Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE

Project Title: Media That Crosses the Digital Divide

Project Type: Sustainable Broadband Adoption

_______________________ Executive Summary _____________________

After decades of neglect, ethnic media are gaining recognition as the fastest growing sector of American journalism. Close to 51 million ethnic adults, or one out of 4 American adults, depends on the ethnic media sector for news, information and entertainment, according to NAM’s multilingual polls. The biggest challenge they face today is that posed by the Internet. Fewer than 30 percent of ethnic news outlets currently have a robust online presence. Those that remain invisible on the Internet could wind up as elder statesmen, unable to access the advertisers abandoning print and even broadcast media for the Web and therefore irrelevant to their communities. Our proposed project builds on New America Media’s (NAM) two-year national initiative aimed at linking ethnic media with one another to improve the flow and scope of news and information about immigration reform to predominantly immigrant audiences. Thanks to that project, New America Media has forged close ties with hundreds of formerly isolated ethnic media decision makers and practitioners across the country. And we have recruited 18 journalism schools to partner with us in expanding the resource base for ethnic media in their regions. Through network building convening’s, professional trainings, newsmaker briefings, one-on-one meetings, these media outlets have developed growing interest in exchanging content, staging joint events, developing digital advertising networks, and even launching ethnic media blogathons. They know that Internet technologies hold the key not only to operationalizing their emerging alliances but to securing their own long-term survival. NAM will use an open source platform to enable us to host online functionalities for our media partners and serve as a demonstration model for what even a modest online presence can achieve. NAM will utilize a team of tech savvy staff to serve as ‘circuit riders’ to train our media partners serving their growing and diverse audiences. NAM’s circuit rider team will meet individually and collectively with all media partners to assess what each one of them need to build/expand and maintain an online presence, and what NAM needs to do to build Internet linkages and visibility for the project. We propose to provide small grants of $3,000 to each to cover costs to expand their tech infrastructure including hardware and software. We will explore options for tech-savvy students from our local partners to join this effort as we build and maintain these web site applications. NAM will use its own site or that of a media partner to host the aggregated content of the targeted ethnic media partners in this project. We will explore the possibility of using a hub that can draw in more local ethnic media over time to create an inter-ethnic media exchange for hyper-local reporting, commentary and blogging, particularly on those issues like immigration, education, health care, of greatest relevance to the audiences served. NAM will organize weekly editorial webinars to share story assignments, plan multi-media blogathons, and convene newsmaker briefings and seminars, set benchmarks for evaluating success of editorial collaboration and expanded online coverage. This
project will focus on 10 cities: New Orleans (African American, Hispanic, Vietnamese), Atlanta (African American, Hispanic, Korean), Washington, D.C. (African American, Hispanic), Miami (African American, Hispanic), Phoenix (Native American, Hispanic, Asian), Seattle (Asian, Hispanic), Houston (Hispanic, African American, Asian), Chicago (Hispanic, African American, Asian), San Jose (Hispanic, African American, Asian), and Los Angeles (Hispanic, African American, Asian). NAM, formerly New California Media, is the only nonprofit media and communications organization with the staff, track record and brand recognition to convene let alone convince ethnic media to make the digital divide transition. Founded in 1996, we are headquartered in San Francisco with offices in Fresno, Los Angeles, New York and Washington DC. As the first and largest association of ethnic news organizations in the country, our most important accomplishment is that we have put ethnic media on the national radar as an indispensable and distinctive sector in American journalism. We have worked to support smaller nonprofit organizations promoting ethnic media in their regions. Daily Planet in Minneapolis, New York Community Media Alliance in NY, Community Media Alliance in Chicago, among others. And over the last two years, we've enlisted the support of 18 journalism schools (and more are joining) to expand their knowledge of and engagement with ethnic media. In short: 1) we have longstanding trusted relations with ethnic media in California and key urban regions across the country; 2) we have a core group of tech-savvy staff and consultants who know open source technology and how to customize a new wave of tech tools to ethnic media's resources and capabilities; 3) we have partnerships with J-schools that can assist in training and promoting internet expertise in the sector; 4) we have a track record for brokering partnerships between and among ethnic and mainstream media; 5) we have run marketing campaigns that have steered over $12 million in ad revenues into the sector and have recently built an online ad network of 40 ethnic media in California that will help us expand access to online ad dollars for our clusters; 6) we have raised over 80% of the funds needed for 2008 and 60% of the funds needed to meet projected costs for 2009. Estimated Number of Broadband Subscribers Reached: 60 Million