Executive Summary

PROBLEM STATEMENT Madison, Wisconsin, is a community in transition. It has a national reputation as a very livable city that benefits greatly from its two anchor institutions: the University of Wisconsin and state government. However, a fast-growing segment of the city's population is unable to fully benefit from local employment opportunities due to a lack of education and job skills. During the last decade, the poverty rate in the Madison area has increased nine times faster than in comparable US cities (Brookings Institute). During 2000-08, Madison experienced a 29% increase in the number of low-income residents moving into the area. Now one in six Madison residents lives below the federal poverty standard of $22,600 for a family of four. Even more disturbing are indicators that point to an increasing poverty rate in the years to come as Madison children grow into adulthood. One of every two Madison school students now participates in the free and reduced-cost lunch program compared to one in five students in 1990. Madison schools currently have a majority of low-income students. The crime rate in the Madison area has increased significantly in the last decade. Currently, the Madison area is statistically at the national average both in property crime and violent crime. Madison Police Department estimates there are currently 900 active youth gang members, with over 500 more youth identified as being associated with a gang. For example, five years ago two Hispanic gangs were operating in the Madison area; now there are seven. The current economic downturn is straining the ability of Madison organizations to provide the services needed by families in crisis. Local agencies are receiving fewer state dollars due to Wisconsin's $6 billion deficit, one of the largest deficits per capita in the nation. In the Madison area, 763 companies downsized their workforce in the past year. This compares to 355 companies that downsized in 2008. One example of the strain on services is the more than 8,000 increase in the household visits to River Food Pantry last year. The local Salvation Army recently had 81 applicants, one third with college degrees, applying for a part-time coordinator position. Poverty is not restricted to one area of Madison. City leaders, trying to reduce a growing geographic split between poor and middle class citizens, instituted a policy of placing low-income housing in pockets citywide. While this policy has not eliminated the income disparity in neighborhoods, it means that poverty is present in many Madison neighborhoods. Because of this widespread distribution of poverty, community-based programs need to address community problems on a citywide scope. In the past two decades, Madison has developed a network of community centers that extends city-wide. These community centers serve as neighborhood anchors for citizen access to a wide variety of services, including job searching and training, recreational and educational programs, and neighborhood dialogs. Madison community centers, and many public libraries, have historically provided limited broadband access to low-income Madison residents who do not have computers or Internet access at home. The
current capabilities of these centers do not begin to match the growing number of Madison residents, particularly low-income individuals, who could benefit from ready access to technology to support basic family needs: e.g., access to job listings. The primary focus of the MAPCCI project is to upgrade broadband access and computer technology at these centers and significantly increase the number of low-income residents using this expanded capability. OVERALL APPROACH TO ADDRESSING THE NEED

Goodman Community Center is leading the Madison Area Public Computing Center Initiative (MAPCCI), which includes 10 public computer laboratories and 4 additional nonprofit partners. This initiative addresses two inter-related community issues: (1) unemployment and (2) youth engagement. These issues have been chosen because meaningful programs hosted at public computer centers can have an impact both in communities and in the lives of individuals. 1. Bandwidth: The community centers' Internet connections are inadequate when their computer labs are full. This will be even more limiting as some centers make more workstations available to the public. In conjunction with two other BTOP Comprehensive Community Infrastructure projects (one funded and one in preparation), MAPCCI will increase available bandwidth to community centers. 2. Update labs: Public-access workstations at community centers will be upgraded to take advantage of media-rich Internet resources. This upgrade will ease workstation maintenance. Also, remote management will be available at each lab. 3. Connect to community center educational programs and online resources: Providing bandwidth and computers is not sufficient to make the workstations a rich resource for the community. Many of the low-income residents need training to take advantage of these resources. This project works with community partners (largely nonprofits with youth and employment-related programs) to introduce Internet resources to residents of low-income neighborhoods. This will help sustain efforts beyond the availability of federal funds. AREA(S) TO BE SERVED; POPULATION OF THE TARGET AREA(S), INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION; AND THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF POTENTIAL USERS OF YOUR PUBLIC COMPUTER CENTER(S). Community centers funded by United Way of Dane County and by the City of Madison are located in low-income neighborhoods. Because of the wide distribution of poverty in the Madison area, these community centers have the potential to serve 58% of Madison's population of 232,000 people (2008 estimate). Estimated another way, the total participation rate for this project's two year period is estimated to be 119,000 participants, of which 90% percent will be low-income residents. Over the past five years, the Goodman Community Center has successfully managed over $2.4 million federal dollars. These dollars are administered along with several other sources of funding, including the City of Madison and United Way of Dane County. Goodman Community Center has been serving low-income eastside Madison residents since 1954 and has recently raised $12,000,000 to purchase, renovate and occupy a 47,000 square-foot facility. It serves 3,000 youth annually. Last year 145,000 residents, 70% of whom are low-income, visited the center. Goodman Community Center will contract with DANEnet to provide technology support and training to the entire network in the MAPCCI project. DANEnet, a nonprofit organization, has been providing technology support to community centers for 15 years and has built or maintained 14 public-access computer labs in Dane County. At Goodman Community Center specifically, DANEnet has built or rebuilt the computer lab four times at three different locations with successive generations of technology. JOBS TO BE SAVED OR CREATED By working with existing agencies, the number of jobs created and the longevity of those jobs is maximized. The community centers and agency partners in this project are all strongly committed to reducing unemployment and increasing youth engagement. All partners are well established and are more likely
to be able to sustain their programs at the participating centers than would programs that were created just for this opportunity. Using the OMB standard of one job-year created per $92,000 expenditure, the minimum number of jobs created will be 14. We estimate jobs saved or gained to be 1,500 due to improved skills of workers. OVERALL COST OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT $1,295,579