

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center Foundation Proposal – DRAFT Application for BTOP Public Computer Center Support

Note: This document following the format of the Public Computer Centers Application. It is intended to be merged with the UC2B proposal. Please contact Danielle Chynoweth 217.721.7223 or chyn@ucimc.org with questions about this document.

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center Foundation

202 S. Broadway Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801

501c3 Non Profit Corporation

Tax ID # 37-1403593

DUNS: 10-130-8836

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Project Description: (500 char)

The Champaign Digital Inclusion Program will boost the capacity of the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (UCIMC) to serve area organizations and members of the public as one of the community's technology center hubs. With federal support, the UCIMC will expand its ability to provide media production training, community webhosting and listservs, public wifi access, public access computing, and community radio webstreaming and remote radio broadcast. Founded in 2000, the UCIMC's mission is to foster the creation and distribution of media and art emphasizing underrepresented voices and perspectives and to promote empowerment and expression through media and arts education. To this end, the UCIMC owns and operates 30,000 square foot a Community Media and Arts Center in the center of downtown Urbana.

The Champaign Digital Inclusion Program will expand the UCIMC's technical infrastructure through a hard link into the City of Urbana's fiber-optic infrastructure and improvements to the electrical systems of our technical spaces, the creation of a new 110-foot broadcast tower as a critical community wireless internet gateway, a new public computer lab, an overhaul of our current media production lab, the addition of full-time staff to a technical training program, computers for volunteer use, and extension of wireless internet access to all areas within multiple blocks of the facility. The result will extend broadband access to an estimated additional 45,000 members of the public per year. In addition, our programs will engage users in broadband adoption through their ability to produce and share media content.

Specific capacity building needs and budget requests:

1. Train the Trainer program - \$160,000

The UCIMC works on site with community organizations to train their staff in using broadband technology in their communications. After this program is over,

community organizations will have the training and documentation to continue to train and support their constituents. This program is currently run by volunteers, and with a long waiting list of organizations requesting support. UCIMC requests 2 years of 2 full time staff to add to the 1 CTC VISTA worker who can expand the capacity of UCIMC's train the trainer program to a staff of 3.

2. Community Webhosting capacity improvements, - \$20,000

The UCIMC has a server room running 6 servers which currently provides free webhosting and listservs to the community. There is not a single power outlet left, no power backup system, and the temperature inside the room is usually 10 degrees greater than outside the room, causing regular hardware failure. Capacity improvements include greater power capacity to the server room, a ventilation system, UPS power back up system.

3. Upgrade and extend media production lab - \$30,000

The UCIMC currently has a media production lab of 6 computers for audio/video production, although only one has sufficient speed for high end editing. The other 5 computers would be upgraded, 3 more added, and a storage system acquired to lengthen the time people have to complete their projects. A mobile production system will allow members of the public to broadcast over community radio live using a web stream to send content to the station for broadcast distribution and online streaming. The UCIMC will implement a wiki-powered production system, with a telephone interface that allows reporters to conduct interviews from any phone, which are automatically recorded and uploaded, in raw form, to the production wiki, facilitating collaboration among a dispersed, volunteer, production group. Several dedicated computers and faster broadband are required. The UCIMC will also implement a content sharing system to push content to distribution venues throughout the system such as Urbana Public Television and to pull content from producers to its website and radio broadcast station.

Additional Public Access Lab – (20 workstations) \$20,000

The Urbana Free Library, which is located across the street from the UCIMC, has long waiting times for computers with one hour usage limits and there is little space to expand the number of workstations. The UCIMC, which has space and technical expertise, has been meeting with the UFL to help address their resource concerns. The UCIMC established a wifi network within the UFL and provided broadband for free for a number of months until the library established its own network. The UCIMC would like to expand its handful of public access stations into a computing center so that library patrons and UCIMC visitors have another nearby option for computer access. A fully accessible laboratory location would be provided and staffed for the public to utilize.

4. **Bandwidth / Fiber link across and street** - \$40,000

The UCIMC currently serves 16 computers, 22 offices, 78 websites, and 204 listservs off of a single cable connection. No additional services can be provided and the current ones are in jeopardy without additional bandwidth. The UCIMC sits 200 feet from the City's current fiber backbone. UCIMC is requesting a fiber hook up to the city's backbone and 2 years of at-cost bandwidth.

5. **Downtown Wifi Blanket** - \$50,000

The UCIMC requires the establishment of a tower to extend wifi coverage to all of downtown urbana in a hub and spoke model. Any visitor to downtown will be able to access the community network given a computer with a wireless connection. This greatly extends the capacity and reach of current infrastructure which has been used by the UCIMC to provide free wifi in the downtown area for the past 8 years.

Matching funds total \$45,000 - \$17,000 from UCIMC tower fund, \$21,000 from the CTC VISTA Americorps program, and \$7000 from the UCIMC General Fund.

