

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio Inc

Project Title: Regional Fusion Public Computer Centers

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

PROBLEM OR NEED THE PROJECT ADDRESSES

There is a regionalism movement taking place in northeast Ohio in response to the need to be competitive in the global economy. Its proponents believe that northeast Ohio's future economic success hinges on its collective ability to collaborate, cooperate and coordinate with neighboring cities, towns and townships throughout the region. But, as local television news operations continue to narrow their focus on major city news and daily and weekly newspapers continue to shrink, citizens have scant awareness of what is going on in their own neighborhoods much less what is taking place in neighboring cities and towns.

OVERALL APPROACH

This initiative proposes to use broadband technology and applications to educate, unite and engage northeast Ohioans in the regionalism effort. It calls for the establishment of a regional, interactive Web site, Regional Fusion: The Central Authority for All Things Regional. The Web site has three components:

- "Public access" broadband (Internet) channel that organizes and plays content created by student and citizen journalists
- Virtual public square that facilitates interactive regional dialogue by way of email, chats, blogs, vlogs (video blogs) and streaming videoconferencing
- Regional knowledge portal that aggregates reports, studies and research about northeast Ohio

AREAS AND POPULATIONS SERVED

The 4.4 million residents of northeast Ohio will potentially be served by this project. The potential number of trained people for the grant period is 990. Web site hits are projected to reach 500,000 a month by the end of the grant period.

A critical component of the Regional Fusion Web site is the public access broadband channel that organizes and plays video content created by students and citizen journalists. To accomplish the broadband channel, it will be necessary to establish five public computer centers in northeast Ohio that serve as regional content-producing hubs. Each public computer center will house 10 broadband content editing stations and 10 broadband video field camera packages and ancillary lighting and audio equipment. Workshops will be offered that will train students and citizens on how to create broadband content and how to upload content on the Regional Fusion Web site.

One computer center will be housed at Western Reserve Public Media in Kent, Ohio. The journalism and mass communications departments at The University of Akron, Kent State University, Youngstown State University and Cuyahoga Community College will serve as partners in this initiative and each house a center. This ensures coverage of all of northeast Ohio

We propose that each computer center conduct 18 workshops on broadband video production and social networking tools in the first year to teach participants to create and post broadband content. Each public media center will be open 48 weeks a year, 66 hours each week. Access to the computer centers will be open to those who have completed the Western Reserve Public Media certification program and to experienced individuals who qualify through an assessment process.

QUALIFICATIONS

Western Reserve Public Media is made up of an Educational Services division and two separately licensed public television stations (WNEO and WEAO) operating under one 501(c)(3) corporation, Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc. (NETO).

Western Reserve Educational Services has been operating a computer training center (21st Century Learning Center) at its Kent facility for 36 years. This education technology service is funded by the State of Ohio through eTech Ohio and serves K-12 students and educators including 92 public school districts and 134 nonpublic schools, 256,700 students and over 21,000 educators. Our educational technology consultants train teachers to use the latest educational technologies in their classrooms. For the last five years, the organization has been offering workshops in video production and social media applications. In the 2008-09 academic year, we presented a total of 182 professional development technology workshops to 2,794 educators.

Western Reserve Public Media's two public television stations comprise the only broadcast television service in the area that links together the entire northeast Ohio region. WNEO was established in 1971, is licensed to the city of Alliance and serves the Youngstown designated television market. WEAO went on the air in 1975, is licensed to the city of Akron and serves the Cleveland-Akron (Canton) designated television market.

The corporation, NETO, is owned and operated by a consortium of The University of Akron, Kent State University and Youngstown State University.

Western Reserve Public Media's 2010 fiscal year operating budget is \$5.2 million. The organization employs 22 full-time and 4 part-time staff members and engages the services of 29 freelance professionals for special projects.

JOBS SAVED AND CREATED

This initiative will create two full-time and 15 part-time positions. In addition, eight independent contractors will be engaged.

OVERALL COST

The total project cost for Regional Fusion Public Computer Centers is \$1,683,284. We are asking for \$1,259,910 in Recovery Act BTOP funds. Western Reserve Public Media will provide a 25% match that equals \$423,374 of in-kind contributions.