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Request for Proposal of Evaluation Services for Wireless Philadelphia

Introduction

Wireless Philadelphia (“WP”) is a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania based non-profit organization whose mission is to facilitate the deployment of a high-speed wireless Internet infrastructure throughout the entire City of Philadelphia, along with its partner EarthLink, and to advocate the accessibility of the network to low-income residents by providing an innovative Digital Inclusion continuum of Training, Education, Access, Content and Hardware (the “T.E.A.C.H.” continuum). The goal of Digital Inclusion is to enable people to begin to use the Internet to improve their educational, employment and life opportunities.

As it launches Digital Inclusion programming, WP seeks to conduct a two-year formative and summative evaluation of its pilot collaborative service model, in order to assess the project’s success in meeting service objectives and outcomes for multiple disenfranchised populations receiving the TEACH bundle of services. The evaluation will further assess WP’s initial service delivery approach to Digital Inclusion, which entails partnering with high-performing community organizations to help identify targeted households and integrate WP’s TEACH bundle into their own service benchmarks for qualified constituents. WP is currently seeking proposals from teams and/or individual third-party evaluators to design and conduct the evaluation. Respondents are encouraged to review and be familiar with WP’s Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2007-08 and other background materials, which can be downloaded from its website, www.wirelessphiladelphia.org. The Plan and web site provide detailed information on the goals, objectives, business model and assumptions for the Wireless Philadelphia initiative, as well as current status.

WP’s partner in evaluation is the **William Penn Foundation (the Foundation)**, which will be actively involved in proposal review and evaluator selection, and will serve as an adviser throughout the project’s design and implementation phases. The William Penn Foundation, founded in 1945 by Otto and Phoebe Haas, is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Greater Philadelphia region through efforts that foster rich cultural expression, strengthen children’s futures, and deepen connections to nature and community. In partnership with others, the Foundation works to advance a vital, just and caring community. More information about the William Penn Foundation and its programs can be found on its website, www.williampennfoundation.org.

Project Purpose and Background

The purpose of this evaluation is to demonstrate the direct impact of home-based computers and Internet access among a host of disenfranchised populations in Philadelphia, and to assess the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of WP’s service delivery model. The uniqueness of Philadelphia’s proposed model, as the first major city going completely wireless and offering citywide Digital Inclusion services, also offers a significant opportunity to advance the fields of research and policy with regard to technology and low-income populations.

WP’s signature initiative, its **Digital Inclusion Program**, was launched in 2007 as a three-year pilot. Digital Inclusion will engage a broad coalition of public and nonprofit collaborators to connect

disadvantaged households who are not currently online, so that they can use broadband technology in their homes to access resources and improve their lives. Overall, within the three-year span of the pilot, 6,000 low-wealth households will benefit from this service, laying the groundwork for a long-term strategy designed to invest in the human capital of Philadelphia – its workers, residents, students, and future.

WP is taking an innovative approach to connecting low-income families and households with **Training, Education**, reduced-cost Internet **Access**, targeted online **Content**, and **Hardware**. Together, this “TEACH” continuum will enable users to enhance skills development, strengthen linkages to community resources, and improve their lives. WP begins with the concept of “presumptive eligibility,” meaning that those who have already qualified according to income for participation in welfare-to-work, food support, family services etc, will automatically qualify for WP’s Digital Inclusion program. Based on this approach, WP is developing relationships with leading community-based organizations with the demonstrated ability to: serve at-risk and low-income children and their families; provide trusted community services to low-income Philadelphia neighborhoods; and serve isolated/underserved populations who could benefit from home Internet connectivity. This model is applicable to an extremely broad range of organizations and service/funding streams that promote education, employment and independence for various segments of the target population; each of these entities in turn is creating its own benchmarks for the distribution of TEACH bundles to members of the target population.

Wireless Philadelphia is about more than promoting wireless technology: at its core, the project is about **opportunity**. The presence of a computer, high-speed access, and tailored online content to help families navigate resources from their own home will make a critical difference in assuring that low-income residents of Philadelphia can access at their convenience the supports they need to both prosper and thrive in an increasingly technology-based society.

