The City of Manchester is a diverse community of 110,000 residents and has many challenges. There are eight Title I schools and a subsidized school lunch participation rate that averages over 40%. The soup kitchen served over 70,000 meals in 2008 and on an average day there are as many as 382 children in the school system classified as homeless. The city is designated a refugee resettlement area by the State Department and has a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA), which is a HUD designation targeting areas of concentrated poverty in large cities. For many city residents, internet access is simply not affordable. This application is for a comprehensive community-based project that will bring free Internet Access with training to the general public, school children, seniors, the homeless, the unemployed, English Language Learners, students, refugees and the disabled. The computer labs and access will be made available in places where the targeted groups already go including schools, libraries, youth centers, a senior center, a job training center, a healthcare center, a homeless shelter, and a new community center. The City will also install wifi hotspots in 61 strategic locations throughout the city that can be used by anyone with a laptop, netbook, and wifi enabled devices such as iPods, PSPs, DSs. Each of Manchester's 22 public schools will get full wifi access coverage that will include segments for administration, students, and open public access that will be available both inside and outside of the buildings. Each school will get a complete laptop cart with 24 laptops and productivity software, a nurse's workstation and at least two PCs to be placed in every school lobby to be used by parents. All workstations will have internet access that will be upgraded from 10 Mbs to 30 Mbs with funding from the Title I and IDEA grant. There are 15,813 students, their parents and 2,000 teachers and staff who will benefit. The city's 2 libraries will upgrade 36 of its public access computers, increase the amount of public access computers from 42 to 92 and increase the Internet bandwidth from three Mbs to 20 Mbs. In 2009, the libraries had 470,515 patron visits and 84,325 internet logins. The William B. Cashin Senior Center will upgrade their current computer lab equipment, increase the lab workstation count from 9 to 13 including a handicap accessible workstation, add a permanently mounted projector for computer training and add wifi access to the whole facility for use by the public. The center has over 2,000 active members. The Regis Lemaire Youth center is located in the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) and serves all city youth between the ages 10-18. They will upgrade their current computer lab equipment, increase the lab PC count from 6 to 9 PCs and will add wifi access to the whole facility for use by the public. The center serves about 100 children per week. The Manchester Police Athletic League is located in the NSRA and will build a lab to be used for homework by the 600 participating students. The computer lab will have 6 workstations with a printer and wifi access. The Manchester Community Resource Center will be upgrading the existing job training lab, add 15 netbooks that can be
used by students for web based training, expand their public access area from 3 to 6 computers, add training in IRS Free File Tax Assistance including Financial Literacy and expand their overall job training programs. With this upgrade, they will be able to expand from 170 to 296 people served per week. The Manchester Police Department network will also be extended to this facility to improve Public Safety in the area. The Manchester Continuum of Care will build a computer lab in their new homeless shelter. The lab will include 15 workstations, 2 printers and a projector for training. This lab will provide Internet access and job training to the homeless. The shelter serves an average of 75 individuals per day. The Salvation Army Kids Cafe is open to inner-city youth between the ages of 5-13 Monday through Thursday and open to teens on Friday and Saturday night. The center serves up to 150 children each night and serves these children dinner (without their parents) and then provides supervised activities in the evening. Teen Nites serve 80-90 youth on Friday and Saturday. The center's lab will be upgraded with 12 new PCs, a wifi access point will be added and a firewall with unlimited connections will be added. A minimum of 780 youth will be served in a 120-hour week. This is the city's ultimate crime prevention tool. The YMCA will be adding 44 computers: a new 12 computer teen lab, 8 computers for the STAY Program in the four middle schools and 20 MacBooks for the Youth After School Program in the city's two neediest schools where 87% and 81% receive free and/reduced lunch. The three programs serve 500 children and teenagers per week. Child Health Services, a low-income child health care provider, will install public access computers in their patient waiting area and in private offices to improve their health care delivery. The center serves 250 patients a week. The New Hampshire Institute of Art (NHIA) will, in partnership with the City of Manchester, create a public computing facility in the recently gifted St. Anne Church. The computer lab will be located in a main level room, suitable for 25 workstations. The facility will be used to provide on-site access and training to populations served by the multitude of service organizations in the area. Partnerships with local non-profit organizations will include but are not limited to: Boys & Girls Club, YWCA, YMCA, International Institute, and local refugee organizations. As a member of the New Hampshire College and University Council, the lab will be available to the college population who reside or work in the downtown area. The City of Manchester will leverage their 60 miles of installed fiber optic infrastructure and install public wifi access hotspots in up to 61 locations throughout the City. This access will be free to the public and will provide coverage around schools, in commercial areas, and in low-income areas that are in the city' Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA), a HUD designation targeting areas of concentrated poverty in large cities. This network will be available to all 110,000 residents plus all of the students, business people and visitors that come into the city everyday. We estimate that each hotspot would be accessed by 10-20 people per day depending on the access point location and the time of year so the access per week would be between 4200 and 8400 per week. The City of Manchester will oversee this grant implementation. The City has successfully managed all aspects of complex information technology projects. The City's Information Systems Director has 30 years of progressive experience in the Information Technology area and has a Masters of Business Administration. The City’s Network Engineer holds numerous certifications including Cisco CCNP and Microsoft MCSE. All of the participating outside agencies must either demonstrate their in-house capabilities or partner with an outside service provider to install and maintain their facility. The City also has experience with and procedures in place to manage grants of this type that have sub-recipient agencies. If the City is awarded this grant, the City will execute a signed agreement with each agency that details the tasks the agency must complete.
Twenty temporary full time jobs and 9.5 permanent full time jobs will be created in the Manchester community. The overall cost of the proposed project is $5,436,644 with a match of 31.6%.