Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: MEXICAN INSTITUTE OF GREATER HOUSTON, INC.

Project Title: Sustainable Broadband Adoption through Training for Hispanic Adults

Project Type: Sustainable Broadband Adoption

_______________________Executive Summary_______________________

A. Need: According to a recent Pew report, the three primary reasons for lack of a broadband subscription (where such options are available) are that people perceive broadband to be too difficult to use, not relevant to their lives, and in the context of these factors, too expensive. This is especially true for vulnerable populations, such as Hispanic families, which often have the additional barrier of language to overcome, and low income populations, which have lost significant income sources in this recession. In accordance to stated BTOP goals, this project aims to address the need to: - provide broadband access, education, awareness, training, equipment and support to an organization serving vulnerable populations, and - stimulate the demand for broadband, economic growth and job creation. The Mexican Institute of Greater Houston has established a network of 100+ Community Learning Centers (CLCs) offering instruction from a curriculum of Basic Technology Literature courses in Spanish. This program has proved successful in promoting active broadband usage and better job skills among the area's Hispanic population (7200 graduates since 2002). However, the economic recession has created an environment of increased demand and decreased available funding. B. Approach: Our project will: - Maintain the existing MIGH CLC network in the Greater Houston area by covering the projected funding shortfall, and - Provide funds to expand our curriculum contents, geographic reach, and target demographics, to address increased demand; A key factor for this success is that the CLCs are located in community anchor institutions such as K-12 schools, allowing recruitment among parents/family members and creating an environment of active community involvement which encourages retention. We propose to retain this model as we expand. The curriculum consists of courses with classroom instruction at CLCs (at least 100 hours) and tutorial aid (via the Internet), leading to a Certificate recognized in Texas. C. Geography/Demographics: The proposed project areas, as detailed in the main part of the proposal, are predominantly Hispanic. As examples, we mention that Houston ISD is 60%, Dallas ISD is 67% Hispanic and Austin is 57% Hispanic. D. Qualifications: The MIGH is a non-profit 501c3 organization, founded in 1991, providing hands on and distance education courses in Spanish to low income adults in the Greater Houston area. The MIGH record is that of a pioneer in the U.S. and leader in bringing basic computer technology education to Hispanic Parents. Since 2002, more than 7200 parents have graduated with a certificate by Texas-accredited Tecnol'gico de Monterrey of Mexico and MIGH after attending a 100 hour course on Basic Computer Technology (Internet use, e-mail, Microsoft Office programs) and/or a 50 hour HTML Web site design course. As a result, they are now consumers of broadband access services, have better paid jobs and/or are starting their own small businesses. They are net contributors to the economic growth of their region. Our own history demonstrates that we are qualified to take our mission to the next level. E. Jobs: Using the OMB rubric of ~1 job year

...
created/$92,000 of federal expenditure, the minimum number of jobs created will be 22. We anticipate that number to be higher because of small business training. We estimate jobs saved to be about 4000 due to increased skills of workers and the expansion itself of the MIGH program. Precisely due to the recession more and more persons have plenty of time now to attend classes to be ready for the re-hiring phase we are all expecting. In order to motivate our students and keep their self-esteem high we select the best ones for additional training to become part of our instructors' team or online tutors. Therefore we also create jobs.

F: Overall cost: The overall cost of the project is $2,904,299 including $2,032,540 in requested BTOP funds and $871,759 (30%) in matching funds, for a total cost of $519/trainee over the course of the project. The increased family income produced as a result of getting this training, estimated to be about $6,300.00 per trainee a year, plus the economic multiplier effect of those dollars being spent (injected) in the local economy would produce a positive economic impact of about $40Million in that period. Based on our past experience with successful results we know we will produce and improvement in broadband adoption with a goal of training 5600 adults in the three years of its ARRA funded implementation. We expect no less than 70% percent of these adults to remain active broadband subscribers.