Executive Summary

Los Angeles Constituent Access Resource to E-government Services (L.A.-CARES) is a web-based constituent services and information system designed to provide easy access to the full spectrum of City content that is available on-line. It will link residents, businesses and visitors conducting business with the City with the relevant information and services, as easy as one, two three, using any Internet connected device. The City will contribute training education and awareness programs regarding web-based city services and the use of broadband in general for constituents at Public Computer Centers and other key locations with assistance from partner departments: Library, Recreation and Parks, Community Development Department, and Department of Aging. The program will focus technology training for seniors as broadband adoption rates are lowest among adults 55 and older - only 44% of adults 55 and older in the Los Angeles area use broadband service at home. This grant will also cover accessability enhancements for work stations at the Public Computer centers. The L.A.-CARES project will serve the entire City of Los Angeles, which encompasses over 472 square miles in land area (As a means to provide a perspective of just how large such an area is, it is larger that the combined total land area of the cities of Milwaukee, Cleveland, Saint Louis, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Boston, San Francisco, and the borough of Manhattan). Over 22% of the Los Angeles population (801,050 individuals) is living in poverty compared to 12.4% nationally (2000 Census). Research conducted by NTIA, the Pew Foundation and the Federal Communications Commission among others has documented that there is a strong correlation between broadband adoption and household income. The Employment Development Department of the State of California reports that the Unemployment Rate for the City of Angeles for January 2010 was 12%. For the same month, the Unemployment Rate for the nation was 9.5%. In addition, a great deal of the City of Los Angeles has been identified as both an Enterprise Zone Renewal Community by the federal government. Such a designation makes these areas eligible for robust tax, housing and job development services. Many times these services can best be found on a 24 hour basis on line, the types of services L.A.'CARES seeks to bring to all. The total population (2007) is 4,018,080. Residents 62 years of age and over represent about 12% of the City's population. Los Angeles has one of the nation's most ethnically and culturally diverse populations. According to the 2000 Census, the city's population consists of 46.5 % Hispanic, 30.1 % non-Hispanic White, 11.2 % Black, 10.0 % Asian, 0.8 % Native American, 0.2 %, and Pacific Islander. Los Angeles has been described as an immigrant metropolis. Immigration patterns have resulted in significant populations of people from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. In addition, there are sizable numbers of Armenians, Arabs, Iranians, Israelis, and Jews. Almost 41% of the city's population is foreign born compared to the national average of 11% (2000 Census). Over 2.2 million residents (approx. 57.7%
of the City's population) speak languages other than English at home compared to the national rate of 7.9% (2000 Census). CHALLENGE Even as the City makes more services and information available to our constituents on-line, there remains a significant digital divide in the Los Angeles area. Research reveals that over one million residents (25%) in the City do not have access to a computer at home and half of all residents do not subscribe to a high-speed connection at home. In addition to those that lack a computer at home, others cannot afford a broadband connection or have not yet come to understand the important role that such a connection plays in education, employment, economic development and enhanced health care delivery. Our City's senior citizen population is underserved, and is among the most at risk of being disconnected from vital on-line services. A recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California tells us that only 44% of the Los Angeles population - 55 and older - has a broadband connection at home. According to the national Pew Internet and American Life study, only 30% of seniors 65 or older report having a broadband connection at home. And in responding to questions regarding why they don't have broadband, or Internet access at home, nearly 60% said it was due to usability. PLAN Los Angeles is committed to making its web-based services available to all its residents, especially mobility-limited groups such as senior citizens who may have difficulty otherwise utilizing those services. This project will create a Citywide Web-based Service Directory, Customer Resource Management Web Content Management System designed to ensure ALL City web services and information are accessible to everyone - especially our most vulnerable populations, such as senior citizens. In this increasingly connected world - City residents, businesses and visitors seeking city services and information expect to obtain access to those services 24 hours a day via the Internet. Competing delivery modes, confusing user interfaces, and the sheer number of different departments, agencies, and organizations (over 40) that generate this information, sometimes impede the service delivery and information flow. Currently on-line service directories are available, and the City's 311 call center operation continues to serve as a 'one call to city hall' contact point for constituents, but advances in web content management and customer relations management technology offer options to provide these services more effectively. With shrinking resources - both in terms of revenues and reductions in the number of city workers who must provide services and information that our constituents expect, the City of Los Angeles faces unprecedented challenges for the foreseeable future in delivering vital City services. Leveraging web-based service and information delivery is widely recognized as a key strategy in making city operations more efficient. The City estimates that this project will create no less than 20 jobs directly and result in approximately 18 indirect jobs. The overall cost of the proposed project is $15,883,237.