

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Miami-Dade County

Project Title: Miami-Dade Library Community Broadband Initiative

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

a) The need for broadband access is becoming a prerequisite for daily living. Community reliance on broadband Internet services is rapidly increasing as more essential services become digitized and are made available online. Online access is now necessary to efficiently manage finances, communicate with teachers and monitor your child's grades, communicate with vendors to purchase desired products and commodities, search and apply for employment, register for government services including Medicare/Medicaid, Food Stamps, Housing and Unemployment. The Miami-Dade Public Library System (Library) is a community anchoring institution that provides free broadband access services and a wealth of online resources to meet all the informational needs of the Miami-Dade County community. As the overall community's need for broadband access increases, so does the Library's need to enhance and expand training services, broadband access points, and overall network infrastructure to accommodate the growth. Factors preventing the Library to effectively meet all the growing broadband needs of the Miami-Dade County community include: the communities' lack of computer skills, long wait lists for computer training classes and for public computers, better centralized training locations, wireless connectivity at or near maximum capacity, and slower connection speeds associated with overall institutional IT growth.

b) The Library respectfully requests \$2,224,960 to enhance and expand public broadband access, speed, branch and infrastructure equipment, customer training and support services, with the ultimate goal of increasing user reliability and safety at 48 Library branch sites located throughout Miami-Dade County. The proposed comprehensive upgrade to the Library's computer services and infrastructure will provide an increased density of access points, increased computer availability and training, and quicker transaction processing for wireless connections. Specifically proposed funds will: 1) create two new state-of-the-art computer labs; 2) create 52 new broadband access opportunities via laptops at 10 library sites; 3) increase Wi-Fi density through the addition of 20 wireless access points; and 4) enhance the broadband network architecture by acquiring additional servers and related infrastructure equipment.

c) The Library serves the entire area of metropolitan Miami-Dade County spanning 5,040 square kilometers. Located in the southeastern part of the state of Florida, its diverse socioeconomic

population is estimated at 2.4 million residents making it the most populous county in Florida and the eighth most populous county in the nation. The population's demographic makeup consists of 61.3% Hispanic or Latino, 18.7% White, 18.6% Black, 1.7% Asian, and .2% American Indian or Alaskan Natives. It has an elderly population of 14.2% (ages 65 or over) (Gaquin, D. and DeBrandt, K. 2008); a per capita income of \$23,125 (U.S. Census Bureau 2007); and a record high unemployment rate of 11.5%, .7% higher than the State of Florida (10.8%) and 1.8% higher than the national rate (9.7%) (U.S. Bureau Labor Statistics June 2009). It is part of the seventh largest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the nation and comprises 35 incorporated cities and a vast unincorporated area spanning 2,431 sq. miles. The total 2009 Year to Date (YTD) customer door count for all 11 branch sites represented in the proposed application is 1,843,395; its YTD PC usage count is 465,879 on a broadband access availability of 273,988 hours. The proposed project has the potential to reach more than 612,743 PC users annually.

d) The Library currently operates 48 branches with 931 desktops and 550 laptops for public use, and two training labs within regional library facilities located at opposite ends of the County. The Library manages over 2,200 devices, either desktop PCs or laptops, for staff and customer usage. Technical staff is well adept and capable of implementing the proposed technological activities and facilitating its ongoing required maintenance. Seven technicians currently conduct all Library projects including hardware refresh and rollouts; installation of access points and switches; creation of PC images; ongoing software upgrades and patches; and hardware repairs. Three Network Managers are responsible for servers, wide area network, local area networks, and the maintenance and upgrades of all broadband equipment connecting to the Internet. The Training Department currently implements curricula designed to address some of the technological needs of our community. The trainers are an exemplary, well qualified group of librarians with advanced Masters Degrees in Library and Information Science. Additionally, the Library has successfully implemented technological projects similar in scope with Library and previous grant funds including the current telecommunication/Metro Ethernet culminating this fiscal year (FY). The Library was the 2008 recipient of the National Medal for Museum and Library Sciences for its outstanding service to its customers.

e) A total of four jobs will be saved or created by the proposed initiative for the project duration of 2-3 years.

f) The total project cost is \$2,769,190 composed of a total federal request in the amount of \$2,224,960 and a matching in-kind contribution in the amount of \$544,231.