

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** University of Utah

**Project Title:** Utah Education Network COST Project for Sustainable Broadband Adoption

**Project Type:** Sustainable Adoption

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### **Executive Summary**

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Utah Education Network (UEN), Utah's non-profit educational technology service provider, requests funding of \$2,447,803.69 to address critical gaps that have prevented Utah's most vulnerable learners from realizing the power of the Internet for education and personal growth. Working with public schools, libraries, and community partners, UEN has a decade-long history of connecting schools and homes with rich educational content, online libraries, lesson plans, distance education courses, and multimedia. Despite this, we have been unable to provide content and support services for learners in critical need areas.

Utah has the highest population of children in the nation and the lowest amount of per pupil spending on preK-12 education. UEN provides key Internet content services designed to close this gap, but the economic downturn has limited our ability to serve all Utah citizens. As our population continues to grow and diversify, we are unable to bring critical Internet resources to the populations that need them the most: English Language Learners, Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind, college-bound students who still lack essential math and science skills, and Utah adults who are retraining or acquiring job skills. To preserve Utah's education-to-work pipeline and provide jobs and economic growth for our state, this proposal addresses gaps in educational service through a four-tiered approach: Content, Outreach, Support, and Training. The acronym COST reminds us that there is a cost to our citizens, state, and nation if we fail to address the critical educational needs of all Utah learners. Compelling content, outreach, and training tied to personal growth will motivate new and expanded broadband subscriptions.

Our project is innovative because it targets vulnerable populations, but also provides access on an equal basis to EVERY person living in Utah. Students in Big Water School, population 45, will have the same online learning opportunities as students in Salt Lake City. Preschoolers at home and those at Head Start Centers, adults retooling to keep jobs in rural communities, and those seeking jobs in new industries will have equal access to rich online content, outreach, support, and training. We also employ creative technology solutions in this effort, including a new public TV series called Tech Café that teaches basic skills, a Virtual Tutoring Center for just-in-time support, and skilled trainers to provide in-person workshops in rural and urban learning centers. UEN's COST project will support all 2,736,424 Utah

residents, and specifically target 50,000 K-12 students who are Limited English Proficient, 52,000 students with disabilities, 115,000 college-bound students, and 90,000 preschoolers. The project will directly preserve 11 jobs, create 4 new jobs, and indirectly support 78,000 unemployed adults through career training.

UEN will match the \$2,447,803.69 requested with \$891,893.66, showing our commitment to the overall project totaling \$3,339,697.35.