Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: ALBUQUERQUE, CITY OF

Project Title: Let's A.B.C! (All Be Connected) at Albuquerque Bernalillo County Libraries

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

Albuquerque is located in the middle of the major metropolitan area (pop: 845,913) with a city population of 521,999 as of 2008. While it is the smallest county in the state, the Albuquerque metro area is the 34th largest city in the U.S. with approximately half of the state's population residing there. Bernalillo County ranks as the 59th largest metro area in the United States. Projected population estimates indicate that from 2020-2025 New Mexico will be among the most rapidly growing states in the West. With growth rates twice that of the national average, the West will continue to expand through both planned development and redevelopment. Bernalillo County, and certainly Albuquerque as the state's major city, will see this expansion within a short few years. In fact, by the year 2035, the Bernalillo County population is expected to expand to 1.2 million people. The designated public library service area in Bernalillo County (NM) covers nearly 1200 square miles. A unique contemporary feature of urban life in Albuquerque is the presence of several extant and contiguous early Hispanic settlements and neighborhoods that remain rural in nature as vestiges of small historical and agriculturally-based communities. Within those communities, residents maintain close family ties on land holdings that frequently reach back to original land grant appropriations from the Spanish and Mexican periods of New Mexico's history (1598-1848). In addition, the city and the county are bordered by traditional Native American communities including the 8 southern Pueblos and Tojajiilee (NM), a Navajo community. All of these communities border the county and are within a 50 mile radius of the metropolitan center of Albuquerque. These communities are further served by the library system through its branch libraries and online resources. The African American community has had a vital and robust presence since the turn of the century and has centralized in Albuquerque. Many of the original settlers of this community come from ancestral backgrounds as Buffalo soldiers and early residents of Vado (NM). The first African American community in New Mexico, Vado was founded just south of Las Cruces in the late 1880s. In addition, community expansion within the city (and in some parts of the county) has been heavily impacted by growth in new immigrant families and a growing Asian community that began arriving through resettlement programs in the 1970s and continues through today. With such diversity of population, long community and ancestral histories, and with the majority of the state's population located in Bernalillo County, it is no surprise that overall existing resources are stretched to the maximum. This is further complicated with New Mexico ranking number three (19.4%) in the country for families living below the poverty level (national 9.2%). Bernalillo County and Albuquerque also have significant populations below the poverty level (Bernalillo Co, 14.4% and Albuquerque, 10%; average income in NM, $37,396; Bernalillo county $34,495, and Albuquerque, $43,667). State and local government resources are severely stretched to reach such diverse and long distance needs. Historically
underfunded and lacking sufficient support resources, grant funding significantly impacts the Albuquerque/ Bernalillo County Library system's ability to upgrade to the appropriate levels for this service area. Working though its network of 17 branch libraries this grant expands resource access to a population base with ongoing and rapidly increasing programmatic, training and educational needs. The project will focus on a broad range of internet and web-based provisions (including hardware and software) as established by the project management team. This will enable an increase in services to the general public as well as under-served and vulnerable communities [including (but not limited to) children, seniors, the disabled, the economically disadvantaged, homeless and jobless, as well as bi-and multi-lingual (ESL) populations]. Between FY2005 and FY2009 the library experienced a growth in the number of building patron visits by 5% annually. Taking 5% as a conservative annual growth rate, by 2015 the anticipated number of library patrons will be 3.4 million, an increase of 74% from 2005-2015. With one new branch library in the planning stage to service the fast growing west-side communities, five other areas also require facilities. The project management teams (including administration, Informational Technology and support staff) readily accept the challenges of leadership in the implementation and sustainable activities over a three year grant period. This team has demonstrated an excellent track record of sustainable activities that has sought reasonable, economical and efficient solutions to library and technological challenges as these challenges have presented themselves and as funding has become available. Among the most recent activities as examples are: Administration and Support Staff o Maintaining a commitment to excellent public service. o Basing decision making on benefits to the customer/user (internal and external). o Maintaining an organizational viewpoint that technology provides the key to effective service which includes providing the necessary IT employees to complete the work in a timely manner. o Sustaining a reputation as 'early adaptors' (i.e., first fully automated branch opened in 1987 and implementation of self checkout in 1995). Informational Technology o Seeking new customer services (Wi-Fi service to customers, 2008). o Providing implementation of a system wide (17 libraries) public computer management system with only 3 IT FTE staff (2002). o Seeking grant opportunities for development of the system (Gates Library Initiative, 1999). o Migrated system wide to Innovative Interfaces (1998) o Installed the first public access computer in each branch (1995) o Implemented the GEAC 8000 integrated library system (1984). A successful grant project is dependent on many factors. This library system has demonstrated the capability, willingness, energy and necessity to see this project to a rapid conclusion on behalf of its many 'publics' and constituencies. Therefore, we request a project federal funding amount of $1.92 Million to complete the tasks and project as outlined in the proposal budget for Years 1 and 2 that compliments In-Kind and Matching funds.