

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: The Housing Authority of the City of Durham

Project Title: DHA Neighborhood Network Computer Center's Job and Educational Training (J.E.T.)

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

There is a great need to expand the Neighborhood Networks Computer Centers' education and job development training opportunities for DHA residents. Availability of and access to educational resources and job training is essential for residents to become active members of the job pool. Through the establishment of the Job and Educational Training (J.E.T.) program, DHA will provide services to its residents that will effectively prepare them for employment. The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) funding will allow for the expansion of computer and Internet access throughout our 13 Public Housing communities; and through community partnerships, computer-based educational and job training programs will be available to prepare our unemployed and underemployed residents for immediate job opportunities. The J.E.T. program will also enhance the availability for various adult literacy, youth educational programs, and web-based community resources.

One hundred randomly selected households within eight DHA communities were surveyed in December 2008 to assess their computer technology needs and interests. Surveyed household members ranged from ages eight to 62 and over. The survey indicated there is an ongoing need for educational, job training, and life/personal skills activities that target older adults, persons living with disabilities, and school-aged youth. Ninety percent reported they did not own home computers and 93% expressed a need for computer labs within their communities. Sixty-one percent reported that they had less than a high school/GED education and 63% reported unemployment. Sixty-two percent reported an interest in utilizing computer labs for programs and services.

The City of Durham's population is 198,376. DHA currently services approximately 10,524 residents, which make up approximately 5% of the total population of the City of Durham. The current poverty level in the target market of the DHA is 15.0%. Durham's unemployment rate is 9.1%, whereas DHA's population unemployment rate is 65.1% (based on the employment information reported by the DHA residents). Currently 92% of all families that are living in the targeted (non-elderly ages 18 - 61) DHA communities are single women head of households, with children under the age of 18.

We thoroughly reviewed the socioeconomic profiles of the eligible residents that will be served by the program. African Americans comprise 93.7% of DHA's resident population, Caucasians comprise 5.8%, and approximately 0.5% of the residents are classified as Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Other. Less than 1% of the targeted DHA residents are identified as Hispanic or Latino. The average annual income for Public Housing residents is \$8,132.28.

The DHA Neighborhood Network Computer Center's J.E.T. program grant will be implemented under a management structure with a historically proven track record. By incorporating the J.E.T. program grant under the existing staffing and management plan, the DHA can ensure that implementation of this grant will be economical and efficient. The DHA has approximately three key staff persons with over 100 years of experience operating and managing self-sufficiency programs and fiscal operations. The Resident Services Director, Jo-Ann Davis (who reports to the Chief Operations Officer who in turn reports to the Chief Executive Officer), will provide overall management and coordination for DHA Neighborhood Network Computer Center's J.E.T. program. Mrs. Davis has over 30 years experience in grant implementation and housing management. She secured and currently manages more than \$1,000,000 in grant funding to include the management of DHA Neighborhood Network Computer Lab grant, three Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency grants, and a number of foundation, local government and state funded grants.

The goal of the DHA Neighborhood Network Computer Center's J.E.T. program is to create a Coordinator position to manage the program; expand computer and Internet access in two existing community buildings; upgrade donated computers in an existing computer center and provide educational and job training that will prepare approximately 200 residents for employment. The overall funding request of the proposed project is \$400,000.