Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: ALLIANCE FOR DIGITAL EQUALITY, INC.

Project Title: Miami Dade Broadband Computer Education and Workforce Development Initiative

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Problem: There are targeted communities within Dade County, Florida that are unserved and underserved from a broadband perspective, and is composed primarily of African-American who are experiencing high rates of poverty and unemployment. Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 2009), the unemployment rate is 9.4%, the drop-out rate is 4.4%, and the poverty rate was 22.6% in 2008. These economic indicators are more than double for the residents of Liberty City, Overtown and Miami Gardens. Recent statistics show that the national unemployment rate continues to escalate. Employers now require workers to have GED, basic job skills that include competencies in computer usage and familiarity with the Internet and other broadband technologies. To address this demand for basic computing skills, we have made a formal commitment to the development of program initiatives that foster the revitalization of these working families.

Solution: To bridge the broadband divide in these three communities, broadband equipped Public Computer Centers (PCCs) will be established utilizing two existing community-based facilities, and a leased facility within Miami Gardens. Our partners, Urgent, Inc. and the Belafonte Tacolcy Center, are respective organizations within Dade County, and have a successful record of sustained operations. A total of 3 PCCs will be established with 50 computers made available for public access. It is projected that 7,409 residents in these three communities will be provided access to computers, the Internet and educational and workforce development training services.

Qualifications of the Applicant: The Alliance for Digital Equality (ADE), a national grassroots non-profit organization established in 2007, serves as an advocate for communities seeking to explore and benefit from the revolution of distance learning, broadband services, and information technology. In the fulfillment of that mission, ADE seeks to educate and train individuals in unserved and underserved communities about the global benefits of broadband services and the digital empowerment that flows based on its use. The key to expanding opportunities for all communities is through Digital Empowerment. Since its founding, ADE has launched nine Digital Empowerment Councils nationwide: Charleston, SC, Houston, TX, Detroit, MI, Miami, FL, Atlanta, GA, Boston, MA, Chicago, IL, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles, CA. These innovative Councils examine the impact of broadband access on the local communities in the areas of civic participation, public health, public safety, urban and economic development, and education. ADE's partner, the Miami Dade Chamber of Commerce, which is located in the City of Miami, will manage the implementation and ongoing operations of the proposed three centers. The Chamber serves as a voluntary Association of small and minority-owned businesses, and professional persons working together to promote the business and economic interests of the black community throughout Dade County. Another partner is the Belafonte Tacolcy Center, which is one of the largest, private non-profit youth service institutions in the Greater Miami area. Founded in 1967,
this center was created and started as a place for youth to be helped, heard and involved. The center operates out of a 1.75 million dollar complex in Liberty City, Florida. Our last partner is the Urban Renewal Greater Enhancement National Team Empowering and Revitalizing Urban Communities (URGENT, Inc.) Founded in 1994, URGENT, Inc. provides social services, education, training and affordable housing, targeting neighborhoods in Overtown, Little Haiti and Goulds. Some of the initiatives include skills development, career internships, and youth empowerment during after school and the summer. With funds from BTOP, ADE will establish three (3) Public Computer Centers, and implement its Learning Without Walls (LWOW) Initiative. We will target computer illiterate adults and youth using community based resources to expand perform outreach activities within the three target areas of Dade County. ADE and the Chamber of Commerce will provide adult participants with computer-based career training, GED preparation, and job enhancing skills. We will collaborate with our partners to bring technology to students and their families in our target areas. We will provide students with relevant online broadband accessibility, through the use of online tutorials. This program will stimulate and promote educational dialogue, digital literacy, e-learning, research, and peer education. BTOP Statutory Purposes: The implementation of the proposed Initiative will advance 3 of the BTOP's statutory purposes: 1.) Provide broadband access to consumers in unserved areas through the establishment of three (3) centers, 2) Provide improved broadband access to consumers in underserved areas by providing appropriate Internet speeds and 3.) Stimulate demand for broadband adoption through our outreach, awareness and training activities. Total federal funds being requested for the proposed Initiative for the two (2) year grant period totals $2,628,833. Successful deployment of this initiative is expected to create or retain more than 370 jobs.