Applicant Name: EDWARD WATERS COLLEGE, INC.

Project Title: Edward Waters College Public Computer Center (EWCPCC)

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

There is a widening 'digital divide' with regard to American urban communities. The Edward Waters College Public Computer Center initiative proposes to establish a community network that supports broadband deployment within a 10-mile radius of the main campus in a local networking effort to (a) provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support to community anchor institutions, and vulnerable populations; (b) improve access to and use of broadband services by public safety and health agencies, and (c) stimulate demand for broadband in local residencies. The need to bridge this digital divide is evidenced not only in the use of broadband technology by disadvantaged populations, but is even present in the agencies which serve them. A study by Bower and Berry (2004) titled 'Information Technology in Northeast FL's Nonprofits: A Comprehensive Study with Ten Major Findings and Policy Recommendations' analyzed the technology being used in 262 nonprofit organizations. Recent economic factors in FL have not helped the situation. Tremendous shortfalls in property values have resulted in deficits in educational funding. This in turn has led to layoffs and 'no growth' strategies with far-reaching consequences for administrators, teachers, students, and ultimately the quality of education affecting the general public. Although it is possible to leverage information technology to solve some of the problems, this cannot be done without investment in technology infrastructure, technology education and training. The best equipment in the world goes into the closet if people are not trained to use it. In an effort to bridge the 'digital divide' that inhibits a comprehensive approach to 21st century education on the part of urban America, EWC's Public Computer Center endeavors to launch a community outreach initiative that will entail the development of a fully equipped state-of-the-art, technology-based Community Computer Center. Located on the campus of Edward Waters College at the Shell-Sweet Community Resource Center, the Center will be technologically capable of interfacing with high schools, collegiate campuses, community organizations, and the homes of under served populations throughout FL and the country via broadband, WiFi, Internet, VPN (virtual private network) protocols, and other formats for the purpose of instantaneously providing a wide variety of educational, business, and health-related training and resources that are a scholastic product of EWC and its participating collegiate and community affiliates. The general public will be invited to take advantage of free, continuous training classes and seminars covering such topics as office productivity software, Internet skills, shopping, computerized GED review, health literacy information, computer literacy, web design, and career-oriented computer training. Students at EWC will experience enhanced learning opportunities through free WiFi based broadband connectivity distributed throughout the computing center, EWC campus and surrounding community. In addition, the WiFi access points will extend free broadband connectivity to several neighborhoods adjacent to the
EWC campus. The facilities plan includes two new computer labs, one with 40 workstations, and one video conferencing center with 12 workstations. This will enhance the existing capacity of the current computer lab with 20 workstations. 78 new workstations will be purchased for the Center labs in order to support public use of high speed broadband technologies. This will allow high speed Web access to the public, and will also support 30,000 new training interactions per year which will greatly impact 800 students at EWC and the 275,268 residents within the 10-mile radius of the Center. In addition, a Mobile Computer Lab of 20 laptop computers will be available to support mobile training activities in the immediate neighborhood(s) proposed by community agencies and organizations, such as training seminars and conference events. New proposed training and educational events are designed to draw the community in for increased broadband awareness and use. These include computer summer camps, computer repair classes, college classes, technology-based seminars, Internet and Web design, career exploration, and computer networking.

c AREAS SERVED The area to be served is the 10-mile radius of population centered on the EWC campus. The number of potential subscribers in the target area is 275,268. Duval County, FL has a population of 935,107. Average persons per household are 2.1. Average household income is $40,554. Gender statistics: 48% men, 51% women. Ethnicity: 65% White, 27% Black, 4% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 0% Indian. The median age of all persons is 33.7 years. The high school dropout rate is 41%. The percentage of persons living in poverty is 11.66%. Block groups surrounding EWC consistently indicate below poverty level households of 19.1 to 23.1 percent. The overall block groups which comprise census track 29.02 data reflect an overall below poverty rate of 27 percent. If it can be assumed that the entire county rate for broadband usage is 13 percent, when you include all low to moderate income households in the county, the potential un-served would be greater. This almost certainly means that the percentage of citizens utilizing broadband services in this area is even lower than the already very low 13 percent penetration rate that exists for the entire country.

d QUALIFICATIONS Edward Waters College is a private HBCU, located in the urban area of Jacksonville, FL. Founded in 1866, this four-year, accredited, liberal arts, coeducational institution has extended its campus to underserved neighborhoods by providing comprehensive educational and community services. Since 1999, EWC's Schell-Sweet CRC has collaborated with the City of Jacksonville, University of FL, Jacksonville Department of Children and Families, Association of Black Psychologists, Northwest Behavioral Health Services, Duval County Department of Health, local faith-based institutions, and other community-based organizations to offer a wide range of support services and information exchange to Duval County’s most blighted areas. EWC and the Schell-Sweet CRC are located in an Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Zone. The college offers small class sizes, individualized attention to students, diverse social activities, and a rolling enrollment policy. Recognizing and practicing adherence to national academic standards is imperative for educational process and EWC is no exception to that reality. However, EWC avoids utilizing test scores as the main focus to determine a student’s academic potential, instead using an assessment program which enables it to ascertain the level at which students need to begin their college careers at EWC. The college offers many different degree programs, and the type of campus environment that is uniquely suited to an urban student. Located on the Kings Road corridor, in close proximity to downtown Jacksonville, FL, EWC continues to build upon its solid foundation of teaching, research, and community outreach. The college’s current enrollment is 800 students. Approximately 51% of the student body is male, 49% female, and over 90% of the students rely on financial aid. Training which is currently being conducted at the Schell-Sweet CRC includes
University of FL's Shands Clinic Services, CRC Social Services, Housing, Jobs, Food Distribution/PSI Services, Health Literacy, Veterans Computer Training, DCF Food Stamps, Urban Jacksonville, Senior Wellness, Jax Birthing Project, Seniors Computer Class, Senior Wellness, Bridge Class, Northwest Mental Health Counseling, Open Computer Lab, Teen Court Services, Elder Source, WorkSource, and FSCJ GED Classes. The Schell-Sweet CRC schedules plenty of 'Open Lab Periods' during which its computers are available to the general public. Jobs Saved or Created EWCPCC will stimulate the creation of massive employment opportunities in a wide variety of fields ranging from building construction to educational and training experts. The launching of EWCPCC in Jacksonville, FL not only provides a basis for existing jobs, but will also produce a minimum of 50 new full-time and part-time jobs composed of administrative staff, account executives, technical trainers, teaching faculty, engineers, students, maintenance personnel, and building construction/renovation workers. Proposed Project Costs

The EWCPCC initiative will cost $1,500,000 to implement.