Executive Summary

a) The decay of inner city neighborhoods plaguing our nation with high crime, graffiti, low educational achievement, and poverty are not issues that can readily be solved by government intervention programs. Technology offers new hope for communities to join efforts in building a healthy community and addressing these key concerns. The West Fresno Technology Initiative will help address these critical needs by providing: ' Access, training and technology support ' Employment training ' Financial and digital literacy ' Improved communication with Community-Based Organizations and Faith Based Organizations. A June 2009 study conducted by the California Public Policy Institute indicates the digital divide is slowly closing. However, there is still a disparity in computer usage among African American and the Latino population, as well as by residents with household incomes below $40,000. Approximately 82% of residents in West Fresno have incomes below $40,000. West Fresno is part of the 20th Congressional District which ranked as the last district or 436th in the nation based on a 2008 study using longevity, educational attainment and poverty. The grant will provide new job opportunities and long-term employment solutions, by offering job training and employment readiness skills essential for workforce preparation which will help change the quality of life for area residents. b) The West Fresno Technology Initiative will expand the City of Fresno Park, After School, Recreation and Community Services (PARCS) Department neighborhood centers, the Fresno Public Library West Branch, and Edison High School's computer centers, and touch the lives of over 70,000 underserved residents. The West Fresno Technology Initiative meets the BTOP statutory purposes: 1. Improve Broadband to underserved areas in zip code 93706. Fiber Optic Cable will be installed to serve two new neighborhood centers located in highly underserved and under resourced communities. This will improve Ethernet connection to the neighborhood centers and increase community access and collaboration with Community-Based Organizations (CBO's) and Faith Based Organizations (FBO's). 2. Provide Broadband education, awareness, training, equipment and support at PARCS neighborhood centers. The PARCS Jobs Initiative program will offer employment readiness workshops and job retention services to vulnerable populations. 3. Provide Broadband service to unserved residents. Four PARCS mobile vehicles, improved with satellite technology and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for public safety personnel use during emergencies, will be used on an ongoing basis by children and senior citizens for educational programs. These vehicles will also be used to provide educational enrichment, nutrition, art, science, fitness, environmental science, and technology programs to unserved residents in Fresno, Madera and Tulare Counties. 4. Stimulate demand for Broadband service in West Fresno underserved and unserved areas. The West Fresno Technology Initiative will provide internet access to community and faith based organizations in zip code 93706. These organizations will work in partnership with PARCS by offering in-
kind support that includes facilities, mentoring and outreach, English as a Second Language (ESL), General Educational Development (GED), Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), financial literacy, mentorship, access to immunization, health advocacy, and numerous other programs. These services, together with the job training and new technology at neighborhood centers, will address the racial digital divide in West Fresno, improve economic security, and promote upward mobility. c) The Initiative will serve seven different U.S. Census Tracts including: Census Tract 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 which had a total population of 23,693 in 1999, per the 2000 U.S. Census. The demographic consists of 3% White, 37% African American, 48% Hispanic, 11% Asian, and 1% Native American. The Median Househould Income (MHI) is $15,482. As evidenced by an informal survey of our PARCS After-School program participants, at least 90% of participants do not have a computer at home and 99% of participants noted they would use the computers center more often if they were connected to high speed internet. The computers currently available at the City neighborhood centers are End of Life (EOL) computers donated by City departments. Most of these computers are at their very end and are in dire need of replacement. New equipment for each neighborhood center will include new computers, printers, drop down screens for job training, and assistive technology. The new computer equipment, faster Ethernet access, and new public outreach, will substantially improve the overall number of users. The total estimated number of visits by underserved individuals to the computer centers, parks and mobile vehicles sites are 70,000 annual visits. This would include outreach to 25,000 underserved adult populations and youth, including African-Americans, Hmong and Latino immigrant populations. d) The City of Fresno is uniquely qualified to successfully implement this project. The City has qualified, professional staff that will oversee and administer this grant. Our Information Services Department (ISD) will work with the Parks, After School Recreation, and Community Services (PARCS) Department staff to implement this Initiative. The City of Fresno currently administers numerous Federal-funded programs throughout the City including grants for transportation, affordable housing, and community development. The City of Fresno recently completed the Dickey Youth Development Center at a cost of $5,691,311, and the Victoria West Park Improvements at a total cost of $4,220,500. Both construction projects were funded by State grants and City Park Bond funds, and are evidence of the City of Fresno PARCS Department's professional expertise. Additionally, the City of Fresno follows Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles on all grants. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has recognized the City of Fresno with its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. e) The estimated number of jobs that will be saved or created with this grant is 120. Ongoing job training will help place 100 or more participants in jobs. Improving the technology at the centers will also offer employment opportunities for young adults and adults that are currently participating in the County of Fresno (ARRA) Transitional Subsidized Employment Program (TSEP). At least 100 TSEP participants will be employed by the City PARCS Department, including six at the neighborhood computer center sites. The grant would also help retain PARCS jobs that would have been eliminated if not for this grant. f) The overall cost of the proposed West Fresno Initiative project is $1,235,000. This includes: Building renovations to improve the computer centers, and modifications to address American's With Disabilities Act (ADA) limitations. The proposal also includes the installation of fiber optic technology, new computers and technology equipment, including assistive technology, and personnel costs for job training and technology education.