

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Avergent

Project Title: Project BroadSword

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Project Broadsword is a proposed government funded initiative to deploy 'computing centers' in inner-city areas where the residents are historically financially unable to access personal computing and broadband resources. Broadsword also targets transitional middle-class areas experiencing high unemployment rates due to layoffs and underemployment where the population can benefit from exposure to IT technology resources and training. Broadsword will make available state-of-the art computing equipment, training programs that lead to industry recognized IT certifications, a testing center, and access to broadband communication resources.

Project Broadsword is a multi-pronged approach to provide access to IT resources and training in areas traditionally suffering from the lack of access to computing resources. Additionally, Broadsword is a Web 2.0 facing project that will provide online IT training globally in a fee-for-advertising only paradigm offered in a "cloud learning" environment. The income from the "cloud learning" environment will sustain the financial needs of the computing centers as well as facilitate expansion beyond the government grant period.

Project Broadsword is a 180 degree deviation from the "if you build it they will come" paradigm. Merely providing computers and broadband to under served areas accomplishes very little other than to provide a place to "surf the web" for the interested few. Instead, Project Broadsword uses computers and broadband technology to spark interest and passion in technology and related careers. RIS Computing Centers should be a catalyst to develop qualified IT workers from a population that is underrepresented in the IT career space, as well as to the unemployed / underemployed seeing career retraining.

To implement the RIS Computing Center vision, two computing centers will be located in Chicago, IL and two computing centers will be located in Washington, DC. As such, the general demographic will generally be African-American males between the ages of 19 and 39, however, the Centers will be positioned in traditionally racially diverse areas to also appeal to unemployed white males between the ages of 19 and 39 that have been laid off due or wish to engage in a career change. Since males make

up the majority of the IT industry, it is expected that the initial racial demographic will be primarily male, however, it is hoped that an increasing number of females will utilize the computer centers and programs will be implemented to attempt to enlarge the female presence in IT usage, training and employment.

Each computing center facility will accommodate up to thirty (50) workstation users in addition to housing classroom facilities to accommodate up to forty (30) students. Workstations will be a mix of PC and MAC and demonstrate the latest start-of-the art computing resources. All workstations will be equipped with word processing, financial, and graphic design software applications as well as web browsers and be connected to the internal network at 1Gbps (Gigabit Ethernet). All workstations will connect to the Internet via a single DS3 (45Mbps) which would allow each computer to utilize +1Mbps of dedicated bandwidth to the Internet and 1Gbps of dedicated bandwidth to internal network enabled applications.

In addition to offering start-of-the art computing resources, expert staff will be on hand to assist the users with all questions as well as certified trainers in Microsoft & Cisco technologies.

The core team deploying the Computing Centers are all industry certified experts in Microsoft and Cisco Systems' technologies . Michael Toussaint, President of Rock Island Systems, Inc, is a Cisco Certified network Architect in network as well as voice over IP systems. Mr. Toussaint has over 12 years of experience in deploying large scale networking systems in the US and abroad, and, has worked for IT consulting firms such as Ernst & Young, Telcordia / SAIC and Accenture. Mr. Toussaint as also worked on large federal government projects for the Department of Defense as well as for the federal government where he was the Video Telecommunications Supervisor and COTR for the US Census Bureau. Most recently Mr. Toussaint has been designing and implemented network projects for fortune 1000 companies on a global scale as a Technical Trusted Advisor and Global Network and Telecom Architect.

Project Broadsword expects to create a minimum of ten permanent and ten contract IT jobs in each of its initial target cities. Additionally, Project Broadsword expects to train and certify more than six hundred new IT engineers per year in each city. Additionally though its virtual training services, Project Broadsword expect to train and certify tens of thousands per year.

The overall cost of Project Broadsword will be \$7,500,000 and will be fully staffed and functional within six to eight months.