Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: GOBIERNO MUNICIPAL DE CAYEY

Project Title: Centro Tecnologico Comunitario Municipio de Cayey

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_______________________Executive Summary_______________________

The Municipality of Cayey is located in the central area of Puerto Rico, surrounded by La Sierra de Cayey and the Cordillera Central, a mountain range that covers most of the Central part of Puerto Rico. Cayey is spread over 22 wards and has an estimated population of 47,370. The Municipality of Cayey has experienced significant economic growth and development during the last ten years, mostly in the urban center and nearby communities, where the largest density of population is established. The remote wards or barrios of Cayey are home to a significant amount of population that requires attention in order to enhance their educational and economic development. For this reason, we have identified the need for Community Computer Centers at these remote areas, to provide better access to essential services for the community through the use of technology. The Computer Centers will offer a unique delivery mechanism that can empower local communities of Cayey. It is our mission to provide high quality services to the community. We have studied our processes and have identified areas in which we take advantage of the technology available in order to make those processes faster and more accessible to the public. At the present time we have an initiative called Faros del Saber at two communities in the urban area, which are public computer centers that provide internet access, education and training. We have successfully implemented this project, this demonstrates our capability to manage and operate similar projects on remote areas of the Municipality. For the purpose of this grant opportunity, we have identified two remote communities, Farallon and Jajome Bajo, to establish and expand services in a Community Computer Center. Farallon is located at the southeast region of Cayey and has a population of 693 citizens. According to the 2000 Census data, 89 of 693 citizens are attending educational institutions, 200 citizens are on the workforce, 133 persons with impediments, the median income is $12,149 annually and the unemployment rate is 2.9%. The estimated number of potential users of the proposed public computer center is 35-40 citizens. Jajome Bajo is located at the south region of Cayey and has a population of 637 citizens. According to the 2000 Census data, 205 of 637 citizens are attending educational institutions, 164 citizens are on the workforce, 201 persons with impediments, the median income is $11,750 annually and the unemployment rate is 15.3%. The estimated number of potential users of the proposed public computer center is 35-40 citizens. Both remote communities requires special attention and to be provide with the needed services to improve their quality of life and economic development. The establishment of Community Computer Centers in Cayey is key in the economic development and the educational advancement of the community. Due to the existing high demand for these services at the urban area, we have identified the need to expand the services to the rural communities, in order to bring them the same opportunities to access the world of knowledge. The student population of these remote communities spends half of their school life on schools located at
those communities. Once the transition to high school is made, since the schools are located on urban areas, they found big cultural differences, due to the fact that the students from urban areas of the Municipality have had previous experience on the use of computers and access to the technology. Those cultural differences have been a key factor to student desertion problem, with all the consequences this brings, at long term, to our society. In all these communities education level are low. Many young people drop out of schools; others leave home after high schools or college for lack of job opportunities. Rural people deserve opportunities to participate in technological development, and rural communities have few institutions other than community schools that can simultaneously work to built a viable economy and educate people for a better life. The Municipality of Cayey initiative offers a model to help community schools in remote areas move their people and communities toward prosperity. As mentioned before, our main goal with the establishment of these public computer centers is to enhance the educational and economic development of the remote areas of the Municipality. In addition with these enhancements, there are several other ways in which the Municipality can provide support and leadership for economic development, as it is create and saving jobs. This initiative will help save four employments, by transferring these resources to the proposed computer centers. All implementation and planning cost estimates in this proposal represent the best-known data at the time of this writing. Costs were estimated based-on the current public computer center established in the urban area of the Municipality. The overall cost of the proposed project is $160,000.00.