Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Project Title: @CCESS CENTER: The Public Library of the Future

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

a. Problem/Need The City of Toledo, located in northwest Ohio in a region dominated by auto manufacturing and related businesses, is the 8th poorest city in the U.S., (The Blade, [Toledo], February 14, 2010, Sec 1, p 1) with an unemployment rate that has doubled from December 2006 (6.2%) to December 2009 (12.9%) (U.S. Dept. of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics) and an underserved population that needs 21st century education and retraining to improve job and life skills. The number of Toledo residents with home high-speed Internet access is lower than its surrounding Lucas County, where only 55% of the residents have broadband service. This places undue demand on the free public access computers at Toledo-Lucas County Public Library (TLCPL) Main Library and 18 branches, a demand that far exceeds TLCPL's ability to provide. TLCPL expects to fill a portion of that capacity gap with a public computer center and traveling mobile unit and use the model for expanding capacity at other branch libraries located in underserved areas.

b. Overall Approach TLCPL intends to renovate the 16,800’ sq. Kent Branch as the site for an enlarged and enhanced public computer center. Kent has an 1,800’ sq. auditorium that serves as a major community meeting center. The Kent Branch (Lucas County Census Track 8) serves a high rate of undereducated, unemployed, underserved, minorities, seniors, and needy children. Reported data from the 2000 Census Track 8 shows 30% of residents over the age of 25 lacked a high school diploma, 15.7% of those over 16 were unemployed, 63.8% of adults over age 65 had a disability, and 44.3% of grandparents served as the responsible caregivers for their grandchildren. For Kent Branch residents, and Toledoans in general, the past ten years of a declining automotive assembly, parts and sales economy have not been kind to their well-being. Kent's @CCESS CENTER: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE will increase the number of free public computers from 25 to over 100. One-on-one instruction, training in small groups of 4-6, and training for 12 in the training center on basic computer use, basic Internet use, job search, WORD, health and preventative care awareness will mainly be taught by TLCPL staff. The proposed auditorium design will have the capability of dividing into two rooms as necessary. In order to reach vulnerable residents beyond the @CCESS CENTER, TLCPL will expand service through its Outreach Services with a 12-workstation cybermobile that travels to senior centers, housing units, health and social service facilities and after-school youth sites. Outreach staff will operate similarly to the @CCESS CENTER and will educate and train with the same curriculum. TLCPL began bookmobile service in 1937, one of the first libraries in the nation to do so. Partnering the cybermobile with bookmobile operations is a perfect match. To serve the needs of our disabled patrons, some of the @CCESS CENTER computers will feature special hardware and software to assist people: 4 ZoomText, 4 Natural Readers and 2 Dragon workstations are planned. The Branch itself will be totally ADA compatible. The cybermobile's lift will accommodate a wheelchair for entry/exit and one special
feature workstation to accommodate those with low vision, hearing impairments and/or in a wheelchair. c. Area to Be Served. The City of Toledo has a population (2000 Census) of 313,619, of which white Caucasians comprise 70.2%, Blacks comprise 23.5%, biracial and others comprise 6.3%. Hispanics of any race make up 5.5% of the population. Potential users: Given the large size of Kent Branch and its proposed increased number of free access computers; expecting that the @CCESS CENTER will draw from the larger Toledo area rather than the smaller Kent Branch Lucas County Census Track 8; coupled with the addition of a new cybermobile to travel around Toledo, estimates for potential users at the @CCESS CENTER are 8,400 white Caucasian users, 2,820 Black users, 432 Other users, 660 Hispanic users, and on the cybermobile estimated 4,200 white Caucasian users, 1,410 Black users, 216 Other users, 330 Hispanic users. TOTAL ' Estimated 18,000 potential users per year. d. Qualifications of applicant TLCPL is a merged city-county public library system and a revered intellectual, social and educational community anchor. It has previously placed in the top ten libraries of its population category in the Hennen's annual rankings, and it received a 4-Star rating in the 2009 Library Journal annual ranking of U.S. public libraries. Founded in 1838, it is the oldest public library in Ohio and has a Main Library, 18 branches and Outreach Services. The Main Library was opened in 1940, a distinctive art deco civic structure built with assistance of the Works Progress Administration. TLCPL's management team has over a dozen years of experience with new construction, renovation and additions at Main Library ($45m project) and all 18 branches ($1m - $3m projects.) TLCPL's team knows how to manage large and small library construction projects; it knows how to pack, empty and store the contents of a library building as well as how to bring materials back and get them in order for the public. TLCPL opened one of the first public computer labs at Main Library in 1986. TLCPL understands the need for technological improvements and that public computer access is an essential service for children and adults. It currently supports over 1,100 computers. TLCPL has provided mobile service since 1937, so the cybermobile fits right in. KEY PARTNERS: 1. Buehrer Group Architecture & Engineering, Inc., a local company which designed and completed the renovation of our Reynolds Corners Branch at LEED silver level, has partnered on the @CCESS CENTER project. Buehrer has obtained the building permit. A second LEED certification is a priority. 2. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, a longtime library supporter who applauds our strategy to bring enhanced broadband service to many residents especially to idled auto workers; she will be a strong advocate on our behalf in Washington D.C. 3. City of Toledo and 4. Lucas County Commissioners, both are gratified that TLCPL is addressing a serious local need for improved computer skills and broadband access; 5. Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc., a regional nonprofit law firm joins TLCPL to provide free high quality assistance to low income people; 6. Area Office on Aging commits to our project with in-kind services, welcoming the cybermobile to senior centers and for intergenerational education classes at the @CCESS CENTER for grandparents and grandchildren. 7. Lucas County Workforce Development Agency will use the @CCESS CENTER to present job skills classes; 8. Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority will host the cybermobile on its many sites; jobs depend on computer skills. 9. Neighborhood Health Association supports the TLCPL application because many of its clients lack access to free computer education and training. 10. Owens Community College commits to student support at the @ACCESS CENTER and will continue presenting GED classes at Kent Branch. 11. ProMedica Health System commits to sharing its planned community health care and wellness network with TLCPL. 12. St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center, a close neighbor to Kent Branch, has a parallel mission to improve quality of life for the underserved. e. Jobs Created/Saved TLCPL will hire 1.5 trainers for the
ACCESS CENTER and 1 trainer and 1 driver who can assist training services on the cybermobile for a total of 3.5 new jobs. There may be upwards of 147 people involved in construction and site visits: 6 from the architect's office, 74-88 workers employed under the general contractor, 10 from various utility companies, 8 from the vehicle manufacturer, 10 from technology integrators, and 25 from the material suppliers, including those individuals needed to take down and install. Overall Cost of the Proposed Project Federal grant request: $2,163,655 TLCPL 30% cash match: 927, 281 TOTAL PROJECT COST: $3,090,936