

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: College of Menominee Nation

Project Title: Comprehensive Community Technology Center

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Problem project addresses: Over one third of Menominee's population lives below poverty guidelines. In June 2009, Menominee County's unemployment rate was 15.6%, which does not account for the chronically unemployed. The most recent BIA labor force report provides an account of such persons, documenting that 44% of enrolled members are unemployed and 31% of those who are employed are below poverty guidelines.

There are also a number of community indicators that detail the reservation is an un-served/underserved community of broadband technology. The 2000 U.S Census documents, that 13.4% of Menominee households do not have terrestrial telephone services. Standard DSL is only available within limited areas of the community. Nor does the community offer any type of community technology center. Because of the community's significant poverty and unavailability of broadband services, residents also lack the knowledge and skills of computers, internet use and resources, software, and other technology issues. There currently are no programs to assist these individuals. The college has two computer labs, but these labs are dedicated to academic and student use. They are unavailable to the general public, and are rarely available for use by the community education and technical education departments as their demand for academic courses is continuously increasing.

Approach to address need and sustainable adoption: CMN's proposed Comprehensive Computer Technology Center will be available from 9am to 9pm Monday through Sunday for general public access. We propose to construct a LEED Silver energy efficient sustainably built one-stop Comprehensive Community Technology Center approximately 9,800 square feet in size. The Center will be strategically placed adjacent to our Trades Education Center on the Keshena Campus of College of Menominee Nation in order to provide synergistic deliveries of services to our existing students and to a much broader range of users. The proposed center design will provide previously unavailable high speed internet access to vulnerable persons, and allow the college to provide critically needed community support activities that focus on increasing the employability and job skills of local residents. The center will coordinate the following technology-based activities simultaneously to the community:

- 1.)open lab for general public use,

2.) special focus employer-needs-based and community-needs-based workshops, special focus workshops for vulnerable populations including persons with disabilities, children/youth, Native Americans, elderly, and unemployed/underemployed.

3.) skill building activities from GED assistance to math and reading assistance, career exploration and placement,

4.) certificate/technical diploma job training (using technology equipment),

The specific technology plan approaches include: increasing bandwidth to 100Mbps; providing strategic workstations, computer lab configurations, and programs; providing reliable, secure, and user friendly systems and support personnel; and network configurations that are compatible with the college's current network.

The sustainability of the technology center is soundly based on the integrated use of the center for technology based community education and technical diploma job training. This will allow the center to eventually generate program income based on CMN's tuition and community education fee schedules, while also providing free and limited fee community access to broadband technology simultaneously.

Area to be served, population, and estimated number of users: This project will primarily serve the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin consisting of over 8,300 tribal members of whom, 5,000 live on or next to the reservation. Approximately 750 users are estimated each week, resulting in a minimum of 1000 unduplicated persons served annually.

Applicant qualifications: CMN has a demonstrated ability to develop and equip their campus facilities. Moreover, it has the organizational and administrative experience to strategically mobilize resources and successfully implement programmatic activities. The staff competence in planning, building, and managing construction and grant funded programs is noteworthy, and perhaps atypical of institutions of higher education. The college has successfully completed over 20 campus construction projects within proposed time frames, including several large three story academic facilities. It has also developed and sustained seven facilities, one baccalaureate degree program, fifteen associate degree programs, four one-year technical diplomas, and three certificate programs, along with numerous community outreach programs and activities during its sixteen year existence.

Jobs to be saved or created: The proposed construction will support local rural businesses. These businesses provide employment for hundreds of individuals. Currently, many construction workers are laid-off due to the recent recession. This project will provide critically needed construction work in our area.

Direct jobs to be created through the BTOP funds and sustained by CMN include four new positions that are required to support the programmatic and technology infrastructure of the new technology center. CMN will also need to explore internally if additional maintenance and housing keeping staff are needed to maintain the facility.

Furthermore, the credit and non-credit training activities support the spirit of the Recovery Act. It will assist the Menominee Tribe and surrounding communities, who have been significantly impacted by the recession, increase their skills for long-term employment.

Cost of project: The total cost of the project is \$4,959,723. CMN is requesting \$3,339,130 in BTOP funds, and will be providing \$1,620,593 or 32.68% of project costs in matching funds. This project would not be able to take place without these one time Recovery Act funds.