Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Project Title: Incubator Technology Training Program (ITTP)
Project Type: Sustainable Broadband Adoption

Executive Summary

Background: American Samoa is the only US flag Territory located south of the equator, 2,300 miles southwest of Hawaii and consists of seven islands, with a total land mass of just over 76 square miles; located in the tropics, 14 degrees south of the equator and 160-173 degrees west longitude, American Samoa is warm and humid place. This group of islands is located approximately 2,300 miles southwest of Hawaii and 1,700 northeast of Auckland, New Zealand. It is the eastern part of a 290-mile long island chain, and shares the same heritage, traditions, and culture with Samoa, an independent nation. The main island of Tutuila accounts for three-fourths of the total land area and home to 90% of the population of nearly 65,000. Of these, 89% are Samoan (Polynesian), 6% are other (primarily Asian), 4% are Tongans, and 2% are Caucasians. American Samoa has been a territory of the United States since 1900. The Territory’s economic base is limited and fragile with almost 75% of its revenues derive from federal government and two tuna canneries. However, there are about 500-600 small businesses in the private sector, which are primarily in retail and service related operations, with a growing number in manufacturing, fisheries and tele-communications industries, which is indicative of the Territory’s increasingly technical and sophisticated population. Although the Territory’s economy has since evolved and has embraced many elements of a western-style market economy, for the past 50 years, the Territory’s economic structure has remained virtually unchanged and her economic growth is persistently stagnant. Need Statement: as surmised by the background description, the three underlying issues identified are: (1) ‘American Samoa’s Economic base is very limited and therefore, delicate’; (2) the Territory’s geographical location is too isolated; and, (3) the Territory’s workforce (although young and vibrant), is under-developed. These barriers collectively have impeded any reasonable effort to tackle both workforce and economic development issues, unless they are addressed prudently and simultaneously. Solution Statement: In short, to develop (or expand) ones’ economic-base, prudent application of technology, at a reasonable cost, would no doubt do it; but to maintain it, a skillful workforce, in sufficient numbers, must be in place in order to support it. Thus, the proposed project aims to expand business opportunities (of the ‘right-kind’) in order to increase the size of Territory’s economic-base. To accomplish this, the Territorial government must attract outside business investments that are technology-based and driven such as: Tourism Industry, Call Centers, Computer Software and Hardware development/Repair, Tele-medicine, engineering design works, etc. Prerequisite to all of this is American Samoa’s infrastructure (using Broadband capability) must be on "par" with state-side or industrialized countries to entice companies in order to invest in the Territory. This noted deficiency is currently being addressed by an award of $89 Million grant/loan to the American Samoa Tele Communication Authority (ASTCA). While moving the Islands physically closer to US mainland or
else where is impractical, the effective application of technology, as noted, would also close the 'digital-
gab" among countries and their respective populations. Thus, ready-access of high speed technology to
the wider population is the prudent way to resolve this issue. With technology infrastructure currently
upgraded, the Territory is now poised to develop its local pool of skilled workers in all aspects of
technology, taking advantage of the Territory's young and vibrant workforce as well as the availability of
jobs created from upgrading the technology 'infrastructure'. Moreover, being part of the United States,
it is easier for American based companies to establish in the Territory, given the availability of good
English speaking population, without 'accent' plus, a younger population exposed to basic technology
skills are baseline ingredients for success. The proposed Incubator Technology Training Program (ITTP) is
designed to be inclusive by extending training opportunities to the widest possible population:
(a) training of incumbent workers already in the system to upgrade and formalize their skills with
certification; (b) training of new entrant to the workforce; (c) training of adult population and dislocated
workers for 'retooling' purposes; (e) training of veterans and previous incarcerated populations for 're-
entry' into civilian society; and, training of the younger population with basic technology skills before
entering the workforce. These populations are vital to the success of the program and purports to yield
900 incumbent and new entrant trained technicians that would help sustain the viability of our local
infrastructure thereby, retaining and creating new jobs along the way and, help develop the overall
economy to the next generation. It's estimate that the project will save 400 jobs and create 500 new
opportunities within the technology field. One of ITT's strengths will bring to the project its internal
community networking committees, which encompasses all of Eleven (11) existing programs: Private
Industry Advisory Council (PIAC); Public Entities Advisory Council (PEAC); Apprenticeship Training
Program (ATP); and Eleven (11) standing Committees that review its curriculum annually. ITT also serve
at the Territorial Workforce Development Council and its Dean Chair's the Governor’s Economic
Advisory Council on Workforce, Education and Technology Committees. As lead agency, ASCC was
established in 1970 and is the only fully US accredited higher learning institute in the Territory that
offers academic and technical subjects, with earned academic credits transferable to mainland
institutions. ASCC has an open admission policy, co-educational post-secondary system comprised of
Land Grant, English & Samoan Languages, and Trades & Technology courses, offering programs leading
to associate degrees and certificate of proficiencies as well as professional licensures and certifications
that are recognized throughout United States. Moreover, ASCC has managed over 1,000s of projects
worth millions of dollars in the past from USDOE, USDIO, USDHHS, Gear-up, Upward Bound, and Capital
Improvement Projects (CIP), etc.; thus, earning the respect of its accreditation institutions, including a
proven record of working with both private and public entities with programs that supports training for
the community. ASCC faculty, in excess of 85% hold Masters and Doctoral degrees from variety of
institutions, with a student-faculty ratio of 1:20, with class limitation to 25 in size'exceptions are in
technical, nursing, and other specialized programs where class sizes are 12. Recently, division of ITT was
elevated as an 'Institution' within ASCC's hierarchy and the Dean's position was assigned his own staff.
Then, ITT acquired all technological functions of the campus including Pacific Institute of Technology
Computer Academy (PITCA) and Information Communication Technology (ICT). The Dean, one of three
Deans on the campus, reports directly to the President of the College, who answers to a seven member
Board of Higher Education (BHE) appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Territorial legislature.
Bill Emmsley, Dean of ITT will serve at the principal investigator to the project. Dean Emmsley is a full-
professor at ASCC and has committed his professional career to the development of non-traditional teaching and learning models. Dean Emmsley has managed multiple WIA grants for the State of Hawaii and built a successful Incubator project in Honolulu, serving low income and Native Americans. Dean Emmsley was appointed by two separate Mayors of Honolulu to be the Chairperson of OWIB local office. The Dean also established the 'School of Engineering Technology (SET) and serves on the Governor’s Economic Advisory Council as Chair to Workforce, Education and Technology Committees. He also published a strategic plan entitled, 'Assessment & Strategic Vision' for Vocational Education in the Territory, which paved the way for transformation. ASCC/ITT and its partners, via ITTP is proposing a comprehensive technology-based training program which will cover basic computer skills, basic electronics/electrical technical training, fiber optics training, computer networking and repair systems. The proposed project will improve Territory's technology capacity; and, build Territory's capacity to conduct and deliver related trainings generating pool of skilled technicians, meeting the needs of industries experiencing high growth and high demand targeted areas. To accomplish the proposed project, ASCC/ITT is requesting $3,000,000.00 of federal share of funds, leveraging $600,000.00 of non-federal in-kind match. This is a 3 year project.