

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Coppin State University

Project Title: Coppin Heights-Rosemont Family Computer Center: Creating Jobs and Improving Education and Health

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

The target area for our project suffers from a low rate of broadband service adoption. In fact, fewer than five percent of homes and businesses in the area subscribe to a broadband service, primarily because of high rates of poverty. Overall, the low level of broadband connectivity in the region has negative consequences for job training and creation, educational achievement, dissemination of health-related information, and improved quality of life. Even most public schools in the target area do not have a broadband connection.

In response, Coppin State University, Advanced Technology Integrators, and various community partners will establish the Coppin Heights-Rosemont Family Computer Center to provide access to broadband services and to offer numerous training/educational courses and on-line resources. This will be an innovative and creative center that will engage the entire family in unique ways. Although the Center will occupy space on the Coppin State University campus – which is in the heart of the target area – it will have its own facility, computers, networks, and governing structure. The center will be for the exclusive use of the community – not for Coppin State University students.

The Coppin Heights-Rosemont Family Computer Center will feature 60 state-of-the-art workstations across four different labs. It will have two large computer labs with 25 work stations each, and two tutorial rooms with five workstations each. The center will offer a total of 15 training and educational courses on a regular basis, which will provide a wide variety of opportunities for the entire family in computer and broadband instruction, job training and creation, health information and education, and education more generally.

Together, the new infrastructure and instructional resources offered by the center will not only stimulate greater and more efficient use of broadband services, but also result in new jobs, a better educated work force, improved schools, healthier people, more globally competitive businesses and schools, and greater financial stability. Many community members who will use the facility are among the most vulnerable of our citizens.

The target population resides in a 1.6 square mile area in West Baltimore known as the Greater Coppin Heights-Rosemont region. Approximately 35,000 residents live in the fourteen neighborhoods in this area according to the City of Baltimore's Neighborhood Map and the U.S. Census Bureau. The area is primarily in Zip Code 21216 and Census Tracts 1504 and 1607. Four years ago Coppin State University, the City of Baltimore, the Enterprise Foundation, and others studied this region intensively and developed the Greater Coppin Heights-Rosemont Revitalization Plan. Our grant proposal is very much in line with the objectives of the plan and with the urban mission of Coppin State University, an historically black institution that is strongly committed to the education of its students and the vitality of the surrounding community.

Drawing on census and other data between 2000 and 2007, it is clear that the target area exhibits a substantial degree of poverty. Although the median household income is \$26,275, 20.8 percent of the households in this area have an annual income under \$10,000, and 39.3 percent have an income under \$20,000. Overall, 21.4 percent of households live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate is 14.4 percent, and 17.4 percent among males (far higher than for the larger City of Baltimore). Eighteen percent of households are headed by single women with children, and 29.1 percent of households have only one person living in the home (usually a senior). In fact, 25.7 percent of residents in the target area are over the age of 55, whereas 27.5 percent of area residents are children. Census data shows that the target area is more than 97 percent African-American.

Coppin State University and its partners are uniquely situated and qualified to design, implement, and carry out the project. The University is a comprehensive urban institution that offers a broad liberal arts education as well as highly-rated professional programs in nursing, education, and business. A trademark characteristic of the University is that both students and faculty must engage in service projects in the community in order to graduate or advance professionally. Coppin State University has attracted substantial federal and state funding to support its many academic and community-based initiatives. The University's Information Technology Division has also been recognized nationally for various awards by Microsoft, EDUCAUSE, the International Data Group, and Campus Technology magazine.

Coppin State's primary business partner in this endeavor is Advanced Technology Integrators, a Washington DC-based company that has a rich history of providing complex advanced technology integration and mixed network communication solutions to HBCUs, Black Churches, media companies, and many other businesses and organizations in the U.S. The company offers impressive capabilities and services: Certified Apple Developers, Certified BIC SI, Certified Wireless Broadband, and Certified MERU Wireless.

Over the three years of the grant, we anticipate a number of outstanding accomplishments. We estimate that 12,000 adults and children will participate in instruction and other activities at the computer center (many involved in multiple activities). We estimate that we will create, save, or improve 5,500 jobs. And we will create literally thousands of new products such as digital stories, web sites, business plans, school assignments, and other resources.

The total cost of the program is \$1,155,481. We are asking for \$932,116 from the grant opportunity, and we will provide \$223,365 in matching funds.