Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

**Project Title:** Broadband Access for Self Sufficiency (BASS)

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

a) Statement of Problem: In addition to traditional skills such as job search, r'sum' writing, and time management, computer skills have become essential in the job market. The Denver Housing Authority provides affordable housing to more than 25,000 very low, low, and middle income individuals representing approximately 10,000 families in Denver. 73.94% of DHA's residents are unemployed and many face multiple barriers to employment, the cornerstone of self-sufficiency. These barriers include problems with transportation, child care, and scheduling conflicts, which also serve as barriers to skill development, common among low-income populations. With an average median household income of $8,388 annually, DHA residents lack the resources to purchase computers or individual broadband service to develop and/or improve the computer skills that enhance employability. DHA's current computer labs, which are open to DHA residents and residents of the surrounding low-income neighborhoods, are limited. Though the average speed of data transfer in the labs is 1.5 Mbps, they share this connection with DHA's central server, along with 22 other sites, imposing additional limitations on access and speed. A dedicated T1 line for each location will significantly increase speed at the computer centers, and will allow users access to streaming video and other services currently unavailable in the existing labs. The BASS project will also add new computer equipment and peripherals, updated software, and improved training opportunities. Most of these training opportunities will be self-paced and all will be available at all of the computer centers, to allow users to enhance their skills at their convenience. b) Approach: DHA's overall approach is to upgrade six existing computer labs (in the North Lincoln, Platte Valley, Quigg Newton, Sun Valley, Westridge, and Westwood developments) and develop one new one at the planned 10th & Osage Senior/Disabled Housing and Community Center for the purpose of providing residents with broadband access to increase self-sufficiency. Each center will have at least as many workstations as it currently has, and no fewer than sixteen workstations, for a total of 140 new or upgraded computers. Broadband adoption in these public computer centers will serve two primary purposes. The first is that users can develop and practice computer skills, from basic workplace applications to web design, social and professional networking, database management, desktop publishing, and creating presentations. The second is that broadband access can increase options for service delivery by presenting self-sufficiency and life skills classes in formats such as live and archived webinars, CDs and DVDs, and online training modules. To serve the widest spectrum of users, course offerings will include classes in employment skills, life skills, computer skills, financial management, nutrition, and health promotion. DHA will purchase a 14-passenger van and a handicap-accessible minivan, and to transport residents from other developments to the computer centers to facilitate access to the course offerings. While in-kind commitments have been
secured from five partner organizations, DHA will continue to work with additional organizations to expand course offerings throughout the grant period. c) Population served: Existing computer labs will be upgraded at the Quigg Newton development, as well as at DHA’s five Opportunity Centers, located at the North Lincoln, Platte Valley, Sun Valley, Westridge, and Westwood developments. A new lab will be located at the planned 10th & Osage Senior/Disabled Housing and Community Center. These centers will serve over 3,000 DHA resident households and will be open to the public. North Lincoln, South Lincoln, Sun Valley, and Westridge are all located in the 80204 zip code, which has a population of 32,789 residents. Platte Valley is located in 80205, with a population of 29,726. Quigg Newton is located in 80211, with a population of 37,620. Westwood is located in 80219, with a population of 59,829. For each of these zip codes, the median household income is less than both the area and the nationwide average, while the number of families and individuals below the poverty level is higher than the national average by more than double in 80204 and 80205. Outreach will be conducted to all DHA households through the bimonthly Resident and Community Services (RCS) newsletter. The Opportunity Centers have large outdoor display boards that notify the neighborhood of the services available. DHA anticipates serving at least fifty individuals new users per center, per year for a total of 1000 individuals attending classes and webinars, viewing recorded classes, or using self-paced training modules. These figures do not include individuals using open computer lab services, expected to be at least an additional 1000. d) Qualifications of applicant that demonstrate ability to implement the project and achieve intended results: DHA has over 15 years of successful experience in quality comprehensive self-sufficiency program design and implementation. RCS’s two program managers have over 30 years’ combined experience managing self-sufficiency programming for youth, adults, seniors, and disabled. DHA’s programs consistently meet or exceed projected goals. The MIS staff has a combined 95 years of service at DHA. DHA maintains long-standing partnerships with several community organizations that provide services related to self-sufficiency, health and safety, education, financial fitness, homeownership, and more. These existing partnerships and DHA’s exceptional ability to develop new organizational relationships give DHA the capacity to meet the changing needs of residents. e) Jobs saved or created: A total of eight jobs will be created through this grant, and 23 job-years. One position will be in MIS for the full three years of the grant and six computer lab coordinators will be hired for the full three years of the grant. One computer lab coordinator will be hired for Years 2 and 3, following the opening of the 10th & Osage location. f) The overall cost of the project totals $3,441,599.36. DHA has secured a minimum in-kind match of $1,129,100.00, and is requesting $2,312,499.36 in BTOP grant funds.