

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Fayetteville State University

Project Title: Fayetteville State University/Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority Computer Center

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

There is a significant need for a public computer center in the proposed target area. This population lacks: (1) knowledge and awareness of the true value of broadband services, (2) financial resources to purchase broadband services, and (3) basic computer skills to use these services. Moreover, many of these residents don't realize the role broadband services can play in furthering the education of their children who are often enrolled in low performing schools.

The socio-economic profile of the targeted population is listed below:

- Nearly 60 percent of the residents are unemployed.
- The average annual household income is \$15,000.
- The primary source of income for most individuals is governmental subsidies.
- More than half of the area residents hold a high school diploma or less.
- Property values are deplorably low and business activity in this neighborhood is virtually non-existent.

Previous research has demonstrated that individuals residing in an area of concentrated poverty had only an 11 percent probability of access to a home computer compared to those residing in an upper middle-class community, where the probability of access rose to 67 percent. Moreover, individuals residing in areas with low educational attainment (zip codes with only 61 percent of the population with a high school diploma or higher) were 56 percent less likely to have a home computer than the same respondent living in a zip code where 87 percent of the population had a high school diploma. These findings suggest that concentrated poverty and educational opportunities in communities shape access to technology (FMHA, 2009).

The project will provide the following services for the targeted population:

- Training and awareness on the importance of broadband services
- Outreach and orientation sessions to publicize the availability of services

- Ongoing technical training and awareness programs on web-based resources (e.g., educational and health services)
- Ongoing digital literacy training
- Computer Center accessibility to vulnerable populations served by a variety of support services organizations (i.e. our anchor institutions)

The proposed project represents a collaboration among several anchor institutions including: Fayetteville State University (FSU), The Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority (FMHA), Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Cumberland County Public Library, North Carolina Cooperative Extension and The Fayetteville Business Center. The Computer Center will rely on the services of local agencies and University faculty and staff to provide educational and other supportive services to vulnerable populations. Both the problem and the proposed solution address the BTOP purpose of providing broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support to community anchor institutions, job-creating strategic facilities and vulnerable populations.

Areas to be Served and Demographics-Old Wilmington Road, Grove View Terrace, Murchison Town Homes

Qualifications of the Applicant- Fayetteville State University (FSU) was founded in 1867, and became a member of the University of North Carolina (UNC) System in 1997. The UNC system is comprised of 17 institutions, including two high schools and five Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCs). The 156-acre main campus is located in the City of Fayetteville, the largest municipality in Cumberland County.

In late 2007, all campuses within the UNC System were asked to participate in the UNC Tomorrow initiative to determine how the University of North Carolina and its 17 constituent institutions can respond more directly and proactively to the 21st century challenges facing North Carolina. The proposed project is perfectly aligned with the purpose of UNC Tomorrow initiatives which are predicated on teaching, research, and public service. FSU, through its community based economic development non-profit organization (FSU Development Corporation), has committed to strengthening its role in developing and managing community redevelopment efforts, providing more resources for economic transformation and community development, and continuing efforts to increase opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses.

Prior to the UNC Tomorrow Initiative, FSU was a leader in economic transformation in the Murchison Road Corridor (MRC). Over the last 20 years, the University has been at the forefront of the redevelopment of the MRC, including the completion of the Murchison Road/College Heights Master Economic Development Plan. This Plan provides the rationale for redevelopment efforts and identifies business investment opportunities within this long-neglected gateway to the city.

Jobs to be Saved or Created- The services provided by the project will help stimulate the economy by expanding capacity and creating jobs for those employed at the Center including cable and high tech equipment installers and Center staff.

Overall Cost of Project-The cost of the project for a three-year period is \$1,026,074.00.