Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** PINE PENOBSCOT INDIAN NATION ENTERPRISES

**Project Title:** Native American Community Portal and Broadband Adoption

**Project Type:** Sustainable Broadband Adoption

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**Executive Summary**

**Problem:** While broadband may be available to many Native Americans throughout the United States, broadband use for education, job-training, job seeking, and community connection remains low. Native Americans must make use of the educational, economic, and community building opportunities available via the internet and made possible with broadband connections. Opportunities for education, jobs, and a greater sense of community cohesiveness abound, but community-based broadband adoption must be undertaken so that that more broadband subscribers are shown the how and where to access these opportunities. The Native American Community Portal (NACP) and Broadband Adoption Project (the Project) will address several needs of the Penobscot Indian Nation (PIN) and the 24 other tribes that make up the United Southern and Eastern Tribes (USET), and provide critical and lasting value to the PIN, USET tribes, and eventually, to the Native American community as a whole. With its comprehensive and synergistic components, the project will provide a viable and sustainable vehicle with which Native Americans can increase their educational opportunities, enhance their job-seeking and training opportunities and skills, and enable community development and sustainability within the Native American community. This Project is grounded is a feasible and timely plan to build a robust future for the Penobscot Indian Nation and other Nations across the U.S. (We invite you to read the detailed PIN Plan and Strategy in Supplemental Attachment 1 of 2).

**Approach:** As the primary applicant, Penobscot Indian Nation Enterprises (PINE), the business unit of the Penobscot Indian Nation (PIN), in cooperation with its partner, B2 Technology and Consulting Services (B2 TeCS), and with support from the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET), will launch the Native American Community Portal (NACP) to increase broadband adoption and use in the areas of post-secondary education, education funding opportunities, e-learning, job searching and job training, and community communication and wellness. The NACP will be available for subscription by any Native American tribe in the U.S. for an annual fee of $10,000. Individual users will not be charged a fee once the Tribe becomes a subscriber. The fees collected from subscribing tribes will sustain the NACP beyond the grant period. The NACP is based upon a proven and scalable suite of web-based applications that has been deployed to the U.S. military community for the past three years by the Project's technology partner, B2 TeCS. The portal includes five components as summarized below: 1. The Native American Community Academic Explorer (AeX) exposes the depth, breadth, and value of U.S. post-secondary education to students in our community. With a current universe of 180 accredited academic institutions, 142 of which offer online programs, over 11,000 certificate and degree programs and over 200,000 individual courses, no other program, platform or resource can match this reach. This universe of academic institutions and certificate and degree programs is growing, and will continue to grow substantially from month to month. 2. The Native
American Community Scholarship and Financial Aid Explorer (SFeX) offers an online environment wherein public and private entities can highlight scholarships/funding opportunities for Native American students to explore and obtain funding for their post secondary educational interests. 3. The Native American Community Job Explorer (JeX) offers an online environment wherein public and private entities will be encouraged to highlight job opportunities available in the community. 4. An Open Courseware Repository that will leverage relevant educational material offered at no cost by dozens of academic institutions throughout the U.S. and abroad, and compile, organize, and deliver this free content from multiple sources via a unified, web-based environment to the Native American community. 5. A Social-Networking Environment that will offer an open environment where the Native American community can openly discuss and explore their interests/needs for e-learning, where community institutions can provide updates regarding health and environmental matters, as well as emergency services and community events. This input and live discourse will be nurtured by qualified counselors and community leaders, and will help shape the need for new curricula/content, articulate the specifics of what is needed, research available material, and compile necessary content/create new content which will then be made available in the Open Courseware Repository. In addition to access to the above resources, each subscribing tribe will also have the opportunity to create and maintain a unique web page 'a Tribal Portal' linked to the NACP providing the full details of the tribe's education and career development programs, services, and related offerings, as well as contact information for tribal government personnel and counselors in these areas. PINE will leverage the support of USET to aggressively market the portal first to the 24 other USET tribes, and subsequently to the over 550 tribes throughout the U.S. to sign tribes as subscribers to the NACP. As a subscriber each tribe will have access to the portal and its applications, receive onsite or online training support for its community members, and will be able to contribute to ongoing enhancements of the NACP. Each subscribing tribe will have the opportunity to appoint a representative to the NACP Steering Committee. At sites located on Native American reservations that have the need to enhance or install small wireless networks to facilitate broadband use or broadband training specific to the NACP, the Project's technology partner, B2 TeCS can install its cost-effective and scalable BroadLeap Hybrid System. In line with the overall PIN Strategy and Plan, PINE and PIN are aggressively seeking funding to launch the first Tribally Controlled Community College east of the Mississippi. Beginning with an online presence, Wabanaki College will offer GED Test Prep courses, career and skill enhancement courses, and certificate courses to the Native American community. Future enhancements of Wabanaki College will offer online Associates Degrees with the goal of full accreditation as a degree-granting Tribally Controlled Community College. The NACP will be an important lynch-pin in the establishment of the college. For, through its aggressive outreach and training, broadband use and adoption can become an integral part of tribal communication and success. The NACP fosters the digital culture needed for the success of communities throughout the region. It will enhance the chances of success for Wabanaki College and opens the door for the PIN to create a community that can engage in future projects such as a Broadband Technology Training Institute, a Career and Counseling Call Center, and a Broadband Technology development Center. Areas to be Served: The NACP will be open for subscribership to any Native American Tribe in the United States. The Project will be administered from Indian Island, Maine. Qualifications: PINE, along with its partners is uniquely qualified to launch and maintain the Project. PINE as the business unit of the PIN has the personnel and experience in management and execution of projects and contracts that directly
serve the Native American community. The PIN Tribal Leaders will provide their knowledge and community ties with other Tribes in the U.S. to promote and advise the Project. USET collectively represents 25 Native American Tribes in the Southern and Eastern United States at the regional and national level and supports the improvement of tribal quality of life of its members. The Project will leverage USET’s scope and reach to expand the Project and promote the Project to local, state, and Federal entities. PINE has partnered with B2 Technology and Consulting (B2 TeCS), a provider of a full spectrum of consulting and technology services to leverage its current work with similar portals for the military community, and to identify, build, deploy and support customized, web-enabled solutions to streamline communications and business processes to develop the Portal application. Jobs Created: Based on the White House Economic Advisory Council’s methodology for estimating job creation, this project will directly create 21 jobs during the funding period. Additionally, the NACP, Wabanaki College, and the future opportunities of the project stand the chance of empowering hundreds, if not thousands of Native Americans in U.S with education, skills, and knowledge. Overall Cost: The overall cost of the project is $4,980,900 and the Project has secured a 30.1% match from its partner. As such, $1,500,300 will be obtained as matching funds, and $3,480,600 of Federal Grant Funds are being sought.