

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Education Networks of America, Inc.

Project Title: Broadband Access & Equity for Indiana Community Anchor Institutions

Project Type: Middle Mile

Executive Summary

Education Networks of America (ENA) requests \$14,257,171 in BTOP Middle Mile Infrastructure funding to deploy fiber-based broadband facilities to 145 schools and libraries in 39 proposed funded service areas in the State of Indiana (12 of which are underserved). It is a highly-collaborative effort establishing partnerships with multiple, local service providers and the community anchor institutions that will be served to deliver cost-effective and far-reaching high-speed broadband service. It will provide the greatest broadband speed as well as increase the affordability of and subscribership to broadband services in these geographies and will not result in unjust enrichment. The Benefits of ENA's Application: This is a high-value project that will provide enormous benefits to students, teachers, aged and unemployed people, and will promote economic growth in the communities. ENA's 13-year experience serving the needs of schools and libraries confirms that the demand for high speed connectivity in these anchor institutions is accelerating. Schools and libraries' Internet capabilities are suffering from a lack of sufficient and scalable broadband facilities and many of these anchor institutions are unable to meet the growing demand for online educational resources. By adding fiber-based services, the schools and libraries will be able to introduce a variety of additional services and applications such as distance learning, on-line job training, access to e-government benefits and advanced studies classes. ENA's application will generate broad economic benefits to the surrounding community, including the creation of work for 80 FTE's over the one year build-out phase of the project. ENA's proposed funded service areas include 555,234 people, 216,663 households, 31,808 businesses, and 630 community anchor institutions, including schools, libraries, fire stations, police stations, hospitals, and other critical community organizations. The areas covered by this application have a high percentage of people that can be described as "vulnerable." About 20% of the population of the service areas is elderly, compared to the national average of 12.5%. Furthermore, the unemployment rate in Indiana (10.6% in June 2009) is higher than the national average (9.7% in July 2009). ENA's application (39 proposed funded service areas, which includes 72 last mile service areas) will directly provide high speed access to 290,000 students and library patrons. ENA chose these communities for a variety of reasons, including:

- These schools and libraries will be immediate adopters of the new service as they have requested fiber-based service in previous years. Additionally, each of these entities utilizes E-Rate funding to subsidize their ongoing recurring costs which provides sustainability for the service.
- The community support for the proposed projects is overwhelming. ENA received over 180 letters of support from every type of community stakeholder including state, legislative, business, education, library, and other community leaders.
- These communities would not have access to fiber-based broadband service within the next 3 years but for government funding. Each of these entities has been denied adequate broadband service

and will continue to be denied for the life of this application because the service providers have decided not to serve the area or the price they would have to charge for build-out was too high for the community to bear. ENA's Proposed Network and Services: ENA proposes an economically efficient, technically feasible, state-of-the-art broadband network. ENA will work with multiple service providers to provide fiber-based broadband connectivity of at least 100 Mbps at each of the 145 sites. Upon receipt of funding, ENA will immediately complete contractual agreements with its customers and vendors. The pricing for these services will be reasonable, as they will be governed by the prices set forth in ENA's existing, competitively bid contracts with the State. ENA will comply with all the interconnection and non-discrimination provisions set forth in the NOFA. ENA will not block, discriminate against or favor any network traffic unless specifically requested by the customer. ENA's network facilities will be open to interconnection and wholesale access to ensure that the network facilities built with these funds will benefit the entire communities in which the 145 sites are located. Additionally, ENA will require our vendors to agree in writing to abide by these requirements as a condition of receiving a contract. ENA is "Shovel-Ready:" ENA is already in a contractual agreement to provide managed network services to the public schools and libraries in Indiana, who comprise the anchor institutions for this project. In addition, ENA has existing contractual relationships and project protocols established with the participating vendors. In Indiana, ENA connected over 400 sites to the Internet in under a year's time, and completely upgraded 210 sites in a large school district in Florida to a fiber-based wide area network (WAN) in less than 9 months. Because of these pre-existing relationships and our past history of success, ENA will not face the hurdles faced by a new entrant. ENA typically installs over 400 new fiber installs in a year and we anticipate that we will more than substantially complete this network within 2 years. Our plan anticipates reaching such a milestone in 18 months, which is half the time required. Budget: The budget is reasonable and cost-effective. ENA secures its contracts through a competitive bid process and subsequently selects its vendors through a competitive quote process in order to ensure the lowest possible expense consistent with quality and technology fit. The costs of this project are consistent with eligible costs in the NOFA and with the cost principles identified in the OMB circulars, ENA has been able to deliver similar prior projects on time and within budgets. Matching Funds: ENA and its service providers will contribute \$3,564,293 in matching funds, which is 20% of the total cost of the project. ENA's Qualifications: ENA is a for-profit entity with a management team that has extensive related experience. Since its founding in 1996, ENA has become one of the nation's leading providers of managed network services to schools and libraries. ENA operates much like a general contractor building a house; ENA is the single service provider responsible and accountable for on-going maintenance, monitoring, security, and support, and ENA works with multiple communication and equipment providers to provision the network facilities. ENA currently provides broadband solutions to 560 school districts, 230 libraries, 2.5 million students and educators and 6.2 million library patrons and librarians in 4 states (FL, ID, IN and TN). ENA in Indiana: ENA currently has 2 contracts with the State to manage the broadband services for schools (since 2005) and libraries (since 2006). These contracts cover 320 school agencies and 160 libraries. When ENA assumed these contracts, most schools and libraries were being provisioned with a T1 (1.5 Mbps). While this level of service may be adequate for residential consumer service with a single computer, it is woefully inadequate for schools and libraries that are transforming to digital web-based resources and can have hundreds or thousands of simultaneous users on an ever-growing number of computers. ENA has

already successfully upgraded broadband capacity for many schools and libraries in Indiana, but upgrading the sites included in this application is cost-prohibitive unless ENA receives funding from the BTOP program. Statutory Priorities: ENA's application will satisfy 4 of the 5 priorities identified in Section 6001(b)(3) of the ARRA:

- Since the lack of adequate "middle mile" connections is one of the primary impediments to providing residential consumers in underserved areas with high-speed bandwidth, this application will make it easier for last mile providers to provide residential consumers in these communities with high-speed connections.
- Community institutions (schools, libraries, health care entities, etc.) will benefit directly from the construction of 100 Mbps fiber optic networks directly to 145 of these sites, bringing access and equity to these institutions.
- Public safety users will benefit because the fiber that provides service to the schools and/or libraries in these communities will be open to interconnection and can be shared by public safety providers.
- This application will also promote sustainable broadband adoption by introducing students, teachers and library patrons to the benefits of high-speed Internet access, which will encourage them to subscribe at home and take advantage of online applications and tools.

Community Support for ENA's Application: ENA has a very high-level of community support for this project. ENA's application has letters of support from the IN Department of Education, IN State Library and the IN Association of Public School Superintendents. In addition, ENA has received letters of support from 175 community institutions, and from 4 national associations (SIIA, CoSN, SETDA, and Internet2). In summary, if awarded the funding, ENA is able to immediately start the project and achieve the intended results. ENA has a history of success – it has already provided fiber-based connectivity to over 1,300 schools and libraries over the past 5 years, meeting installation timelines. ENA believes our approach of aggregating several service providers to deliver high-speed broadband to multiple underserved schools and libraries throughout Indiana is an excellent best-practice model that is highly collaborative and comprehensive and delivers the exact broad significance objectives and outcomes that the BTOP is seeking to achieve.