PROBLEM STATEMENT 4 million Ohioans do not adopt broadband. Some cite availability or cost, but the main barrier to adoption is perceived value. A training and outreach effort is needed to convey and introduce the benefits of broadband to these non-adopters. Libraries offer the best solution. Consumers rely on them for access to information and appreciate their free and accessible resources. Ohio Libraries have insufficient capacity for existing patrons and cannot provide training and access to incremental potential adopters without resources. They need adequate computers, curriculum and trainers, and a public awareness campaign to invite the potential users to experience life across the digital divide. Research shows that once consumers realize the benefits of broadband, they embrace it and the value it brings to their lives. Retention of new subscriptions is very high. A recent Pew release cited a willingness to give up cable TV and cell phone service before abandoning broadband by those who realize its benefits. 18.5% of non-adopters would willingly attend a free course, if offered. Consumers must be made aware of the opportunity, exposed to the tools and benefits, and taught to improve their lives by through access to better education, healthcare, jobs, communication, commerce, and government services. Equipping our libraries to prepare them, we can improve the lives of millions of Ohioans.

PROPOSED SOLUTION Libraries are a natural place for citizens to access technology. Delivering information in a nonjudgmental and low-cost environment, they are the first place people go when they need to find information, access government forms, research purchases, or initiate electronic communication about a job opportunity. Inviting non-adopters to learn about broadband's value in a trusted environment, libraries serve as an important bridge across the digital divide. Keys to the solution: 1) Identify and promote libraries as sources of broadband access and training 2) Engage non-adopters with a comprehensive public outreach campaign, helping them understand broadband benefits and inviting them to experience the value at their library 3) Provide basic curriculum to teach computer use, broadband access, and key applications 4) Ensure that libraries have sufficient equipment and support, as well as training staff to deliver the curriculum to potential adopters 5) Offer a compelling promotion to participants, giving them the opportunity to adopt the technology for everyday use in their homes In partnership with over 500 libraries, COH produced an inventory of equipment, available training hours, and classroom capacity. COH determined the number of non-adopting residents in each library's service area, and a survey was conducted to determine non-adopters' willingness to attend free classes about broadband benefits. As partners in COH’s OPAL II and SLO’s OPAL I application, more than 320 libraries in 50 counties agreed to provide space for 5,040 computers, and to provide training over two years. Where libraries cannot meet the need, Community Colleges have agreed to fill the gap. Community colleges and workforce centers can house another 1000 computers in 80 facilities where
libraries cannot. Jointly, 200 of these facilities can host over 87,000 training hours for up to 290,000 citizens and 200 more can provide self-paced curriculum for another 160,000 participants, together instructing 450,000 willing citizens from 360,000 non-adopting households. Research suggests that 169,000 of these newly trained citizens will adopt broadband in their home, joined by another 41,000 existing patrons who would adopt broadband at home as a result of the training. An incremental 250,000 citizens would begin to use the expanded public computing capacity regularly. To invite non-adopting households and ensure their participation, COH will deliver a statewide public awareness campaign designed to reach non-adopting citizens, compelling them to attend free classes to experience the benefits and value of broadband. Partners in providing a solution, COH and SLO divided the task into two parts. SLO is addressing Public Computing Capacity with their OPAL I application to provide computers to libraries. COH addresses capacity for the non-library locations, and creates adoption through training, technical support, curriculum, and public awareness for all locations with its OPAL II application. OPAL II is made up of six components: 1) Equipment ' SLO's OPAL I project, if funded, will deliver 5,000+ computers to expand library computing capacity. OPAL II requests funds for 1000 additional computers to deploy in community college, and workforce centers where library capacity is limited. Together, these enable 400 community computing centers across Ohio's 88 counties and, with existing modern computers, will serve today's 670,000 library patrons and another 450,000 non-adopters. The computers provide access and training to an incremental 360,000 households over the project term. 2) Training ' Instructors will be provided for each facility with capacity. In regions where libraries cannot deliver training, community colleges and workforce centers will fill the void. Self-paced curriculum and outreach will be provided for libraries without training capacity. A total of 87,318 instructor hours are requested, providing six hours of training for up to 290,000 discrete patrons. Each hour of instruction, valued at $30-$45, includes necessary preparation time, materials, travel, and local overhead. 30 minutes of prep time is included with each hour of instruction, so 87,318 instructor hours require 130,977 work hours, creating 65.5 job-years. 3) Curriculum ' SLO provides web-based curriculum which can be self-paced or delivered by instructors. Each library or college will provide a mix of scheduled training classes and self-directed learning opportunities. Alternatives are available for 1, 1.5, and 2-hour classes. Self-paced curriculum is available in Spanish. 4) Technical Support ' will be available for all centers that need it. COH will contract this work from a central nonprofit provider. Libraries and Community Colleges with sufficient technical resources will provide their own support, lowering the total cost significantly. 5) Public Outreach ' A statewide campaign will be developed through a partnership with public and cable television, radio stations and print media. A comprehensive campaign will deliver the messages 'Life is Better with Broadband' and 'Get Connected', directing the public to libraries and computing centers for access, training, and an opportunity to adopt. The professionally developed campaign includes 90% of tv and radio stations and 95 newspapers, reaching 4.5 million households about 60 times per month. A call center will help respondents identify their local facility. 6) Management - A small staff will administer the program, including COH's field staff who will regularly visit libraries to ensure effective deployment. Broadband Service Providers will encourage adoption by OPAL II participants. Programs will be available to participants including free installation, contributions toward initial subscription costs, and incentives to encourage at-home adoption by those who complete the introductory coursework and do not currently use broadband in their homes. Funding is made up of private investments by providers, so is not part of this request. Included with this application are three
representative commitments, valued at approximately $50,000. COH's UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS TO CONDUCT THE PROJECT Connected Nation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (CN), will implement this project through its wholly owned subsidiary Connect Ohio, LLC. CN has operated since 2004. Governor Strickland established the COH program to increase availability and use of broadband in 2007. A central and field staff is in place, engaged with stakeholders for over 2 years. Over 3000 broadband stakeholders are engaged, statewide. COH has local broadband teams in each of Ohio's 88 counties, involving local government, libraries, hospitals, higher ed, K-12, ag, business, tourism, and community organizations. COH has the capability to identify and contract with local resources. COH has provided more than 600 computers to community organizations and libraries across the state. COH partners with over 100 broadband providers to collect data and produce maps. COH helps consumers understand broadband's value. Our unique relationship with the provider community helps us aggregate adoption opportunities for consumers for delivery through an unbiased clearinghouse. COH employees have direct technology training, advertising and computer procurement experience. JOB CREATION The project creates 78 direct job-years. 65.5 training, 2.4 technical, 10 administrative, 14 indirect, and 52 induced. 144 job-years in total.