

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Educating Young Minds

Project Title: Access / No Excuse

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Data from the Pew Internet & American Life Project Home Broadband Adoption state that while some 55% of adult Americans now have broadband internet connections at home, only 25% of low-income Americans reported having broadband at home in April 2008. While many Americans have seen continued strong growth in broadband adoption, growth in broadband adoption was flat among the poor and African Americans. Public computer centers in California, located primarily in educational institutions and libraries, have been impacted by state budget cuts. With fewer publically available computers and a reduction in professional staff to provide advice and guidance, low-income Californians face an increasingly challenging atmosphere as they try to bridge the digital divide that separates so many of them from the tremendous educational, vocational, and networking resources available on-line.

Educating Young Minds, a non-profit tutorial center, is proposing ACCESS / NO EXCUSE, a project that will increase access to broadband services by expanding our current computer center in mid-Wilshire Los Angeles; creating a new computer center in Watts; and partnering with local colleges (West LA College and UCLA) to open their computer centers to ACCESS / NO EXCUSE clients. In addition, we will supplement and expand upon the capabilities of broadband access with educational, vocational, and mentoring services, both in the classroom and with specialized on-line software.

We have always felt our organization, EYM, has been innovative in its 22 years of serving children and young adults because we serve the whole child. While our educational programs have empowered a generation of students with the skills and abilities to enroll in succeed at, and graduate from four year universities across the country, our counseling and mentoring programs have helped us create an atmosphere where children and young adults feel nurtured and supported. More than 75% of our students are with us for five years and more. More than 65% of our students become EYM college-scholarship recipients. After college, our former students also receive guidance, mentorship, and vocational assistance. We believe that through BTOP, we can expand and strengthen the services we already offer. In addition, access to broadband technologies will also attract more children and young adults from inner-city communities to our educational, vocational, and mentoring programs.

ACCESS / NO EXCUSE will serve low-income children and young adults (ages 10-25) from Los Angeles and its neighboring communities. Our target population is primarily African-American and Hispanic, and comes from communities with poor broadband accessibility. ACCESS / NO EXCUSE will serve 4200 children and young adults over the next three years.

An early proponent of computer and on-line literacy, Educating Young Minds first established an internet connected computer lab in 1995. As our organization has grown, so have our technology based capacities. EYM's move to a new and larger location in 2005 allowed us an opportunity to create a computer lab from the ground up. We worked closely with our contractor in the design and installation of the computer system. Mr. Terrence Budd, our chief educational officer, has been in charge of the maintenance, supervision, and upgrading of EYM's computer systems and on-line connectivity for the past seven years. During this time he has learned a great deal about how to maintain a functioning, effective computer center. EYM will complement our experienced staff with qualified contractors to implement the expansion of our current computer center and the creation of a new computer center. In addition, EYM's collaborative partners will share existing computer lab capacity with our clients.

To build our on-line, Virtual Vocational Network and Virtual Educational Network, EYM will once again supplement its experienced staff with highly qualified collaborators and contractors. EYM's staff includes Adam Craig, chief technology officer, a former EYM student and a computer science graduate from CalTech. He is a very talented teacher and computer programmer and will be a lead developer of EYM's on-line programs. He will work with EYM teachers and our collaborative team of experienced software developers to create on-line programs that provide interactive vocational and educational experiences for our clients.

Our in-person educational, mentoring, and vocational services will be based upon existing EYM programs. We will add services from our collaborative partners, including volunteer staff and facilities for workshops and seminars covering technological, vocational, and financial literacy. Our collaborative partners will also play a key role in ACCESS / NO EXCUSE's mentoring program.