Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Open Neighborhoods

Project Title: Open Los Angeles Community Wireless

Project Type: Last Mile

_____**Executive Summary**_____

While many rural areas in the United States still lack essential broadband infrastructure, millions of people in Los Angeles and other tech-savvy wired cities do not have high-speed access in their homes or businesses. Typically priced at $40 to $60 per month high-speed Internet service is often too expensive compared to other necessities for low-income households, immigrant populations and senior citizens -- especially in challenging ecomomic times. These communities are the last to be wired for next-generation broadband such as fiber optic service, which can reduce the cost of access substantially. As a result, many of our most vulnerable residents and businesses are further disadvantaged with lack of broadband access. They are prevented from applying for jobs, taking online classes, finishing their homework, researching healthcare options, discovering online bargains on purchases, and participating in public discourse. The Open Los Angeles Community Wireless program is an innovative wireless broadband infrastructure project that will provide free public broadband service to vulnerable LAUSD students and low-income families in Los Angeles. The program builds upon the existing Open Mar Vista community wireless network which overlaps the Open Los Angeles Community Wireless service territory. Utilizing wireless mesh networking equipment and software services by San Francisco-based Meraki, Open Mar Vista is inspired by San Francisco's Free The Net municipal Wi-Fi project now serving thousands of San Francisco residents with free broadband service. The Open Los Angeles Community Wireless program will deliver free 1mbps broadband service and paid $10/mo 5mbps broadband service to low-income housing areas in Los Angeles neighborhoods Mar Vista, Del Rey, and Venice. Such affordable pricing results in savings of $20-30 per month for broadband service relative to comparable speeds from local cable/DSL providers. The program uses low-cost mesh networking hardware from Meraki including $199 Outdoor Wi-Fi antennas that can be mounted and installed for another $200. Each well-positioned antenna may serve 20-30 users with free broadband service. Such inexpensive equipment will allow the Open Los Angeles Community Wireless program to deliver immediate savings at relatively low upfront cost. Open Los Angeles Community Wireless will reach 5,000 under-served households, 200 businesses, and 50 critical community organizations. The Open Los Angeles Community Wireless program will not favor any lawful Internet applications and content over others, and network management policies will be displayed in a prominent location, with notification to customers of any canges to these policies. Open Los Angeles Community Wireless will provide interconnections to multiple backhaul service providers, and will negotiate reasonable rates and terms in good faith with all parties making a bona find interconnection request. With BTOP funding, the Open Los Angeles Community Wireless will offer affordable equipment and installation to residents and businesses in the service territory. Open Los Angeles Community Wireless will charge a $50 activation fee for each

Outdoor Wi-Fi installation in the service territory, for recipient savings of $350 per installation. In addition, the Open Los Angeles Community Wireless program will work with LAUSD administrators to waive the $50 activation for eligible students enrolled in Free and Reduced Price lunch program at schools in and around the service area. The Open Los Angeles Community Wireless program intends to work in concert with the Open Los Angeles Community Adoption program and a partnership with Computers for Youth to provide computer training and equipment to under-served youth in neighborhood public schools. As a result of the Open Los Angeles Community Wireless program thousands of under-served residents in target low-income areas of Los Angeles will receive highly affordable broadband service and in many cases the training and equipment to take full advantage of the service.