Clarkson University’s Adirondack North Country Initiative for Wired Work (ANCIWW) seeks to leverage federal funds to provide Sustainable Broadband Adoption awareness, training, education, and outreach in and around the Adirondack Park of NYS, with the ultimate goal of creating 14,785 new adopters during the project period, and 2019 new wired jobs by 2019. Broadband adoption in the region is challenged by the extremely remote location of many of the communities, low population density, a high degree of seasonality to both population and business, and shifting demographics of increasing age, lower median incomes, and lower educations rates (Adirondack Park Regional Assessment Project May 2009) that are leading to low adoption rates (Internet Innovation Alliance July 2009) in the limited areas where broadband is available. The ANCIWW strives counter these trends by employing an innovative approach that creates a culture favorable to tele-work, wired entrepreneurship, and broadband enhanced businesses. The Sustainable Broadband Adoption project will create awareness and offer digital literacy and broadband skills training in and around the Adirondack Park, serving as a stimulus for economic development in a manner that is compatible with the unique protected environment. The linking of broadband access with job creation and expansion, coupled with a synergistic alignment with anchor institutions, allows this project to provide the programming, training and awareness that will drive adoption in the communities. The awareness campaign will focus on 6 demographic groups in the park. (1) Small business owners and entrepreneurs will be offered skills training on commercial and open source software they can leverage to grow their business and extend their market beyond the park. (2) Permanent residents of the Park will be provided with digital literacy courses, broadband jobs skills training and job matching services. Our partners in the counties' One Work Source centers will help identify participants and promote our services. (3) Seasonal workers will likewise be given workshops and skills training programs to enable them to extend their employment beyond the seasonal limits they now face. (4) Seasonal residents and visitors will be targeted with awareness campaigns to encourage them to work remotely from the park so that they can extend their stay, and some of the 40% of home owners who live outside the park will call the park home. (5) Employers of Telecommuters will be marketed to and encouraged to tap into the well trained, experienced, efficient, and cost effective workforce being built within 5 hours of 50 million people. (6) Recent College graduates that comprise a demographic with a high adoption rate, and a desire for unique work environments; with 27 colleges in the 12 county region this group will be made aware of the wired job placement services of this project. Clarkson University is uniquely qualified to launch and endeavor of this scale with its experience of managing tens of millions in research dollars annually, and has established strict compliance, training, and audit programs to ensure efficient and appropriate use of funds and program resources. Clarkson
University’s Shipley Center for Innovation has the leadership experience and the regional connections necessary to make a project of this scale successful. A key goal of this project is that it remains sustainable beyond the life of federal funding. In order to achieve this goal, the ANCIWW has established a large network of key partners from across the region in public, private and non-profit sectors that are committed to supporting this effort. The project will coordinate delivery of programming with North Country Community College, regional k-12 schools through the Board of Cooperative Education Services, and the ANCIWW Public Computer Center in Lake Placid, NY. In addition, the ANCIWW will hire an executive director (ED) whose mandate is to make the project self-sustaining within this funding cycle. The ED will develop a strategic fund-raising plan to outline funding goals and objectives, and identify major funding sources to pursue. Also lending to the sustainability and usability of the centers will be the extensive use of open source software. This will not only allow the ANCIWW to contain software costs, but will introduce our participants to a large suite of software that they can use to enhance their business without the ensuing costs. The overall impact of this $878,514 project will be transformational for the region. The Adirondack region has been on a slow decline over the past 30 years as industry has shifted out of the region and new development has not materialized.