

To: Library Directors of Ohio

From: Connect Ohio
Tom Fritz, Executive Director

RE: Public Access and Adoption Program (Every Community Online)

Date: February 22, 2010

The public libraries of Ohio have a great opportunity to work together on a project that will bring enormous benefits to each community they serve. Increasing public access to broadband service, training in its use and value, and a hand in helping citizens to adopt this all-important technology into their homes is something we can provide in a very complete way if we work together to identify the right tools and implement them correctly.

Attached, you'll find the results of a survey which your library conducted to prepare for this opportunity. You've inventoried your equipment and capacity to instruct the citizens you serve and the patrons of your libraries have told us about their use of technology at your facilities. Connect Ohio has used this valuable data to help you identify the needs of your community and is committed to assist you in obtaining the capacity you need by aggregating a statewide grant application project.

Funds will be requested through the ARRA's BTOP program, administered by the NTIA. The program allows for grants to fund necessary equipment, training, public awareness, support, and programs to ensure the eventual adoption of technology in residents' homes.

Two collaborative grants are being prepared for any of Ohio's public libraries to participate in.

First, an application from the State Library of Ohio which will request sufficient PCs to serve the local community. It is important that these workstations be modern, equipped with curriculum which can be driven by the user, and available in sufficient number to ensure that users who don't have broadband at home can find reliable access without a frustrating wait. We are referring to this component as the Ohio Public Access through Libraries, part I program (OPAL I).

Second, a complementary application from Connect Ohio to provide the training, technical support, and public awareness campaign that will ensure that citizens are able to use these workstations to learn not only how to use broadband technology, but about its value in their lives. In addition to having ready access to broadband in a public place, participants can complete a basic slate of curriculum which will help them to see the economic, social, and educational benefits of broadband clearly and to apply this value to their everyday lives in the forms of better education, healthcare, communication, and access to government services. We refer to this as the Ohio Public Adoption through Libraries, part II program (OPAL II).

It is important that your libraries participate in this statewide upgrade and enhancement program. If awarded, the grant will ensure that your library has enough equipment, training capacity, and support, together with a program to drive public awareness, to enable real change throughout your community.

The attached spreadsheet details your library's current and ideal level of technology. It suggests the level of support that your community needs and which can be realistically provided through your facilities, when optimized. The suggested ideal level of computers is based upon the size of the community you serve and its current use of broadband outside of the library. This number is tempered by the physical capacity of your facility. Library locations are designated as either Public Access Centers (PACs) or Technology Education Centers (TECs), depending upon their ability to host physical training classes. PACs will offer self-directed training, while TECs will offer classes led by instructors provided by Connect Ohio or your existing staff. Training hours needed are based on the anticipated number of citizens who would use your facilities or attend training classes, given the proper prodding through a public awareness campaign that will essentially convey the message of, "Life is better with broadband. See the difference at your public library."

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, each citizen who completes the basic coursework of the program – either by instructor-led or self-directed training – will have the opportunity to adopt broadband into their homes. A program offering incentives to first-time broadband adopters is being developed with the support of local broadband providers in your area. Free installation, limited free service, and other incentives may be provided, based upon the participation of these local broadband providers.

Please complete the following tasks by FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26th in order to participate:

1) Decide whether you would like to participate in either or both of the programs. Confirm your participation in a letter to Tom Fritz and Missy Lodge. A template letter is attached. A letter confirming your participation must be received by FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26th, and should include confirmation of the following items:

- 1) Review the suggested number of new computers and confirm or adjust it. (See column BV in the accompanying spreadsheet) Please bear in mind that the total number for your system is what is most important, since the population numbers may be assigned to the system, not to an individual branch. However, you must tell the State Library how many computers will be placed in each of your locations.
 - a. Once the number of computers is determined, the State Library of Ohio's application will provide \$475 per computer. Document your ability to provide matching funds in the amount of at least \$125 per unit. These funds must be available no later than January 1, 2012. (See column CK)
- 2) Review the suggested number of incremental training hours and confirm or adjust it. (See column BZ)

- a. Document your ability to provide matching funds in the amount of 30% of the calculated cost. (Column CL) These funds must be available no later than January 1, 2012.
- 3) Review the number of households in your service area. This number has been calculated based upon the geography that is closer to your facilities than to the next-closest public library.

You will have until FRIDAY, MARCH 5th to provide the documentation of matching funds to Connect Ohio for each portion of the Connect Ohio project. Connect Ohio is providing a limited number of matching funds to this effort, however, it is important that each library explore their ability to provide funds through a board action, participation of patron and friends groups, foundations, local corporations, and local broadband providers. It is particularly important that local broadband providers participate in offering an incentive to new adopters. This ensures that patrons will have an easy and sustainable path to adoption of technology in their homes. A letter for the use of local providers is attached here, and should also be returned to Connect Ohio by FRIDAY, MARCH 5th. An estimate of the number of new subscribers and a suggested minimum contribution from local providers is available in columns CM, CN, and CO.

