Applicant Name: POWELL EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS

Project Title: Broadband Educational Access in Life Reinvestment and STEM (BEARS)

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

_______________________Executive Summary_______________________

The Broadband Educational Access in Life Reinvestment and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) program, also known as BEARS is aimed at providing privileged broadband access to Baltimore City Communities in Maryland through strategic partnerships with anchoring institutions that includes minority small-businesses, faith-based organizations, minority health care providers, schools, and community centers. The proposed program seeks to address the needs of the urban, underserved, and economically distressed areas within Baltimore City that include, the Upton/Druid Heights, Arlington, Greater Mondawin, Mount Washington/Coldspring, Harlem Park, Belair-Edison, Poppleton/Hollins Market/ The Terraces, Southwest Baltimore, Midway/Coldstream, Chinquapin Park/Belvedere, and Northeast Baltimore/Guilford/Homeland communities by utilizing faith based organizations, health care facilities, and community centers as hubs for high speed internet access and to promote broadband adoption. Maryland has been an innovator in broadband access and Baltimore City is a developed urban area with extensive broadband availability. Currently, Baltimore is the eighth most wired city in America and according to Forbes Magazine ranks 4 in broadband access. In the urban, underserved communities in Baltimore, the problem isn"t access, it"s adoption. For every 1000 households, only 200-400 (less than 50%) have adopted broadband use. Baltimore has 18 broadband providers which include well-established companies such as Comcast and Sprint. However, these providers charge $500-$600 per year for fees, and even higher for higher internet speeds (ie. Download speeds >50MB/s), these fees are considered a hardship for many residents in Baltimore City. And some providers like Verizon fail to offer privileged broadband (ie. FiOS) to Baltimore City neighborhoods. Although many local residents, businesses, and neighborhood organizations within Baltimore have a vast selection of broadband providers to choose from, many are unable to afford, experience slow access or just fail to utilize these resources. Hence, with the BEARS program, Powell Educational Consultants along with its partners, will provide services to improve broadband adoption among Baltimore City residents. Powell Educational Consultants (PEC), LLC, a minority-owned small-business that is committed to providing quality educational services since 2003, firmly believes that when one becomes broadband literate it empowers them to become innovators and inventors, self reliant and logical thinkers and technology proficient problems solvers when combined with STEM training. Building upon their extensive experience in educational preparation, training, certification, and STEM summer program enrichment, PEC has recently partnered with local community anchor organizations to expand the services they offer to include STEM-based consultation, life-skill training, professional certification, and health information distribution and awareness. With the addition of these new services, PEC has positioned itself to apply for the Comprehensive Communities Infrastructure Broadband Technology Opportunities Program.
Grant supported under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The proposed funds will provide broadband access to the following six (6) schools, four (4) faith-based organizations, three (3) community centers, two (2) minority healthcare facilities. In conjunction with our broadband access anchor institutions, we are partnering with KANN Partners, a majority architectural firm, who will be assisted by a women-owned firm Carroll Engineering, Inc. for structural and civil engineering services and a minority-owned firm, Johnson Consulting Engineers, for mechanical and electrical engineering services. All of which serve underserved and underprivileged communities. Our list of partnering institutions include: Local Schools: Fredrick Douglass High School Harlem Park Campus (Harlem Park Elementary and Harlem Park Middle School) Vivien T. Thomas Medical Arts Academy Steuart Hill School Baltimore Talent Development High School Augusta Fells-Savage Institute of Visual Arts Faith-Based Organizations: Beth-El Temple Church of Christ Shiloh Church of God 7th Day St. Martins Church of Christ Synergy Center Community Centers: Communities Organized to Improve Life (COIL), Inc. Franklin Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Center (FEAC) The Zeta Sigma Community Foundation Health Care Facilities: Dr. Jacayln Blackwell-White Pediatric Center Life Care Plus PEC tenures this grant proposal not to become an economic power house in the community, but to escalate through broadband technology what we have achieved on a smaller scale over the past ten years. PEC proposes to promote broadband adoption by developing modules, tutorials, and sponsoring community forums for educational advancement, life-skills training, health awareness and professional certification via high speed internet. The following approach will be taken to ensure privileged broadband access and adoption to underserved communities within the metropolitan Baltimore Area: 1. Implementation of a broadband infrastructure at each anchor institution 2. Centralization of efforts facilitated at the COIL with management oversight by PEC 3. Creation of online educational training for GED, SAT, and MCAT preparation and tutorials for Praxis certification 4. Creation of online life skill training and certification in areas including, but not limited to job searching and placement, understanding financial management, learning adult basic life competencies, and assessing information. 5. Creation of online tutorials and webinars on various health topics that focuses on minority populations. 6. Institution of community forums at faith-based organization locations and community centers. 7. Implementation of a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math)-based summer program for youth. 8. Implementation of cutting edge Biometrics to track, secure, document and perform data collection at all anchor institutions. With broadband access available at 15 anchor institutions, the community impact encompasses 32.4 square miles, 63,166 number of households, and 3,511 of businesses. The BEARS program requests $46,752,917 dollars to support the eligible expenses for construction, renovation, procurement, management, and implementation of project activities. This program intends to establish 36 distance learning centers, 3 video conference rooms, 629 new jobs, 516 indirect jobs, job training and placement of 725 individuals, educational preparation to over 1350 youth and adults per year, and life skill training to over 5000 community residents per year. By the end of the grant approximately 313 jobs will be saved. In order to meet program goals, PEC has partnered with Sprint and Icetech. As a BEARS partner, Sprint will be the broadband service provider implementing both wireline and wireless solutions and Icetech will manage the IT resources and needs. Sprint is a formidable wireless service broadband provider within the Baltimore Metropolitan area. By leveraging partnerships with last mile providers, Sprint has recently established a 4G wireless network capability in Baltimore, known as 4G mobile broadband. Mobile broadband will allow true broadband in urban areas where building fiber
networks would not be cost effective or unavailable. Sprint will provide 3G and 4G wireless broadband access for the smaller community partner facilities and wireline services for our larger community partner facilities. Currently, Sprint is the only wireless carrier offering the 4G network which provides speeds up to 10x faster than 3G networks. Baltimore was the first market to launch 4G back in late 2008 and PEC has been able to partner with Sprint to provide this technology to our community partners and schools. Icetech is a 20 year old cutting edge information technology firm, specializing in, web development, web hosting, database solutions, and development of advanced information systems. The company provides high quality, cost-effective technical solutions and consulting to both government and commercial clients. As a minority small-business, Icetech has a proven track record with implementing effective IT solutions. Through key partnerships with Sprint and Icetech, PEC will leverage its educational acumen with their technology savvy.