waiver for the long-term sustainability of this project through. City enthusiasm for the project indicates possible sustaining support for this project in the future.

CHA requests a waiver due to financial hardship & because the technology gap that exists in our society leads to generational poverty.

CHA’s FY07 & FY08 audit is attached.

C. Executive Summary

7. Executive Summary of Overall Proposal:

The Columbia Housing Authority (CHA) is submitting two (2) BTOP grant applications: 1.) A Sustainable Broadband Adoption application; & 2.) A Public Computer Center application. Each proposal can be funded separately on its own merit but there is a considerable cost savings in funding both proposals. These applications are designed to complement each other & provide a continuum of access to broadband technology for public housing residents that directly advances three (3) of the BTOP statutory purposes.

1. Provide improved broadband access to consumers in underserved areas. Only 5% of CHA’s over 1,100 public housing residents have access to broadband technology in their homes. CHA’s “Equal Access for All” wireless network & corresponding XenDesktop enabled laptop computer loan program will provide 100% of CHA’s over 1,100 public housing residents with free broadband access & will loan XenDesktop enabled laptop computers to 60% (429) of our public housing households upon completion of our computer literacy program. The average annual income of public housing residents is less than $8,000/year.

2. Provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, & support to community anchor institutions, job-creating strategic facilities, & vulnerable populations. A condition of receiving the loan of a XenDesktop enabled laptop computer, public housing residents will need to complete computer literacy training at CHA’s Computer Literacy Centers. The training program will provide education, awareness, training, access, & state of the art equipment for public housing residents.
3. Stimulate demand for broadband As public housing residents gain easy access to broadband technology & learn to use it on a daily basis, demand for in-home access will increase. As increased access leads to increased success in school, work & family self-sufficiency goals, low-income public housing residents will have a powerful tool at their disposal to help them break the cycle of poverty & be able to afford in-home access to broadband technology.

Public Computer Centers Proposal: CHA’s Neighborhood Network Computer Literacy Centers would put centers within one (1) city block’s distance for 75% of our residents. Of the remaining 25%, the farthest distance anyone would have to walk would be three (3) city blocks.

Neighborhood Network Computer Literacy Centers are the necessary first step in providing access & training to learn multiple software programs necessary for success in the work place & in school. As computer literacy increases, increased access will also be promoted through the loan of laptop computers for personal use at home. This is the next step in a continuum of computer literacy for our public housing residents & will increase access, provide education & training, & stimulate demand for broadband.

Cost Savings for Funding Both Proposals

There is a $395,508 cost savings for funding both the Sustainable Broadband Adoption Public Computer Center proposals. Since both proposals utilize the XenDesktop system for connectivity, there is hardware equipment in the Network Center & a fiber optic network that can be shared by both programs.

Funded separately, each proposal would cost as follows:

- Sustainable Broadband Adoption (Equal Access for All Program) = $977,210.59
- Public Computer Center Grant (Computer Literacy Centers) = $641,858.75

Total if Funded Separately = $1,619,069.34

As compared to funding both proposals:

Total if Funded Jointly = $1,223,560.97

Savings Achieved by Funding Both Grant Proposals = $395,508.37
Additional Savings on Connectivity

Our City of Columbia connection rate is $250 per month per connection for 10Mps transmission speed. In comparison, the current market rate for [Redacted]’s “[Redacted] Ethernet” fiber optic 10Mps connection is $1,600 per month per connection.

Our total connection cost from the City of Columbia for the three years of the Sustainable Broadband Adoption grant is $99,000 as compared to [Redacted]’s rate of $473,600 for the three year period. A savings of $374,600! Equal to a 45% match.

Our total connection cost from the City of Columbia for the three years of the Computer Center grant is $45,000 as compared to [Redacted]’s rate of $288,000 for the three year period. A savings of $243,! Equal to a 36% match.

Funding of both proposals would reduce our connectivity costs to $99,000 over the three year life of the grant, a savings of $45,000. The City of Columbia has also expressed a willingness to evaluate the public benefit of both programs & determine if it is able to provide additional matching funds for the long-term sustainability of this project through the waiver or reduction in connection fees for their fiber optic network.

Lack of computer & technology skills puts low-income adults of all ages at a severe disadvantage in the job market. Likewise, school children without access to computers & related technologies are at a distinct disadvantage & less likely to complete homework assignments & succeed in school without equal access to the tools that other children use on a regular basis at home. Poor school performance increases the likelihood that a student will drop out of school. Students who fail at school are more likely to fail in life & perpetuate the cycle of poverty for their own children. Parents need access to computers & technology to help their children learn these skills. Seniors & persons with disabilities need access to computers & technology in order to increase their access to the community network of health & human services & to access important information that would be otherwise unavailable to them due to mobility limitations, lack of accessible transportation & other barriers caused by poverty.

D. Project Purpose