

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: American Library Association

Project Title: Turning the Page

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

A number of recent news stories and research reports confirms that public computer centers are seeing an across the board increase in community participation for e-government applications, online learning, job searches, email, social networking, and a rapid decline in public funding. Centers are closing, reducing hours and staff, not keeping up technology advances, or maintaining their current inventory. These centers need sustainable funding. Turning the Page is a successful model of communication and development training for library leaders and trustees that will help to address long-term funding sustainability challenges.

PLA proposes to host conferences for public computer centers that are to receive Broadband Stimulus funding in order to prepare them to build community coalitions, make their match payments and create sustainable funding. Based on the current estimated number of centers in rural areas, PLA would plan to host 19 conferences in 18 states (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia.) These states are in critical need for this education, all but one (Michigan) has public computer center funding rates that are less than the national average and Turning the Page has not been offered in these staes nor is there any plan to offerr it.

PLA is proposing that there be 19 Turning the Page events within the scope of this grant. Most of the events will be for a specific state, the states with fewer library systems (South Carolina and Georgia, Mississippi and Arkansas) coming together for two events and the states with more systems (California, Michigan and Texas) each having two events.

Each library system in these states will be able to apply to participate in Turning the Page. The application process will require library systems to provide data regarding PCC connectivity, population poverty levels, user activity data, and current funding levels; commit to creating and implementing project plan for connectivity and public computers; and create a team of three library supporters to actively participate throughout the entire program. Preference will be given to library systems with the greatest need, serving the most vulnerable populations and fulfilling the other requirements.

During the conference the team must complete activities including the pre and post assessments, attend seven work sessions, and create a work plan for their proposed sustainable funding project with measurable results. After the team returns to the library community, they will participate in the online community, provide an overview of Turning the Page to the board and staff of the library (including TTP online), implement their sustainable funding proposal, and report on their progress through the online community and in a survey after 6 months. Evaluations and survey reports have shown PLA that this process works to provide long term successes for these participating intitutions.

During the course of Turning the Page many jobs will be created and saved. PLA will be able to retain and hire additional staff as well as our contrators, Exclaim, GMMB, NogginLabs, and over twelve independent contractors. Also, Turning the Page will provide for the local economies that host the conferences. Over a three day period, PLA will spend at least \$250,000 in mid-size communities in the lodging, transportaion and restaurant businesses. Not to be overshadowed is the fact that equipping the public computer centers with this education will give them the skills to fund longer hours and more staff at each facility in these 18 states.

PLA is uniquely prepared to provide a communications and development training model to PAC centers in the U.S. to help centers achieve their long-term sustainable funding goals. We have done it successfully for over two years and have a proven record of impact and results within the communities and states that have participated in Turning the Page. In making Turning the Page available to public computer centers, rural and high need communities will strengthen the skills necessary to build sustainable funding for computing and connectivity. Turning the Page is poised to begin as soon as called upon.

Based on data gathered, it is expected that the total cost of this project will be \$9,355,727.00 with PLA providing 20% (\$1,559,288.00) and the federal government providing a grant for the balance (\$7,796,439.00).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this grant proposal.