Executive Summary

Cornell Cooperative Extension is a subordinate Governmental Agency of the State of New York and a key outreach system of Cornell University with a strong public mission and an extensive local presence that is responsive to needs in New York communities. The Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. Cooperative Extension serves urban, suburban, town and rural areas by offering programs in five broad areas: Agriculture & Food Systems; Children, Youth, & Families; Community & Economic Vitality; Environment & Natural Resources; and Nutrition & Health. This application combines the efforts and resources of 20 New York County offices and New York City to connect the educational knowledge of the 106 Land Grant Universities and Colleges to the end-user of Broadband services. Cornell Cooperative Extension is also partnering with the Albany, NY, based Public Utility Law Project of New York. (PULP) Whereas Cornell Cooperative Extension provides educational information for use by Broadband subscribers, the Public Utility Law Project has proposed a way of teaching low-income New Yorkers how to afford Broadband access. Combined these two projects will provide information that New Yorkers will want to see and hear on the internet while providing the means for low-income residents to afford access to the internet. The PULP proposal has developed a phased in approach to enabling and empowering low income households the ability to connect into the DSL, Cable and Fiber connections that traverse the state. The Problem: New York residents need enticing and value added information on the internet. There is a lot of information that is available but many times in cumbersome or useless quantities and quality. Cornell Cooperative Extension has valuable information that is time tested in its applicability toward sustaining agricultural industry, creating job growth, assisting families, teaching youth through 4-H programs, assisting families in food and nutrition science, and much more. The problem is that much of Cornell Cooperative Extension's information and research based knowledge is in paper or has been applied to the internet in 'paper like' fashion. Cornell Cooperative Extension's professional educators are using the same person-to-person teaching methods that have been our standard since 1911. The problem in the teaching methods are a vast number of people that need the information that Cornell Cooperative Extension provides and the methods used reach a minority of the population Increasing Broadband Adoption Rates: By using the Sustainable Broadband Adoption grant Cornell Cooperative Extension can increase the numbers of internet users by placing vital and value added information on the internet. Additionally, this project will hire regional Technology Cooperative Extension Educators. These professional educators will teach and guide Broadband users and potential users in efficient and productive internet use. Placing the time proven information on the internet provides a vast multiplier of Cornell Cooperative Extension professional staff
time and enables residents and users of the internet to have real time and archival access to the information they need for job creation in areas such as agriculture, horticulture, economic development, and natural resources while also providing the quality of live information in parenting, youth development, nutrition, health and safety. The new Extension Educator professional staff member will build on the time proven teaching methods of the past 100 years of Cooperative Extension education and bring the entrepreneurial internet opportunities to the end-user using the technology of the current and future Broadband applications. INNOVATION: Cornell Cooperative Extension has been identified in terms that denote: 'steadfastness'; 'time honored'; reliable'; 'trustworthy'; and 'the best kept secret'. The innovation this project brings is a universal availability of the information and educational work of the Cooperative Extension system. Cornell Cooperative Extension has provided and continues to provide to its end users the highest quality of information that encourages job growth, improves quality of life, and provides the tools for industry sustainability in whatever field Cooperative Extension develops research based knowledge: agriculture; small town development; main street business improvement; home businesses; horticulture; landscapes; turf grasses; and more. The innovation in this project is to apply the research based information and knowledge developed by the Land-Grant Universities and Colleges that is respected through the United States to the internet end user. Potential Broadband Subscribers: The Counties and Boroughs that house the Cornell Cooperative Extension offices partnered in the application have a combined population of over 11.3 million New York residents. The Cornell Cooperative Extension system in New York State encompasses all of New York with a population of over 19.4 million. By placing the research knowledge and information on the internet in multiple venues: print; visual; video; interactive classrooms; online classes; and more the potential increase in Broadband subscribers and internet users is almost unlimited. The online archived information will be available 24/7/365 so anyone with internet access can improve their lives, communities and businesses through current and future web based educational materials. The Cooperative Extension system has always maintained openness, availability and accessibility to all people. Added to this concept is the ability to use existing NYC staff fluent in over 5 languages. With the openness of the internet the potential for Broadband subscribers is almost unlimited when combined with the time proven educational and research information Cooperative Extension has to offer that will entice users to log on and participate in the real time and archived multi-disciplinary materials offered by this project. Qualifications of the Applicant: Cornell Cooperative Extension is a system of 56 independent unincorporated associations located in every New York State County and in the City of New York. This project is a grass roots lead operation organized by 20 of those independent associations. The lead association, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County has been in continuous operation since 1917. The executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County has been in that position since 1995. The partnering associations selected Rensselaer County and their executive director as the lead agency for the purpose of writing, submitting and coordinating the application of this project. Additionally, the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations have partnered with the Albany, NY, based Public Utility Law Project of New York. (PULP) Whereas Cornell Cooperative Extension provides educational information for use by Broadband subscribers, the Public Utility Law Project has proposed a way of teaching low-income New Yorkers how to afford Broadband access. Combined these two projects will provide information that New Yorkers will want to see and hear on the internet while providing the means for low-income residents to afford access to the internet. Jobs Created and/or Saved: Cornell Cooperative Extension has
a history of saving and encouraging the creation of jobs in the agricultural sectors. The educational and research based information is directly and indirectly responsible for job creation and job sustaining activities throughout New York. This project will directly employ 17 full time equivalent staff in Technology Education, financial management, and community education. Indirectly the project will provide the necessary information that has the potential to maintain and create jobs throughout the agriculture industry by making the time honored agriculture educational information available in a more accessible and user friendly media. The economic development and business development information disseminated and archived on the Cornell Cooperative Extension system will encourage and assist in the development of home based businesses and small businesses by making archived information available 24/7/365 so people can access the information and use the information at any time vs. the traditional methods of talking to or taking a class only during normal work hours. Overall Cost of the Project: Cornell Cooperative Extension and the public Law Project of New York have contributed $1,992,748.00 in matching dollars for this project and anticipates that the upgraded T1 service, archive servers, computer equipment, internet classrooms, mobile internet classroom materials, and staffing will cost $7,698,500.00.