Estimated Funding:

Federal: \$320,000

State:

Local: \$45,000

Other:

Program Income: \$3,000

Total: \$368,000

e) Applicants must demonstrate that but for Federal funding they would not have been able to complete their project during the grant period.

The UCIMC is a volunteer run organization with 1200 active volunteers and 284,002 served. Without the grant funding, the UCIMC would continue to only be able to provide media production training to members and targeted partners, due to limited workstations and bandwidth. The UCIMC community technology center is primarily funded through the rental of a office spaces and individual private donations. In the wake of the current recession, we have seen vacancy rates skyrocket and individual donations decline. Due to budget cuts, our Illinois Arts Council General Operating Support has been cut in half. This has already led to major overhead cuts, and will decrease our ability to serve the public in the future.

f) The budget for the project must be reasonable and all costs must be eligible.

See budget above.

C/7. Executive Summary

The Chambana Digital Inclusion Program will expand the UCIMC's technical infrastructure through a hard link into the City of Urbana's fiber-optic infrastructure and improvements to the electrical systems of our technical spaces, the creation of a new 110-foot broadcast tower as a critical community wireless internet gateway, a new public computer lab, an overhaul of our current media production lab, the addition of full-time staff to a technical training program, computers for volunteer use, and extension of wireless internet access to all areas within multiple blocks of the facility. The result will extend broadband access to an estimated additional 45,000 members of the public per year. In addition, our programs will engage users in broadband adoption through their ability to produce and share media content.

a) A statement of the problem or need your project addresses with regard to improving broadband service adoption rates.

b) Your overall approach to addressing the need, and [for Sustainable Adoption projects] how your approach is innovative.

c) Area(s) to be served; population of the target area(s), including demographic information; and [for Public Computer Centers] the estimated number of potential users of your public computer center(s) or [for Sustainable Adoption projects] the estimated number of potential broadband subscribers your project will reach.

Our program aims to empower underserved groups for digital inclusion. Our programs serve a variety of ages, and are targeted towards populations underrepresented in the media such as African-Americans, Latinos, new Americans, youth, gay and lesbian, and the working poor.

In Champaign County, the poverty rate is 17.7%, well above the state average of 12%, according to the 2008 Report on Poverty in Illinois (by the Mid-America Institute on Poverty and Heartland Alliance). The same report demonstrates that Champaign County and Cook County are the only two counties in the state with poverty rates above 15% and with over 20,000 people living in poverty (actual number in Champaign County is 29,800). The most recent information from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that in 2000, in the city of Urbana, 28.4% of households made less than \$14,999 per year (In the neighboring city of Champaign, 24.3% of households made less than \$14,999 per year). The City of Urbana, the City of Champaign, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign are entities that share boundaries and create one urban area in Champaign County, with an immediate audience base of 111,000 within a 10-mile radius in Champaign County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

d) Qualifications of the applicant that demonstrate the ability to implement the project and achieve its intended results.

See organizational readiness.

e) Jobs to be saved or created.

Will create 2 full time positions, and support workskills development for thousands.

f) Overall cost of the proposed project.

See above.

E. Project Benefits

12. *Public Availability. Will your facility be available to all members of the general public, or a specific population only? Please explain. If you charge membership dues or other fees for the population you are proposing to serve, please explain how these charges are consistent with the public interest. [One Page Limit]*

The UCIMC is open to the general public. Membership is encouraged, but not required.

13. *Restrictions on Center Use. If the use of your center(s) is restricted to certain purposes, please identify those and explain the reasons for the restrictions. [1/2 Page Limit]*

The UCIMC is a public access center. We adhere to a free speech policy with two exceptions: We do not allow the viewing of pornography or the creation of hate speech.

14. *Accessibility. Please describe the ways in which your center(s) will be accessible and welcoming to people with disabilities. [1 Page Limit]*

The UCIMC's public computing and training facilities are wheelchair accessible.

15. *Center Locations. What is/are the location(s) of your new/expanded Public Computer Center(s)?*

UCIMC 202 S. Broadway Ave, Urbana, IL 61801

16. *Center capacity*

Computer Center name: Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

Current Open Hours Weekday: 40

Current Open Hours Weekend: 16

Proposed Open Hours Weekday: 50

Proposed Open Hours Weekend: 20

Current Broadband Workstations: 13

Proposed Broadband Workstations: 39

Current Facility Broadband Speed: cable modem speeds

Proposed Facility Broadband Speed: connection to community fiber optic system

Size and Scope of Target Audience. For the computer locations you described above, please complete the following table indicating the size and scope of your target population, and targets for persons served in each center, referring to the sample.

