Applicant Name: NATIONAL URBAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER INC, THE

Project Title: SeedTech Connect®

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

According to Pew Research, home broadband adoption lags in low income communities and the barriers are affordability and relevance. Just 42% of low-income families use broadband at home and adoption is 30% among those with less than a high school diploma. There is a strong correlation between broadband adoption, education levels and income; and the gap keeps low-income minority populations and the nation at a disadvantage educationally and economically. A June 2008 report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy stated that of the approximately 222 million adults aged 16 or older living in households or prisons in the U.S., some 93 million lack literacy at a level needed to enroll in the post-secondary education or job training that current and future jobs require. The National Urban Technology Center (Urban Tech) approach is to expand the technological capacity of anchor institutions in 70 low-income communities to achieve greater broadband use; and provide culturally relevant applications that focus squarely on improving literacy rates, computer proficiency and critical life skills that prepare people to graduate high school on time, attend post secondary education and become qualified for full time employment with a living wage. Urban Tech, NYC Dept of Parks, USDOJ/Weed & Seed (W&S) and other Partners will build on Urban Tech's proven SeedTech Connect' model established in 1995 to provide computer centers with state-of-the-art hardware and software, curriculum, teacher training, and access to broadband applications that help vulnerable populations find jobs and meaningful employment. This highly replicable, 'turn-key' model ramps up centers quickly by providing pre-tested hardware and software, effective training programs with curriculum that build in-demand tech skills, address language and literacy barriers and provide administrative systems for operating centers effectively. The SeedTech Connect' infrastructure sustains public computer centers by providing ongoing operational and technical support and access to broadband applications through an online 'cooperative' that also provides: 1) a network for Public Computer Center (PCC) Administrators to share information and best practices; 2) online training and webinars; 3) measurement systems for tracking course completions, certifications and job placements; 4) access to trained volunteers to assist PCCs in integrating broadband applications for workforce development; and 5) outreach and marketing approaches to build awareness and expand the user base. SeedTech Connect' frees non-profits from operational issues and infrastructure headaches and allows them to focus on education, improving health delivery and creating a competitive workforce. The needs are greater now than ever with over 20% unemployment in our vulnerable communities. Building the capacity of these centers is critical to building a workforce and putting people back to work. Proposed Solution Urban Tech, NYC Dept of Parks and W&S reach a vulnerable population that is 38.7% Black, 39.6% Hispanic and 16.1% White. Average per capita income is $11,927 and the median household income is $26,300, slightly above the poverty
level. In the last several months, the unemployment rate for Black and Latino youth with less than high school was 28% vs. 10% for high school graduates and 4.7% for college graduates. With BTOP funding, Urban Tech and its Partners will expand SeedTech Connect in vulnerable NYS communities and provide broadband applications for life skills, computer training, workforce development and jobs. The following plan will be scaled for distribution to centralize development and maintenance of operational systems for running PCCs, maintain highly trained teachers and ensure the most efficient delivery of current technology and broadband applications. SeedTech Connect will mobilize community stakeholders in strategy planning sessions; build/upgrade public computer centers and mobile labs at 70 locations; provide hotline for usability and defect maintenance, teach and prepare trainers using its proven Computer Training Program (CTP) to provide computer training to 140,000 unserved and underserved residents; ColoursTV will conduct a statewide awareness campaign and local outreach will be held in schools, churches, shopping malls and neighborhood block parties to 1.4 million residents in low-income vulnerable communities to communicate the benefits of broadband across NYS and drive new users to PCCs for training; The Interactive Learning Network (iTN), a 5-year development effort by Urban Tech and USDOJ Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) will be combined with SeedTech Connect and scaled for distribution to all PCCs to accomplish functions such as networking PCCs, scheduling and tracking of visitors to the center, access to online teacher training and participation in webinars; Seedco will deliver Technical Assistance to 70 sites to assist Urban Tech in placing 1400 people in jobs; Urban Tech's Youth Leadership Academy (YLA), a web-based life skills curriculum will provide basic computer training for jobs, enhanced health delivery; and the LEAGUE's service learning projects to prepare youth, ages 10-17, to be advocates for change in their communities; 24/7 access for residents of all ages both in PCCs and at home for GED prep, health clinics, financial literacy, public safety, job banks and other resources for smarter, more resourceful low-income, vulnerable populations. Urban Tech's Experience and Qualifications Urban Tech was founded by former IBM executives and technology professionals with a background in systems integration and management of large-scale application systems. In the last 15 years, Urban Tech's staff and management team have designed and developed replicable computer programs and curriculum for digital literacy, life skills, health education and jobs. Urban Tech has facilitated thousands of community planning sessions and training workshops across the country and installed over 750 computer centers to educate leaders on the value of technology while positioning cities/communities for success in the 21st century. In NYC, Urban Tech is integrating YLA into 350 classrooms, training teachers and providing critical health education to 10,000 families and students who are disadvantaged. Urban Tech has expertise and experience creating and managing technology projects that solve community problems and adapting offline curriculum to rich interactive broadband content that is engaging to people with low literacy skills. Urban Tech's curriculum and software development process includes a formal quality assurance process with input from Urban Tech trainers and users by stipulating quality criteria, such as accuracy, comprehensiveness, accessibility, sensitivity, time and usability. The Partners Urban Tech has assembled a group of public and private sector Partners for this project that will build high quality PCCs, leverage proven computer training programs, network PCC Partners for collaboration and sharing best practices, access applications for life skills, education and workforce development, and ensure operational efficiency and sustainability. A detailed description of each may be found in the PDF document entitled: Supplemental doc #1 Key Partners Description and Contact Information. W&S and NYC Dept of Parks will upgrade 70 PCCs in vulnerable communities,
provide local outreach to 1.4 million residents and drive 140,000 residents to PCCs for computer training and workforce development. Seedco will work with Urban Tech Regional Managers and Administrators in the 70 PCCs to create economic opportunities for vulnerable residents and place at least 1400 in jobs. Colours TV will educate and inform 19 million viewers in NYS about the value of broadband, and IBM will partner with Urban Tech to bring SeedTech Connect’ to scale for distribution to PCCs across the country for access and use of broadband technology to build a competitive workforce. Urban Tech will hire four (4) FTEs, fifteen (15) consultants for PCC deployment and 70 PCC-based jobs to implement the project. A conservative 10% of the estimated 1.4 million residents attending events in PCC outreach centers will receive computer training and as many as 1400 will be placed in jobs. Cost The total cost of the two-year project is $11.9m of which Urban Tech seeks $8.2M in government funding from BTOP. Urban Tech will leverage $3.8M in cash and in-kind services, equipment, facilities & personnel costs from Partners for a total match of 31.4%. Our projection estimates $5.86 of ARRA funds per broadband-educated consumer over the two year timeframe.