**Applicant Name:** CALIFORNIA EMERGING TECHNOLOGY FUND

**Project Title:** Access to Careers and Technology - ACT

**Project Type:** Sustainable Broadband Adoption

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

Statement of Need: With unemployment and underemployment reaching record high levels nationwide, now is the time to train and retool the workforce. New and innovative workforce development systems must respond to the technical needs of the 21st Century economy, especially in relation to building critical broadband and digital literacy skills. California's high unemployment (12.6%) ranks fourth in the nation; in absolute numbers, California tops the list. In the six California regions targeted by ACT, the rates are much higher, with some areas approaching and even exceeding 20% (California Employment Development Department). Low levels of broadband adoption and Internet access further exacerbate the deep unemployment issues in the regions/communities identified for priority action. Twenty-five percent 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 a minimum, basic computer and Internet skills (Public Policy Institute of California -PPIC- 2009). Within the priority regions/communities, ACT has further targeted specific groups including Latinos, Native Americans, low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities. 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 low 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). With the technology sector recovery projected to outpace the overall economic recovery (Forrester 2010), the U.S. must urgently prepare residents for jobs involving Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills. With modern jobs requiring basic proficiency in computer use, business software, email, and Internet, many Californians remain at a distinct competitive disadvantage. The scope of the problem mandates that solutions go beyond training programs only, to include job creation and placement with approaches that can achieve high levels of scale and sustainability. Overall Approach: CETF is submitting two Round 2 proposals which build upon CETF's Broadband Awareness and Adoption initiative, 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. The Round 1-funded Broadband Awareness and Adoption initiative is currently working in these same regions to foster overall community awareness and the development of basic computer literacy skills. The two proposals submitted 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 and placing them in jobs. 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. This proposal focuses on ACT. Over the last decade, some progress has been made at expanding the number of ICT training programs that help low-income Californians increase their skills, enabling them to progress along digital career pathways. Program models, curricula, and training systems have been developed to prepare residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods for entry-level and progressively more advanced positions. CETF has successfully invested in the piloting, evaluation, and systems development required to effectively scale up several of the more promising of these efforts and, through ACT, proposes a five-fold program designed to produce rapid impact, especially in terms of job placement. ACT will: 1. Increase employment and reduce poverty by enabling low-income residents to gain technology skills to enter ICT jobs. 2,647 individuals will be placed into full-time living wage jobs that require technology and/or Internet skills; 15,035 Small Business owners or employees will obtain digital literacy training; and 8,270 youth will gain technology skills critical to their academic and professional success. 2. Prepare low-income individuals for technology-based careers through extensive vocational training programs that result in recognized certifications. Vocational courses will prepare individuals for careers including PC technician, office administrator, digital animator, and web designer. Certificate-based courses for IC3 and A+ certification will also be available, enabling individuals to enter other technology-based careers. 1,019 individuals will receive advanced technology certifications. 3. Engage 28 community anchor institutions as training sites and broadband access points to improve access to services and outcomes. In addition, locating ACT services in well-known community organizations will strengthen program outreach capacity within the target communities, increasing use of services and creating a greater positive impact. 4. Increase household broadband adoption rates through equipment affordability programs that offer low-cost refurbished computer equipment to low-income individuals. 9,237 low-income households will adopt broadband services. 5. In addition, each of the 11 implementing partners will develop and implement an accessibility plan and will offer training and employment services for people with disabilities. Areas served ACT partners are located in regions/communities of the state that are most impacted by the Digital Divide: the San Francisco Bay Area (East Bay), Los Angeles (East and South), the Inland Empire (Riverside), the Sacramento Valley (South Sacramento), San Diego/Imperial (San Diego), and the San Joaquin Valley (Fresno and Patterson). Within these regions/communities, CETF focuses on demographic groups whose computer and broadband usage has significantly trailed the rest of the state including Latinos, Native Americans, low-income individuals, and people with disabilities. Qualifications 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 program, funded during Round 1, resulting in its growing familiarity with NTIA and ARRA requirements. CETF has extensive experience working with its grantees in program coaching, monitoring and evaluation, in successfully growing a learning community, and engaging partner organizations to achieve maximum impact and meet their specific outcome targets most efficiently. Jobs saved or created

Through the planning process initiated by CETF over one year ago to initiate preparation of the ACT proposal, partners were able to carefully estimate the impact of their work on job creation and retention. During the 18-month ACT program period, 2,647 individuals will enter full-time living wage jobs. Simultaneously, 15,035 small business owners or employees will obtain digital literacy training to improve the efficiency, competitiveness, and financial stability of their businesses. Overall cost of the proposed project CETF proposes an overall ACT project budget of $11,062,277. Of this amount, CETF requests $7,108,199 in BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption funds and will provide $3,954,079 in matching resources, representing 35.7% of project costs. The match amount includes $3,848,058 in cash match (34.79% of total project costs).