

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION LLC

Project Title: BET Networks National Sustainable Broadband Adoption Project

Project Type: Sustainable Broadband Adoption

Executive Summary

a) Statement of Problem ' Only 59% of African Americans (AAs) have adopted broadband in the home compared to 67% of the overall US population (OBI Working Paper Series No.1, FCC, Feb. 2010). That means nearly 16 million of the 39+ million AAs have not adopted broadband. Further, the adoption rate for AAs within specific vulnerable subpopulations is dramatically lower: low income (45%); ages 50+ (36%); and high school dropouts (27%) (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Report on National Minority Broadband Adoption, Feb. 2010). Sadly, these communities are those that would most benefit from the life-improving features of broadband. Critically, and central to BETN's BTOP proposal, non-adopting minority respondents cite lack of interest as the number one reason they have do not have broadband (Joint Center). This lack of interest stems from a 'perceived lack of relevance' among minority non-adopters according to the study. This finding is underscored by the FCC's call for a national outreach and awareness campaign targeted at minorities during the America's Digital Inclusion Summit it hosted on 3/9/2010. Increasing AA interest in and perceived relevance of broadband is a prerequisite for increasing these vulnerable communities' broadband adoption, and ultimately improving their education, employment and health opportunities. b) Overall Approach and Innovation ' BETN's solution involves reaching virtually all 39+ million AAs in all 50 states and targeting 20.5 million AAs in the 91 poorest Congressional Districts with an AA population higher than the national average. The BETN-NSBAP will provide a compelling reason for new households to adopt broadband and will directly address three problems: (1) increasing the awareness of 'the promise' of broadband technology; (2) increasing the relevance of broadband technology to marginalized AAs; and (3) increasing the digital literacy of those who have been 'left behind' in as many targeted communities as possible. BETN is partnering with (1) HealthCentral (2) the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (Joint Center); (3) Kaplan Ventures (Kaplan); (4) MedHelp International, Inc. (MedHelp.org) (5) the National Urban League (NUL); (6) One Economy Corporation (OE); and (7) Tutor.com, Inc. to implement the following SBA components. Multimedia Campaign: BETN will execute an aggressive 2-year broadband awareness and adoption campaign targeting AAs using all of BETN media platforms. The media plan will include traditional advertising spots, public service announcements, on-screen graphics, in-show integrations and dedicated TV shows on the BET and Centric cable networks and digital properties. A significant portion of the campaign will incorporate the 'I Am Connected' messaging from the NUL's 100th anniversary 'I Am Empowered' campaign. Broadband-Enabled LIFE PORTAL: BETN will deploy a LIFE PORTAL featuring best-in-class broadband applications, information and communities tailored to the specific needs of AAs. It will focus on three areas of critical need among AAs: (1) health and wellness; (2) education; and (3) jobs and training. Health and Wellness: The LIFE PORTAL will provide AAs with tools,

applications, information and communities that will enhance the user's ability to manage and improve their health. BETN's e-health offering will include valuable broadband features such as chats with certified medical professionals; communities that provide information, advice and support; and health information management applications targeting conditions disproportionately impacting AAs.

Education: The LIFE PORTAL will provide broadband education and distance learning applications that will improve educational performance in the AA community. Key offerings will include accredited online classes across the full range of subjects for grades 6'12 and online tutoring services for students in grades 6'12. These broadband applications will allow AAs, and in particular, the most vulnerable segments of the AA community, to continue and/or complete their education, even if it has been interrupted by a life circumstances.

Jobs & Training: As AAs experience double the unemployment rates of non-AAs, the LIFE PORTAL will provide training certifications in high-demand fields, career management applications, and job postings.

Digital Literacy Community Outreach: The Digital Connectors (DCs) program will be deployed in targeted Congressional Districts in partnership with NUL and OE. These programs identify talented youth, immerse them in technology training, and provide them valuable workforce and leadership skills. Using a combination of structured lessons, experiential learning, and on-the-job experiences, the DCs train and employ young people (14'21 years old) to promote and support the adoption and use of technology among families and individuals in their communities. The BETN-NSBAP is innovative because it is the first partnership that will conduct a national awareness campaign targeted to AAs to establish the benefits of broadband adoption, deploy a broadband life portal tailored to the AA community's needs, and deploy in-market digital literacy centers. The solution also incorporates a measurement and analysis component to track the effectiveness of the program which will enable a continuous improvement feedback loop to maximize results.

c) Target Population and Households Reached ' BETN's solution involves reaching virtually all 39+ million AAs in all 50 states and targeting 20.5 million AAs in the 91 poorest Congressional Districts representing approximately 5.7M households. In addition, BETN will hyper-target several vulnerable subpopulations: ' 50+ years old ' Annual household income under \$20,000 ' High school dropouts ' Unemployed ' High incidences of certain health conditions (e.g. obesity; high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.)

d) Applicant Qualifications ' BETN is, by far, the largest media company targeting the AA community, with 100% brand awareness amongst AAs and reaching over 28 million different AA citizens. Through its two main networks 'BET and Centric' BETN is in over 90 million US households. BETN has the largest collection of AA-targeted digital platforms, including BET.com, mobile, and video-on-demand. BETN also has strong business partnerships with the majority of US broadband ISPs. In addition, BETN has historical and meaningful relationships with high-profile celebrities that are most relevant and speak directly to the AA community. BETN has a strong 30-year track record of influencing AA behavior and decisions through various marketing-based initiatives that drive significant and demonstrable results. Most importantly and highly relevant to this BTOP SBA grant application is that BETN is the first choice among AAs for reliable, trustworthy news and programming. Since 1998, BETN and the BET Foundation have collectively managed a total of over \$6.45 million in grant awards from partners and foundations.

e) Jobs Saved/Created ' The project will create approximately 260 direct job years in support of the implementation of the solution, 255 indirect job years as a result of the citizens adopting the solution and getting trained, and 123 induced job years as a result of increased spending in the economy.

f)

Overall Cost ' The overall cost of the BETN-NSBAP is \$31,473,841. Matching contributions total \$6,580,276.