Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: RIVERSIDE HEALTH SYSTEM FOUNDATION, INC.

Project Title: The Riverside Broadband Distance Learning Initiative

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY The Riverside Broadband Distance Learning Initiative Broadband Distance Learning for Economically Disadvantaged Citizens, Creating 500-1,000 Newly Qualified Healthcare Workers with Technology Skills in Rural and Underserved Areas. This three year $7.985 million grant proposal fulfills the BTOP statutory purpose of providing awareness, training, access, equipment and support to community anchor institutions, job-creating strategic facilities and vulnerable populations. This proposal is innovative and unique in that it presents numerous benefits as a Middle Mile Community Anchor Institutions Network. A Virginia Broadband Coverage map is included in the Supplementary Information which designates the underserved regions required by the criteria. A star network design is to be developed consisting of a central hub to the internet with OC3 broadband access, along with six sites all point-to-point connecting back to the hub with T3 broadband, thus sharing the OC3 to the internet. This innovative and project: *Alleviates a drastic shortage of geriatric nursing aides and practical nurses in eastern Virginia, a shortage threatening the fabric of the community health care infrastructure. *Utilization of broadband technology to replicate a talented and experienced faculty in underserved and rural communities. *The rapid creation of 500-1,000 (depending on enrollment levels) trained workers during the three years of funding, transforming people from unemployment to successful, in-demand workers with an upwardly mobile, continuous career track. *A project which will improve the broadband infrastructure of these underserved regions, stimulate the economic development and technological advances in health care ' assuring that the quality of care is equivalent to that available in urban Virginia locales. *A project which can be expanded beyond the grant period and is not only sustainable, but presents a demand based model of continuing the program as well as increasing its reach and scope. On a beautiful campus in mid-town Newport News, VA resides the Riverside School of Health Careers, one of America's finest. Established in 1916, this non-profit educational institution trains geriatric nurse aides, practical nurses, registered nurses, radiological technologists and surgical technologists. Operating at an annual deficit of $1.9 million, this powerful school produces over 300 fully trained nursing and technological professionals each year. Yet obviously, it cannot be justified to bear the infrastructure expenses of setting up a broadband network without grant funding and support. It would be possible to cut corners on the education of health professionals, but Riverside has not and will not make that choice. It is simply put, very expensive to train a good nurse ' much more expensive than tuition permits as we subsidize a huge percentage of the actual costs of this education. Initially, we have selected six underserved areas in Virginia ' underserved in terms of broadband subscribership and access, and underserved due to severe poverty. This proposal represents an impressive array of partnering organizations ' the Mt. Gilead Baptist Church in an impoverished
neighborhood in James City County, the Eastern Shore Community College, a life safety net for migrant workers and students from poverty, three rural hospitals, and the City of Newport News Parks and Recreation Department with its Downing-Gross Cultural Center in the impoverished southeast community of Newport News. Importantly, the Peninsula Workforce Development Consortium has provided inspiration and a sustainability partnership. Riverside is highly qualified to administer this Distance Learning innovation — we have been named the Most Wired health care organizations in the nation for five years in a row. One of the reasons there is a desperate shortage of geriatric nurses aides is the fact that they have to go without income during training and many people simply cannot afford to stop working long enough to obtain the training. Included is an upwardly mobile career ladder for students. Students taking the course will be employed by Riverside or other providers immediately. At the conclusion of the grant, every healthcare organization in these communities will have benefited from the highly trained excellence of the graduates and we will begin a new process of sponsorship — whereby a nursing home, hospital, home health agency, home for adults or retirement community will sponsor a student, paying the full expenses of that education, in exchange for a work agreement of 1-3 years at that organization. This demand based training system will become the standard for health care training programs once its efficacy is demonstrated. Combining this sustainability strategy with the grant making capabilities of the Virginia Peninsula Workforce Development Consortium paints an optimistic picture for a successful, sustained program creating 500-1,000 (depending on enrollment) newly trained professionals every year. These are people moved from unemployment to a career ladder, people that will transform the landscape of healthcare in underserved communities, working for organizations no longer struggling for trained professionals, no longer enduring the high cost of recruitment and turnover. This is a grant request that produces an innovative strategy with a long-term economic benefit that can be replicated at nursing schools across the country.