

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** Los Angeles Urban League

**Project Title:** Los Angeles Urban League Community Technology & Media Center

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

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### **Executive Summary**

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For over 85 years, the Los Angeles Urban League (LAUL) has been an outspoken advocate for the cause of equal opportunity among African Americans and other minorities. As one of over 100 nationwide affiliates of the National Urban League, LAUL also serves as the liaison between the business community, city, county government, and other community service organizations.

Los Angeles Urban League aids more than 100,000 people through its various programs and services. Many are economically disadvantaged and marginalized minorities struggling to find and maintain employment and overcome a myriad of other challenges, including educational disparities.

Our research showed that conditions are worsening for most inner-city residents of Los Angeles. An examination of the longstanding challenges facing our community compelled LAUL to create a strategic planning process to explore best methods for expanding and creating positive, lasting change.

During the course of developing our plan, the Los Angeles Urban League's 2005 State of Black Los Angeles Report and later the State of Women in Los Angeles County report brought forth alarming statistics about our neighborhoods. Among them:

- African-Americans scored the lowest in the overall Equality Index among the four major race and ethnic groups (.69 compared to the benchmark 1.00 for Whites)
- African-Americans have the lowest median income in L.A. County at about \$32,000 compared to \$34,000 for Latinos and \$54,000 for Whites

#### **Building on an Existing Holistic Framework/Model**

In 2006, the Los Angeles Urban League launched Neighborhoods@Work (N@W), a place-based initiative designed to improve the quality of life for 10,000 residents of Park Mesa Heights in South Los Angeles. The area is comprised of 1,460 families with children, 740 single parent families, while 18% of the residents of this predominately African American neighborhood live below the poverty line.

Within a 70-block neighborhood of Park Mesa Heights, our innovative and holistic model for community change is already at work. The N@W model is revitalizing the community by simultaneously addressing critical issues of five key areas: Health, Housing, Safety, Employment, and Education.

Paramount to the success of the N@W strategy is providing technology access to the residents of this underserved community. The average household income among our targeted population is under \$30,000. Only 21% of families with incomes of \$30,000 annually or lower have broadband service.

#### Adding a 21st Century Technology Solution

The Los Angeles Urban League has developed a Community Technology Plan with the vision of supporting the attainment of Neighborhoods@Work goals, bringing broadband access while providing 21st-century skills and culturally relevant content to the community in a way that enhances the lives of community residents.

Education and job training are essential to preparing residents for employment and living independently. We propose to create a state-of-the-art public computer center by expanding our vibrant Milken Family Literacy and Youth Training Center (already in use at the center of Park Mesa Heights target neighborhood) to develop a new Community Technology and Media Center that will be a wireless hub for the community by affording accessibility to disabled clients and serving vulnerable populations. This approach points the way forward by proactively working toward a community with access for all.

The Center will house 50 new computers, feature interactive whiteboard technology, and offer various educational courses and tutoring for all ages. Most important will be job training, financial literacy and support for adults. Classes will include such applications as SkillsTutor, Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite, and iLife, among many others. Online individual tutoring in résumé writing, job interviewing and employment skills are central to the plan for students and adults.

To engage households in our community, we will distribute 1,500 laptops to residents allowing them free remote broadband access and linking them to our wireless hub at the Center. Using wireless access, the laptops will be a tool for distance learning for all residents and reduce barriers to broadband for the elderly, disabled, those with childcare and transportation concerns and re-entry populations that are unable to venture into our center for fear of crossing “gang lines.”

The Center will stimulate the economy both directly and indirectly by allowing the public greater access to employment opportunities through Internet access and the new jobs that will be created for the Center's operation. We will hire additional IT staff, technology instructors, a Center Director, a Case Manager, Job Developer, Internship Coordinator and several high school interns.

Recognizing that content must be relevant to the lives of users to increase utilization of broadband, we will develop a web-based application with the functionality that can provide information on specific Park Mesa Heights neighborhood improvement events, employment opportunities and available neighborhood resources.

The Los Angeles Urban League has proven success and experience in serving the greater Los Angeles Community operating programs in employment, training, job placement and education with foundation, county and city funded programs located in South Los Angeles, Pomona, Pasadena and Inglewood, California. Past experience includes the operation of a Business Development Center and an Automotive Training Center. We are uniquely positioned to offer this community a cutting-edge Technology Center that will address its current and future needs to improve outcomes in education, employment, safety, health and housing.

The overall cost of the Community Technology and Media Center is \$6,213,922 to provide broadband service to 10,000 residents in the Park Mesa Heights community.