

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Common Sense Media

Project Title: Promoting Broadband Adoption and Digital Literacy in America's Schools and Communities

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

Improving broadband service adoption and promoting digital literacy is central to our nation's economic and educational future. America has an historic opportunity to connect every home, school and community with broadband in the coming years. And the success of this effort will be greatly enhanced by a strategic commitment to digital literacy programs that will promote broadband adoption in schools and communities across the nation.

Today, millions of American homes as well as thousands of schools homes and many thousands of American schools do not enjoy the benefits of a broadband world. Clearly, a central factor is the absence of digital literacy programs and a corresponding lack of public awareness of the educational and economic benefits of broadband particularly in underserved and unserved areas. In a related vein, millions of families have reasonable concerns about inappropriate or indecent content that may have kept them from adopting broadband in their homes and schools.

To address this need, Common Sense Media is proposing to work with schools and communities across the United States to provide them with the tools and information resources they need to become "digitally literate" and thereby to encourage safe and responsible broadband adoption services. Our project will be collaborative, scalable and sustainable. And our efforts will demonstrate significantly increased educational and economic opportunities for millions of American children and families over the coming years.

Common Sense Media's innovative and collaborative strategy focuses on three core elements:

- 1) Development and Dissemination of Digital Literacy Curricular Materials in partner school districts and communities around the country.
- 2) Training and Education Programs for Teachers and Parents across the U.S.

3) A Coordinated Public Education Campaign promoting the importance of safe and responsible broadband adoption and digital literacy programs, coupled with significant media industry support as well as targeted community outreach.

Our curricular materials will represent state-of-the-art practices and research and will be created in collaboration with partner school districts and with input from leading American educators and senior officials of the Dept. of Education. Similarly, our training efforts for teachers and parents will be based on the latest in digital literacy research and expertise. Each of these programs is designed to significantly increase broadband adoption by consumers and schools in both the short and long-term.

Finally, our targeted public education campaign – developed in partnership with One Economy – will highlight the benefits of safe broadband adoption and digital literacy for America’s families and schools. We have already secured agreements from major industry leaders for matching air time and distribution resources for this campaign as well as a commitment of donated creative resources from Ogilvy & Mather.

Our coordinated broadband adoption and digital literacy effort will target both urban and rural areas that are underserved, with particular attention to regions with high concentrations of low-income residents and communities of color. We will target Latino communities with specifically tailored Spanish-language materials, and school districts will be critical partners in the overall effort. In our Round One proposal, our school district partners will include Los Angeles, NYC, Denver, Omaha, and San Francisco as well as the states of Florida, Maine, Virginia, Nebraska and Arizona.

In total for this Round One, we expect to reach at least 1.6 million students with our digital literacy program over the next three years. We also expect to train over 26,000 teachers and educators, and we will reach at least 1.2 million parents. In addition, through our coordinated public awareness campaign, Common Sense expects to reach at least 40 million American homes with targeted messages (in both English and Spanish) about the importance of digital literacy and safe broadband adoption.

Common Sense Media is the nation’s leading non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the media and technology lives of children and families. Common Sense Media has enjoyed a remarkable track record of success over the past six years and is widely respected as a national leader in the field of digital literacy. Common Sense is funded by a number of the nation’s leading foundations as well as major donations from our Board of Directors and millions of dollars annually in sustainable earned revenue from leading media companies.

Digital literacy is a critical component of America's 21st Century schools and job success for America's youth. Experts have indicated that successful digital and technology literacy training in schools will add significantly to America's overall GDP over the next 20 years. In the short-term, we expect that the curricular development and dissemination efforts coupled with the teacher training and professional development program will create or save hundreds of jobs in the education arena over the course of the next few years. In addition, the public education campaign will help drive significant new broadband adoption, thus helping to create thousands of jobs in the broadband field as well as dozens of production and creative jobs in the hard hit media business.

The total overall budget for our Round One proposal to NTIA is \$16 million. This is broken into three separable parts: approximately \$4.5 million for Development and Evaluation of Digital Literacy Materials; \$6.3 million for Teacher Training and Dissemination; and \$5.2 million for the Public Awareness Campaign Encouraging Broadband Adoption and Digital Literacy.