Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: NETX INTERNET LLC

Project Title: Neighborhood Computer Collaborative of Lorain & Cuyahoga Counties (NCCLCC)

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary_______________________

The Goal: The project will provide broadband access, education, training, equipment and support to fifteen (15) agencies, at twenty (20) sites, serving a low-income, vulnerable population in Cuyahoga County and Lorain County, Ohio. The project will provide upgraded broadband service to 358 public workstations (258 existing plus 100 additional) and will be completed over an eighteen month timeframe. The project uses 4G WiMax technology to upgrade broadband service to 358 public workstations.

The Need: The low-income urban population of Cleveland, Lorain, and Elyria Ohio has limited access to personal computers and training resources and therefore limited broadband access to the internet. This is due to both personal economic hardship (can't afford a computer and monthly ISP charges) and limited and/or costly transportation options. Based on our research, the broadband adoption rate of the low-income population in the census blocks surrounding our 20 site locations is a low 25%.

Approach: The proposed approach is to access this vulnerable population through an existing network of twenty (20) neighborhood community centers and youth centers who are 1) already firmly established in the neighborhoods where this vulnerable populations lives (within walking distance), 2) who have already established trusting relationships with their guests, 3) already have the staff and facilities to accommodate an expanded public computer center outreach program, 4) have developed a "computer-literate" staff and volunteer base who will work with the users, and 5) already offer public computer access.

The Collaborative: NetX Internet, LLC, the lead applicant has organized a collaborative made up of fifteen (15) organizations and agencies serving low-income individuals. NetX Internet LLC, is a small, minority owned and controlled business. This collaborative will have an administrative office in Westlake, OH and will be directed by William Beargie, an experienced manager of social service non-profit agencies and a CPA registered in the State of Ohio.

Area(s) to be served: The twenty (20) public computer centers sites are located throughout the lowest income areas of urban Cleveland, Ohio; Elyria, Ohio; and Lorain, Ohio. It is our goal that the initial twenty (20) sites will provide broadband access to 7,000 unduplicated individuals over a one year period of time.

Project Benefits: Each of the 20 public computer center sites will receive 1) A high speed 3 mb symmetrical broadband connection (via WiMax rooftop receiving radio). This is the broadband equivalent of two (2) T-1 lines (note: a single T-1 circuit in Cleveland and Lorain Ohio are currently selling for $380 to $600 per month). The applicant, NetX Internet LLC will deliver a 3 mb connection to each site (twice the capacity of a T-1 line) at a cost of $400/mo. The collaborative members will pay $150.00 of this cost. 2) Router and connections to the bank of workstations. 3) Five (5) additional new PC's and monitors and related workstation furniture (100 total for the 20 sites). 4) Remote hosting services (hosted desktops) from central data center for all workstations (existing and new) thereby reducing ongoing equipment cost. 5) On-site and off-site
technical support. Five (5) of the sites will receive 6) Secure Wi-Fi network within the building (2 access points per site) with installation and tech support to connect both existing and new workstations. End Users will receive 7) High Quality (fast and reliable) remote terminal session free of charge. 8) Customized desktop sessions tailored to individual site or user needs via a 'hosted desktop' environment. 9) Access to large inventory of software (server-based and web hosted). 10) On-Site support and training, education and support for both agency staff and/or volunteer trainers.

Qualifications of the applicant: NetX and its partners are uniquely qualified and ready to complete this project. Consider the following: 1) NetX has gathered a project team with extensive experience in both for-profit and non-profit project management; 2) The team and participating agencies have extensive experience in serving the low-income community; 3) The participating agencies have facilities located in many of the poorest neighborhoods in Cuyahoga and Lorain counties. These agencies have a long history of working with the low-income population that we are serving in this project; 4) NetX has successfully delivered high speed wireless broadband to over 40 businesses and non-profit agencies in Northeast Ohio over the past 3 years including connection at Cleveland City Hall for Cleveland City Council and Key Bank. NetX's majority owner has also installed and configured a 30-site wide area network for Cuyahoga Metro Housing Authority; 5) NetX has successfully implemented a 4G WiMax broadcasting site in Cleveland, OH. This WiMax technology will provide the 'last mile' connectivity in this project; 6) NetX has successfully tied its network into OneCommunity's high speed fiber backbone with a 100Mbps wireless connection into the IdeaStream building in downtown Cleveland; 7) NetX has established a contractual relationship with OneCommunity allowing access to its 23 county fiber network as well as use of its Parma, OH data center; 8) NetX has obtained the required FCC licenses to broadcast at the 3.65 Ghz frequency; 9) Solar Systems Networking Inc. (SSNI), a key partner, has an established track record of installing 'business-class' commercial Wi-Fi networks. Currently SSNI is working on a large consulting job with Cleveland City Council; 10) OneCommunity, a key partner, has an established ultra-high speed fiber network extending over 23 counties in Ohio. It is this network which will form the backbone of this project as it expands to other communities. Jobs to be created: The project directly creates 3 full-time equivalent jobs (1 technical support and 2 training jobs). Within 3 years, the project will indirectly create 4 new sales jobs as a result of NetX's expanded geographic coverage. Through the services provided, it is expected that the user base will increase technology skills which will, in turn, result in employment. Overall Cost of Proposed Project: The $647,520 project budget covers the eighteen month timeframe to get all 20 sites up and running. $381,744 of the project cost will be funded by the BTOP grant and $265,776 will be funded by NetX, Internet LLC and its collaborative agencies. Sustainability: After the grant period is completed there will be ongoing costs that need to be sustained. These ongoing expenses will be funded by NetX through operating profits, by fees charged to the participating agencies for services used, and by private foundation grants. The ongoing cost of providing training and support is approximately $90,000 per year. The ongoing connectivity cost for the bandwidth and remote server hosting is $400/mo per site. A portion of these costs would be funded by the participating agencies at a cost of $400 per month per site ($150 per month for the connectivity and $250 per month for the on-site training and support). The remainder of the costs for connectivity, data center technical support, and ongoing management will be absorbed by the applicant, NetX Internet, LLC, through profits earned from its non-collaborative customers. Expandability: It is our expectation
that this collaborative of neighborhood computer centers will expand to 60 non-profit agency sites within four years.