

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Southern Aroostook Cooperative Board of Education

Project Title: Region Two School of Applied Technology BTOP PCC Grant

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

PROBLEM OR NEED

The changing face of Maine's economy has left many residents in our communities without jobs & without the training, education, or skills necessary to compete in the 21st century job market. With an average unemployment rate of over nine percent, our communities are greatly in need of programs & services that will enable our residents to become highly skilled & qualified for work in Maine's high-growth industries & those industries with labor shortages. While the nation's recent economic decline has been felt across the state, many of our communities are particularly vulnerable to the downturn. The state's traditional industries have been in a sharp period of decline for the last two decades, & workers in these industries continue to face layoffs & furloughs. Because these declining industries have traditionally required relatively low skills, workers in these regions are not equipped to transition into other areas of employment. Unless an avenue for remediation can be provided, displaced workers will continue to lack the training & education that would enable them to compete for today's high-paying & in-demand jobs.

OVERALL APPROACH

The provision of distance learning equipment (personal computers & videoconferencing equipment) connected over broadband technologies will open new avenues of learning for residents throughout the state. The goal of this project is to provide expanded educational opportunities for community members, with particular emphasis on displaced workers. Individual PC workstations will allow project sites to expand their web-based learning programs. These will increase the availability of courses & opportunities for individual learning. Each site will also receive a videoconferencing unit. These will not only broaden the scope of current programs at the centers, but also allow the regional vo-techs to connect to one another to share courses & programs. Training courses at one center can now become available at all locations through interactive video. Additionally, our partnership with the Workforce Investment Board will provide a direct link for adult learners to career counseling & advice.

AREAS TO BE SERVED

Biddeford Adult Education Center: Biddeford: pop. 21,435; median household income \$34,976
unemployment rate 8.4%; number of potential users 150

Biddeford Regional Technology Center: Biddeford: pop. 21,435; median household income \$34,976
unemployment rate 8.4%; number of potential users 550

Foster Technology Center: Farmington: pop. 7,545; median household income \$26,814; unemployment
rate 8.4%; number of potential users 650

Lake Region Vocational Center: Naples: pop. 3,659; median household income \$38,141; unemployment
rate 7.8%; number of potential users 300

Maine School Administrative District 24, Adult & Community Education: Van Buren: pop. 3,479; median
household income \$20,038; unemployment rate 8.6%; number of potential users 300

Maine Vocational Region 10: Brunswick: pop. 21,720; median household income \$36,372;
unemployment rate 6.9%; number of potential users 500

Mid-Coast School of Technology (Region 8): Rockland: pop. 7,436; median household income \$30,209;
unemployment rate 8.5%; number of potential users 100

Northern Penobscot Tech Center Region III: Lincoln: pop. 5,258; median household income \$30,823;
unemployment rate 11.5%; number of potential users 500

Portland Public Schools, Portland Arts & Technology High School: Portland: pop. 62,986; median
household income \$42,830; unemployment rate 6.8%; number of potential users 950

Region 9 School of Applied Technology: Mexico: pop. 2,866; median household income \$27,406;
unemployment rate 18.1%; number of potential users 800

Region Two School of Applied Technology: Houlton: pop. 6,144; median household income \$26,212;
unemployment rate 11.1%; number of potential users 200

Regional School Unit 1, Bath Regional Vocational Center: Bath: pop. 8,885; median household income
\$36,372; unemployment rate 6.5%; number of potential users 400

Sanford Regional Vocational Center: Sanford: pop. 21,156; median household income \$34,668;
unemployment rate 10.9%; number of potential users 1,900

Skowhegan Regional Vocational Center: Skowhegan: pop. 8,679; median household income \$28,390;
unemployment rate 9.4%; number of potential users 450

United Technologies Center Region # 4: Bangor: pop. 31,765; median household income \$29,740;
unemployment rate 7.8%; number of potential users 1,800

St. John Valley Technology Center: Frenchville: pop. 1,189; median household income \$33,214;
unemployment rate 8.8%; number of potential users 250

Waldo County Technical Center (Region 7): Waldo: pop. 1,151; median household income \$29,063;
unemployment rate 7.4%; number of potential users 400

QUALIFICATIONS

Region Two School has participated in multiple grant programs in the past, including the RUS-Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant. Region Two has experience in implementing equipment grants, not only in purchasing & installing new equipment, but also in integrating it into the teaching & learning environment.

A project director will be hired to ensure there will be an appropriate level of administrative support to carry out a comprehensive grant program such as this.

JOBS TO BE SAVED OR CREATED

Although the purpose of this project is not to create a specific number of new jobs, it's targeted to train and retrain workers to fill recession proof jobs – particularly in those industries experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. New training programs brought about through this PCC grant will target adult residents throughout the state, particularly low-income, unemployed, & low-skilled workers. Training programs will be focused on positions in high-growth fields such as healthcare, tourism, technology, energy, & education. A total of 10,200 potential end users will be targeted for training/retraining leading to recession proof, affordable wage jobs.

Overall cost of the project: \$2,092,478