Executive Summary

The need for broadband access has become a prerequisite for daily living. Community reliance on broadband Internet services is rapidly increasing as more essential services become digitized and are made available online. Online access is now necessary to efficiently manage finances, communicate with teachers and monitor students' grades, communicate with vendors to purchase desired products and commodities, search and apply for employment, register for government services including Medicare/Medicaid, Food Stamps, Housing and Unemployment. The Miami-Dade Public Library System (Library) is a community-anchoring institution that provides free broadband access services and a wealth of online resources to meet all of the informational needs of the Miami-Dade County community. As the overall community's need for broadband access increases, so does the Library's need to enhance and expand training services, broadband access, and overall network infrastructure to accommodate the growth. Factors preventing the Library to effectively meet all of the growing broadband needs of the Miami-Dade County community include: the communities' lack of computer skills, long wait lists for computer training classes and for public computers, and slower connection speeds associated with overall institutional IT growth. The Library is requesting $2,590,395 to enhance and expand public broadband access, speed, branch and infrastructure equipment, customer training and support services, with the ultimate goal of increasing user reliability and safety at 48 Library branch sites located throughout Miami-Dade County. The proposed comprehensive upgrade to the Library's computer services and infrastructure will provide increased computer availability, increased training opportunities, quicker transaction processing and greater reliability. Specifically proposed funds will: 1) replace 900 public workstations; 2) enhance the broadband network architecture by acquiring additional servers and related infrastructure testing and monitoring equipment; 3) increase Wi-Fi density through the addition of 20 wireless access points; and 4) hire trainers to upgrade the training modules and provide added training opportunities to the community. Through a partnership with the County's Sustainable Broadband Adoption application, the 900 replaced computers will be donated to local community-based organizations for the purpose of furthering the BTOP goals. The Miami-Dade Public Library serves the entire area of metropolitan Miami-Dade County. Located in the southeastern part of the state of Florida, its diverse socioeconomic population is estimated at 2.3 million residents, making it the most populous county in Florida and the eighth most populous county in the nation (Gaquin, 2009). It is part of the seventh largest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the nation and comprises 35 incorporated cities and a vast unincorporated area spanning 2,431 sq. miles. The County serves an extremely diverse mix of residents and visitors in regards to age, profession, ethnic heritage and economic background. Of the total County population of 2,310,497, 81.7% consists of minority groups. The Library provides service to
the second largest percentage of Hispanic and Latino population at 62\% of the population, with Black/African-American residents at 18.3\%, white at 18.3\%, Asian/Pacific Islander at 1.8\%, and American Indian/Alaskan Native at 0.2\% (Gaquin, 2009). 50.2\% of Miami-Dade County residents are foreign-born, and 70.6\% speak a language other than English at home (American Community Survey, 2008). 77\% of residents over the age of 25 have at least graduated from high school, and 27\% have a bachelor's degree or higher. 23\% of residents are dropouts that are not enrolled in school and have not graduated from high school (American Community Survey, 2008). The per capita income is $23,010 (ESRI, 2009) and Miami-Dade County has an unemployment rate of 11.3\%, 0.3\% lower than the State of Florida (11.6\%) and 1.6\% higher than the national rate (9.7\%) (U.S. Bureau Labor Statistics, 2009). Over 469,199 people or 18.8\% of the population living in Miami-Dade County are living in poverty (Office of Economic Development Coordination, 2009). The community has 415 public schools, educating 345,150 students (prekindergarten to 12th grade) and employing 21,260 school teachers (Miami-Dade County Public Schools Statistical Highlights 2008-2009). Approximately 20 college and university campuses are located in the County (Rose and Rose, 2009). The Miami-Dade Public Library System includes 48 branches and four bookmobiles. The Library runs approximately 1,036 public computer workstations, 541 laptops and 119 3M Express-Checkout machines, and provides access to electronic resources. The Library serves a population of 2,102,749 residents. In the last fiscal year, 1,046,839 users were registered, 7,890,048 customers visited our facilities, and approximately 8,900,065 items were circulated from over 3,574,176 items in our system's collection. Additionally, the Library offered 16,053 programs with an attendance of 556,380 customers. Our Interlibrary Loan Department shared over 8,025 items with participating libraries and received around 9,075 items for our customers. As of February 2010, the Library staff includes 859 employees, 636 of whom are full-time and 223 of whom are part-time. The Library has approximately 91 volunteers throughout the different branches, including nine at our Main Library location. In addition, our Friends of the Library have approximately 125 volunteers who assist with sorting and preparing materials for our annual book sale. In the 2009 fiscal year, the Library provided approximately 4,364,062 virtual visits to our network, and our staff answered approximately 8,027,998 questions. The Miami-Dade Public Library System is led by Library Director Raymond Santiago. Mr. Santiago reports directly to the County Manager who is appointed by the Mayor. The Library manages over 2,200 devices made up of desktop PCs, and laptops, for staff and customer usage. Technical staff is well adept and capable of implementing the proposed technological activities and facilitating its ongoing required maintenance. Seven technicians currently conduct all Library projects including hardware refresh and rollouts; installation of access points and switches; creation of PC images; ongoing software upgrades and patches; and hardware repairs. Three Network Managers are responsible for servers, wide area network, local area networks, and the maintenance and upgrades of all broadband equipment connecting to the Internet. The Training Department currently implements curricula designed to address some of the technological needs of our community. The trainers are an exemplary, well-qualified group of librarians with advanced Master's Degrees in Library and Information Science. Additionally, the Library has successfully implemented technological projects similar in scope with Library and previously received grant funds, including the current telecommunication/Metro Ethernet project culminating this fiscal year. The Library was the 2008 recipient of the National Medal for Museum and Library Sciences for its outstanding service to its customers. A total of four (4) jobs will be saved by the proposed initiative for the project duration of 2-3 years. The total project cost is $3,701,485 composed of a total
federal request in the amount of $2,590,395 and a matching in-kind contribution in the amount of $1,111,090.