Applicant Name: NATIONAL FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY BROADCASTERS INC.

Project Title: The Native Public Media Native/Rural Community Broadband Adoption and Digital Literacy Project

Project Type: Sustainable Broadband Adoption

Executive Summary

The Need: The market-driven model of broadband deployment has failed Tribal, rural and farmworker communities; in many communities there is little or no service. The 2009 New Media, Technology and Internet Use in Indian Country study explains, 'Broadband deployment in Indian Country is at less than a 10% penetration rate while analog telephone only reaches one in three families in many tribal communities.' This is the digital divide that disadvantages Native Americans. The Innovative Solution: This sustainable broadband adoption proposal is a multi-pronged intervention. This project provides the access points, equipment and training, and a value of training through off-site and on-site hotspots at 17 sites, a train the trainer methodology, and building a digital community not only for each site, but tribal communities nationwide and creating the foundation to spur continued broadband adoption as well as lay the groundwork for broadband deployment in the future. The project drives broadband adoption through a comprehensive approach to introduce equipment, trainers, digital literacy, access, and a digital community to areas with severely low adoption rates. Combining hotspots at community radio stations with netbooks, digital multimedia training and certification, data-driven analysis will allow this project to become a replicable model. The project includes: 1) an analysis of 17 preselected community radio stations to assess individual needs. 2) The requisite equipment and software will then be procured to facilitate the new media transition. 3) Two trainees per station are chosen to attend the Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC) program benefitting from a custom-designed curriculum tailored for this project as well as nearly two years salary to bring their newfound knowledge home. 4) Once trained, tribal and rural individuals will be industry certified to set up equipment, maintain multimedia technology, and establish a portal tied to citizen engagement. These individuals will become the resident experts and conduct community digital literacy workshops. 5) Youth Radio will offer a corresponding academy for youth. The project will also: 1) establish stations as Wi-Fi hotspots for public engagement, 2) establish an interactive web portal for streaming of all 17 of the stations' content, 3) conducting public outreach to encourage Internet access and adoption, and 4) incorporate a research component. Wi-Fi Hotspots: This project brings introductory access to broadband to these communities and the ability to drive adoption directly through providing equipment, and indirectly through creating demand. Wi-Fi broadband hotspots will give the community access. Along with digital literacy and technology training, these sites will serve as digital hubs and be outfitted with an outdoor wireless node. Netbooks provided for a small fee of $100 to community members who attend digital literacy training will access the hotspot. The availability of a hotspot will be the first influx of broadband access and an enabler for adoption and will be available to the public free of charge. Web Portal: A web developer will create an interactive web
portal so that all trainers have access to a national platform of distribution for locally reflective creative content. Trainees will also create content for their own community radio station websites and build an unprecedented link between diverse stations. Community Outreach: Introductory Internet connectivity in these communities is mandatory for adoption, as is equipment and training. Members of the community will receive a netbook for a nominal fee after successfully completing the digital literacy training from the community trainers and will be able to sign up for the CompTIA A+ Training, a self-paced eLearning course. Research Component: The research component will employ a digital data flow tool for project management that can be easily used for project evaluation, designed and implemented by Dr. Kate Williams of the University of Illinois, called DEPR or Data Engine for Policy and Research. Williams and her team will work with project managers at the beginning of the project to inform plans for data collection. The purpose of the research component is to manage critical data that will be used for evaluation, and for asking the many questions that are warranted in the case of such a game changing intervention of broadband stimulus investment in Native and rural unserved and underserved communities where little or no data exists. In concert with the University of Illinois, the Open Technology Initiative (OTI), will develop adoption metrics for the project. OTI will also assist in tracking subscribership at the 17 sites. Target Population: The target population of the NPM Project is multi-state, multi-tribal and includes multiple vulnerable populations. The total number of communities served by this project is 17. The community radio hubs are located in 13 different states and serve 8 tribal reservations, 2 Alaskan native communities, 2 farm worker communities, 4 rural communities, including 1 Appalachian community, and 1 Hawaiian Native community. As a vital community hub, residents in Indian Country and rural America already turn to their radio stations for information. Some of these communities don't even have 911 services and radio stations provide public safety updates, local news, and the cultural involvement that communities need to thrive. These communities are among the poorest and have the least access to technology. The median per capita income for the NPM project target population is half the national average with the percentage of families living below the poverty line (21%) and the percentage of individuals living below the poverty line (25%) are both over twice the national average. For the Tribal Stations, the story is even worse. According to the decennial census, the communities our Tribal stations in our project serve are comprised of 82% tribal members. 40% of those people speak a language other than English in their home. 40.4% are classified as families in poverty and have median incomes of two/fifths of the national average. This project directly increases adoption by connecting community trainers to broadband and those community trainers will leverage their expertise to connect others. Users will be able to connect through hotspots at the radio station, gaining access to the Internet. Compared to the unconnected users in these communities, the number of netbooks issued will provide a direct increase in access rates. The hotspots will register the IP address of users, allowing each site to keep track of the number of unique users, not only comparing them to netbooks distributed, but also to track the number of additional users from the community. IP addresses will be anonymized and web traffic will not be tracked. Applicant Qualifications: Native Public Media and the National Federation of Community Broadcasters are uniquely positioned to implement this project because of their direct connection to existing community radio stations; their expertise in working with Native and rural communities; their experience in conducting case studies in tribal communities; and their familiarity with socio-economic conditions in rural and Native communities. NPM's presence in Indian Country, and the role of radio stations as a vital community hub, will bring broadband
intervention to these communities. With tremendous community capital, the radio stations are the
conduit through which broadband training can happen. The digital community these stations will create
will span not just the new community of online users at each site, but a digital community connecting all
sites. In addition to NPM and NFCB's fiscal readiness, the presence of these stations demonstrates the
cultural and community readiness which can be leveraged into the success of this proposal. Rural and
Indian Country are separated by a deep digital divide from the rest of the nation. These communities are
in need of resources to expand access to broadband that has not been provided by market forces. NPM
and NFCB are leveraging their community engagement with federal funding to lay the groundwork for
broadband use and deployment in rural and Indian Country. Jobs created: Over the term of the project,
over 144 jobs will be saved, created or induced within these communities with more local trainees ready
to join the workforce through community outreach efforts. This project includes 500 seats to CompTIA 'A+
' certification and includes training and job placement assistance. The overall cost of this project is
$13.193 million dollars.