Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Project Title: Native Hawaiian Broadband Community Centers Project (OHA-PCC)

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_________________________ Executive Summary_________________________

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM OR NEED This project is will create 27 new PCCs and bring together a comprehensive group of community, education and industry project partners utilizing broadband connections to innovatively provide underserved Native Hawaiians with the requisite education, training and skills necessary to compete for recession-proof, affordable wage jobs. Hard hit by the deep and protracted U.S economic recession, Hawaii’s overall economy and labor market is currently in a state of near mandatory realignment and transition. As the U.S. reels from a near recession, the historically dominant Hawaiian tourism/travel and related services sector has suffered as a result and is now in a depressed condition. Many urban and rural workers are currently unemployed or displaced, but do not have the requisite training, education, or skills necessary to transition to new jobs in other industries or to compete in the rapidly changing 21st century technology-driven job market. This is particularly true for Native Hawaiian residents, who are experiencing almost twice the state's average (16.4% vs. 7.7%) unemployment and traditionally have lower than average educational attainment, preventing them from competing for affordable wage jobs even in the best of economic times. Hawaii’s indigenous minority and disadvantaged communities are greatly in need of programs and services that will enable residents to become more highly skilled and qualified for work in a broader spectrum of industries (e.g. healthcare, IT, new business entrepreneurial, green-tech, or online virtual jobs. Unless an avenue for rapid remediation can be provided, Hawaii’s displaced workers will continue to lack the training education that would enable them to compete for today's higher-paying and in-demand jobs. Finally, many Native Hawaiians in our target communities are located on remote islands. Access to education and training is limited at best. When education and skills are attained, Native Hawaiians are often faced with the choice of leaving their native homes and move to where affordable wage employment opportunities exist, or staying put with extremely limited earning opportunities. We therefore propose via the relationships forged between Certiport and Kelly Services to create ‘e-Workforce’ job placement and career management ladder for these remote Native Hawaiian workers. OVERALL APPROACH The creation of strategically located PCCs, connected via broadband technologies to key (and culturally appropriate) project partners, will address the high unemployment, low educational attainment, and extremely limited access to workforce opportunities for Native Hawaiians. The provision of broadband enabled distance learning equipment (PC's and videoconferencing equipment) will open new avenues of learning for Native Hawaiian residents throughout the state. OHA and partners will create a broadband enabled, interactive base systems infrastructure for the anticipated new Native Hawaiian Government Entity in 2010-11. The creation and/or expansion of Public Computer Centers will allow project sites and partners to offer web-based-learning programs and community workforce outreach. Project partner,
Hawaii Technology Institute, as the anchor technical school will provide expanded training and education outreach, leading to certification and degree attainment. Alu Like Inc., who since 1975 has assisted Native Hawaiians achieve social and economic self-sufficiency will provide a direct link for youth and adult learners to career counseling, family support services and advice. Certiport Inc., a global leader in standards based certification programs will provide a comprehensive list of their eTraining Skilled2Succeed packages and modules. Perhaps the most innovative element of this project is the connection with the Kelly Services/Kelly Connect program, providing residents who complete certifications and job readiness training with the opportunity to fill a virtual job, thereby offering Native Hawaiians the ability to stay in their homelands while earning an affordable wage. The entire network will be integrated with state-of-the-art video infrastructure and open-source lower cost network support services. The project's entire network, gateway and PC layer hardware/software set-up and services will be outsourced and centrally managed by ClearCenter to insure reliability and sustainability. A train-the-trainer approach will be taken in regards to network, PC and video management. Our strategic capacity building approach will significantly increase overall access and the availability of courses opportunities for individual learning. Every effort has been taken to leverage existing resources. Participating sites that currently have adequate video equipment will only receive computers to outfit their PCCs. The remaining sites will receive a videoconferencing unit, along with an adequate number of personal computers. This integrated approach of providing both live and web-based learning capabilities will not only broaden the scope of current programs at the centers, but also allow the project’s comprehensive group of education, training and industry partners to interact with the OHA PCC communities, leveraging resources and facilitate the sharing of Distance Learning systems courses and programs. Training courses at one center can now become available at all locations through interactive video and online to PCC’s.

AREAS TO BE SERVED

The areas served by this project will cover the five major islands of Hawaii. The number of PCC's on each of the islands in this project will be: Oahu-15; Hawaii-5; Maui-4; Kauai-3 and Molokai-1. The following demographic summary covers the major areas served. The estimated potential users and trainees of PCC facilities at project sites is conservatively estimated to be 17,952 over 3 years. (1) Oahu: Total Population: 876,150; Native Hawaiian (NH) Population 153,125 (17.48%); NH median household income: $48,870 (87.1% of average Oahu); NH unemployment rate 15.5% (2008); Estimated PCC Project Users: 12,250 (2) Island of Hawaii: Total Population: 148,675 NH Population: 43,020 (28.94%); NH median household income: $35,855 (84.2% of average); NH unemployment rate 18.0% (2008), Estimated Potential PCC Project Users: 3,442 (3) Kauai: Total Population: 58,305; NH Population 13,385 (22.96%); NH median household income: $39,611 (82.2% of average) NH unemployment rate 10.9% (2008), Estimated Potential PCC Project Users: 1,070 (4) Maui County (Maui and Molokai): Total Population:128,094; NH Population: 29,952 (28.15%); NH median household income: $45,538 (82% of average); NH unemployment rate 20.7% (2008), Estimated Potential PCC Project Users: 1,545

QUALIFICATIONS

Project partners HTI and Alu Like have long experience in implementing and managing federal grants, as well as providing training and education services to the target community. HTI has a long history of integrating online, interactive and classroom teaching and learning environments, and will be an invaluable resource to this project. OHA, as fiscal agent, is expected to take a leading within the new Native Hawaiian Government Entity. OHA as a major trust and state agency with assets over $400 million, and annually manages and distributes over $20 million in grants and support its community. A project director, technical director and other
administrative support personal at OHA will be hired to ensure there will be an appropriate level of administrative support to carry out a comprehensive grant program such as this. Other partners will be provided with adequate new staffing. JOBS TO BE SAVED OR CREATED Although the purpose of this project is not to create a specific number of new jobs, this project If will specifically create 16 new jobs. Moreover, the primary goal of this project is much more impactful. We conservatively estimate that up to 35% of Hawaii’s Native Hawaiian population will have proximity to our PCC’s and have access to training and retraining, enabling workers to qualify for and fill recession proof jobs particularly in those industries experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. New training programs brought about through this OHA PCC grant will target Native Hawaiian working age youth and adult residents throughout the state, particularly low-income, unemployed, low-skilled workers. Training programs will be focused on positions in high-growth fields such as healthcare, IT, green-tech/energy and education. A total of 17,952 participants and end users will be targeted for training/retraining. We project that up to 750 individuals alone who receive certifications and job readiness training will be eligible for virtual employment annually. Overall cost of the proposed project: $2,865,088