

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Miami-Dade County

Project Title: Miami-Dade Countywide Innovative Internet Access Project

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

a) Nearly 32% of the Miami-Dade County population does not have direct access to a computer and/or an internet connection at their homes. With increasingly more community and government services being offered online, residents without internet access are at a significant disadvantage. Broadband internet access is no longer necessary just for entertainment and commerce purposes, it is vital to obtaining essential information about community life, community events, and resources that improve the quality of life of Miami-Dade residents. Primary factors contributing to this digital divide range from socio-economic factors like internet connection or equipment affordability to language, cultural, and skill-set barriers. Additionally, Miami-Dade County government budget cuts for traditional forms of marketing are causing the County to rely heavily on its online services to communicate and disseminate information to the community as traditional forms of marketing. Without convenient public access to broadband services, many residents will remain misinformed, unconnected, and further disadvantaged.

b) The availability of kiosks and free WiFi at locations easily accessible and frequently visited by county residents, particularly constituents with typically low internet access rates and computer usage, is a viable solution to this project of un-connectivity. Miami-Dade County's proposes to expand broadband access by creating new broadband access points via 100 kiosks workstations and free WiFi service at 10 public parks throughout the community. The kiosks will offer connectivity to resources on the internet, such as government online self-services, community websites, online jobs clearinghouses, and popular portals such as Google, Yahoo, MSN. The kiosks can also be enabled for payment transactions (e.g. for water bill and other utility fee payments), and with phones which have direct access to the County's 311 Answer center, so the resident can contact the County with questions regarding government services. This bundling of payment and call options, with internet access, is particularly innovative in that it comes as close as possible to a one-stop-shop center for information and services.

c) The proposed project is intended to serve 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 residents making it the most populous county in Florida and the eighth most populous county in the nation. Its immigrant population is among the highest in the nation. The population's demographic makeup is comprised of: 61.4% Hispanic or Latino; 18.1%

African American; 18.0% White; 1.4% Asian; .1% American Indian or Alaskan Natives; .6% Two or More Races; and .4% Some Other Race. It has an elderly population of 14.2% (ages 65 or over); 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 MSA (metropolitan statistical area) in the nation and comprises 35 incorporated cities and a vast unincorporated area spanning a total area of 2,431 sq. miles. The proposed project has the potential to reach an unlimited number of broadband users via kiosk workstations and free WiFi service at public places throughout Miami-Dade County.

d) The Government Information Center's eGovernment Solutions team is comprised of Web Developers (Senior and Junior), Systems Architects, and Systems Analysts/Programmers, who have vast experience in engineering/developing applications for public access that can be utilized on various devices (such as kiosks workstations) and integrating systems with the County's Answer Center software and its miamidade.gov web portal. GIC technical staff will work closely with technical staff from the Miami-Dade County's Enterprise Technology Services Department (ESTD) to ensure the proper network connectivity of all kiosk devices deployed through the proposed initiative and to facilitate any necessary hardware support needs. Qualified staff from ETSD will be responsible for the installation of WiFi service at 14 proposed parks. Their prior experience in successfully installing and operating the same WiFi service at three other parks make them qualified to implement this service at 14 other park sites.

e) A total of four jobs will be saved and/or created as a result of this initiative. They include two full-time Software Developers and two IT Specialists.

f) The total of \$4,404,169 is requested to implement the proposed project. A match in the amount of \$1,249,775 has been committed to this project for a total project cost of \$5,653,945.