The Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority Neighborhood Network Expansion Project addresses a need for broadband access and training to residents in low-income neighborhoods.

The Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA) provide sites to anchor institutions such as the Boys and Girls Club and Girls Inc. because they offer much needed services to the public housing communities. This proposal will provide broadband access equipment to be used for training programs within these service groups across the City of Newport News. This access will enable students to get connected to research, social networking, career counseling, and employment opportunities.

The Marshall Courts Neighborhood Network Center (MCNN) would be updated and expanded with this proposal to continue its operations as a public computer center with youth and adult training programs. Within the last three years of operation, over 900 people registered to use the computer lab and its services. The Family Investment Center will use funding to update and expand its computer lab and open it as a public computer center. It will also continue its mission of training public housing and Housing Choice Voucher residents for self-sufficiency through specialty training programs.

Four senior complexes will be setup with computers in their community centers to give broadband access to the residents. The City of Newport News Department of Human Services and qualified software training groups will offer training on how to use the computers and where to find health and wellness resources on the web.

There are 392 seniors in these properties and 49% have some form of disability. There are over 28,000 people in the census tracts that the targeted public computer centers are proposed. The median household income for 93% of the residents targeted for our proposed programs is less than $25,000.
There are 392 residents in the senior complexes and we anticipate at least 50% or 196 residents to regularly use the broadband access and attend the training over the three year term. Using the numbers from the MCNN Center for the past 3 years and taking into account the hours that each public lab will be open we estimate that we will have 2000 users over the next three years. We also expect that we will have 600 students in the homework clubs provided.

NNRHA was established in 1939 and has been managing federal grants since the beginning. Many of the grants are for multi-million dollar construction projects and for community resources such as the HUD ROSS (Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency) grants and the HUD FSS (Family Self-Sufficiency) grants. The MCNN Center already operates as a successful and busy public computer center and will be a model for this project. The NNRHA partners for this funding, Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc., and The City of Newport News Department of Human Services have also been offering services to the community for decades and are running time tested programs.

The money for this project will save at least three jobs and create three new positions. More important is that between the Family Investment Center and The Marshall Courts Neighborhood Network Computer Lab in the last year they assisted 70 people in finding employment. This funding will allow these centers to not only remain open but expand their services so that more residents across the City of Newport News can take advantage of the services offered. Over the next three years of this grant that is a potential for more than 210 people finding employment through these services and training programs.

The overall cost of the project is $1,209,380. We are requesting $993,880 to be supported by the BTOP Public Computer Center Grant and $215,500 to be supported by in-kind services from our partners.