

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Greene County Public Library

Project Title: Greene County Public Library: Public Laptop Computers and Mobile Training Lab

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

The Greene County Public Library (GCPL) provides more than 4,000 public computer sessions each month. Recent changes to the Greene County Ohio economy due to the economic downturn and the ripple effect in the local automotive industry after the closing of Dayton-area General Motors plants, the closing of the DHL hub in nearby Wilmington, and the relocation of the NCR corporate headquarters have caused an increased demand for free, broadband public computer access. The public uses the computers provided by GCPL to file unemployment applications, do online job searches, and prepare resumes. The increased demand for free, broadband public computer access has increased waiting time for public computers in GCPL libraries to two hours or more and many patrons are turned away due to time constraints.

This project will increase the number of computers with broadband access available to Greene County Public Library (GCPL) patrons by nearly 100 percent. This will be achieved by providing laptop computers. The project also includes increased training in basic computer skills, online job searching, and employment preparation skills. Deployment of a mobile laptop training lab will bring training opportunities into the community. Enhanced broadband wireless Internet access within each of GCPL's seven library buildings will increase access for patrons who own computers.

GCPL currently provides more than 4,000 public computer sessions each month and if this project is approved anticipates the number of public computers session would double to some 8,000 per month.

While GCPL does not have enough physical space in its buildings to increase the number of sit-down public computer workstations, it does have the capability to provide its patrons with laptop computers with broadband wireless Internet access and a suite of word processing and other productivity tools. With laptop computers they may use the computer at a study table, reading chair or anywhere within the building.

Upgrading and expanding GCPL's broadband wireless Internet access will increase access to broadband for patrons who own their own computers and may not, or cannot, afford broadband access in their homes.

Deploying a mobile training lab to the six GCPL locations, which do not have a training facility, and reaching into the community at senior centers, and other community facilities will provide Greene

County residents with additional opportunities to develop computer skills prepare resumes and use other online tools to find employment opportunities.

GCPL serves Greene County Ohio with seven branch libraries and bookmobile service to local schools. Greene County is generally described as rural and agricultural, but it is also a bedroom community for the workers in the Dayton Ohio automotive and other manufacturing industries. Greene County's population is 150,000 and GCPL has some 60,000 registered borrowers.

GCPL has been providing free public computer access for 13 years and was an early adopter of the OPLIN statewide internet connectivity project. GCPL is also the recipient of two Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants. GCPL currently provides public computer training in a 12-seat computer training lab located in the Xenia library.

Due to recent reductions in State of Ohio funding for public libraries this project could save two library staff positions and potentially create an unknown number of jobs in the community if patrons are successful in their job searches.

The cost of this project is \$103,250 including the laptop computers, including those used in the mobile training lab, color printers, office and other productivity software, and upgrades to wireless routers and wireless access points within GCPL's buildings.