

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Utica, New York

Project Title: City of Utica Public Computer Center Program

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

The City of Utica Public Computer Center Program, under the management of the Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Utica, New York (UMHA), will conduct a three year broadband technology initiative designed to 1) expand community broadband access points through the establishment of three new computer centers, 2) provide computer literacy training through existing centers, 3) provide job training to unemployed public housing residents in networking skills through a partnership with CISCO Systems; 4) increase access of low-income people to existing health and education programs web-based applications. Our program consists of a collaborative of local colleges, private sector companies, and community organizations dedicated to bridging the digital divide in our community.

Participants to be served by the project will be public housing tenants, low-income people, and Utica's large immigrant community. Many of these residents are disconnected from the Internet and computer applications due to the lack of broad public access to computers in public locations, lack of technical training, and limited computer literacy education. Through our program, residents will be provided with convenient neighborhood access points to take full advantage of broadband technologies for job development, education, and civic engagement.

Through this initiative, a total of 545 residents will access the computer center programs and participate in training programs.

Our current Neighborhood Network Center grant, which will be expiring later this year, is successfully meeting their project outcomes. The UMHA has extensive experience in developing and implementing job training and resident supportive service programs and has already in place the program infrastructure to carry out the proposed program. We have created the necessary screening, intake, curriculum, and service protocols to provide computer and job training services to residents.

The UMHA is the major provider of subsidized housing in the City of Utica and operates public housing units as well as a Housing Choice rental assistance program. It has successfully administered human and

community service, job training, and educational programs for residents. In order to maximize community resources and leverage limited government funding, UMHA has obtained in-kind service commitments from local agencies and colleges with extensive experience in technology and job development programs.

We anticipate that the project will provide job training and placement services to 60 residents.

The UMHA is respectfully requesting a grant of \$1,054,288 from the U.S. Department of Commerce. We have leveraged a total of \$326,025 in non-federal in-kind funds from a wide variety of universities, private sector firms, and community organizations to provide program resources. We are contributing \$125,000 in federal HUD Capital Funds Program cash funds to help subsidize the construction of a new computer center which will be accessible to the disabled. The total project budget is \$1,505,313. The match of \$326,025 represents 22% of the total proposed project budget. Therefore, this application meets the 20% match test.

The goals of the Public Computer Center Project Project as it relates to broadband technology are:

1. Maintain the operation and expand the capacity of the existing three centers located at Gillmore Village, Perretta Twin Towers (senior/disabled housing), and Adrean Terrace/N.D. Peters/F.X. Matt Apartments;
2. Develop a new center at the Humphrey Gardens Center;
3. Establish min-labs at other senior/disabled housing sites including Chancellor and Marino-Ruggerio Apartments.
4. Increase the number of users and programs offered using computer applications such as data base, spread sheet, word processing, internet, teleconferencing and other programs;
5. Offer group classes and individualized computerized/web-based curriculum for specific interests, populations such as

- a. SAT- college preparation classes;
 - b. Remedial, English as a Second Language and adult literacy classes;
 - c. Introductory & intermediate classes in computer applications and internet use for adults;
 - d. CISCO Networking Academy classes;
 - e. Classes in desktop publishing;
 - f. Homework help for elementary and secondary students;
 - g. G.E.D. test preparation;
 - h. Scheduled open hours for general client use
6. Expand and create physical space to accommodate the disabled and increased number of participants;
7. Double the broadband capacity of the existing computer centers;
8. Network with a variety of schools, community agencies and Community Development Corporations for education, job development and economic development activities;
9. Increase the number of hours of operation of the Centers including evening and weekend hours;
10. Ensure that the Centers are accessible to the disabled;
11. Develop job training (data entry, word processing, desktop publishing, networking) programs in technology for client use.

An innovative element of the program will be the Technology Youth Corps. The program will recruit a group of 15 youth each year who will be trained in basic computer application skills as well as graphic

design, visual arts, and new media. Youth will also learn through the CISCO Networking Academy skills on how to install and troubleshoot wireless networks. In addition, the youth will receive training on how to repair and restore donated computer equipment for distribution to their communities. The Youth Corps will serve as community outreach persons who will conduct a marketing campaign to raise awareness of digital technology. Youth will be paid a stipend for participating in the program.