

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Stark County District Library

Project Title: Public Computing Center and Training Lab

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

a) Statement of Problem

The demand for public internet access, and computer and employment training has been increasing consistently and significantly over the past several years at the Stark County District Library. Since March of 2007, our internet bandwidth has increased tenfold in an attempt to keep up with public access demand. We offer over 200 classes of free computer training per year, but are turning patrons away because of limited facilities and resources. Currently we use 10 laptop computers as part of a mobile lab that has to be setup and torn down for training classes. This is an insufficient, inefficient and cumbersome method of providing training. Also, due to budget cuts at the local and state levels, other local groups that used to provide training are eliminating that training, putting an even greater demand on our resources. This project will help alleviate those issues.

b) Overall Approach

The Stark County District Library will develop a new, permanent computer center and training lab to meet the community demand for computer training and internet access.

The lab, to be located in a permanent location at the Main Library in downtown Canton Ohio, will provide 27 computers dedicated for a free public training lab and computer center. The lab will include presentation equipment for the instructor's use. Existing physical space will be reallocated to this project. Some additional power and data cabling will be required.

The lab coursework and training materials will also be incorporated into the overall public access network at the library. This will allow students who have completed class work to reserve time on public access computers in order to practice their skills, complete class homework, or use their recently learned skills to perform desired tasks. A computer scheduling system will provide equal and equitable access to the computers.

c) Demographic Information

Canton, Ohio's \$28,730 median household income is significantly lower than the national median of \$41,994. Unemployment as of June 2009 is 12.1% countywide and exceeds the national average. More than 40% of the population have only a high school diploma or equivalent, and the population with a bachelor's degree or higher is only about half the national average. Eleven percent of the population of the county lives below the poverty level. The economy of the community was driven by manufacturing jobs which have mostly left the area creating a tremendous need for job retraining and skills enhancement.

d) Qualifications

The Stark County District Library has assembled a project team that has extensive experience implementing projects for the library. The team has experience in project management, network design, training, and administration.

The team has successfully managed projects for the library that range in scope up to \$3,947,464.00. The team has also successfully managed partnerships, such as our partnership with the Stark Parks on the Canalway Center / Perry Sippo Branch Library that have shown dedication, innovation and emphasis on education.

e) Jobs saved or created

Recent budget cuts have forced the Stark County District Library to suspend hiring and begin layoffs. The Computer Center and Training Lab Project will require 2 additional employees, a trainer and an administrative assistant. These two jobs will be performed by existing personnel, thus saving two jobs.

Although we currently do not track the effects of computer and job training on created and saved jobs in the community, we have 12 letters of support from businesses, schools, and organizations who have used our training for their staff, employees and students. We consult with these organizations on a regular basis to provide essential training that helps them maintain computer and job skills of their people.

f) Overall Cost of the Project

The total cost of the project is budgeted at \$228,560.55 (automatically rounded to \$228,561 by the electronic filing software).