

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** New York State Education Department

**Project Title:** New York Computer Centers: Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

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### **Executive Summary**

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a. The “New York Public Computer Centers: Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary” project will address three problems facing vulnerable populations in upstate New York (low-income, unemployed, underemployed, aged, non-English speakers, seniors, persons with disabilities): 1) Upstate New York’s high unemployment rate and distressed economy; 2) Lack of affordable public access to high-speed broadband services, education, training and technical support, particularly in geographically isolated upstate communities, and 3) The increasing need for New Yorkers to access essential E-government resources and other online resources for work, healthcare, education, and citizenship at the same time the economic downturn is reducing consumer ability to acquire the necessary computer technology and broadband access.

b. Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary will expand public computer center services to 41 upstate NY counties by deploying an innovative mix of 30 library-based public computer centers and five prototype E-mobile training labs and access to 24/7 online job search resources to provide workforce and digital literacy training. Partner libraries will provide free public access computing services to the general public with a focus on services for the unemployed and underemployed. Computer centers will add workstations and services accessible to persons with disabilities. The New York State Library and partners will purchase online resources and software to help job seekers with resume preparation, test preparation, interviewing, job research, small business startups, and more. The project will also expand public computer center hours of service, improve broadband capacity, provide computer equipment for users, and expand education, training and technical support services. Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary will be easily replicable as all project materials will be freely available on the State Library’s website.

c. Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary will serve the residents of 41 upstate counties, with populations totaling 6,655,824 (2008 Census). Based on experience with existing computer centers, partners estimate 12 million potential uses of the 35 static and E-mobile public computer centers over the two years of the project.

d. The New York State Library, under the auspices of the New York State Education Department, is the lead applicant for Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary, working with 37 partners. The State Library is a major unit within the New York State Education Department, whose mission is “to raise the knowledge, skill, and opportunity for all the people in New York.” The State Library has extensive experience in managing innovative statewide grant projects of comparable size and complexity. The State Library, because it is located within the State Education Department, has excellent capacity to effectively lead implementation and evaluation of this project and to efficiently distribute all grant funds to project partners according to the proposed timeline. For example, the State Library manages \$9 million annually in federal Library Services and Technology Act funds in addition to other federal grants awarded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services and other federal agencies. The State Library also administers over \$100 million annually in state grants for libraries and oversees the State’s innovative network of 73 regional library cooperatives and some 7000 academic, public, school and special libraries. The State Library has successfully applied for and managed over \$30 million in private grants from the Bill&Melinda Gates Foundation in support of public access computing. The State Library’s established relationships and prior work with the regional library cooperatives and local libraries to expand and sustain public-access computing services provides a firm foundation for effective and timely implementation of this project. The State Library, building on “lessons learned” from past grant initiatives, is confident that this project will be successful in New York, having found that employing dedicated staff and partnering with the state’s regional library cooperatives, as well as developing a supportive relationship with the individual participating libraries, helps to ensure the success of a statewide grant initiative.

e. Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary will save or create a minimum of 76 jobs, involving 60 jobs (2 per center) for the 30 library-based computer centers; 15 jobs (3 per unit) for the E-mobile units; and 1 evaluator position. This innovative project has the potential to help thousands of New Yorkers find jobs or start new small businesses through extended Public Computer Center hours, dedicated job search resources, printers and software for resume preparation, and online job search software available 24/7 at the library and from remote locations. Fifteen of the partner libraries are already designated NY State Career Resource Centers. With the high unemployment rate in New York (8.7% as of June 2009), libraries are overwhelmed with unemployed and underemployed job seekers using online resources and seeking expert staff assistance with their job searches. This project will help New York’s libraries respond to the overwhelming demand for public access computing services and online resources.

f. The overall cost of Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary is \$15,939,520 for the two year project. Costs include \$7,221,000 for expanding public computer centers at 30 library locations, \$123,000 to hire an independent evaluator who will assess impact, \$1,277,150 to create and deploy five E-mobile training labs and \$1.9 million to license online job search resources available 24/7 to all New Yorkers. The State Library is requesting \$10,521,150 in BTOP Public Computer Centers Program funds and project partners will provide \$5,418,370 in cash and in-kind services.