

## Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** SC STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

**Project Title:** SC REACH For Success - SBA

**Project Type:** Sustainable Adoption

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### Executive Summary

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#### A. Problem/Need Statement

- With 12.1% of its workforce unemployed, South Carolina has the 4th highest unemployment in the nation (US Department of Labor, BLS Statistics, June 2009).
- With only 39.1 % of its households having broadband access, South Carolina ranks 49th in the United States (US Census Bureau, Internet and Computer Use Supplement to the Current Population Survey, 2007).
- 20.6% of children in SC live in poverty, the 11th highest in the nation. (American Communities Survey, 2007).
- With only 56.5% of entering 9th graders graduating from high school, South Carolina is ranked 47th in the United States in high school graduation rates (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2006).
- With 788 offences per 100,000 population, South Carolina ranks 1st in the nation in violent crime (Crime in the United States: 2007, Federal Bureau of Investigation).

Ranking among the last where we need to be first and among the first where we need to be last is a tragic reality for our struggling state. In South Carolina's rural communities and underserved urban areas, most residents do not have access to educational opportunities or workforce training, and have limited healthcare and entrepreneurial resources. High speed internet access and the skills to use it are critical for personal and professional health and prosperity; therefore expanding broadband access to these targeted populations will have a positive effect on all measures of health and welfare in South Carolina. The South Carolina Technical College System, comprised of sixteen Colleges, has developed a broad-based approach to extending broadband access to rural, underserved and unserved areas of South Carolina. This SBA proposal and its partner Public Computing Centers proposal will stimulate broadband adoption, a critical first step toward improving South Carolina communities' health, education and economies, so that all South Carolinians can REACH FOR SUCCESS.

As community anchor institutions, the Colleges in our System are extremely well positioned to provide expanded broadband access, but the lack of financial resources is an obstacle. South Carolina has been particularly hard-hit by the economic downturn. Within the past two years the state has cut allocations to our Colleges by 25%. Colleges have little or no room in their budgets to support innovative approaches that provide our constituents with opportunities to explore the benefits of broadband use. Federal stimulus funding is a necessity to make this project a reality.

## B. Overall Approach

The SC REACH FOR SUCCESS Colleges and partners, will work together to implement a three-pronged approach to expanding public awareness of broadband access and use and increasing broadband adoption in South Carolina:

1. The SC TECH REACH Portal. At the heart of the SC REACH FOR SUCCESS project is the SC TECH REACH portal, a web site that will host resources directing users to programs for special populations and the general public by location. The REACH Portal will serve as the hub of the project's public awareness activities. The REACH Portal will be used not only by the other components of this project, but in the Public Computing Centers implemented in the partner PCC project.
2. A network of Public Computer Centers on a Cart (PCC-Cart). Each college in the system will host a mobile computing center for outreach to the most rural and underserved populations of their service areas in particular (see map in uploads section).
3. REACH Mobile Classroom (REACH-MC) demonstration project. The REACH-MC is a self-contained mobile computing center which will serve target populations in rural, underserved, and unserved areas. REACH-MC instructors will provide hands-on workshops and training which will expose patrons to broadband tools and use, with the goal of encouraging broadband adoption.

## C. Areas and populations served (with demographic information) estimated number of users of PCCs.

A demographic profile of the PCC-Cart and REACH-MC users will most likely mirror the state's overall population demographics. In 2008, the ethnic composition in South Carolina included 65.2% white, 28.1% African-American, 4.1% Hispanic, and 2.6% other races (US Census Bureau estimates). We estimate the number of individuals using the PCC-Cart and REACH-MC will be 6,120, the number of new household broadband subscribers will be 105,000, and the number of new small business subscriptions will be 1,000 by the end of the grant period.

D: Qualifications demonstrating ability to implement project and achieve intended results.

The SC REACH FOR SUCCESS Colleges have: 1) a strong history of successful system-wide collaboration, 2) extensive experience administering federal and state grants, 3) existing broadband infrastructure, and 4) IT staff with qualifications and experience in implementing and administering broadband service. Although no SC resident lives more than 30 miles from a REACH College campus or training site, this project will literally bring broadband access to their neighborhood.

E. Jobs saved or created.

This project will employ a minimum of 5 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees who will implement and administer the REACH Portal, provide maintenance and support for PCC-Cart systems and the REACH-MC and provide training and instruction through the PCC-Cart systems and the REACH-MC.

F. Overall cost.

SC REACH FOR SUCCESS is requesting \$2,268,840 in BTOP funds. The System and its member Colleges will commit a 25.3% match of \$573,637 to broadband access, training and outreach.