Executive Summary of the Proposed Project
a. A statement of the problem or need your project addresses with regard to improving broadband service adoption rates. The South Central New York Rural Broadband Alliance - Public Computer Centers (the Alliance) project addresses 3 problems facing vulnerable populations in the rural Southern Tier of New York State. These vulnerable populations include those who are low-income, unemployed, underemployed, aged, non-English speakers, seniors, persons with disabilities, and veterans. The 3 problems are: 1. high unemployment rate exacerbated by the economic downturn; 2. lack of affordable access to high-speed broadband services, including education, training and technical support, especially in isolated rural communities; and 3. lack of access to essential E-government resources and other online resources for work, job search, health care, education, and citizenship, especially where, because of the bad economy, consumer ability to acquire computer technology and broadband access is limited. b. Your overall approach to addressing the need. This project will upgrade the resources of the rural Southern Tier of New York State through assisting the critical multicounty public service organizations in the area that are members of the Alliance. These Alliance members include (1) the Finger Lakes Library System and (2) the Four County Library System, which combined have 75 libraries; (3) United Health Services Hospitals, Inc. (UHSH), which has 4 hospitals; (4) the Chenango/Delaware/Otsego Workforce Investment Board, which trains and assists job seekers; (5) the New York State Home for Veterans and Their Dependents; and (6) the Central New York Area Health Education Center (CNYAHEC). The project will significantly enhance the ability of these organizations to work together to help as many people as possible, particularly the disadvantaged, job seekers, and those with health issues or without access to computers. In order to accomplish the stated goals, the project will: - install much higher capacity broadband cable that will connect with the 42 libraries in the Four County Library System, plus the 4 C/D/O Workforce office locations, in Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Otsego Counties. This will significantly upgrade local connectivity; - purchase desktop and laptop computers and peripherals for use in libraries for research and training purposes; - provide for the hiring of 4 career counselors to provide job counseling/career assistance in local libraries; - utilize library webcams (already in place) for one-on-one counseling, and remote job interviews; - coordinate the addition of electronic resources so citizens may access resources from home or office; - purchase 'Enterprise' software, to allow the library systems to create dedicated 'rooms' on their main catalog pages. These 'rooms' would be created for (1) Job Information and Career; (2) Health and Medical Information; and (3) Veterans' Resources, with: 'Links to the C/D/O Workforce homepage; 'Links to CNYAHEC's 'My Health Career' webpages; 'Links to the Southern Tier Health Link (the local
regional health information organization), and area hospitals and medical offices, to enable access to electronic health records (EHRs) and other illness prevention and health maintenance information; "Links to the NY State Vets' Home; "Metasearching" capability, to allow users to search a topic through many resources, such as the library catalogue, electronic databases, Internet, ebooks, and the NOVEL suite of electronic resources, with links to career information; -purchase an upgraded Cybermobile for use in the Four County Library System's most rural areas; -purchase vehicles for counselor travel and delivery/maintenance of computer equipment; -provide for the hiring of more staff at the Four County Library System to manage the project and computer network, and operate the Cybermobile; -allow CNYAHEC to offer on-line coursework to upgrade job-seeker skills; -preserve jobs and create new ones, at the two library systems, C/D/O Workforce, CNYAHEC, and the NY State Vets' Home. In addition, the C/D/O Workforce Center will seek to expand education, training and career resources with an emphasis on serving job seekers and veterans. The partners will coordinate the resources and staffing of the Libraries and One-stop Career Centers to provide career counseling services, on-line education and training resources and access to wireless services. All wireless user access requests from either the One-stop Centers or library users would be managed by the local libraries. The application seeks over $1 million in funds to support (1) jobseeker credential and degree-based educational programs and (2) on-the-job training. --Jobseeker credential and degree-based educational programs. C/D/O Workforce would provide 1-year and 2-year training assistance to 200 individuals per year, in: Healthcare-related jobs: 75 people @ $4,688 per training course = $351,600 Computer/Info Technology jobs: 40 people @ $3,815 per training course = $152,600 Electronics/Telecommunications jobs: 60 people @ $5,494 per training course = $329,640 Business related jobs: 25 people @ $5,538 per training course = $138,450 Total: 200 people trained at a cost of $972,290 --On-the-job training. C/D/O Workforce estimates that it can support 25 on-the-job training (OJT) contracts per year with employers in technology, telecommunications and associated business fields at an average cost of $7000 per contract (50% of the average wages paid for a maximum period of 6 months). This program follows federal guidelines under which workforce One-stops provide OJT contracts. The total OJT funding request would be $175,000. c. Area(s) to be served; population of the target area(s), including demographic information; and the estimated number of potential users of your public computer center(s). The 2 multi-county library systems will coordinate with the C/D/O Workforce Board and the CNYAHEC, as well as UHSH and the NY Vets' Home, to help local citizens find jobs, develop new or improved skills, and better access libraries and educational materials. In addition, these organizations will provide the means for citizens to access their EHRs and other health maintenance and prevention information. They will also provide the same assistance to veterans. The 75 local libraries in the 2 library systems serve 9 rural upstate New York counties: Broome, Tioga, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Chenango, Cayuga, Tompkins, and Seneca. These libraries will be a focal point for accessing training and information, particularly for the unemployed. The 9-county area covers over 6,500 square miles--20% larger than Connecticut--with a combined population of over 675,000. Based on current usage of the libraries, which is up substantially as the economy has deteriorated, the estimated number of potential users of the public computer centers is at least 225,000 individuals per year. d. Qualifications of the applicant that demonstrate the ability to implement the project and achieve its intended results. All participants have actively committed their executive and managerial departments to implement the project and achieve its intended results. The lead applicant, UHSH, is serving as the sponsoring applicant and seeks no dollars from this PCC
application. Moreover, UHSH has already invested enormous amounts of time and effort to help this project succeed. UHSH will also contribute to the project by providing time and guidance from its information technology team, as part of the match requirement, to make sure that the system is implemented. The UHSH leadership team consists of: John M. Carrigg, COO Thomas Burke, Esquire, Assistant General Counsel Michael Rusnak, Director of Information Systems The Finger Lakes Library System leadership team consists of: Karen Creenan, CEO Rex R. Helwig, Computer Network Services Manager The Four County Library System leadership team consists of: David J. Karre, CEO Jeffrey B. Henry, Automation Systems Manager Eve Randall, Finance Officer The C/D/O Workforce team is led by Kevin Price, Executive Director. The NY State Vets’ Home leadership team consists of: Sally Venugopalan, Administrator Noah Davis, Assistant Administrator Lori Meszler, COO The CNYAHEC leadership team consists of: John R. Hughes, Executive Director Suzanne Vary, Director of Health Workforce Development e. Jobs to be saved or created: Jobs created: 237. Preserved: 20 f. Overall cost of the proposed project: $52,250,546.40