



Generation ZD Digital Literacy Program Executive Summary

ZeroDivide's "Generation ZD Digital Literacy Program" will form a new generation of broadband users among underserved youth who otherwise have limited or no access to digital and information technology in the home. ZeroDivide will partner with 7 community anchor institutions (hereafter also referred to as "sub-recipient partners") in 6 western states (CA, HI, OR, WA, NM, UT) to increase broadband use and build the broadband application skills – resulting in higher educational achievement and job opportunities - of over 140,000 low-income, disadvantaged youth in urban and rural environments.

Problem Statement:

An increasingly complex and technology driven world has exacerbated social and economic inequality for low-income, disadvantaged individuals, particularly underserved youth. Access barriers such as availability, cost, and lack of relevant content have impaired broadband adoption rates within vulnerable communities. Barriers related to race, physical capacity, economic conditions and geography further contribute to this digital divide. This makes it difficult for disadvantaged youth to fully participate in the digital revolution and overcome related social, economic and education disparities. A recent study by Connected Nation reported that subscription rates to broadband service remain stagnant among low-income and minority consumers, due to such factors as lack of a household computer, lack of broadband training, high costs of service, and/or unreliable network facilities. In urban areas, broadband adoption and home subscribership among minorities remains at 47%, and among low-income minorities at 20%, compared to 52% of non-minority residents. In rural areas, only 33% of minorities and 20% of low-income minorities subscribe to broadband, compared to 40% of non-minorities. The racial breakdown illustrates lower broadband adoption rates among all minorities, with Hispanics and African Americans reporting even significantly lower computer ownership rates. While young people drive technology adoption in these communities, disadvantaged and low-income youth often do not have access in their home environment. A Pew Internet & American Life survey revealed that while teens have higher rates of internet use than adults, low-income and minority youth have lower use rates. The resulting digital divide is a technological manifestation of socioeconomic, cultural and political divides that impact vulnerable and underserved youth in these communities.

Overall/Innovative Approach: Through ZeroDivide's 10 years of experience, we have learned that technology adoption, particularly broadband, is driven by the amount of relevant content on the internet. For young people, the ability to develop and distribute their content, whether a website, video, game, blog or podcast, provides a significant incentive to engage in and learn more about broadband applications. However, the Pew survey above found that low-income teens and teens living in rural and urban locales are less likely to be internet content creators than their higher-income counterparts living in suburban areas. ZeroDivide has worked with over 50 programs, directly impacting over 10,000 individuals, that incorporate digital media production as a means to increase

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broadband technology skills and use among low-income and disadvantaged individuals. In addition, these programs increase leadership and collaboration skills, increase academic achievement, and build workforce development skills. An evaluation of one of our programs in Long Beach, California concluded that this technology-based content development program resulted in a 100% high school graduation rate among its participants compared to an 80% graduation rate in the Long Beach Unified School System.

This project implements digital literacy and content production programs at 7 community anchor institutions to increase broadband use among low-income and disadvantaged youth in rural and urban environments in 6 western states (CA, HI, OR, WA, NM, UT). The project will advance two BTOP statutory objectives: 1) Provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support to community anchor institutions, job-creation facilities, and vulnerable populations; and 2) Stimulate demand for broadband.

The program consists of three major components:

Broadband Digital Literacy Skills Curriculum: Curricula will include an average of 60 hours of digital media arts production training such as video, graphic design, animation, games, audio and radio stories and documentaries, podcasts, and music at sub-recipient sites. Participants will also develop leadership skills, including project management and collaboration training.

Content Distribution: Content developed through this program will be distributed through a variety of broadband channels, such as local and regional community media stations, social networking sites, and youth media and service organizations.

Community Anchor Institution Capacity Building and Sustainability: ZeroDivide will improve the capacity of our 7 sub-recipient partners to deliver broadband programs, including addressing accessibility issues of individuals with disabilities; and increasing sustainability by diversifying income and developing earned income strategies to sustain the program beyond the life of the BTOP grant.

Areas to be served: Low-income youth communities in urban and rural areas with significant numbers of minority/immigrant and other disadvantaged/vulnerable populations in Humboldt County, CA (cities of Eureka, Arcata, Fortuna, Rio Dell Ferndale & Blue Lake); Salt Lake City, UT; Maui County, HI (Islands of Maui, Lanai & Molokai); City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista and San Benito County, CA; King, Snohomish, Skagit Island, and Pierce Counties, WA; City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington Counties, OR; and Santa Fe County (City of Santa Fe), NM.

Target area population: 224,500 people of which 73% have household income at or below the poverty level; 100% are 5 to 25 years old; 5% are non-English speaking at home; and 32% have one or more disabilities.

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Demographic Information: Among the 146,283 participants in this project, 100% are children and youth 5 – 25 years of age, 75% live in low-income households, 50% speak English as a second language (ESL), 5% are non-English speakers, and 35% have one or more disabilities.

Qualifications: ZeroDivide is a 501(c)(3) public foundation that supports technology adoption in underserved communities. Established by community leaders representing of the most underserved populations in California, ZeroDivide has documented expertise in overcoming barriers to technology adoption in disadvantaged communities. Over the last 10 years, ZeroDivide has invested in building technology capacity in nearly 450 community anchor institutions, and increasing technology (including broadband) adoption in the communities they serve. ZeroDivide has specific expertise in working with underserved communities to produce digital media content as a means to promote broadband adoption. ZeroDivide’s Digital Storytelling Institute was one of 8 projects featured by the Federal Communication Commission at America’s Digital Inclusion Summit on March 9, 2010. In addition to the technology adoption outcomes of our programs, we have increased graduation rates among low-income and at-risk youth in Long Beach; increased access to health care for limited English proficient and low-income individuals in San Francisco; and diversified media content distributed via broadband networks throughout California to better reflect the state’s diverse populations. ZeroDivide has the experienced management staff and qualifications to replicate and scale models, including:

- a. Technical, organizational and financial capacity;
- b. Ability to leverage experience and philanthropic/corporate relationships;
- c. A proven track record in stimulating broadband demand and adoption in vulnerable communities.

Outcomes: This project will train 146,283 new broadband users, and build a replicable best practices digital media technology curricula in 7 community anchor institutions (outside the home), to sustain broadband adoption by young people in vulnerable communities.

Job Creation: 22 jobs saved or created (using National Council of Economic Advisors formula)

Overall cost of proposed project: ZeroDivide proposes an overall budget of \$1,989,242 over 27 months. Of this amount ZeroDivide requests \$1,384,242 in BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption funds and will provide a \$605,000 cash match, covering 30.4% of the project costs.

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