

Executive Summary (rough idea for discussion only)—sli comments—bb edits

Urbana-Champaign has an acute gap in digital literacy. With a population of 113,000, we are home to the University of Illinois, the nation's second largest research university (in research dollars). We invented the Web browser, NCSA Mosaic, the LED, and the brilliant people in our #1-ranked CS program invented YouTube, PayPal, and more. Next we are building the world's faster supercomputer, Blue Waters.

But our community has the widest digital divide in Illinois and perhaps the nation. Within miles of these world-leading advancements we have populations that do not have access to broadband, to computer workstations, or to the basic digital literacy that is now critical for jobs and education. We have the fifth largest population below the poverty line in Illinois, and our public schools have 60% of children federally eligible for free or reduced lunch. We know that roughly 2,000 children in our schools do not have access to a computer at home, and that broadband adoption is below 40% in our target neighborhoods.

UC2B and 5-partner agencies that serve vulnerable populations have come together to bridge this digital divide in the following Public Computer Center and Sustainable Broadband Adoption proposal. Our partners include the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, home to the Prairienet community network project (founded in 1993) that received a TOP grant in 1997 to support free dial-up Internet. Our public libraries have served over 110,000 computer users in the last 6 months and successfully operate existing public computing centers. Parkland College has a public computer and workforce development training center and an effective program that has already given thousands of people job training in IT skills, resume support, and more.

UC2B is a consortium of the University of Illinois and the Cities of Champaign and Urbana. The partners include Parkland College, Champaign and Urbana Public Libraries, Don Moyer's Boys and Girls Club, Champaign and Urbana Public Schools, the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center, along with a group of community centers, churches, and outreach organizations that specifically serve vulnerable populations.

Our Public Computing Center proposal includes:

- Expanding and renovating 20 public computer centers in 3 libraries, 1 workforce development center, and 6 not-for-profit agencies that serve vulnerable populations, adding 218 workstations and laptops along with wifi access points to serve 60,000 additional users each year.
- Delivering training to 4,000 people in IT-related job skills such as word processing and computer repair, providing resume support, and delivering workforce development to re-train unemployed and underemployed populations.

- Sustaining this effort after the term of the grant through the commitments of the partners (Parkland College and Public Libraries) to continue operating and upgrading these public computing centers on an ongoing basis.

Our Sustainable Broadband Adoption proposal includes:

- Employing 6 “cybernavigators” to provide outreach and training within the vulnerable populations of the community, delivering a digital literacy training curriculum that, for example, helps bring churches online with digital video, introduces families to email and social networking to stay connected between generations—making broadband a part of people’s lives through informal training that mirrors the way we ourselves learned to use email, smartphones, and Facebook by learning through family, friends and community and adopting these as part of our lives.
- Expanding our successful “Lighted Schoolhouse” model to 3 additional elementary schools to create parent resource centers where parents can get online to check their children’s homework and grades and coordinate with teachers.
- Involving teens in social networking and multimedia productions using a mobile trailer
- Extending the University’s small business incubator services to small, minority-owned and disadvantaged businesses, and providing training on getting their business online, e-commerce, and common business software from Office to financial management (e.g., Quickbooks).
- Providing 1,000 notebooks to income-eligible public school students in grades 6-12 who have no access to a computer at home, ~~and broadcasting a wifi network with a basic level of free access into the targeted neighborhoods where these notebooks will be, while also providing a secure network for police and fire public responders to access data more quickly from their mobile vehicle computers.~~
- Creating and translating materials into Spanish and working with our partners to reach vulnerable populations.
- In total creating 5000 on-going broadband subscribers, including residents and small businesses.
- Sustaining this outreach and training after the grant by adopting a “train-the-trainer” model where each group of cybernavigators helps train and orient the next group, and being a cybernavigator fulfills the community service curriculum requirement at Parkland College or is eligible for a graduate assistantship at the University of Illinois, providing motivation for people who were originally students to become cybernavigators and give back to their communities.

Through these PCC and SBA projects we will create or save 50 direct jobs in construction and in staff delivering these programs, and we expect to create 80 indirect jobs through small business support. We have identified a 40% local/state match for this funding, in addition to leveraging other existing federal

grant support. We look forward to receiving funding and initiating this project which will greatly expand our local capacity to bridge our digital divide by providing broadband access, fluency and skill to vulnerable populations.