Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: COOPER COMMUNITY INITIATIVES, INC.

Project Title: Broadband For The Blind

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary _________________________

a) Statement of the Problem: Broadband for the Blind is targeted to educate blind and visually impaired persons about broadband technology. The blind and visually impaired community has no support in Washington DC. There are no schools for the blind in DC, yet there is a substantial blind and visually impaired community in Washington DC. B) Approach: CCI's innovative approach is to implement a computer center that has adaptive tools for the blind to help them surf the internet and use computers. The center will encourage, usage of the center by having state of the art tools such as JAWS, Magic Pro, large keyed keyboards, Braille keyboards, Braille embossed printers, and computers. Our center will be staffed with teachers that specialize in visually impaired and blind teaching methods. CCI's approach is to reach out, and educate as many blind persons, and blind organizations as possible. We will conduct our public computer center (PCC) in the region in Washington DC that is accessible, via public transportation. CCI will conduct seminars for blind and visually impaired persons from all walks of life, including the elderly. The center will be available for usage on weekends, and evening hours, for additional accessibility. Our approach is to educate the blind and visually disabled population and encourage participation and usage of broadband technologies, by putting the community at ease with the benefits of broadband, by using the adaptive tools. The more education and knowledge blind and visually impaired persons has with the technology, the more at ease they will be with subscribing to using broadband in home, and businesses. The PCC will enable members of the community to access long term benefits. The long term benefits of Broadband access include: teaching the telemedicine applications; bridging broadband learning curves by providing distance learning, online course, and advance learning tools and capabilities; The community to be served also consist of low income, blind and visually impaired persons. C) Demographics: We estimate a high level of usage of the center, at least 400-600 persons per month, because there aren't very many, if any other blind PCCs in Washington DC. D) Qualifications: CCI is formed by ex-IBMers. Our team is diverse, and we have extensive IT, telecommunications, business management, training and outreach experience. CCI has a relationship with the Blind and visually disabled community. Our staff has experience implementing broadband technology, public computer centers, and providing training and outreach to diverse, handicapped populations. We know what needs to be done to successfully implement the PCC, because we've done it before. CCI has the operational exp., people, processes, and systems to quickly deploy, and manage the project. E) Jobs to be Created/Saved: CCI will create at least (4) jobs for the center. These jobs will consist of a project manager, Visually Impaired Sr. manager, Visually Impaired/BTOP assistant, and a Telecom Sr. manager. In addition, at least (5) indirect jobs will be created, and at least 10 induced jobs. F) Overall Cost of project $704,370. CCI is not partnering with anyone on this project, however we have received
community support, and have attached (1) letter of community support to this application, as a supplemental document.