

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: New York State Education Department

Project Title: New York State Universal Broadband Adoption

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

In New York, 48% of households are not high-speed broadband subscribers, even though 78% have some type of Internet service using DSL. This is 1% below the national average of 79%. Research indicates the largest barrier to home broadband use is relevance. Adoption hurdles include: interest, age, access, affordability, computer availability, rural location. We will address the issue of relevance by demonstrating the value of broadband and providing the skills to use broadband technologies effectively.

Our project consists of three primary components: 1. Develop curricula that target a broad NY demographic including the visually impaired, physically impaired, geographically isolated, early literacy group and non-English speakers; 2. Provide professional development programs for educators and librarians; 3. Market and deliver digital literacy training, education and awareness, using curricula for many public audiences who need increased digital fluency.

Our proposal is innovative because it: crosses the lines of traditional education delivery; includes professional educators and the general public; uses broadband as a delivery tool for the training designed to increase broadband (broadband as a demonstration of its own value); incorporates the skill sets of different types of institutions, academic libraries, public libraries, schools, workforce development agencies, etc.; proposes new programs to enlist youth & senior citizens in creating broadband awareness. Our project will develop education programs based on the training, again targeted at specific and general audiences and available in multiple languages. Our education will be delivered through a variety of methods including online courseware, video and webinars, downloadable podcasts, and in-person training and education. In those cases where we deliver in-person training, we will use specialized peer-to-peer training methods through our K-12 "Broadband Buddies" and our older American "Cyber-Sages" programs. We will drive non-broadband adopters to education and training programs which stress the benefits of broadband for teaching and learning, enhanced employee productivity and skill, public safety, employment, job search, and the development of daily living skills in a digital economy. The estimated number of potential broadband subscribers we hope to reach through this project is 14.5 million. Currently, 52% of New Yorkers are broadband subscribers. At the conclusion of the project we anticipate adoption of broadband by nearly 3 million additional users. Individuals who are: economically disadvantaged, speakers of English as a second language, aged, blind, physically handicapped and children are specific targets for educational outreach, digital literacy and public awareness initiatives. These populations are over-represented in the population of New Yorkers

who do not subscribe to broadband. Therefore, our outreach and education efforts will be focused to increase the adoption rate within these communities. In the Public Computer Center program category, (PCC Program Title) New York's application for static and mobile computing centers proposes serving geographic areas previously identified as economically disadvantaged. This will reinforce our ability to reach our target audiences. The project will serve all of New York State, which is the 3rd most populous state in the country with an estimated population of 19.4 million. New York is the 27th largest state in terms of geographic size, with 54,555 square miles of territory, and ranks behind much smaller states in broadband penetration. Despite New York's populace and commerce, 25% of the states are ranked higher for Digital Economic competitiveness. In NY City (pop. 10 million) 66% of the population do not have home broadband and 48% of households are not high-speed broadband subscribers. 35 % of people surveyed indicate that cost is the major impediment to broadband adoption, but awareness of the uses of broadband and its importance in the digital economy is also a factor. The state's 1100 public libraries and branches are the broadband hub for citizens in many communities. A Pew study finds that in 72% of instances nationally, public libraries offer the only free community access to the Internet. Although the diffusion of broadband has increased, the home adoption for Internet remains suppressed by cultural, regional, and economic barriers. Indeed 24% of rural NY users indicate they cannot access high speed Internet because the infrastructure is not available. The University of the State of New York (USNY), the nation's most comprehensive and unified educational system proposes a broadband education, awareness and outreach program to raise broadband adoption from the current 52% to 80% to create a sustainable human infrastructure to build knowledge and access to a digital world. We will develop a corps of educators to engage citizens as participants in a broadband economy. The program uniquely combines and leverages skills and resources of the institutions that comprise USNY to provide a holistic approach to digital literacy education. USNY includes: more than 7,000 public and private K-12 schools; 270 colleges and universities; 450 proprietary schools; 7,000 libraries, 750 museums, state archives, vocational rehabilitation for adults with disabilities, special education services for pre-school and school-age children and teenagers; Schools for the Blind and the Deaf; 25 public broadcasting facilities, including seven public television stations and 240,000 certified public school teachers, counselors, and administrators. USNY manages annually over \$26 billion in aid to localities. The project creates 224 jobs within the partner organizations, including instructors, curriculum writers, marketing staff, web designers, and college interns. The total cost of this project is \$17,977,613.