With this in mind, WP and the Foundation seek to assess both:

- A. Its own model of service delivery as it works with community organizations and public-sector partners to provide the Digital Inclusion TEACH continuum to targeted low-income households, and
- B. The impact on individual household consumers as relates to their overall connectivity, and to specific interim service outcomes achieved through their participation in community programs, which are enhanced by Digital Inclusion.

Key research questions to be addressed through evaluation include:

1. What is the overall impact of Digital Inclusion in providing “access to opportunity”, per WP’s mission, for various low-income and underserved populations? Does the program begin to make a difference in improving the lives of these populations, and if so, how?
2. To what degree does WP’s service bundle enhance its community and public-sector partners’ goals and interim service outcomes specific to Digital Inclusion, across a set of key issue areas/populations (such as employment, health, youth, seniors, etc.)? What capacity levels or resources are required by service partners to implement the Digital Inclusion program model? What adjustments to the model, if any, should be made to make it more effective?
3. How effective is WP’s overall Digital Inclusion model of collaboration with nonprofit and public-sector providers to deliver both training and services to low-income households? What

are the key hallmarks or challenges of this model that can be built upon or addressed in order to for WP to take the program to larger scale in subsequent years?

4. What are the lessons learned for WP from this initial pilot phase? What are the key successes, challenges, and broad impacts of this innovative national model for increasing Internet access to low-income communities on a citywide scale?

Scope of Services

WP and the Foundation are currently seeking proposals to evaluate its Digital Inclusion model within the context of the assessment parameters and research questions presented above. The proposed scope of services should include, though need not be limited to, the following tasks:

1. Design an evaluation plan to address WP's key research questions for Digital Inclusion.
2. Advise on the optimal number of population sets to be assessed, the use of comparison groups within each subpopulation or as a whole, and the targeted number of individuals/households within each subset.
3. Design a plan or describe how to establish baseline data and measure change over time during the two-year evaluation period.
4. Implement the evaluation across a confirmed cross-section of WP's user populations.
5. Work with WP to develop the data needed to conduct the evaluation, including utilization of existing data and creation of a structure to collect additional data, as needed.
6. Provide implementation analysis of WP's model of working with community partners. This may include analysis of staffing, training and infrastructure resources and needs, as well as actual costs of services, relevant to the project's current and anticipated rate of growth.
7. Develop an interim and a final report presenting aggregated outcomes, results and recommendations relevant to the above tasks and linked to key research questions.

In order to assess a diverse representative sampling of Digital Inclusion participants, while maintaining feasible evaluation costs and scope, WP and the selected evaluator will further confirm the subset of populations to be followed and compared through this study. These groups may include: low-income individuals participating in TANF; low-income adults participating in employment training programs; at-risk youth participating in academic and behavioral enrichment programming; and low-income seniors with specific health disparities. The total number of households to be assessed will be determined with evaluator input, and will be drawn from WP's goals of 2,000 and 3,000 households to be served in FYs 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, respectively.

WP anticipates that the evaluation will begin in Fall 2007 and last for approximately twenty-four months, including an initial design phase. The budget will be determined jointly between WP, the selected evaluator, and the Foundation.

Approach to Evaluation

WP and the Foundation envision a multi-method process that incorporates various levels of data collection and analyses. We anticipate that the evaluator will: review background materials; interview WP and community partners to confirm parameters for assessment and establish baselines; and

design and utilize appropriate evaluation methodologies, which may include user surveys, focus groups, case studies, quantitative data analysis, and/or other methodologies.

It is anticipated that projected outcomes will be based on WP's theory of change model. For consumers, WP theorizes that by providing home-based high-speed Internet access through Digital Inclusion, low-income households will take greater advantage of the Internet and use it to access resources that will enhance and improve their lives. For community nonprofit and public-sector partners, this theory asserts that Digital Inclusion will provide the tools and training support required for their consumers to better participate in programming and meet service outcomes, as defined individually by each partner provider. While these outcomes will vary, they may include program retention rates, specific achievement benchmarks, skills development, health improvements or maintenance, etc.

The proposed indicators of change and outcomes that WP and the Foundation have developed to date include the following.

