Need: Broadband use represents an essential component of 21st Century citizenship and economic life. In California, the birthplace of the Internet, substantial progress has been made toward linking all residents to these critical communications tools. Nevertheless, over 14.4 million Californians are not connected to broadband. This figure includes disproportionate numbers of rural residents, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. The sheer magnitude of this gap mandates that California play a leadership role in any national effort to close the Digital Divide.

California's high unemployment rate (12.6%) ranks fourth in the nation; in absolute numbers, California tops the list. In the six California regions specifically targeted by this application, the rates are much higher, with some areas approaching and exceeding 20% (California Employment Development Department). In the priority regions/communities targeted by this proposal, 25% of residents lack access to a computer in their home and 45% do not have in-home broadband access, creating a substantial challenge in preparing a workforce for jobs that require, at minimum, basic computer and Internet skills (Public Policy Institute of California 'PPIC- 2009). Within the priority regions/communities, CETF and its partners have further targeted specific groups, including Latinos, Native Americans, low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities, who are desperately in need of broadband connectivity and computer and Internet skills. Only 39% of Latinos in California have broadband at home, as compared to 75% of Whites. The household broadband adoption rate for low-income individuals is only 40%, approximately half the household adoption rate of other Californians. Disabled people also have significantly lower broadband adoption and use rates, approximately 47% (PPIC). National data indicates that within these groups, adoption rates drop further for specific subgroups. For example, the broadband adoption rate for monolingual Spanish speakers is estimated at 20% (FCC 2010).

Approach
CETF is submitting two Round 2 proposals which build upon CETF’s Broadband Awareness and Adoption initiative, which was funded by NTIA in Round 1. The three proposals align as a synergistic strategy, enabling California to advance with deliberate speed towards closing the Digital Divide and develop a next generation workforce. All three proposals and related efforts will focus on six high-priority regions and, within those regions, efforts will be focused on communities where rates of broadband adoption are lowest. This place-based strategy leverages and aligns with work being undertaken in these same regions by the Round 1 funded LA-CAN project and the additional CETF-supported School2Home program. School2Home provides middle school students and their families with laptop computers and basic digital literacy training, focusing on improving student academic achievement within the state's lowest performing middle schools. CETF's Round 1-funded Broadband Awareness and Adoption initiative is currently working in these priority regions to foster overall community awareness and the
development of basic computer literacy skills. The two proposals being submitted by CETF for Round 2 include: 1) Digital Literacy for All (DLA) — building higher level digital skills at community access centers; and 2) Access to Careers and Technology (ACT) — preparing individuals for 21st Century ICT careers. Both DLA and ACT will benefit from their close linkage to the 700,000 referrals that will be generated by the targeted outreach of the recently funded Broadband Awareness and Adoption initiative. They will also reinforce the School2Home initiated transformations in these communities. This Round 2 proposal focuses on CETF’s Digital Literacy for All initiative. Over the last decade, while great progress has been made toward closing the Digital Divide, the systemic changes needed to enable all low-income Californians to adopt broadband technology have not yet taken place. Based on CETF’s experience and analysis of the research, it is clear that the mere existence of broadband access at public computer centers is not enough to build a digitally literate citizenry, especially among vulnerable populations. To achieve significant impact, public computer centers must engage in or be aligned with outreach from trusted community partners, utilize clear standards for computer proficiency, and link their digital literacy training programs to well-recognized next steps including skill certifications for job and college. The Digital Literacy for All Approach: CETF and its partners have developed, refined, and evaluated highly innovative methodologies that will be utilized in the next generation of public computer centers and digital mobility centers. Program participants will be able to make significant digital literacy gains while being linked to a strong network of programs and services. Using BTOP funds and their own matching resources, Digital Literacy for All partners will create or expand the 27 public computer centers described in this proposal to coordinate a digital literacy training initiative using recognized standards and offering certification as the basis for measuring outcomes and achieving scale. The Digital Literacy for All initiative will realize three principal goals and related outcomes: 1) Enable low-income Californians to learn applications requiring broadband technology (28,556 youth and adults will gain digital literacy skills); 2) Increase household adoption of broadband technology in high-priority, low-income communities in California (8,377 new households will subscribe to broadband services); and 3) Enable low-income Californians to enter jobs (217 residents will be placed into full-time living-wage jobs). 14 partner organizations are directly involved in the implementation and evaluation of this application. Each of these organizations has executed a specific Memorandum of Understanding with CETF detailing its roles and responsibilities in this program, including a commitment to thorough monitoring and evaluation. Each partner has also participated in an intensive planning process that included the development of rigorous accountability frameworks with outcomes and timelines for this effort. Areas and Populations to be Served: DLA partners are located in regions/communities of the state that are most impacted by the Digital Divide: San Francisco Bay Area (East Bay), Los Angeles (East and South), Inland Empire (Riverside), Sacramento Valley (South Sacramento), San Diego/Imperial (San Diego), and San Joaquin Valley (Fresno and Patterson). Within these regions over 80% of middle school students are enrolled in the free and reduced price lunch program, indicating entrenched poverty. Approximately 46% of the population is of Hispanic/Latino origin and 16% are people with disabilities. Organizational Experience and Capacity: Formed by action of the California Public Utilities Commission, CETF is a non-profit organization committed to eliminating the Digital Divide in California. Utilizing $60 million in seed money to carry out a carefully crafted ten-year plan, CETF promotes high-speed Internet access to underserved communities across California. CETF is uniquely positioned to be an effective manager of BTOP resources as its work-to-date has resulted in an extensive statewide network of partner
organizations working to close the Digital Divide, including the development of several scalable IT-based workforce development programs. CETF is currently managing the Broadband Awareness and Adoption initiative, funded during Round 1, resulting in growing familiarity with NTIA and ARRA requirements. CETF has extensive experience working with its grantees in program monitoring and evaluation, and in successfully growing a learning community where partners share best practices. Overall Cost of the Proposed Project: CETF proposes an overall Digital Literacy for All project budget of $8,448,962. Of this amount, CETF requests $5,600,717.92 in BTOP Public Computer Center funds and will provide $2,848,244.68 in matching resources, representing 33.7% of project costs. Of this match, 96.21% or $2,740,296, is provided in cash, including a $1,554,001 cash grant from CETF.