Executive Summary

The town of Villalba will enhance job placement, business development and business marketing opportunities for some 20,000 rural citizens, of which some 44.8% live below poverty level and face a 11.9% unemployment rate. This will be attained by improving the physical and technological infrastructure of its 18 Educational Technology Centers, by promoting residents access to computer equipment, technology training and educational services and high speed Internet access free of cost.

A large majority of the residents in the rural areas lack computers, thus many who have their own enterprise or small business will be able to market their services and products through the web hosting services provided in the Centers, unemployed residents will be able to seek employment through the Internet and students who wish to avail themselves of long distance learning will be able to do so through the Center’s equipment and WiFi facility. Those who have computers but do not have the resources for high speed internet will be able to access the WWW through the Centers. The areas included in the Project include: Bo. Villalba Arriba and Abajo, Bo. Hato Puerco, B. Caonillas Abajo y Arriba and Bo. Vacas. The township will also promote and make available many of its services and information via the Internet making it easier for residents to access the services.

The areas served by the township include its seven barrios, which constitutes approximately 80% of the 27,000 residents of Villalba. The municipality projects that approximately 75%-80% of the population will avail themselves of the Center’s services or from the high speed access. Currently the town of Villalba successfully administers six federal programs which include: CDBG, Rural Development, Federal Transportation, Homeless and Section 8 totaling approximately 2.2M. In addition it administers an E-Rate grant totaling close to 1M which has provided the resources for the existing Internet services and Educational Centers. It is expected that approximately 36 jobs will be saved by projecting the number of personnel at each one of the Centers in addition to the technical support staff to be hired from these 24 are new and 12 are saved.

Initially 48 jobs will be created as follows: 28 PCC clerks (2) per site

14 PCC coordinators (1) per site

Overall cost of the proposed project is as follows: Computer Software - $134,313

Public Computer Center Hardware $393,411

Public Computer Center Furniture, construction and utility setup - $13,804
Public Computer Center Internet Access - $44,800/ YR

Public Computer Center Maintenance and management - $235,727/ YR

Personnel Training - $342,160