For client households:

- **Indicators** may include: level of adoption of the wireless network by households and community groups; movement along stages of social change; content and context of Internet use across a continuum of quality of life needs/indicators; attitudinal and behavioral changes related to work, study, and civic engagement; level of knowledge of computers and wireless Internet network as facilitated by WP training; community group dynamics; and differential impact across multiple communities/populations/household members.
- **Outcomes** may include the number and percentage of households that: remain connected to the Internet beyond an initial training period; use it actively to access resources and facilitate life improvements; and specifically use the Internet to secure and retain employment, enhance health status, strengthen community or civic engagement, augment education or other skills development, etc.

For WP and its community partners:

- **Indicators** may include: adherence to projected costs of program implementation; staffing capacity and requirements of WP and community partners; effectiveness of WP's train-the-trainer approach and need for ongoing technical support; and other infrastructure, resource or equipment needs related to effective service delivery.
- **Outcomes** may include: overall ability of community partners to enhance services through Digital Inclusion partnership; partners' ability to enhance specific client service goals and interim outcomes through Digital Inclusion; utility of this model in the pilot Digital Inclusion model in meeting its stated goals and objectives; and WP's ability to refine this model to take the project to fuller scale and secure longer-term funding and partnerships.

Requirements for RFP Response

All proposals must provide a comprehensive description of the applicant's strategy for designing and implementing a two-year evaluation of Digital Inclusion. This response must be in keeping with WP's key research questions, partnership-based service model, and user populations, as described herein. The proposal must also include a statement of qualifications concisely describing the applicant's capabilities relative to this project, including the following:

1. A track record of formal evaluation services as well as an understanding of employment, educational, health and/or civic applications of technology and the Internet, preferably as demonstrated by previous work,
2. A listing of non-profit or municipal clients and references to include addresses and telephone numbers,
3. If responding as a firm, the ownership, size, location of the office responsible for providing services to WP,
4. If responding as a firm, its legal organization (e.g., corporation, partnership) and year of incorporation,
5. If responding as a firm, a description of the firm's equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination policies,
6. If responding as firm, a summary of the firm's minority and female recruitment efforts and the percentage of minority and female officers, partners, or the equivalent,
7. A statement, in one page or less, of any other relevant factors that should be considered by WP in evaluating the proposal, and
8. A proposed cost estimate for services to be provided, along with specific ideas for performance based criteria for evaluation of applicant's success in achieving the objectives of the program (see *Terms and Conditions*, below).

The proposal shall also include the appropriate disclosure forms as required to comply with City of Philadelphia code 17-1400. Forms may be acquired from WP if needed. Please limit all narrative responses to no more than 15 pages, not inclusive of disclosure forms.

Proposals shall be evaluated by a selection committee on the basis of the applicant's skills and experience, proposed cost, presentation and completeness of proposal, ability and willingness to work with WP leadership, the William Penn Foundation and community partners, and references.

Terms and Conditions

Any firm or person submitting a proposal shall state their willingness to agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. The awardee must be fully committed to the mission of Wireless Philadelphia.
2. Termination - A termination agreement is to be negotiated between the parties that includes provisions on termination for cause and termination for convenience.
3. Oral Presentation - any individual or firm who submits a proposal in response to this RFP must be willing to make an oral presentation at the request of the WP Board or Management.
4. Compensation - It is anticipated that the total value of this contract will be in the range of \$150,000-\$200,000 over two years. The actual value of this contract will depend on the type and amount of services proposed by the vendor. The schedule of compensation will be mutually negotiated. The compensation plan will include payment based upon an assessment of the vendor's attainment of specific, measurable outcomes or "performance

benchmarks,” which will be mutually developed between WP and the selected vendor based on the tasks outlined above.

Submissions and More Information

All bid proposals will consist of **one original proposal and six (6) copies** in a sealed envelope, to be submitted to:

Evaluation Services RFP Review Committee
Wireless Philadelphia
121 South 13th Street, 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Attn: Greg Goldman

In addition, please e-mail **one electronic PDF copy of the proposal** to RFP@wirelessphiladelphia.org.

Proposals shall include a table of contents listing all sections, disclosures, etc. and their corresponding page numbers. Proposals will not be accepted via facsimile transmission.

It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to deliver the proposal to the location specified above at or before **5 P.M. on Monday, October 1, 2007**. WP reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject and return without review any proposal received after the proposal submission time and date.

For more information about this RFP, please contact:

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