

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Kansas Board of Regents, Kan-ed

Project Title: Kan-ed: Scaling Up Video Conferencing Services to Enhance Public Access in Kansas Libraries

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

With funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for this proposal to the Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program (BTOP), Kan-ed and the State Library of Kansas (SLK) will work together with public libraries in every county in Kansas to scale up high definition videoconferencing systems (HD VTC) enabling the general public and specific communities of practice to support virtual communities and expand access to economic development activities and resources, telehealth programs, distance education offerings, and e-Government services and events. The project work plan aligns with current initiatives that upgrade the State's networking infrastructure and connectivity. Interactive high definition videoconferencing systems are a prime example of broadband applications that can extend the reach for unserved and underserved residents in rural communities in Kansas who are working to improve local capacities for economic recovery and global competitiveness using the following three approaches:

- Scale up successful practices with the deployment of high definition videoconferencing. The outcome of this objective is to establish a statewide, HD video conferencing network of enhanced library meeting rooms with a point of presence in each of the 105 counties in Kansas. Every resident in the state would benefit from being within reach of public accessible conferencing technology to conduct meetings, share events, presentations, promote distance learning, facilitate employment search and promote statewide distribution of local events.
- Utilize the Kan-ed 2.0 network and existing telecommunication structures and connectivity to reach a wider range of remote, rural communities in Kansas;
- Provide extensive training for library professionals and staff and develop and promote an ongoing calendar of content for videoconferencing sessions.

Kan-ed and the State Library of Kansas have reciprocal representation formally appointed to the Kan-ed Advisory Council and the State Library of Kansas Board (SLK). Working together, Kan-ed and the SLK can provide leadership and vision for this initiative to scale up high definition videoconferencing facilities in 90 public libraries in Kansas. Federal funding is requested in the amount of \$3,924,829.65 to procure, install, and use HD videoconferencing equipment within the LAN at each premise and at the SLK in the State Capitol. The budget request to NTIA for the project detailed in this proposal is matched with \$2,541,866.06 to provide applications, content, and services that may be shared using the local access infrastructure. When complete, all 105 counties in Kansas will benefit from expanded access to economic development resources, distance education programs, telehealth and e-government services. Funds from an award for this project will also support efforts to develop and sustain a calendar of scheduled public information and education sessions to be shared among all network members participating in the Kan-ed network.

This project will enhance the ability of the State of Kansas to contribute to the growth and health of our economy. When completed, Kansas public libraries may serve as sources for technical assistance to replicate success with other library systems in other states and in other public and private sector enterprises beyond the library community. The foundation for these 21st century community values will be built on local need, regional and statewide support, and a broad base of informed, technically competent librarians prepared to maximize the value of, and return on, this important investment from NTIA.

Vision: Kansas public libraries are the place to go for quality, virtual face-to-face communication with other Kansans, other Americans, and the world.

Goal A: HD Videoconferencing is available statewide.

Objective A-1: Make HD videoconferencing available in one public library in each county.

Objective A-2: Connect to and utilize advanced broadband capacities of the Kan-ed 2.0 network to ensure Class of Service and QoS.

Objective A-3: Develop cooperative interaction with existing HD VTC locations in state, and through the Kan-ed NOC's interconnection with Internet2, find, join, and participate with communities of practice and special pools of expertise.

Goal B: Libraries, as a networked group, strengthen their role as an anchor institution for the state as a whole.

Objective B-1: Engage stakeholders to identify local community needs that drive development of sustainable plans for each library's use of the networked video services enhanced meeting rooms.

Objective B-2: Coordinate scheduling and communication regionally and statewide to drive development of a statewide community and sustainable adoption of broadband technologies throughout the library community.

Objective B-3: Provide high quality training and support at the state level and support distributed access to expertise for community development and planning across the entire state.

The proposed approach (deployment of HD VTC) is distinguished in its application of broadband technology from conventional public computer center capacity building projects. Meeting rooms with networked video services expand availability, accessibility, and collaboration capacities for community anchor institutions beyond the public library hosting the video services site. In rural communities where these enhanced facilities exist, volunteer firefighters, public safety and emergency services workers, local law enforcement, court services, and other critical community service personnel are able to attend and participate in training, planning, and simulation exercises in cohorts distributed across regional and statewide settings. This approach supports job retention and career advancement while accelerating and sustaining broadband adoption.