Applicant Name: FERNDALE, CITY OF

Project Title: Ferndale Regional Disaster Recovery Network

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Recovery Act Funds will enable construction of a planned Emergency Operations Center (EOC) of the Ferndale Police Department, within the upcoming renovation next Fall. Due to the recessionary downturn and the City's very limited retail sales tax base, it is not possible to afford a state-of-the-art emergency operations center of the capacity necessary to serve this region at this juncture. ARRA funds will enable a 21st Century EOC to become a vital hub of training and outreach for police, fire, and EMS first responders as well as CERT volunteers and Ferndale's Auxiliary Communication System (ACS) volunteers. Ferndale Washington and nearby rural region is significantly exposed to natural and man-made hazards ranging from seasonal flooding from the Nooksack River to border-related homeland security events. Recovery Act funds will greatly improve the ability for small businesses and households in this area to recover from disaster and thus will serve to retain local business and future employment. The region is close to the Canadian border to the north. It is adjacent to several oil refineries to the immediate west and other targets of interest. It lays exposed to major fault systems. The area would be seriously impacted by a Cascadia subduction earthquake event, now overdue. Nearby tribal communities and residents in low-lying areas are directly exposed to tsunami hazards, and witnessed a small but measurable rise in sea level from the recent quake off the coast of Chile. The region is also exposed to nearly certain future eruptions of near-by Mt. Baker, an active volcano. The approach of the proposed project is to leverage resources of local community anchor institutions to: 'Construct an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the 21st Century;' 'Establish the Ferndale Regional Disaster Recovery Network, connecting households, businesses, and community members to information sources via broadband enabled information and communication technologies.' 'Build broad public awareness across a proposed service area of 30,000 people of the need for and means to use broadband based social media for disaster planning, communication, and recovery;' 'Develop model curriculum designed to improve and broaden general use by the public of broad-band enabled social media for disaster planning, communications and recovery;' 'Enable production of business continuity plans for up to 250 small businesses;' 'Create culminating senior project opportunities, through the Ferndale Boys and Girls Club, for up to 100 high school students in disaster planning projects with small businesses and community organizations;' 'Train up to 100 volunteers for a new Community Emergency Responder Team;' 'Maintain community-wide readiness especially among underserved and at-risk groups and individuals through enhanced public access services of the Ferndale Library;' 'Improve ability to integrate with the National Incident Command System. The project will involve: An emergency operations center, a Boys and Girls Club, new library construction, a leading provider of disaster communications services, a local civil engineering and project management firm, a community college,
high school students, small business owners, emergency volunteers, and the general public. The proposed service area is the Ferndale School District in northwest Washington State. This largely rural area of 30,000 includes the small City of Ferndale, much of the nearby Lummi Nation and several economically distressed Census tracts. Given the geographic and cultural nature of the area, the District includes most of the Ferndale library patrons, youth members of the Ferndale Boys and Girls Club, and much of the downtown retail market. Many households across this area use city services and community support organizations extensively, even though much of this area lies outside of city limits. A recently completed capital campaign has resulted in the construction of a new Ferndale Boys and Girls Club. This facility is due to open in June 2010, just a few months after the submission of this application. This new Boys and Girls Club 15,000 square foot facility will be provisioned without the need for ARRA funding with advanced broadband capacity, over thirty workstations, classroom capacity, multimedia features such as sound systems, large wall display screens, editing studios and more. The project will take full advantage of this facility and build upon it. Meanwhile, the City is preparing construction documents for a renovated and expanded police station, to be located within the current library facility. A separate campaign to construct a new library has reached over 50% of its goal and is in the process of final design and cost estimating. Site preparation work is already underway. Both the police station and library project are linked with timetable dependencies due to the recession. This linkage occurred because original plans for a new, stand alone police facility became financially impossible in the aftermath of market disruptions. Renovation became the most practical means for expansion of public safety services. The current library building is the most logical location for several important reasons. It is well above the 100 year flood plain and adjacent to the city's public works yard. Future city hall annex offices nearby the property recently purchased for new library construction will serve as temporary library facilities. This plan enables the police station renovation timetable to move ahead with speed in October 2010. Library construction is expected to begin in just over one year's time, during the spring of 2011. Moreover, Recovery Act funds will also make it possible to enhance public access capacity for the new Ferndale library, in manner also envisioned in original plans, but not currently possible due to the economic downturn. Recently acquired property for the new library has sufficient space for master planned growth. Current plans are to add on additional space and technology capacity at some future date. ARRA funding would enable that capacity to be returned back to the current construction plans, making this important space for technology a certainty, now. All three facilities have strong historical relationships in the community through their missions. The technology capacity available through the new Boys and Girls Club will eliminate potentially uncertain project dependencies on capital construction. It will be possible to conduct much of the programmatic activities of the proposed project, initially, at the Boys and Girls Club facilities, during the school day, when the facility is available for broad community use. Then, as the two capital facilities come online, new programs created by this project will be poised to become integrated within the new EOC and new public library. The City of Ferndale is well experienced in the financing and management of capital construction of the type proposed. A long standing local engineering and project management firm with years of experience managing very large federally funded projects will oversee and manage key project activities. One of the key project management personnel has extensive experience in community technology, served as a reviewer of the original TOP program, and was a principal investigator to NTIA identifying best practices and lessons learned from earlier grant awards. A nationally recognized (and local) disaster communications firm will
be involved as a key partner and will provide a powerful suite of web 2.0 technologies for the project. One of the country's leading sociologists specializing in the use of social media in disaster communication will guide the curriculum development. A communications officer with the Ferndale Police department who will oversee the new emergency operations center has an extensive background as a university administrator with advanced degrees and teaching experience including strategic planning and project management. This highly qualified team will bring strong curriculum development, programmatic delivery, project management and construction skills sets to the project, and ensure the greatest probability of success. The proposed project cost is $4,416,348. Direct impacts to one thousand individuals include specific and concrete educational outcomes, production of business continuity plans, and creation of a new Community Emergency Response Team. Average cost per individual of the $2,000. The figure is derived from the fact that about half the project cost is construction related, and about half is devoted to program services. Secondary impacts and public awareness measures are not included in this figure. Using the methodology provided by OMB, 43 job years will be created.