

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE

Project Title: Remote Learning & Training Computer Centers

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

The Northern Mariana College (NMC) is requesting funding from the ARRA Broadband Initiative to stimulate broadband adoption and support the community's needs in providing access, education, awareness, training and equipment in underserved areas to stimulate demand for broadband services. The college will implement a plan that includes a public computer center and provide developmental content that will be available through virtual campus and community center sources. These services will help serve the specific needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) brought on by an economic crisis that has tightened the resources available to families needing assistance and the public agencies organized to provide support. NMC proposes a plan that will help better connect the public to educational and developmental resources through facilities that are best supported by broadband internet capabilities.

The NMC is located on the three populous islands of the CNMI in Saipan, Rota, and Tinian. According to U.S. Census counts from 2000, the CNMI has a population of 69,221 and 14,055 households. The area also had a 30% poverty rate making access to technology and broadband internet harder to obtain. The plan NMC is ready to implement best promotes increased adoption through community involvement and public offerings specifically addressing the needs of the community. Because of a targeted plan, the NMC has projected visits to increase substantially to over 8,000 by the 2nd year. This figure is based on a 200% increase of average monthly visit increases based on conservative estimates of 300 average visitors monthly within the first year.

The strategy integrates three objectives and provides a solution that promotes the initiatives of the NMC and the ARRA Broadband plan. The first phase includes the development of multifunctional community centers with access to educational and training equipment. The centers will initially serve as the classrooms to facilitate training courses on broadband internet education and evolve into community resources that can be used to facilitate instructional coursework at no or little cost to the learner. The centers will utilize existing facilities and be open to the public for a variety of uses and to learners of all ages and capabilities. In a separate application, the college has a plan to promote adoption of broadband services through broadband internet training and educational content that will be made available online through virtual campus and community center sources. These two applications

work best in conjunction to serve the community to promote educational opportunities locally helping to create more professional opportunities retaining local talent.

The NMC is ready to use funding as it is available because of this strategic plan that supports quick implementation. The NMC is led by a talented team that has implemented projects promoting the long term vision of the college. These projects include a Fixed Asset Management System and Fiber Optic Network Infrastructure. The plan will help create 20 additional opportunities for employment with and will save 20 other jobs through reassignment. The anticipated cost of the community center project is \$3,643,461.26 which the college will begin using upon award of funding to initiate a plan spurring broadband adoption.