

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Brick Housing Authority

Project Title: Computer Access and Training for Seniors

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Statement of the Problem: The Housing Authority of the Township of Brick is requesting funds to implement a project that will meet a significant unmet need. The proposed construction of a Public Computer Center will provide the 255 residents living on campus with access to today's largest and most commonly used form of communication: The Internet. The Authority's residents represent a diverse mix of seniors and physically disabled, many of whom are continuing to recede into isolation because of their limitations and inability to access programs and services that could make a huge difference in their lives. Many of the residents no longer drive and have limited transportation options. Additionally, many are living without external family support, and therefore, need to rely on themselves for all of their needs. Computer access can empower these residents with the tools they need to educate themselves, connect with people and agencies that can help them, and also to socially network in ways beyond the confines of their apartments. This grant request includes funds for training as well, recognizing that seniors need time and attention in embracing new technology. A trainer will be hired for 20 hours a week for a period of two years to provide training on the Internet as well as software training using Microsoft Word and Excel.

The Authority is located on Chambers Bridge Road in Brick Township – which is in the heart of the second most populous municipality in Ocean County. This prime location makes the Computer Center easily accessible to the community.

Overall approach: The Authority has identified a large community room that is an ideal location for renovation to a Public Computer Center. A technology expert has conducted a site visit and determined that the room could easily be equipped with the infrastructure enhancements needed for the computer center. Cost estimates have been received for the infrastructure, hardware, software and equipment. A technology educator has been retained for the purpose of selecting the most appropriate software, to consult on the hardware needs for this elderly, physically challenged population, and to prepare a training agenda for the next two years.

How project is innovative: The service impact that is the hallmark of this proposal is one that fills an existing unmet need. The connectivity that this Computer Center will provide to isolated, frail and elderly seniors is something that will have an enormous impact on quality of life. Further innovation can be found in the diverse mix of partners: The Housing Authority, working with The Township's governing body providing local government support; the Brick Township School District and Ocean County College

providing educational training assistance; and the Ocean County Office of Senior Services is providing community outreach and targeted training.

Area to be served: The area to be served is Brick Township, Ocean County. As of the census of 2000, there were 76,119 people, 29,511 households, and 20,775 families residing in the township.

Number of potential users: Ocean County is home to more than 150,000 individuals 60 and older according to the 2005 census estimates; there are 19,000 individuals 85 and over that live here. With almost one out of every four citizens in Ocean County age 65 or older, the region ranks first in New Jersey and second in the nation for its concentration of senior citizens. According to the 2000 Census data, there are 113,260 residents in Ocean County age 65 and older representing over 22% of the total population - this is nearly twice the percentage of older adults in the state and national population. In the past three decades, Ocean County's population has been among the fastest growing in the nation, particularly as a retirement choice for the 65 and older age group. While the county's overall population grew by 300% during this period, the 65 and older age population grew by 685%. While most seniors have a strong desire to continue living in their home, many lack adequate social and financial support to do so.

Qualifications of the applicant: The technology consultant is Rick Cohen, Vice President and Founder of MyOffice LLC. Cohen holds HP Computer/Printer Certification and Continuing Education Training (Tech ID SH4723); and Microsoft A+ Certification HP Computer/Printer Certification. He holds an AAS in computer science from Brookdale Community College. Ray Collazo, VCP VI3, P2V, MCP, SAP, will serve as the technology educator. Collazo is a systems architect/analyst with EMC storage and VMware expertise. He is experienced in managing and leading virtualization migration projects and has more than 15 years overall IT experience.

Jobs to be saved/created: The part-time position of technology educator will be created as a result of this grant. Other part-time jobs are retained as a result of this application, including the technology consultant and support staff as well as the funding coordinator. Additionally, several jobs will be retained through the manufacturing of the hardware, software and equipment needed to implement this program.

Overall costs: The overall cost for the program is \$358,391.00. Of that, \$34,810.00 is earmarked for equipment. An additional \$43,000 is needed for the Power Poles to be installed by an electrician and \$5,000 is needed for the installation of the Cable Broadband Internet service. Additionally, the project includes a heavy training component to ensure the Computer Center is used as it was intended and to help users maximize their computer time and skills.