

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** Clarkson University

**Project Title:** PCC - Adirondack North Country Initiative for Wired Work

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

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### **Executive Summary**

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Clarkson University's Adirondack North Country Initiative for Wired Work (ANCIWW) seeks to leverage federal funds to provide broadband access via Public Computing Centers in 10 communities throughout the Adirondack region, with the ultimate goal of creating 2019 new "wired workers" in the region by 2019.

Broadband access in the region is challenged by the extremely remote location of many of the communities, low population density, a high degree of seasonality to both population and business, and shifting demographics that are leading to low adoption rates in the limited areas where broadband is available.

The ANCIWW strives counter these trends by creating a culture favorable to tele-work, wired entrepreneurship, and broadband enhanced businesses. The Public Computing Centers will bring broadband to "Main Street" in and around the Adirondack Park, serving as a stimulus for economic development in a manner that is compatible with the unique protected environment. For many of the 120,000 permanent residents in the Park, whose broadband availability is limited, these centers will serve as a gateway to broadband technologies. For the 200,000 seasonal residents, and 5 to 7 million annual visitors to the region, the Centers will provide a professional environment for users to connect back to their jobs and interests outside the park, while extending their stay or eventually calling it home. Small business owners and entrepreneurs will find workshops and professional development opportunities aimed at helping them leverage the power of broadband to grow their businesses in a sustainable manner. As a important part of developing the culture of 'wired work' the centers will serve as 'digital water coolers' allowing workers to network, collaborate, and exchange ideas. With 50 million people living with 5 hours of the 12 county region, Corporations will find the centers and ideal location to recruit and experienced, knowledgeable, efficient, and cost effective workforce.

Through synergistic alignment with the ANCIWW's proposal for Sustainable Broadband Adoption, these computing centers will offer access to workshops and training for the participants to seek new ways to grow their economic potential.

Clarkson University is uniquely qualified to launch and endeavor of this scale with its experience of managing tens of millions in research dollars annually, and has established strict compliance, training, and audit programs to ensure efficient and appropriate use of funds and program resources. Clarkson University's Shipley Center for Innovation has the leadership experience and the regional connections necessary to make a project of this scale successful.

The Public Computing Centers funded under this proposal will have 6 broadband capable all-in-one workstations, access to a multi-function fax/scan/copier, as well as a wireless projector and conference phone. The Centers will be professionally furnished and can serve as a meeting place for business owners and vendors, clients, and prospective customers. Many of these centers will also be co-located with 'micro wired incubators'; small workspaces for programmers, tech support specialists, web designers, and other broadband businesspersons who don't have broadband access at home.

A key goal of these centers is that they be sustainable beyond the life of federal funding. In order to achieve this goal, the ANCIWW has established a large network of key partners from across the region in public, private and non-profit sectors that are committed to supporting this effort. Also, the ANCIWW will hire an executive director (ED) whose mandate is to make the project self-sustaining within this funding cycle. The ED will develop a strategic fund-raising plan to outline funding goals and objectives, and identify major funding sources to pursue.

Also lending to the sustainability and usability of the centers will be the extensive use of open source software. This will not only allow the ANCIWW to contain software costs, but will introduce our participants to a large suite of software that they can use to enhance their business without the ensuing costs.

The overall impact of this \$1,232,058 project will be transformational for the region. The Adirondack region has been on a slow decline over the past 30 years as industry has shifted out of the region and new development has not materialized.