Name: Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

of persons in service area: 193,636 (Champaign County)

Service Area Identifier:

UCIMC served 284,000 people in 08-09 with all its programs. This project will extend broadband access to an estimate 45,000 additional users.

of persons served weekday (current):

of persons served weekend (current):

of persons served weekday (proposed):

of persons served weekend (proposed):

18. Population Demographics. Indicate the demographic category or categories your program will serve by completing the questions below. [One Page Limit]

a. Age distribution: 0-70 and above.

b. Ethnicities: Hispanic, White, Black, American Indian, Asian, Non Hispanic Other, Two or More Races

c. Gender: Male & Female

d. Median Household Income

less than 9,000 – \$50,000

e. Educational Levels: all

f. Disability Status: all

g. Unemployment Rate:

h. Language: all

21. Workstation Software. What type of software do you intend to provide for each workstation? [Limit 1/2 page]

All software will be open source. We run Ubuntu Studio with its full suite of free media production software applications.

22. Training and Education Programs. Please describe your primary training and educational programs, including curricula, student certification programs, and number of instructors and their qualifications.

The UCIMC provides media production

F. PROJECT VIABILITY

Organizational Capacity

Organizational Readiness

The UCIMC has operated a public access and media production training facility as a 501c3 not for profit since 2001 and Community Technology Center in the state of Illinois since 2003. The UCIMC has an annual budget of \$270,000 with 1200 volunteers logging 61,250 hours in 2008, 10 Americorps staff, 3 support staff, and a supporter base of 21 corporate entities and 18 foundations. These resources make possible the operation of a 30,000 square foot downtown Community Media and Arts Center, including a community radio station, performance space where performers can broadcast live and over radio and internet, media production and training facility with media equipment for check out, an art gallery, and a numerous artist studio and teaching spaces.. The Center provided free services to 59 organizations and 284,002 members of the public in 08-09, including designing a computer training facility for the Boys and Girls Club, a training program at Ready School, and hosting an Indy Media and Arts Lab for Youth. UCIMC provided free community webhosting and listservs to 204 organizations, such as the Volunteer Illini and Red Cross, serving 210,000 subscribers (lists.chambana.net)

With support from private foundations, the UCIMC developed CUWiN (cuwireless.net), the internationally recognized leader in open source mesh network software. Our team deployed the first wifi network in Champaign-Urbana as well as places such as rural Homer, Illinois, the tribal lands of the Mesa Grande Reservation, and the townships of South Africa. The University of Illinois partnered with UCIMC on a \$500,000 National Science Foundation grant to develop high-performance open source mesh wireless technologies, the City of Urbana to receive state funding to expand its wireless network, and The Soros Foundation of a \$150,000 grant to bring community wireless development to Africa. During Hurrican Katrina, the UCIMC helped establish an emergency wifi communications infrastructure allowing victims over 60,000 hours of call time to coordinate with loved ones.

The UCIMC provides Illinois prisoners access to educational materials, shipping over 30,000 free books to prisoners based on their requests, establishing 2 libraries in the local jails, hosting an annual prisoner arts festival, and producing 2 zines of prisoner poetry and art per year.

The IMC prides itself on being an open door and easy partner. The UCIMC partnered with the United Way, Urbana Park District and Champaign School District to provide media production classes in 2007-2008. The UCIMC prides itself on being an open door and easy partner for individual community members as well as organizations. The UCIMC has partnered with the United Way, Urbana Park District and Champaign School District to provide media production classes in 2007-2008. The UCIMC hosts rotating work from UIUC's Art in Public Places class. This past Spring the UCIMC hosted three senior thesis shows of graduating UIUC students. When the local OpenSource art collective lost its space in November of 2007, the IMC offered to host all upcoming OpenSource exhibits. The UCIMC partners with Dance Club Urbana to offer two days of dance classes per week. The UCIMC has collaborated 40 North/88 West in hosting the main event for its Boneyard Arts Festival, Krannert Center by hosting Speak Café during a summit on Katrina, WEFT 90.1 FM by sharing programming, WILL AM- FM-TV's Youth Media Project with a forum on youth radio, and Arts Across Illinois by hosting the

local broadcast. The UCIMC offers free and at-cost space to any community group needing meeting space, such as Truth Ministries (a Christian Fellowship, music, and youth group), the Prompting Theater (a theater of adults with developmental disabilities), the Anti-war Anti-Racism Effort (AWARE), Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice (CUCPJ), Dance Club Urbana, Earthkeep Teaching and Meditation group, and the School for Designing a Society. The UCIMC has received funds from the Illinois Arts council since 2006.

The UCIMC has sponsored and supported 57 national and international media projects, including shipping 6 tons of recycled computers to Latin America, building 2 community radio stations in Kenya, and providing media training to social activists in Burma and Thailand, to name a few.

26. Organizational Chart. Please attach a chart describing how the project team relates to the overall structure of your organization.

Instead of an Executive Director and Board model, the UCIMC uses a horizontal management structure. A Steering Group directs the UCIMC - made up of empowered spokespeople from every working group, who make decisions for the Center using formal consensus. The Steering Group sets policies and vision that are implemented by paid administrative staff, which provide bookkeeping, building maintenance, financial, and grant writing expertise.

The project team is made up of three trainers, the 18 person steering committee of the UCIMC representing every project, plus several active members who provide technical and logistical expertise to the project.