

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Mediacom Southeast LLC

Project Title: Mediacom SBA

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

Mediacom Southeast LLC and its affiliates (collectively, “Mediacom”) operate an extensive multistate network centered on providing advanced telecommunications services to the nation’s smaller cities and towns. This grant request seeks to spur sustainable broadband adoption, create digital learning facilities at Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) locations, facilitate workforce development and make high school equivalency video content available to IWD sites, as well as on Mediacom’s Iowa video on demand service.

With Iowa’s unemployment rate at a 22 year high with over 104,000 Iowans out of work, Mediacom and IWD have formed an innovative partnership to confront this problem. This project would turn Mediacom’s advanced broadband network into a virtual classroom to train and upskill unemployed and underemployed Iowans and to promote sustainable broadband adoption in job search, job skills and information technology based employment opportunities. This program would leverage existing computer connectivity at IWD centers making them into sites to seek job opportunities and tune up digital work skills. BTOP funds would be used to create video on demand classrooms within IWD’s extensive network of field offices and certain other state facilities (the “IWD Training Centers”).

This innovative project advances several of the Recovery Act’s goals by using broadband technology and cable’s mass media reach to spur broadband adoption, job creation and to promote the digital services of IWD. With this project’s unique ability to directly reach and train unemployed Iowans, Mediacom estimates that this project could put upwards of 45,000 Iowans back to work. It is an excellent example of how the private sector can work with government agencies.

Mediacom currently serves approximately 1.4 million customers and passes over 2.8 million homes, making it the largest cable television and broadband provider in Iowa passing over 900,000 of the state’s approximately 1.3 million homes. Since 1996, Mediacom has invested approximately \$5.8 billion acquiring neglected cable systems in small to medium sized communities and upgrading them to state-of-the-art broadband systems. Mediacom’s proven track record of implementing sustainable

broadband projects in rural communities gives it a unique perspective into providing advanced communications services to rural Americans

Mediacom would install one large screen and two small screen LCD televisions equipped with digital set top boxes in each of the IWD Training Centers. The televisions and digital set top boxes would be connected to Mediacom's digital cable service and provide access to Mediacom's video on demand content including GED On Demand and Iowa Advantage On Demand. Each video display device will have data inputs giving instructors the ability to connect to the internet and demonstrate broadband uses related to job training and job search skills. In addition, Mediacom will make the project's GED and workforce development content available to all Iowans that have video on demand capabilities at home. Mediacom is committed to ensuring that the funded project is sustainable beyond the funding period. To that end, Mediacom will provide its video on demand services to each of the IWD Training Centers for a period of at least five (5) years

GED On Demand is a partnership formed in 2008 among Mediacom, Iowa Public Television and the Iowa Department of Education. GED On Demand optimizes the learning experience for Iowans studying for the Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma. GED On Demand integrates the GED Connections programs licensed through Iowa Public Television into the video on demand programming that Mediacom offers to households in its current service territory and intends to offer to the funded project locations.

Iowa Advantage is a nationally recognized series of instructor led classes created by IWD to assist in employment transition. Iowa Advantage On Demand would integrate a library of Iowa Advantage workshops into the video on demand programming that Mediacom will offer to households in its current service territory and at the IWD Training Centers. These programs cover areas like on-line applications and job searches. Compelling content will attract vulnerable populations to adopt and use the internet to improve their employment skills.

Mediacom would also promote broadband adoption and use, as well as the availability of jobs and educational programming through IWD, by producing and airing public service announcements related to digital literacy, the services available through the IWD Training Centers and on Mediacom's VOD service. The announcements will run on the cable networks carried by Mediacom throughout Iowa. The commercials would air on top cable networks such as CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC and ESPN2, and would be intended to improve the visibility and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the GED On Demand and Iowa Advantage On Demand programs.

The innovative partnership between Mediacom and Iowa Workforce Development supports multiple statutory objectives of the BTOP program including stimulating demand for broadband, economic growth, and job creation and by providing broadband education, awareness, training and support to agencies that provide support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by low-income, unemployed and otherwise vulnerable populations. It offers a direct solution to train and educate unemployed and underemployed Iowans. The project is broad in scope, as it covers IWD Training Centers spread across Iowa, the homes of Mediacom subscribers and can be easily replicated at additional locations passed by Mediacom's advanced telecommunications network.