Organization:	Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
Project Name:	Networking Alaska Public Libraries
Project Type:	Public Computer Center
State:	Alaska
Federal Award:	$5,351,378

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Spearheading an expansive collaboration between groups including libraries, state agencies, colleges, healthcare networks, small businesses, and nonprofit foundations, the **Alaska Department of Education & Early Development** proposes to enhance public computer centers at more than 100 libraries across the state while launching an innovative free public videoconferencing network available to all Alaska public library users. Many populations in the surrounding community speak the indigenous languages of Alaska rather than English at home, so the project intends to hire bilingual support staff as part of its broader outreach to economically vulnerable populations, including Native Alaskans, other English-as-a-second-language residents, low-income individuals, and at-risk youth. The project also proposes to connect the libraries with limited terrestrial connectivity options to an affordable, sustainable satellite broadband network.

Networking Alaska Public Libraries also proposes to:

- Deploy approximately 320 new workstations in 104 upgraded computer centers, increasing public access to computer centers by up to 325 hours per week and accommodating approximately 12,000 additional users each week.

- Train as many as 7,000 residents with up to 28,000 hours of teacher-led training annually over the three years of the project. Training will focus on distance education, employment and e-commerce, health resources, and sign language.

- Facilitate the preservation and sharing of indigenous languages across Alaska, using videoconferencing and targeted computer instruction for tribal elders across the state.

ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development's mission is to develop, maintain and continuously improve a comprehensive, quality system to provide resources, data, and world-class support services that inspire quality learning for Alaskans.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Rasmuson Foundation
- Alaska Library Network
- Alaska Library Association
- Alaska Vocational Technical Center; Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Division of Fire and Life Safety, Department of Public Safety
- Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Inc.
- University of Alaska
- Alaska eHealth Network

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