

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center, Inc.

Project Title: Woodruff Arts Center Interactive Education Program

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

a) The Woodruff Arts Center Interactive Education Project (the “Project”) addresses a lack of broadband usage and academic performance by preK-12 students throughout much of the state of Georgia. The Project will address these problems by using, and encouraging students and teachers to use, broadband infrastructure to provide interactive arts education.

Located in midtown Atlanta, the Woodruff Arts Center (“Woodruff” or the “Center”) is the premier fine arts institution in the state of Georgia. Woodruff is home to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art, the Alliance Theatre and the 14th Street Playhouse. The Center is also home to the National Black Arts Festival, Celebrate Diversity Through the Arts, and many of the South’s most prestigious cultural festivals and celebrations.

Arts education is a core part of the Center’s mission to “Lead in Education In and Through the Arts.” The reach, scale and range of arts education offered by Woodruff’s divisions are greater, in both hours and dollars, than those of any other institution in Georgia.

Woodruff’s Young Audiences program brings the arts directly to schools. This dynamic division offers top-notch arts programming at school and community locations. More than 80 professional artists and ensembles from around the world deliver a multicultural, multi-disciplinary mix of 5,000 live programs per year that not only entertain, but also entice students of all ages to learn. See www.yawac.org.

Even so, Woodruff’s programs do not reach most school systems in the state of Georgia. [See Map: Arts Education for the Woodruff Arts Center – Georgia Counties Reached – 2005-2006 Fiscal Year, attached.] Young Audiences has reached only 71 out of 180 school systems in 76 of Georgia’s 159 counties. Accordingly, one of the Educational Priorities developed in Woodruff’s Strategic Plan is to:

- Create a technology plan and roadmap to facilitate the use of cutting edge technology for online educational programming, increased reach, access and impact of enterprise education content and training.

Recovery Act funding would allow Woodruff to meet this goal by providing technology to extend the reach of its programs and create opportunities for students and teachers to use broadband to learn about and actively participate in the creation of visual arts, music and theater.

b) Our approach to addressing the need for sustainable broadband adoption is by using, and thus encouraging students and teachers to use, broadband technology for interactive arts education programs from the Woodruff Arts Center in school systems throughout the state of Georgia.

The approach is innovative because it will:

- Use existing broadband infrastructure;
- Leverage new broadband infrastructure to be deployed in unserved and underserved areas;
- Encourage the use of broadband by students and teachers, including those who may not have access to broadband at home; and
- Produce interactive educational programs which will improve academic performance.

There is a need to encourage the availability and use of broadband outside the home. Only 58% of households in Georgia with access to broadband subscribe to broadband service.* Counting all households, the broadband penetration rate in Georgia falls to only 24%. Even where broadband is available, high (relative) cost and low (perceived) value are the two main factors that limit its adoption.

*NCTA White Paper, Moving the Needle on Broadband (2009) at 6 (citing, Raul Katz and Stephan Suter, Estimating the Economic Impact of Broadband Stimulus Plan, Columbia University Institute for Tele-Information (Feb. 2009) at 18).

Our approach will also improve academic performance. There is a strong connection between arts education and academic performance. Students who have arts education score higher on standardized

tests, are more likely to participate in science and math fairs and are more often recognized for academic achievement.

Georgia's academic performance significantly lags those of other states. Public school seniors in 2007-2008 scored an average of 1,453 on the SAT and ranked 45th nationally. Source: Ga. Dept. of Ed., 2008 SAT Results Highlight Need for Rigor, August 28, 2008. See www.doe.k12.ga.us.

Georgia's limited broadband adoption rates and lagging education performance create a compelling need for Woodruff to extend its arts education programs through broadband technology in order to improve academic performance and sustainable broadband adoption throughout the state.

c) The Project will serve school systems throughout Georgia. Georgia has over 1.6 million preK-12 students in public schools and over 100,000 more in private schools. Adding teachers and administrators yields over 1.8 million people.

As a project to promote sustainable adoption, the reach of this Project will depend on broadband availability. Even with current broadband connections, this Project can reach 1 million or more potential broadband subscribers.

d) The applicant is uniquely qualified to implement the project. As discussed in Sec. 7a, the Center is the largest arts institution in the Southeast.

Just as importantly, the Center is experienced with the use of broadband technology for arts education and has a strategic plan to expand such outreach. Recovery Act funding to allow the Center will implement this priority, make interactive arts education available to students and teachers throughout the state, and promote sustainable broadband adoption.

e) Jobs: The Project will create 93 FTE jobs during its 2 year completion. [See Project Timeline, attached.] The Project will also create 39 permanent FTE jobs to support its ongoing operation. [See Operating Pro Forma, attached.]

Furthermore, the educational benefits of the Project will create greater job opportunities for students in the future.

f) The overall cost of the Project is \$11,157,161.