A) Perhaps more than any state in the country, West Virginia has not responded to the changing nature of the economy from being one that is industrial and manufacturing-based, to one that is technology-rich and knowledge-based. The failure to address the change in today's 21st century has resulted in two problems. First, while technology has the capacity to bring people together and connect people to information, it simultaneously presents the threat of deepening the divide between society's information 'haves' and 'have nots', often referred to as the digital divide. Second, without access to broadband infrastructure and its related applications and tools, residents of West Virginia are failing to realize the potential of technology to deliver socioeconomic progress. The BTOP infrastructure grant received by the Executive Office of the State of West Virginia presents an unprecedented opportunity for West Virginia to address these problems by leveraging broadband technology to expand business, enhance educational opportunities and improve socioeconomic outcomes across the state. However, to realize these improvements, sustainable demand must be created among businesses, community anchor institutions, and individual consumers. Many of the community anchor institutions gaining access to this technology are struggling to find funds that will allow them to purchase computer equipment, support monthly subscription costs, and implement technology training programs. Without significant funding for these institutions to implement broadband adoption programs that will develop digital literacy skills, encourage use, and create sustainable demand among end-users this important infrastructure investment risks going to waste. B) 'Make It Easy Where You Are'- One Economy and the State of West Virginia will leverage their assets to expand broadband adoption. Throughout our ten year history One Economy has recognized the need to simultaneously focus on removing barriers while also innovating to maximize socio-economic progress from our work. Our approach understands that in the Digital Age individuals, regardless of income, demand information on a 24/7 basis in ways that meet them where they are in terms of time, place, literacy and language. Our goal is to produce what we call the 'social dividend' or value for individuals by way of improved socioeconomic outcomes, such as educational advancement, improved health and employment. Our adoption approach is multi-faceted - it provides an individual with content, training, and affordable connections. And it has a proven track record of success - at least 50% of our audience has sustained their broadband adoption after 5 years. We present the following integrated approach to broadband adoption for the State of West Virginia: 1) Digital Connectors & Human Capital. For the past seven years, One Economy has trained youth aged 14-21 to provide digital literacy resources by functioning as technology trainers and ambassadors in underserved communities. To date 2,800 youth have provided 56,000 hours of training. With this grant, we will franchise this model in each of West Virginia's counties to deploy 825 youth in 55 programs to
train 81,000 people. 2) Digital Educators. We will implement a targeted program toward the West Virginia educational system by hiring three Digital Educators to serve as technology ambassadors to parents, students, teachers and administrators. These fulltime Digital Educators will work to train at least one local Digital Educator in each public school in the state. This program will not only educate teachers on digital literacy; it will be designed to create or stimulate a continuum of learning from school to after-school to the home, in addition to easing the pathway for online learning for children and young adults. Through this grant we will hire three full-time Digital Educators who will work to train at least one educator to be a Digital Educator in every school in West Virginia. 3) Relevant Content. Under our motto, 'Make It Easy,' we will produce innovative online programming to meet people where they are with content that is easily accessible, written at low-literacy levels, culturally relevant, and multilingual. During the past nine years, we have created a network of public-purpose media focused on vital issues like health, jobs, finance, education, and civic engagement. The Beehive (www.theBeehive.org) and One Economy's other media properties engage, inform and facilitate individual action, and in total, have been visited by more than 18 million individuals, many first time Internet users. BTOP funding will enable us to localize content based on West Virginia zip codes through a resource locator and produce public-purpose applications for mobile devices and computers. We will also create localized content with a focus on Entrepreneurship and Small Business opportunities. 4) Community Convening: Through full time Local Directors, One Economy will facilitate a stakeholder engagement process to encourage local involvement and ownership of the programs. Through technical assistance, asset-mapping, issue identification, and consensus building, One Economy will assist each community in putting together a technology adoption plan that is locally grown and driven. One Economy has already established partnerships with State government agencies and local community organizations. In addition to targeting all public schools in the state, we have developed partnerships with the public libraries and the field offices of Workforce West Virginia. These partnerships will serve as a base to initiate and then deepen our stakeholder engagement in local communities across the state. 5) Public Education/Awareness. Through an integrated statewide public education and awareness initiative, we will leverage the understanding gained through our national awareness campaign with the local knowledge of our community partners to implement a media campaign with on-the-ground activities to reach about 350,000 West Virginia Households. All efforts will align core messaging developed specifically for our target population in West Virginia and focus on connecting people to adoption support programs. 6) Access @ Home. The home is the essential place to deliver 24/7 access to broadband. For the past eight years, One Economy efficiently deployed affordable broadband solutions into thousands of affordable housing developments. This grant will enable us to leverage our investments and experience to wire 7,000 units of low-income housing in West Virginia for affordable broadband. C) Areas to Be Served: Our efforts will focus on the 1.8 million residents living in the 55 counties in West Virginia, with a particular emphasis on low-income households. With a poverty rate of 17.1%, West Virginia has the 6th highest poverty rate in the United States. The highest poverty rates in West Virginia occur in both rural counties on the southern border and in highly populated major cities. Through this project we will train 50,000 individuals. We project 50,000 households and 129,500 (2.59 per household) individuals will be connected to broadband from our activities. In addition, we project that these activities will create a need for Internet and stimulate demand for broadband among 30,000 individuals who will be ready to purchase as soon as broadband is brought to their home. D)
Qualifications: One Economy is the largest digital adoption organization in the United States. Our ten years of work serves as a proof of concept for effective and sustainable digital adoption. We have established partnerships and raised approximately 63 million in private dollars. Our digital literacy, public-purpose media, and housing based broadband deployment initiatives are now being utilized in nearly all fifty states. One Economy established a relationship with the West Virginia State government in 2007. We began our on-the-ground work in the state in the fall of 2009 through partnerships with Mission West Virginia and The Boys and Girls Club. Through these partnerships, we implemented 2 Digital Connectors programs, training 30 youth. E) We estimate that through our program we will save or create 147 jobs. F) The total cost of the project is $13,578,635 million ($9,507,526 of which is being requested through this proposal)