

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** County of Webb

**Project Title:** Promoting Advanced Computer Training and Technology (PACTT) Center

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

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### **Executive Summary**

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The socio-economic hardship of Webb County forms the basis for the need of the Public Computer Center Project. Webb County is located along the Texas-Mexico border, and has only one metropolitan area, the city of Laredo. According to the U.S. Census 2008 Quickfacts, the County has a population of 236,941, and at least 93% (220,350) of residents live in Laredo, Texas.

The demographic and socio-economic data for the area shows that 94.7% of the county's population is Hispanic, and over 30% live below the federal poverty level. The per capita income is \$12,623, while the state's per capita income is \$23,294. Out of the nearly 200,000 persons over the age of 5, over 184,000 speak Spanish at home. Non-English speakers account for over 48% of that population. (U.S. Census, State and County Quickfacts, 2008) The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the June 2009 unemployment rate to be 9.4%.

Additionally, the Texas Secretary of State reports that the county has at least 62 "colonias," which are residential areas lacking most basic living necessities, such as potable water and sewer systems, electricity, paved roads, and safe and sanitary housing.

Webb County seeks federal funds to construct, equip, and staff a 6,700 square-foot technology center, the Promoting Advanced Computer Training and Technology (PACTT) Center. Laredo Community College will deliver literacy and workplace skill-building education and training. The Center will hold two classes of 20 participants in Adult Education (Basic Literacy), Healthcare, Tourism & Hospitality, International Trade and Logistics, one class of 20 in Texas Industry Specific ESL (TISESL), three GED classes of 20, and 3 ESL classes of 20, for a total of 300 participants.

The PACTT Center will have two Developmental Computer Labs with 25 computer workstations each, a Distance Learning Center with 15 notebook computer workstations, and a Research/Work-Study room with 5 workstations. The PACTT Center will provide broadband internet resources for a variety of users. Additionally, Webb County will add 46 computer workstations to the Buenos Aires Community Center, a

7,000 square-foot facility currently under construction, to assure broadband opportunities at that center as well. Funding is only being requested for the purchase of computer workstations and furniture.

The PACTT Center will target the unemployed, those with incomes below the area median income (currently \$37,300 for a family of 4 members), and those with limited English proficiency, the PACTT Center will be available and open to all. The PACTT Center will have a Center Director, Center Coordinator, and one maintenance staff person to implement programs. Additional staff will serve as recruiters and trainers, as it relates to programs. The Center staff report directly to the County Commissioners' Court.

Webb County anticipates that it will serve 300 individuals annually. It projects at least 100 will retain or rejoin the workforce as a result of the services being received at the PACTT Center. The annual economic impact of this workforce retention/creation at an average annual salary of \$26,000 for 100 individuals is \$2.6 million.

The overall cost of the project is \$3,021,618. This includes a \$207,994 in-kind match (\$151,900 for land from Webb County and \$56,094 in-kind services from the Laredo Community College). Although the County is requesting a match waiver, the match is provided to demonstrate an earnest desire to contribute to the project. The federal BTOP request is for \$2,813,624.

VISIT [www.laredotechcenter.org](http://www.laredotechcenter.org) for a view of the project website.