a. The Problem: Only 30% or 12 million of America's 40 million seniors use the Internet. The percentage becomes lower of the poor, less educated and/or minority seniors that actually go online. Few of the 247,000 seniors and other vulnerable populations in the 70 communities reached by this proposal currently use broadband. For all practical purposes, low income seniors and people with disabilities in Puerto Rico are not using the Internet. Our mission is to get them connected. These vulnerable populations are missing out on the many educational, job training, informational and health benefits that Internet usage can bring. That, in turn, costs our society. For example, depression (often caused by isolation) costs the United States $100 billion annually, yet studies show that Internet use by the elderly can cause a 20% reduction in depression. A 2009 Phoenix Center study concludes: 'expanding Internet usage among the elderly may have significant economic payoffs.'

b. Approach to the Problem: We use an innovative but proven Internet adoption program called Connected Living Adoption and Sustainability Program ('CLASP') which ties technology, training and support together in a holistic and senior-specific way. This program directly confronts traditional barriers to Internet use by late adopters like seniors. First, we focus on relevance to the specific priority needs of each individual. For each trainee, we identify the priority interests and experiences that can be advanced through the Internet and then focus on that interest, whether it is staying connected with children and grandchildren, writing and sharing memoirs, accessing information via the web or accessing health care or government services. We start by teaching the basics of e-mail, web access and practical applications relevant to daily living using the simplified Connected Living Internet Portal or standard programs. Our individual and group training then expands foundation skills upon which other and more advanced skills and applications can be built. Second, we make learning easy, convenient and even fun. The CLASP program uses off-line methods (videos, discussion groups) to draw in participants and demonstrate the practical benefits of the online world, and instructional content is oriented to the actual interests of seniors. Most important, Internet awareness-raising and training is conducted by friendly 'Ambassadors,' often in the very housing communities and units where residents live, so learning takes place in comfortable surroundings in a controlled and semi-social setting. Some Connected Living Ambassadors are high school student volunteers, so training creates both inter-generational exchange and a great volunteer/social service experience. Third, we eliminate cost as a barrier to Internet use. Each participant who attends our training programs and passes an Internet literacy and skills evaluation gets a voucher that makes purchasing a computer and Internet connectivity more affordable. Throughout the program, we will make aggressive efforts to minimize the costs of devices, connectivity and instruction during the period of the BTOP subsidy so that seniors will have the advantage of the lowest possible
costs of Internet adoption when they are paying for the costs of service themselves. Our entire program is leading to an 'end game' where new adopters acquire and pay for Internet services within the structure of the marketplace. c. Areas and Populations to be Served. The sites where we will offer the Connected Living Adoption and Sustainability Program are centrally located in 24 regions covering 48 of the 78 Municipalities. Out of the 773,678 seniors in Puerto Rico, we would reach 277,403 representing 36% of the population. Six of our centers are in HUD Designated Difficult Development Areas because of the high construction, land, and utility costs relative to its Area Median Gross Income (AMGI) (Danter Report) In addition, the combined average unemployment rate in these areas is12.28%. Statistics on the geographic distribution of people with disabilities and the unemployed are more difficult to find, but these three vulnerable populations have the lowest usage of the Internet usage of any demographic. Our program will also reach a secondary audience consisting of the remote family, friends and caregivers who need better ways to stay in touch with their loved ones and who, through positive reinforcement and example, keep their loved ones online. Our local partners (municipalities and social service organizations) have compiled detailed information about the demographics and Internet experiences of the constituents they serve in public computing centers. They also are eager for outreach programs to draw in the people who public computing centers can help the most. Under the CLASP project, an aggressive awareness inter generation program will distribute awareness raising materials, invitations to group meetings and Internet training materials to a wide swath of community members. d. Qualifications of the Applicant. MyWay Village, Inc., a Massachusetts based technology and service company, has designed and implemented successful Connected Living training and adoption programs in senior housing settings in Massachusetts, Illinois and other states, and has developed a Connected Living Internet Portal specifically for those who benefit from simpler, easier ways to get connected (See Exhibit D). MyWay Village has detailed documentation regarding its experiences in providing the personal, one-on-one and online instructional programs at the core of this proposed program to senior communities in 2008 and 2009 (See Exhibit E). e. Jobs Created: Each of the 70 training sites in this program will have a dedicated team that will plan and implement outreach, Internet awareness raising and education/training programs in small group and personal training settings. Each team will be led by a full-time a Community Program Manager who will coordinate a team of full and part time "Ambassadors" responsible for training. This program will create over 300 full and part time jobs.