To enable the library board adequate time to meet, the board resolution form needs to be submitted no later than WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10th in order to be apart of the State Library Application.

Libraries without adequate matching funds may still be included at the discretion of Connect Ohio, but matching funds are very limited, so your facility may be excluded.

Connect Ohio will provide the training, technical support, and public awareness campaign through a combination of direct employees and certified contractors. If you have a staff that is qualified to provide training or technical support, please provide a preliminary quotation for the hourly rate, with any overhead allocated, no later than FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26th. If you are contracted to provide this staffing, you will be expected to comply with federal reporting requirements, and there is no guarantee that Connect Ohio will procure these services from you. It is likely that regional groups with the ability to travel would be hired to provide these services, rather than single-location providers. In total, this training program will provide over 100 new training jobs and a dozen technical support jobs across the state. Even more importantly, our research predicts that more than 200,000 incremental households will cross the digital divide because of this program in the first two years, bringing over \$100,000,000 in direct revenue into the state's economy.

We are excited to offer this opportunity across the state, and especially pleased that it is a collaborative effort between the State Library of Ohio, OPLIN, Ohio Library Council and a number of Broadband Service providers. Connect Ohio has the support of the Governor's office for this initiative, and we appreciate the hard work of gathering the necessary information in each and every Public Library branch. We are hopeful, if time allows, that we will also include a number of Community Colleges as providers of

technical support and training, and as an extension of learning to those who participate in the program.

Please contact Tom Fritz or Missy Lodge with any questions about the program. It is important that we move swiftly to collect the necessary information, and we realize that it is a short timeframe. This is necessary in order to gather, aggregate, and document the participation of more than 500 local library facilities. After the documentation of your match funds is received by March 5th (March 10th for the State Library application), Connect Ohio will have only a week to construct and submit these grants in advance of the March 15th deadline.

Thank you for your participation and support of this project. We are excited about the benefits that it will bring to Ohio and to your community. Public libraries have always been important providers of the information that enables better lives, and we are anxious to ensure that you continue to participate fully in this meaningful task well into the digital age.

TASK LIST:

Open the enclosed spreadsheet.

Review the number of new computers requested in Column BV.

If you see a substantial difference, contact Tom Fritz immediately. If the number seems reasonable, do nothing. **HIGHLIGHT ANY CHANGES IN YELLOW!!**

Review the location(s) designated as PACs or TECs in Column BP.

If there is an adjustment needed, contact Stephen Hedges immediately. If these allocations seem reasonable, do nothing. **HIGHLIGHT ANY CHANGES IN YELLOW!!**

Review the number of instructor hours, technical support, and public awareness budgets in columns BZ, CC, and CD. Again, **HIGHLIGHT ANY CHANGES IN YELLOW!!**

If you have questions, contact Tom Fritz immediately. If these numbers seem reasonable, do nothing.

Indicate your participation in OPAL I, OPAL II, or both. Use the attached form letter as a base and return it to Tom Fritz and/or Missy Lodge no later than February 26th.

If you are unsure about your interest in participating, contact Tom Fritz.

Provide documentation of your matching funds.

Use the attached form letter as a base for your board, and the attached outreach letter and commitment letter as bases for local providers, foundations, or local corporations that might provide matching funds or in-kind services. Matching funds should be no less than 20% of the cost for your location(s), however, 30% will ensure that extra consideration will be given. The OPAL I section requires \$125 per computer be provided at a minimum. The OPAL II section requires a 20% match and extra consideration will be given for 30% or more. Connect Ohio has very limited funds to go toward public awareness, technical support, and training. If you cannot obtain sufficient match funds but still wish to participate, email Tom Fritz with a description of your situation and efforts to provide funds.

Matching fund documentation should be received no later than March 5th for the Connect Ohio application, March 10th for the State Library application.

We will assemble all components turned in on time and aggregate the application. If you are applying for local facilities expansion or direct staffing, you will need to apply independently due to the complexity of federal reporting requirements. If you will be applying on your own, locally, there is an opportunity to collaborate. Please send a letter of support for the statewide program and let us know what support we can offer for your local area.

Direct any questions to:

Tom Fritz, Executive Director, Connect Ohio: TFritz@ConnectOhio.Org 614/220-0190

or

Missy Lodge, Interim State Librarian, State Library of Ohio: mlodge@sloma.state.oh.us
614-644-6914