

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** IKON Cares, Inc.

**Project Title:** IKON Cares 4-U

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

---

### **Executive Summary**

---

The Bronx County is one the poorest urban counties and over 30% of the population live below the poverty level. Many seniors and children lived below the poverty threshold in the Bronx. The median income for a household in the borough is significantly lower versus New York State median income, and the national level. When we take in consideration the digital divide, these numbers will grow as our society becomes more "High Tech". In New York City broadband services is fully deployed, in most cases at least two service providers are available to each household, but if residents cannot afford the service, broadband will still be out of reach. Low-income households have among the lowest rate of broadband adoption, mostly due to high costs of service. If individuals, households or neighborhoods are not exposed to technology, because of affordability, they are less likely to see the benefits of broadband services and will be less likely to use the Internet. IKON Cares, Inc. plan to address this disconnect by advancing the need for accessible internet services and removing the barriers to broadband use. IKON Cares, Inc is Not-for-Profit Cooperation which serves to empower disadvantaged individuals by providing access to "high tech" occupations. IKON Cares was formed by a Bronx family, who wanted to give back to their community. IKON Cares, Inc. was established in March of 2009 by the funding of IKON Business group. IKON Business group founder is Ken Nero a business man with over 17 years of experience in the IT field. His goal was to put to use his knowledge and years of experience in the IT field to help his community. This goal became reality when in 2009 he collaborated with his wife and brother to form IKON Cares, Inc. Their mission is to facilitate technology to disadvantage individuals in order to enhance their quality of lives. IKON Cares is requesting \$2,298,599.97 federal funding in order to provide services to the Bronx Community. The funds will be used to develop a sustainable public computer center and vocational training ground for the Bronx Community. The organization is committed to making technology available to economically disadvantaged persons so will provide access to technology services to the underserved population residing in the Bronx, New York including people with diverse needs. The not for profit corporation recognizes the need to form partnerships with other community based institutions and business in order to bridge the Bronx Community to technology. IKON Cares, has formed partners in order to assist connecting the Bronx residents to technology. Pro Care, an established public computer center, has experience providing technological services to the Bronx Community. The Church of Holy Nativity has been a pinnacle for the residents of the Bronx for over 100 years. The church has provided many outreach efforts and services to its community. IKON Business Group provides the business background and has been solving Business technology needs for over 17 years. It's a for profit organizations that provides Informational Technology services. IKON Business Group vision is to become the leading full service provider of Comprehensive Technology Services that

enable small to medium size businesses to increase their revenues and market share. The IT field is one of the fastest growing occupations and will add many new jobs. The demand for qualified Information Technology (IT) technician has grown; forcing many companies to look elsewhere to fill their hiring needs. IKON Cares will collaborate with High Tech companies in order to provide employable candidates to fill vacant positions. IKON Cares will help meet High Tech firms' employment needs by providing a pool of employable individuals. In order to provide employable candidates to fill the vacant jobs in the IT field, they must be exposed to technology, so trainings will be offered in order to penetrate the High Tech field. The trainings will be provided at community public computer centers.

IKON Cares will provide computer training and opportunities in order to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to enter the IT field. Computer tutorial sessions will be offered to prepare individuals to for the CompTIA A+ Certification exam. Technology is forever changing therefore IKON Cares will provide continual education in technology and will join Cisco Networking Academy. As well IKON Cares future endeavor is to provide affordable broadband Internet connections to disadvantaged areas and low income households. The Internet helps connect people to information and has become essential to people in their daily lives. The Internet is used to help find employment, retrieve information, as well as to participate in distant learning, but for those that can't afford access to the Internet; they are left at a disadvantage when compared to their wealthier counterpart. It is almost a requirement to have some knowledge of technology to perform well in today's society. However as society becomes more information savvy; a certain segment of society is left behind to play catch up. IKON Cares second initiative is to improve the adoption rate of broadband services amongst low income households by providing broadband service. IKON cares realize that broadband connection must be marketed as an essential tool to ones daily lives in order to improve broadband adoption amongst seniors, people with disabilities and low income households, therefore, IKON Cares, Inc. established a special outreach program called IKON Cares 4U. IKON Cares 4U will include a mobile public computer center that will be deployed as a method to market broadband services as well as provide access to technology. A Recreation Vehicle, RV, equipped will serve as a mobile public computer center and provide broadband service. WiMAX/WiFi technology will be utilized in the RV in order to provide free internet connectivity for neighborhoods in its bandwidth.