**Executive Summary**

a) The Shaker Heights Public Library's purpose in seeking grant funds for this project is to significantly increase the accessibility and capacity of our public computing facilities for an underserved population in our district, which includes some of the poorest areas of the City of Cleveland. Our customers are desperately in need of more computers with high speed Internet access and quality software resources, as well free training in their use. Because of 30% cuts in state funding and a drop in local property tax collections, we have eliminated all equipment purchases from our budget and could not move forward without federal funds.

Currently for adults, we have a Computer Center with 14 workstations on the second floor of our Main Library that is supplemented by similar numbers of workstations both on the main floor of the Main Library and at our Bertram Woods Branch Library. Counting the computers for children and teens at both locations, we have approximately 64 public computers. All of these workstations are available 65 hours a week (with 4 additional hours on Sundays during the school year at the Main Library).

b) Our intent in this project is to double our Internet bandwidth and to double the number of public workstations, primarily for adults who have the greatest needs in learning new skills, applying for jobs, getting government benefits, and managing their day-to-day lives (paying bills, making purchases, etc.). The increased availability will offset the current waiting lines that exist for all computer access.

We believe that we have an innovative solution to our problem. Our plan is the create an "Information Commons" area on the first floor of our Main Library that is readily accessible to everyone who enters the building without having to go to the second floor. It will eliminate waiting lines and allow us to incorporate the existing computers from both the Main floor and Computer Center with the new equipment provided through the grant.
Adjacent to the Information Commons, an enclosed “Internet Café” would be established in the room that now houses our Local History collection (that is being moved as part on a renovation project in the planning stages). The café would include computer workstations as well as inexpensive vending snacks to help users save time and money by helping them satisfy their hunger and allowing them to continue working without have to leave the building. The Internet Café would also double as a training facility during hours when classes would be scheduled.

The current Computer Center would become a "Kinko’s-like" Community Entrepreneurial Office with computer and Internet access supplemented by specialty equipment, including fax machine, color copier, commercial quality printers, laminator, scanners, etc. Through this new operation, we would be able to supplies the needs of small and family-run businesses, which would spur growth in the local economy.

We will be increasing the use of underutilized spaces in new and exciting ways that will provide easier, better, and expanded access to the resources we offer and greatly improve the broadband service adoption rates in this region of Cleveland.

c) The Shaker Heights Public Library’s district, with a population of about 33,000, covers the entire City of Shaker Heights and an area of the City of Cleveland known as Shaker Square. Per state law, we cannot restrict use by residency and provide our services to large numbers of Cleveland residents and others in Cuyahoga County outside our jurisdiction. We easily serve 70,000 to 100,000 people within this urbanized region.

The City of Cleveland and its environs are experiencing an unemployment rate of 12.5% and have some of the poorest people, as well as some of the highest minority concentrations, in the country. Our Main Library is situated within one mile of both the poorest/highest minority census tracts in the City of Cleveland and in the City of Shaker Heights.

At the present time, more than 1000 people use our computer facilities weekly and we believe that we can double that amount through this grant project. The vast majority of the people who use our resources do not or cannot afford to have computers and broadband access at home.

d) The Shaker Heights Public Library is ready and well qualified to move forward with this project. Director Luren Dickinson has more than 25 years of library management experience including extensive
work with technology grants, such as Gates and LSTA, in the creation of computer labs, countywide wide
area networks, and z39.50 compatible online catalogs. Ray Zapp, IT Manager, has every certification
that Microsoft offers, and has more than tripled service since Shaker Heights received its initial Gates
grant in 2000. We will be working with architect Duane Van Dyke who is known locally and regionally
for his innovative library design work.

e) During the course of the project, we will be saving a full-time technology position and a full-time
training position, as well as creating three part-time service positions, a part-time architectural position,
and a part-time design position.

f) The overall cost of the project is $196,317, of which $39,375 will be provided through matching funds.