi Public Broadcasting) submits the Mississippi Child Care Centers Broadband Technologies proposal to address broadband adoption and computer access challenges of 42 child care centers serving children from low-income families, the parents of the children in these centers, and the childcare providers/teacher population of these centers. The children and parents represented here are vulnerable populations as described in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Addressing the Need

[redacted]

Areas to be Served

The 42 child care centers to be served are located in 18 communities in 17 counties throughout Mississippi, including the economically disadvantaged Mississippi Delta region. The population of these communities totals 380,082, ranging from 684 in Isola to 173,861 in Jackson, with the median population being 9,343. Of this population, it is estimated that 8,497 will be users of the child care computer centers, including children, parents and center staff. It is worthwhile to note that the median percentage of families with children under five living below the poverty level in these communities is 40.1. Details of the demographic data can be found in the supplemental information attached to this proposal.

Qualifications of the Applicant

MPB has received numerous NTIA and Rural Utilities Service Grants in the past five years and has overseen the construction of over $15 million in technology infrastructure projects. Additionally, MPB has provided over 21,000 hours of mentoring and technical assistance to child care centers that serve low income families in Mississippi in the last four years. This effort has provided MPB with unique expertise in understanding the challenges of child care centers, the providers and teachers that work in these centers, the professional development needs, and the technological challenges these centers and populations represent.

MPB will partner with WGBH, Boston to create computer training materials, both print and DVD, for the child care centers. MPB and WGBH have previously created content and curriculum to serve these centers using the content from the PBS children's program, **Between the Lions.** This program has been nominated for the Emmy for the Outstanding Preschool Children's program numerous times. WGBH and MPB have used the program's characters to create educational content for child care providers in other projects. **Between the Lions'**

characters and stories are a part of web games, parent information, and other family resources. Using these characters to advance the goals for broadband adoption for low-income families will add to the complement of family and child materials already completed.

WGBH is the premier producer of children's programs for PBS. **Between the Lions** is a co-production of WGBH, Boston, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, and Sirius Thinking, Ltd., New York. MPB will also partner with the Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service's Computer Applications and Services Department to provide training in basic and intermediate computer literacy skills. The MSU Extension Service provides computer literacy training in all Mississippi counties.

The third partner in this venture is CYTEC Corporation. CYTEC will provide installation of computers in the 42 child care centers and technical assistance during the grant period. [redacted]

Jobs to be saved or created

[redacted] There are 567 staff positions in the child care centers to be served by this proposal. Child care workers experienced a 7% job loss between May and June 2009, and providing computer training to the staff will enhance their marketability in the workforce. The proposal will support the stabilization of state government budgets as defined by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as it supports Mississippi Public Broadcasting, a state agency, and the MSU Extension Service, a unit of Mississippi State University, a state supported public university.

Overall cost of the program

The overall cost of the program is $2,776,693, with $2,211,202 being requested from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, and the remaining 20% being provided as in-kind support from MPB. However, the total cost is even higher in that much of the in-kind services cannot be calculated. This includes the space and facilities contributed by the 42 child care centers, MPB's technical assistance and operation of its network operations center, additional staff not reported as in-kind, and use of such items as the **Between the Lions** stage sets.

The Southern Education Foundation has calculated that for every dollar spent on high quality child care there is a return of $8 dollars in savings and tax increases. This means that this proposal will demonstrate a return of $22,213,544.