Introduction: In public comments at an outreach session in Dearborn, Michigan on February 5, 2010, Assistant Secretary Larry Strickling noted that 15 percent of the unserved and underserved U.S. population are in communities of American Indians and Alaskan Natives, whereas only 2 percent of the first round funding under the BTOP program that had been announced at that point was focused on Native Americans and Alaska Natives. Executive Summary: The recent ground-breaking study, 'New Media, Technology and Internet Use in Indian Country: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses,' found that there is a widespread desire in Native America to have access to 21st Century communication technologies. However, without knowledge of broadband's availability or affordability, many people in AIAN populations lack familiarity with the internet or have not received computer skills training, it is apparent that a comprehensive and culturally appropriate awareness and education effort is required in order for broadband usage to be truly adopted by a significant portion of Native Americans and Alaska Natives. Our program is designed specifically for this purpose. The American/Indian/Alaska Native Broadband Outreach Awareness Program will support the statutory objectives of the BTOP program by creating awareness, education and training opportunities for Native Americans and Alaska Natives. The program is designed to efficiently and effectively reach virtually all AIAN audiences living on and in proximity to the 25 largest Indian reservations across the U.S., as well as approximately two-thirds of all identified off-reservation American Indian and Alaska Native populations. The program will serve as a template for awareness and education campaigns for the various broadband infrastructure programs being implemented in currently unserved/underserved AIAN communities. In conjunction with C&D Associates, an on-site training program to teach computer skills and internet protocols will be offered at Indian schools, libraries and community centers which will reach a minimum of 30,000 Tribal members. Our approach is innovative because the communications strategy and resulting messaging will be custom tailored exclusively for the American Indian and Alaska Native audiences that we reach. As a marketing communications firm with substantial experience in multicultural marketing and public awareness programs, we understand how important it is to get the message right, and that the same message does not work for everyone. Advertising concepts that may be readily embraced by the general U.S. population are often ineffective or worse, counterproductive or inadvertently offensive when directed at minority audiences with very different cultural attributes and traditions. The messaging development process will include the input of American Indian and Alaska Native communications experts, and the development team will include subject matter experts versed in Native American cultures. Once we have developed several potential creative approaches, we will vet them through creative tests made up of AIAN audience panels prior to campaign rollout. This industry best practice will
ensure that our messaging is on target, and motivates the audiences to want to learn more about internet connectivity, how it can enrich the lives of individual Native Americans, and sustain cultural traditions. We anticipate that the project will reach more than 3.2 million Native Americans. The overall cost for the proposed project is $25,240,000.