

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: North Orange County Community College District

Project Title: Narrowing the Digital Divide Through Education and Access

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

The communities encompassed by the North Orange County Community College District (NOCCCD) have a significant population of individuals who not only do not have access to the internet, but do not possess the skills to utilize the services offered by internet access. The District's School of Continuing Education (SCE) is uniquely positioned to address the significant problem of internet illiteracy and to assist the population in gaining the impetus and skills that are needed to purchase, install, and maintain internet connections in their homes. This grant provides the opportunity to equip SCE for developing the instructional program to meet these needs.

The educational objectives of this project are two-fold. First, it is the goal of SCE to provide instructional opportunities to our community utilizing technology to remove the barriers that keep them from using internet services. Whether the obstacles are access to broadband, access to computers, or access to transportation, we will assist our community of learners by providing instructional opportunities using state-of-the-art technology in their neighborhood centers and schools. The second goal is to enable existing facilities to serve students in new ways. By creating a campus-wide wireless network, we enable students with wireless devices to access district instructional resources and increase their ability to actively participate in the educational process. Due to overcrowding in computer labs and limited hours of availability, many students are unable to obtain technical education. By adding mobile computer labs to our instructional resources, we will enable students, who were previously unable to access instructional technology, the opportunity to fully participate in programs and services. Including staffing, hardware, software, support services, and marketing efforts, the total cost of the project is \$1,779,392.

NOCCCD encompasses approximately 155 square miles and includes the cities of Anaheim, Brea, Buena Park, Cypress, Fullerton, La Habra, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Placentia, Rossmoor, Yorba Linda, and portions of Garden Grove, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, Orange, Seal Beach, Stanton, Whittier, and unincorporated territory in both Los Angeles and Orange counties. With a population of about one million people living within the boundaries of the District, SCE's service area includes a very large number of Latinos. Within the district's boundaries, there are 72,419 non-English speakers and 29,750 households with at least one non-English speaker. In addition, 130,540 residents do not have a high

school diploma and 97,126 are older adults above the age of 65. Studies have shown that individuals in these people groups have much lower than average rates of internet usage at home.

By reaching out to this population of individuals who lack an understanding of the need for internet services and providing them with an education in utilizing the internet, there is a real potential for many more in the community to become subscribers of broadband services. And, in a business environment with an ever-increasing need for technical skills and abilities in all employment areas, this project will provide the needed resources for SCE to reach out to these previously underserved students and equip them with the technical skills needed to help ensure their employability.