

SEALED PROPOSAL

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RFI

For the West Virginia Office of Technology
Additional Enhancements for the Broadband Technology Opportunities
Project ("BTOP")

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BTOP Addition **Internet-Broadband Utilization Service** **(iBUS)**

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WV PURCHASING
DIVISION

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INTRODUCTION

Citynet, LLC is providing this response to the Request for Information (“RFI”) issued by the West Virginia Office of Technology for additional enhancements that can be added to West Virginia’s Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (“BTOP”) stimulus grant. This response provides a comprehensive description of Citynet’s proposed BTOP enhancement referenced as the Internet/Broadband Utilization Service (iBUS) project.

BACKGROUND

A number of barriers exist that prevent rural West Virginians from benefitting from access to high speed broadband services. Some of these barriers include aging infrastructure, mountainous terrain, sparsely populated areas, a lack of competition, high prices for antiquated services, and a high percentage of the population who are not aware of the benefits associated with access to high speed internet services. To bridge the broadband gap in rural America, the Obama administration launched several initiatives including the BIP and BTOP programs. Through these programs, Federal stimulus funding directed \$4.7 billion to expand broadband to unserved and underserved communities. Recently, the FCC created the \$4.5 billion “Connect America Fund,” which uses taxes from customers’ phone bills to pay for high-speed Internet deployment in rural areas. Through the implementation of these programs, the FCC aims to have “universal broadband deployment” throughout the country by 2020.

The digital divide in America -- between those who have access to high-speed broadband and those who don’t -- is caused by a number of items besides access. According to the FCC, only 40 percent of Americans who have access to DSL or cable Internet services actually use them. One of the most significant barriers to broadband adoption is perception of need. In fact, a recent study showed that the most prevalent reason (47%) households without broadband Internet gave for not subscribing were that they had no interest (Don’t need it). To overcome this problem, a compelling case needs to be made for using broadband to improve a person's quality of life.

Congress took notice of this issue when creating the BTOP program. On page 9 of the Notice placed in the Federal Register on July 9, 2009, the Sustainable Broadband Adoption section states, “Applications for Sustainable Broadband Adoption projects should demonstrate a sustainable increase in demand for and subscribership to broadband services. Projects should meet a specific public need for broadband service, including, but not limited to, education, employment, economic development, and enhanced service for health-care delivery, children, and vulnerable populations. Projects should describe the barriers to adoption in a given area, especially among vulnerable populations, and propose an innovative and persuasive solution to encourage adoption.”

The purpose of this submission is to create a program that will educate the citizens throughout the rural areas of the State about the benefits of broadband and how making use of this

technology can positively impact their lives resulting in an increased adoption rate throughout rural West Virginia.

PROPOSAL

Educating the citizens of the State on the importance of high speed broadband services will result in an increased adoption rate throughout rural West Virginia. The implementation of this proposal will result in the creation of an Internet/Broadband Utilization Service (iBUS) bus that will travel throughout the State for up to 10 years demonstrating to all West Virginians the benefits that broadband services can provide.

The iBUS unit will be equipped to show how the internet can be used to stay in touch with friends and family, search and apply for jobs, seek advice and save money online. iBUS staff will be present at each location to give free internet advice and training. Allowing West Virginians to see these benefits first hand will result in higher adoption rates throughout the State. The iBUS will have the following capabilities:

- A small group, High Definition Video Conference/Telepresence room.
- Wireless broadcast to accommodate hundreds of devices to connect locally to the iBus network as a mobile hotspot.
- Individual High Definition Video Conference/Telepresence stations.
- Ability to rebroadcast an existing CAI's broadband via wireless and wired technologies for local iBUS users.
- Internal and External Digital signage to rebroadcast video and static content in regards to broadband.
- Advanced technology enabling users to collaborate, transform and share video and media content.
- Publicly available PCs and Tablet devices to compliment regional educational activities.
- Full complement of unified communications capabilities to be able to have communications from any site where the iBUS is located back to any location.
- Direct Satellite connection for Broadband Internet access to allow for connectivity if local connection to the Community Anchor Institution is not available.

PROJECT IMPACTS

Impacts to West Virginia

The State of West Virginia will experience several positive outcomes through the implementation of this program. As people become more technologically proficient, there will be numerous benefits some of which include: online educational opportunities, telecommuting, online purchasing, online training programs and seminars, online banking, an overall better quality of life, and many new employment opportunities to name a few. Moving in this direction could also have a tremendous positive impact on economic development efforts across the State.

Project Approach & Timeline

The iBUS project involves the purchase of a motor coach and the provisioning and installation of equipment. It is purposely designed for rapid implementation in concurrence with the BTOP and RFI established guidelines.

Project Timeline:

Phase	Description	Duration (days)
1	Execute Purchase Agreement and Purchase Order	10
2	Delivery and Acceptance of Equipment	20
3	Stage and Configure Automobile	10
5	Prepare and Train I-BUS Staff	5
6	Ready for Service	0
	Total Duration	45

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Operating Goals and Objectives

The implementation of the iBUS proposal will enhance the current BTOP project and will achieve the following goals and objectives.

- 1) Meet rapid implementation timeline in accordance with NTIA objectives;
- 2) Increase the adoption rate for broadband services throughout West Virginia;
- 3) Improve the quality of lives for individuals living throughout rural West Virginia;
- 4) Improve economic development efforts throughout West Virginia.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Implementation of the iBUS proposal will include numerous costs including the purchase of a motor coach, equipment, the provision of technical support, implementation and coordination of the project, help desk services, scheduling, project management, marketing e-services, and ongoing technical support, as needed. The project can be fully implemented with a grant award of \$1.1 million.

Environmental Assessments

Implementation of the iBUS Project will not necessitate any State or Federal environmental assessments to be completed to support this Project, nor will it impact or require changes to the State's completed environmental assessment ("EA") in support of the BTOP project.

Matching Funds Requirement

Citynet will commit matching funds at a minimum of 50% of the total cost of the project, as well as through the provision of technical support, implementation and coordination of the project, help desk services, scheduling, project management, marketing e-services, and ongoing technical support, as needed.

Sustainability

The iBUS Project will be an educational program with costs covered entirely by the funding of this grant and the company. The arrangement will provide the State of West Virginia with a well-balanced public-private partnership.

SUMMARY

Strategic Purpose

The strategic purpose of the iBUS Project rests in the recognition that a significant educational investment needs to be made in West Virginia so that people throughout the State can learn about the benefits of high speed broadband services. The iBUS Project provides an innovative solution that is well-balanced for the State's needs and is complimentary to its existing BTOP funded efforts.

Project Advantages

- Offers an innovative approach to educate people throughout the State;
- Can be implemented in rapid fashion;
- Empowers West Virginia's economic development and job-creation efforts;
- Enables next-generation IP based applications (Cloud Computing, video, Integrated SIP, etc.);
- Leverages an established private partner network (expertise and sustainability);

- Requires no additional environmental assessments; and
- Compliments existing State BTOP initiatives.

CONSTRAINTS

Project Constraints

The only known constraint is final project approval by the NTIA.

Critical Project Barriers

None