

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Connected Nation

Project Title: Connect South Carolina

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

STATEMENT OF NEED Although broadband is available to more than 90% of adult Americans, the Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that only 63% of Americans actually subscribe to broadband service. With an adoption gap of almost 27%, roughly one-third of the U.S. population with access to broadband chooses not to adopt it. Numerous studies show that broadband empowers users with educational, economic and social resources. Yet Connected Nation’s research estimates that 44% of Americans with no home broadband connection say they don’t need broadband. Another 32% don’t use broadband because they lack access to a computer. **PROPOSED SOLUTION** Connect South Carolina brings together the Alliance for Digital Equality (ADE), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and Connected Nation to launch a comprehensive sustainable broadband adoption initiative that will advance the BTOP statutory purposes of 1) providing broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support to community anchor institutions, job-creating strategic facilities, and vulnerable populations and 2) stimulating demand for broadband, economic growth, and job creation. To meet these goals, Connect SC will: 1. Launch a statewide grassroots technology planning process and awareness campaign in each of South Carolina’s 46 counties. This process will be driven by indigenous eCommunity Leadership Teams which create and implement community-specific technology expansion plans. 2. Conduct local research to understand broadband use and barriers to adoption among vulnerable populations in each community. Local research is critical for effective demand stimulation and targeted grassroots awareness programs.

3. Increase the use and ownership of computers by providing computers and training to disadvantaged households and anchor-institutions through the Computers 4 Kids Program and Every Citizen Online – a national computer rebate program seeking BTOP funding. 4. Provide computer training, after-school support, and workforce development in minority communities through Digital Outreach Centers while assisting grassroots organizations to coordinate existing digital literacy resources and implement broadband applications that drive adoption. 5. Provide information technology training through “Broadband Technology Training Centers,” targeting all low-income South Carolinians.

Connect South Carolina is a grassroots approach to improve statewide broadband adoption. The project will reach an estimated 293,628 potential broadband subscribers, targeting South Carolina’s 33% minority and 29% low-income populations in both urban and rural areas. This innovative approach empowers all communities across a state, leaving no one behind, through research-based and locally-driven program to improve broadband and computer use on a community-specific basis. This data-

driven and locally-oriented approach results in sustained broadband adoption, while encouraging South Carolinians to invest in technology and become part of a tech savvy workforce to stimulate economic growth. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE APPLICANT Connected Nation is a national non-profit working on-the-ground to increase access to and use of broadband for effective economic and community development, better education, higher quality healthcare, more efficient public service and improved quality of life. For the last five years, Connected Nation has worked directly with states, local leaders, consumers, and technology providers to build public-private partnerships to map the statewide gaps in broadband service; conduct local-level research on broadband and computer adoption and the barriers to technology use; develop grassroots technology planning teams in every county across a state for improved broadband adoption, and establish computer distribution and technology literacy programs for low-income and disenfranchised people. Statewide programs include ConnectKentucky, Connect Ohio, and Connected Tennessee. Communications Workers of America (CWA), representing 700,000 workers in communications, media and other sectors, will establish a "Broadband Technology Training Center" using the CWA/NETT Academy, which was formed in 2000 as the CWA's National Education and Training Trust, to manage and provide instructional resources for each "Broadband Technology Training Center." The CWA/NETT Academy (www.cwanett.org) will leverage 10 years of infrastructure investments in online training and comprehensive partnerships with accredited community colleges. The Academy provides custom-built, online and instructor-led training for the telecommunications industry. Alliance for Digital Equality (ADE) is a bipartisan consumer advocacy organization and a leading voice of underserved communities on matters that pertain to information technology, telecommunications reform and product awareness with a mission to facilitate and ensure "equal access" to technology that seeks to empower all communities. Its primary focus will be low-income minorities in the South Carolinian cities of Aiken, Allendale, Charleston, Columbia, and Orangeburg, using ADE's Workforce Development Training and Educational Tutorial Initiatives: Meeting the Needs of Unserved and Underserved Broadband Communities. With the help of Digital Empowerment Councils (DECs) in cities across the country, ADE acts as a bridge between unserved and underserved Americans and public policymakers on IT issues. With representatives from education, local government, law enforcement, technology providers, faith-based and community organizations, DECs are integral in helping implement programs involving education, economic development, civic participation, public health and public safety. ADE has extensive experience in education and training in the form of the Workforce Development Training and Educational Tutorial Initiatives.

Jobs estimated to be saved or created: 32,000 Overall Program Cost: \$11,339,278