Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: New Mexico State Library

Project Title: Fast-Forward New Mexico

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

_____Executive Summary_____

The Problem

According to Federal Communications Commission statistics, only 78% of New Mexicans have access to digital subscriber line (DSL) service and only 77% have access to cable modem service, well below the national averages of 82% and 96%, respectively. Besides low levels of infrastructure deployment, a second problem concerns Internet usage. A report by the Kauffman Foundation and the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation shows that New Mexico ranks 46th in percentage of Internet users, 49th in e-government, and 36th in broadband telecommunications.

Overall Approach

Demographics, as captured by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, show categories of low users of the Internet, which will be the target population of this program. These demographics include: older people use the Internet less than younger people, low income people with less than a high school degree use the Internet less than wealthier people with college degrees, and rural people use the Internet less than urban people.

Because of these demographics, Fast-Forward New Mexico concentrates on small group training at public and tribal libraries to educate and promote Internet use and broadband adoption. We believe that, for those groups with low Internet use and understanding, it will take a trusting relationship and repeated interactions to have an impact. This raises the cost of encounters, but we believe it one of the few means of raising the adoption rate in these populations. The training is designed for 2 audiences: first-time computer users with courses that address basic computer literacy, Internet use, preparedness for successful online learning, and simple technical support for small organizations; and small business owners and entrepreneurs striving to reach broader markets, improve internal operations, and reduce costs.

This program also will promote broadband on a broader scale with local awareness activities that market local training in conjunction with community partners and providers of broadband. This program

will also promote broadband statewide by organizing a New Mexico Broadband Conference to build on the Integrated Strategic Broadband Initiative created by the State of NM in 2009. The conference will allow NM decision makers to cooperatively shape statewide and local, public and private action agendas to achieve phased implementation of "broadband for all."

A primary goal of the program is to build a training model that can be replicated in other communities and will serve as a foundation for sustainability across NM. Toward this, we will establish a centralized website to support our awareness campaigns, Broadband Conference, local community efforts, and train the trainer initiatives.

Our project has been informed by NM telecommunication companies, state and tribal agencies, education institutions, and community organizations and results in an innovative approach to pave the way for increases in broadband adoption that will lead to positive economic effects for NM and its citizens.

Area/Population/New Subscribers

Fast-Forward New Mexico will be a statewide project targeting audiences by age, culture, education and income and expects to reach a target audience of about 10,000 people in the trainings and local awareness events. We expect that 4,000 persons of this audience will subscribe to broadband within a year of contact – 25% in the institutional category and 75% in the household category. To substantiate our choice of target vulnerable audience, here are some of the NM demographics that guide this proposal: 14% of households are below the poverty line, 9.2% of the population is Native American, 28% speak Spanish at home, 4% speak Navajo, 22% do not have a high school degree. We expect that the Broadband Conference, in the second year of the program, will reach 1,000 people. This event is not targeted to vulnerable populations, as the trainings are, but on key decision-makers who understand the benefits that broadband deployment and adoption have on jobs and output growth.

Qualifications

We have built a collaboration of uniquely-suited partners:

- Lead Applicant is the NM State Library, whose mission includes support of 92 public and tribal libraries throughout the state with training, funding, direct services, and consulting on all aspects of library operations. The State Library currently manages a $1.6M federal Library Services and Technology Act annual grant. State Librarian Susan Oberlander has a Ph.D. in Information Management from

University of CA, Berkeley and 15 years experience in telecommunications policy as well as 14 years experience in library management and leadership in professional organizations.

- Educational partner University of NM is the flagship institution for higher education in the state since 1892 and has extensive experience with community outreach, technology curriculum, and on-line education. Lee Bollschweiler, Division Head for CS, Business, and IT at UNM-Los Alamos, has 26 years of teaching and curriculum oversight experience in technology fields, as well as many years of grant facilitation experience. Leah Kier, Program Manager at UNM, Division of Continuing Education, brings strong experience in managing, designing, developing, and delivering computer courses as well as community outreach.

- Community partner the Global Center for Cultural Entrepreneurship provides cultural entrepreneurship training and statewide community leadership to create sustained community partnerships for economic development around the state.

- Community partner 1st Mile Institute provides over 20 years of experience in promoting rural telecommunications, economic development tied to technology and infrastructure development, community networks, broadband consulting and environmental infrastructure projects.

Jobs Created

The program will hire 10 FTE for training and awareness events.

Overall Cost

$2,047,050