There are millions of persons in underserved areas who are desirous of some level of broadband connectivity, but whom cannot be optimally served by any existing provider when they evaluate the cost versus perceived benefit. RovAir has developed an unprecedented service which will bring affordable broadband connectivity to vulnerable populations in addition to thousands of persons in underserved and unserved populations in Massachusetts and beyond. The problems in these vulnerable areas are two-fold. Firstly, many persons in underserved and unserved areas also face economic hardship. As a result, they have neither the desire nor the means (lack of computer/equipment) to connect all the time, much less be beholden to an expensive contract. Second, these demographics would suggest to the large internet providers there is not a viable market in which to invest and therefore there is little infrastructure to deliver connectivity to these populations. While this infrastructure is certainly lacking, many of these vulnerable populations and underserved/unserved areas do in fact have very good to excellent 3G (cellular) broadband coverage. RovAir's innovative solution utilizes existing 3G infrastructure to deliver our service. As a result, we can bring mobile broadband internet to these areas at a fraction of the cost and time to deploy large wire line cable or fiber infrastructure projects. Here is how it works: Current mobile connectivity models assign one 3G/4G modem (aka data card, air card, or mobile 3G hotspot) to a single account, accessed by a single person. Most existing contracted data plans are tremendously underutilized, forcing the customer to pay for all those times they are not actually connected. RovAir's truly innovative service is our ability to remotely activate and de-activate these modems on demand. We can assign multiple pieces of equipment to a single account and have the end user pay for only their actual usage. Essentially, we can timeshare usage against underutilized accounts and deliver affordable connectivity to a massive unserved market. Our service will also: 'Quickly and inexpensively deploy our equipment into key anchor institutions including public libraries, schools, colleges and universities, career training centers, workforce development centers, public safety programs and healthcare facilities. ' Foster and stimulate true demand for broadband adoption as we can now deliver affordable internet connectivity to underserved/unserved areas and vulnerable populations previously without any other reasonable option to connect. ' Create a previously unattainable market for the large internet service providers (Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, etc.) by pooling our end users. We ultimately deliver thousands of new accounts to these providers and promote further real investment into wireless infrastructure in areas of need. The truly unique advantage of RovAir's service is that it is completely scalable and replicable. It may be deployed locally, regionally, or nationally to an extraordinary amount of unserved and underserved areas. For the purposes of this SBA application, we will narrow our public benefit program to focus on 'low income' populations. RovAir will partner with
three non profit organizations that each deliver jobs, technology, and training to vulnerable populations. First, The On It Foundation is a public 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the mission to enhance and expand technology access to economically and socially disadvantaged families with school-age children in grades K-12. Second, the Volunteers of America helps more than 2 million people in over 400 communities in 44 states through their thousands of human service programs. Third, Samasource, Inc. is a not-for-profit company creating microwork for the next billion. They bring dignified, computer-based work to women and youth living in poverty; Samasource is launching a pilot program for individuals living in poverty in the United States, under this program, we will provide jobs and broadband service to those users needing it to perform home based work. RovAir will work with our non profit partners to create new programs for their beneficiaries and adopt their existing programs in Massachusetts. RovAir will also seek out existing Massachusetts based programs, such as the Technology Goes Home program that was developed by the City of Boston, and which is a fellow applicant under the SBA program. RovAir has been operating for two years in the private sector delivering temporary and short term internet to customers who may not be optimally serviced through present models due to economic disadvantage, network availability, network reliability, and lack of infrastructure or equipment. As such, we are uniquely qualified to understand the logistics of deploying a public/private endeavor and in successfully delivering our model to this program. One part of our existing business is the truly revolutionary reallocation of corporate data usage to other areas of need. For example, a corporation who has a number of mobile data accounts will inevitably under-utilize their accounts. On nights and weekends, corporate utility is often very low. RovAir's service can enable or facilitate the 'donation' of these unused accounts to any number of areas of need be it a housing project, library, conference, or educational program. This model has garnered an extraordinary amount of praise as it is a truly innovative service and perhaps an example of a perfect partnership with non profits that uniquely benefits all partners. RovAir's model for the long term sustainability of this project is equally innovative. Simply using an award for equipment and free internet connectivity will only result in a finite program with little to no opportunity for sustained development. This is hardly a realistic plan for continued success over time. It will be critical to foster and develop the success of the enterprise side of our business in order to make our non profit endeavors truly sustainable. Accordingly, a portion of this funding will also support the systems, campaigns, and administration that can bolster RovAir as a whole and create sustainable long term jobs. While targeting the bulk of our award request to serving our applicant partners, we will ensure the long term viability and replication of our programs by funding them from our private side success. Specifically, we will do so in three ways: 1) Designation of 10% of private side activation revenues to fund replicated programs in areas and populations of most need. The greater the amount of demand we create on the for profit side, the greater the benefit to the non profits. 2) Deployment of RovAir’s revolutionary corporate data sharing model enabling the donation of underutilized data from our corporate clients to programs and populations of most need. 3) Partnership with proven non-profit entities, for expertise, guidance and consulting on the optimal deployment of our model to areas of most need. We are seeking very reasonable $2,007,578 to facilitate and deliver our program. Awarded funds will be designated for equipment including netbooks and 3G/4G modems, awareness/advertising campaign, automation of processes, and employee hiring and compensation. Our program will save or create 24 direct jobs in the timeframe set out in the application with 6 year pro forma direct job creation estimated at 198. Based on the economic benefits through broadband stimulation, we anticipate
thousands of indirect jobs created. We are extremely fortunate to have strong support for our model both on the enterprise and public side of our model, and an existing business model for which to draw from. Under the program, RovAir will provide the matching funds through program income, and strong partner relations. The justification for our award could not be more compelling. The success of our program is vitally important as true sustainable broadband adoption will never be fully realized without the real life successful deployment of critical pioneering programs such as ours. We have proven the successful deployment of the same model on the enterprise side of our business. It will be only with proper funding that we may also identify and properly work within the unique dynamics of such an innovative public/private version of our plan. Our modest request to ensure the success of our project has extraordinary implications for sustainable broadband adoption in the future. It will prove we can deliver mobile broadband to virtually any vulnerable area of need at a fraction of the cost and time to deploy of traditional methods and the ease of replication makes our program a crucial tipping point in finally bridging a massive digital divide and fully realizing the limitless benefits a connected nation will both sow and reap.