

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: The Hope Center, Inc.

Project Title: Jefferson Broadband Technology & Training Access Centers

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

The Hope Center, Inc. (HCI) in partnership with Jefferson Community Action Programs (JeffCAP) with the support Jefferson Workforce Connection (JWC) is seeking funding under the BTOP to make available access to broadband services, basic computer literacy training and job training to underserved populations of Jefferson Parish's most vulnerable communities.

The partnership is lead by the Hope Center a community based non-profit that has served in training and educating low-income household over the past nine years. The households served include children and disadvantaged youth, adults, and senior citizens that struggle with achieving self-sufficiency. The HCI in partnership with JeffCAP and JWC has provided technology training, construction training, life skills and social development skills in working together for the past nine years. The organizations combined have over 80 years of experience in serving and reaching the most vulnerable populations of our parish. In the partnership, JeffCAP has identified key community centers that are strategically placed in low-income neighborhoods serving the most vulnerable citizens of the parish. The centers are located in areas where there are no public libraries or public access to computer technology. If awarded the grant this would place access in 7 community centers with 5 centers being new access points. The centers currently assist community members with commodity distribution, energy assistance payment, income tax preparation assistance, Medicaid application acceptance & preparation, homebuyer education classes, small repair program, weatherization, and a host of other social and educational activities.

The seven community centers are located in the unincorporated and incorporated areas of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana; Harvey, Bridge City, Gretna, Marrero, Metairie, Avondale, and Jefferson (a part of the Greater New Orleans MSA). These centers combined serve an average of 1,920 households a month, which are all low income and have limited access to technology resources. The centers would provide public internet access, training for community members in basic computer skills in internet, word processing, and email usage. Through the partnership with JWC, the centers would also include access to the State Workforce System for community members to file unemployment claims (the only means of access is through the web), perform job searches and upload resumes for employment opportunities.

The Hope Center who is a C-Tech Broadband Academy Certified Training Provider will train at least 60 residents in the Cabling Technology industry. The trainees and successful graduates will earn industry-recognized certifications in Introduction to Telecommunications Technology, Copper Based Networking Systems, and Fiber Optic Networking Systems. This skilled area is needed in the area and HCI will work with Cox Communications and its 70 contractors to place graduates into installation and repair positions ranging from \$14.00 - \$22.00 per hour wages.

The project will create 35 new workstations with the existing 34 workstations increasing the access capacity by 114%. The partners combined have implemented training and educational programs for the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Dept. of Justice, U.S. Dept. of Labor, and the State of Louisiana and have always exceed program outcomes and goals. The U.S. Dept. of Labor named the Hope Center as a Champion of Compassion in 2008 for its innovative partnerships and programs to service citizens of the Greater New Orleans Area in reaching and serving individuals and households that are the hardest to serve.

We are requesting \$1,085,466.17 with an in-kind match of \$258,705.80 and leveraged resources of \$503,390.00 to implement the program. The project is targeted to create eight jobs for instructors for the public access centers and place 60 graduates of the Broadband Academy training to place in employment opportunities in the network cabling industry. The project will train 2000(\$542.73 cost per person) persons in digital literacy and 15,000 (\$72.36 cost per person) person will have public access.