

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Case Western Reserve University

Project Title: University Circle Innovation Zone: An Integrated Ultra Broadband Public Services Platform - Train

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Broadband adoption in America's large core cities is significantly underdeveloped. The underserved urban communities are disproportionately poor, uneducated, and underemployed. In the agglomerated census tracts in this submission, fewer than 35% of residents have Internet connectivity. One out of every five homeowners faces a housing foreclosure. The incidence of teen moms is more than twice the County average (to learn more about these neighborhoods click <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foxRC--ffYQ>). These data estimations include adjoining neighborhoods of relative privilege underscoring the reality that broadband adoption is underdeveloped. While consumer demand for the Internet is one part of the equation, the supply side of the equation frames the question: 'in what way can the Internet be made more relevant to the lives of the underserved.' Adoption rates for broadband will grow proportionate to the relevance of broadband service offering to those residents in the 18 census tracts in our submission. Our public computing centers, what we term Community Learning Studios, are an integrated and integral part of a broader infrastructure submission to BTOP known as the University Circle Innovation Zone (UCIZ). The overall goal of the effort, including the public computing centers initiative is the pursuit of relevance in the supply-side of the broadband adoption equation. The Community Learning Studio Project will produce 54 FTE jobs during implementation and 40 permanent positions. The grant submission for the Community Learning Studio Project (CLSP) is \$1,030,900.

The UCIZ CLSP is a joint public computing center venture of Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), a coalition of neighborhood computing and technology centers, and the Cuyahoga Metro Housing Authority. The goal of the CLSP is to develop relevant and compelling experiences for residents. The program offering at the CLSP extends more than a decade of work among community technology centers offering foundational instruction. The anchor public institutions in University Circle have invested in connectivity and student service learning to bring facilities like the Ashbury Senior Citizens Computer Center online. At the core of CLSP is the development of 9 community-based Learning Studios. The curriculum and experiential offering of the CLSP have been developed for the BTOP public computing center submission. Following assessment, it is our intention to disseminate the curriculum. The CLSP's multi-disciplinary curriculum offering, developed with a cross-section of residents, will be delivered in collaboration with community partners, including the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals,

Metro Health Systems, OneCommunity, the Great Lakes Science Center, our PBS-affiliate, and the forward looking students at Cleveland's two STEM High School sponsored by CWRU.

The CLSP facilities will be based in the census tracts and are replicable across the region. The Community Learning Studios are being built to support a studio experience rather than a traditional classroom. The problem-based curriculum being developed is experiential and hands-on, in contrast to more traditional book-based and assignment driven computer and technical courses.

One of the central challenges for the public policy goal of broadband adoption is creating incentives for engagement. As the studios are an integral part of the UCIZ infrastructure program every resident will have fiber delivered to their front door. The 5000 households represent approximately 22,000 residents. In order to receive their customer premise equipment, which will allow them to turn on the gigabit data services being delivered by the collaborating public sector anchor institutions, residents will have to receive a certificate of completion known as the Broadband Drivers License Level A. The nine Community Learning Studios will be the primary enablers for recipients to receive their Broadband Driver License. The result is that the CLSP will touch almost all the residents in the 18 census tracts. The Level A license is based on a curriculum called "Welcome to the Digital City". The integrated curriculum is based on our original program called "Building a Digital City" which will encourage individuals, family, neighborhood collaboration in building meaningful and relevant solutions to immediate challenges.

Marc Canter, founder of Macromedia, the first major multimedia software platform is on the faculty of CWRU. His course in Computer Science is entitled Building a Digital City. He and his students will spend this Fall Semester developing an integrated curriculum in conjunction with community stakeholders. The outcome will be a detailed, 18 month curriculum informed by problem-based learning and hands on experiential learning focused on combining multi-media technology skills with workforce development, job retraining, and life skills activities.

The approach to local capacity building for community technology literacy is premised on the community technology centers and an innovative program being developed called the Student Broadband Engagement Ambassadors (SBEA). Both will be features of the Community Learning Studio Program. On July 1, Secretary of Commerce Locke and FCC Chairman Genachowski selected the Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center in Cleveland to host their press conference that announced the availability of funds for projects bringing broadband to underserved communities. The community computing centers like Ashbury, Fairfax, and Hough are anchor partners in local capacity building. The SBEA program will be staffed by students who are both residents and attending one of the STEM high

schools in Cleveland. Among other virtues, SBEAs will be able to meet their technology credits in their STEM education through service to their community through a Community Learning Studio.