

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: National Urban Technology Center, Inc.

Project Title: DIGITAL CAMPUS: Advancing Broadband Adoption in Minority Communities

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

a) Digital Divide: A National Crisis

According to Pew Research Broadband adoption lags in low-income minority communities. Just 35% of low-income families use broadband at home; adoption is 30% among those with less than a high school diploma. Pew further reports that these communities do not see broadband's value and believe it is not accessible. The gap keeps low-income minority populations at a disadvantage educationally, professionally and financially.

b) Content-Driven Broadband Adoption: an Innovative Solution

The National Urban Technology Center (Urban Tech) has provided innovative, large-scale, technology-based solutions to low-income schools and community-based organizations for over 20 years. With funding from BTOP, Urban Tech will build on the documented success of its relationship with Department of Justice's Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) and its Weed & Seed (W&S) program to develop a robust technology infrastructure in 300 W&S centers across the U.S. to promote broadband access targeted at inner-city communities.

To increase broadband adoption in low-income minority communities, Urban Tech will:

- a) Build the capacity of 40 W&S sites in Year 1, conducting an aggressive outreach campaign in public computer centers, schools, houses of worship, public housing, and libraries using mobile labs to reach residents where they are;
- b) Deliver relevant content and programming through an online portal, the Digital Campus, that engages residents in broadband-based applications to improve education, employability and economic viability and that leverages resources of W&S for community revitalization;
- c) Replicate the W&S model for broadband training, awareness and access across the W&S network of 300 sites in Year 2, accessing 6 million underserved people.
- d) Promote broadband and Digital Campus through a unique, multimedia marketing campaign, reaching 17 million households in Year 1.

The Digital Campus is an innovative approach to providing content in formats that engage both adults and today's media-conscious youth through one portal, 24/7 any time, any place. Users access literacy

tutors, homework assistance, GED certification, job preparation services, health information, financial literacy, and life skills training. W&S Site Coordinators will complement and enrich senior programs for digital literacy, consumer education, and after school programs for youth development. Schools will have access to customizable courseware, interactive games, videos, and web-based projects to support educational goals and make technology personally meaningful, advancing broadband adoption.

c) Connecting Low-Income Minority Communities

Weed & Seed serves a community that is 38.7% Black, 39.6% Hispanic and 16.1% White with average median household income of \$26,300. With approximately 20,000 residents per site, the Digital Campus has the potential to reach 800,000 people through the initial 40 W&S sites.

The initial 40 sites will each select 6-7 new sites in Year 2 replicating their experience and expertise through online training and webinars, viral marketing at conferences and ongoing technical assistance and mentoring to include all 300 W&S sites, approximately 3600 schools and community-based organizations, and 6 million low-income residents.

d) Applicant Qualifications: Experienced Team, Established Partners

The Urban Tech team includes organizations experienced with broadband content development, implementation and evaluation of large scale programs, multicultural media, and fostering technology careers in minority communities.

Urban Tech and Creative Media Applications (CMA) will combine their assets and experience in building technology centers and publishing web-based education materials over the last 20 years to facilitate broadband usage by underserved populations.

Collaborating with CCDO and W&S communities creates a powerful public-private partnership for leveraging federal programs and local BTOP initiatives for greater efficiencies. This will result in expeditious growth and sustainability of broadband applications and more productive use of BTOP resources for reaching our target of 6 million residents in two years.

Additional Partners providing marketing and advertising experience and implementation, management, and operation of the Digital Campus:

Colours TV, satellite and cable network, has delivered 24-hour programming nationwide for multicultural urban audience since 2001. Colours serves over 17 million TV households, reaching 42.5 million viewers. This non-profit network will lead the multimedia awareness campaign.

Adayana Government Group will design and develop the online portal, social network and learning content management system for the Digital Campus, providing the technical helpline infrastructure required to support the applications and users. Adayana Government Group has developed unique and innovative online solutions to address human capital development in under-served U.S. communities.

Technology Awareness Program has over 10 years experience providing high quality resources to address the digital divide and promote minority achievement in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) by connecting high school students with STEM professionals. Board Chair, Ted Childs, retired from IBM after a distinguished career in human resources management.

e) New Jobs, New Opportunities

Urban Tech will employ up to 30 professionals (staff and contract) to develop the Digital Campus portal and web-based curriculum and deploy technology resources in inner city communities. The Urban Tech team will train up to three instructors in each of 40 Weed & Seed sites—providing 120 new technology-related opportunities in low-income communities over two years. The Digital Campus educational modules and technology training will improve employment opportunities for its user base.

f) Cost Total cost for two-year BTOP project: \$7,903,800