

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** OSHEAN Inc.

**Project Title:** Beacon 2.0 PHA (Providence Housing Authority)

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

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### **Executive Summary**

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#### A) Need Addressed

The Providence Housing Authority (PHA) operates 13 public housing developments in Providence, including 6 family developments, 7 elderly/disabled high rises, and 246 scattered site homes. In addition, the PHA administers a Section 8 Program, which includes more than 2,500 households. Virtually all members of PHA housing are without broadband access. With median family incomes of about \$10,000 for its 5,700 residents, PHA residents are at the center of what is referred to as the “Digital Divide.” At the same time, broadband access is more and more important to daily life.

These people are in desperate need of support with resume writing skills, applying for jobs online, retrain for other fields, earning their GEDs, using computers, searching for jobs online, learning English, and much more. But there is no money to pay for computer centers, even though they provide meaningful and practical benefits to PHA patrons.

#### B) Approach to Addressing the Need

With BTOP funding and matching PHA contributions in kind, OSHEAN (pronounced ocean) will install computer centers in six PHA facilities, to complement the two centers we have. The new sites include:

- Carroll Tower – 16 stories, 212 residents
- Kilmartin Plaza – 6 stories, 110 residents
- Parenti Villa – 16 stories, 210 residents
- Dominica Manor – 16 stories, 228 residents

- Coddling Court – five 3 story facilities, 230 residents
- Manton Heights – eleven two-story row houses, 833 residents

Each of the six computer centers we propose will have six personal computers and monitors, one printer/scanner, one digital camera, one router, and improved Internet access capacity.

PHA currently operates education programs at existing facilities and these will be used as a model for the six new computer centers. Training will include GED programs, computer training workshops, resume workshops, learning to post a resume on the Internet, etc.

### C) Areas to Be Served

Beacon 2.0 PHA will serve the needs of six major public housing facilities within Providence. By definition, the demographics are exclusively our city's most vulnerable including aged, disabled, poor, single parents (mostly female), and largely African-American or Hispanic. The following provides some notable statistics involving the six facilities that will receive computer centers:

- Carroll Tower

Age: 87.2 % are 62+

Ethnicity: 73.1 % African-American or Hispanic

- Kilmartin Plaza

Ethnicity: 80.9 % African-American or Hispanic

Disabled: 94.5 %

- Parenti Villa

Ethnicity: 74.2 % African-American or Hispanic

Disabled: 69.5 %

- Dominica Manor

Ethnicity: 56.6 % African-American or Hispanic

Disabled: 27.6 %

- Coddling Court

Single Female Parents: 86.4%

Ethnicity: 73.1 % African-American or Hispanic

- Manton Heights

Single Female Parents: 81.9%

Ethnicity: 92.7 % African-American or Hispanic

#### D) Qualifications of the Applicant

OSHEAN is composed of 28 non profit member organizations, representing some of New England's most prestigious non profit institutions, including 18 colleges and universities, six hospitals and health maintenance organizations, and three state government agencies. OSHEAN has a track record of success in implementing technology projects.

The PHA was one of the first large public housing authorities in the nation to earn its removal in 1989 from HUD's "Troubled Housing List." In the 20 years since then, the PHA has won numerous awards from HUD and professional associations for our accomplishments. HUD has acknowledged the PHA's administrative management capabilities by awarding numerous grants, totaling more than \$160 million. The PHA received a total of \$6,258,335 in HUD Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) grant awards in 1991; and used them to establish its nationally recognized Youth Program. The PHA has also been the recipient of a Family Investment Center (FIC) grant for \$997,500 in 1994 and six ROSS-Resident Service Delivery Model (RSDM) - Family awards (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007) totaling more than \$2,000,000, as well as three Neighborhood Networks grants (2002, 2003, 2005).

OSHEAN's Beacon 2.0 PHA program is a viable project whose requirements and specifications have been driven by PHA. Beacon 2.0 PHA will be completed within the two year requirement. All of the technical requirements for Beacon 2.0 PHA have been articulated and validated. All technical equipment has been specified. A Project Manager is already in place.

#### E) Jobs Saved or Created

Beacon 2.0 PHA will help Providence's most vulnerable and most under-employed people. The six centers will service the needs of over 1,800 total residents in those centers. Others amongst the PHA's 5,700 total residents will have access to these facilities. Training will be practical and geared toward helping people succeed in the workforce. Some of the residents will find jobs as a direct result of the Beacon 2.0 PHA program. Based on our existing 2 centers, we conservatively estimate that we can achieve an average of one job created per month per center. That is 6 jobs per month and 72 per year. But the leverage is even greater, perhaps even two or three times greater for the population at large. Every time a person on government housing assistance finds a job, there are watershed benefits. They can often leave public housing and break the cycle of public dependence for their families. They gain a sense of self-respect and self-reliance and become productive members of the workforce, which leads to a lifetime of benefits for them and for society.

#### F) Overall Cost

The BTOP grant and associated matching funding will cost \$425,488. This is to purchase computers, monitors, printers, mobile computer centers, routers, software, and training costs. Of that amount, \$339,611 is requested in this application and \$85,877 (20% match) will come from OSHEAN and the PHA.