



**Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
Public Computer Centers Program – Sustainable Adoption Program**

Submitted Date: 8/17/2009 3:24:54 PM	Easygrants ID: 1119
Funding Opportunity: Public Computer Centers and Sustainable Broadband Adoption	Applicant Organization: Mitchell County Courthouse Foundation
Task: Submit Application - Non-Infrastructure Programs	Applicant Name: Dr. Daniel Barron

A. General Application Information

I. Applicant Information	
I-A. Name, Address, and Federal ID for Applicant	
i. Legal Name:	Mitchell County Historic Courthouse Foundation
ii. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):	770697289
Street 1:	11 North Mitchell Ave
Street 2:	POB 39
City:	Bakersville
County:	Mitchell
State:	NC
Country:	United States
Zip/Postal Code:	28705

I-B. Name and Contact Information of Person to be Contacted on Matters Involving this Application:

Prefix:	Dr.
First Name:	Daniel
Middle Name:	
Last Name:	Barron
Suffix:	
Telephone Number:	828-284-1914
Fax Number:	
Email:	drdanbarron@gmail.com
Title:	Chair

I-C. Other Required Identification Numbers



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i. Organizational DUNS: 809784742	
ii. CCR # (CAGE): 5LTZ8	
iii. Funding Opportunity Number: 2	
iv. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: BTOP CFDA Number: 11.557 BTOP CFDA Title: Broadband Technology Opportunities Program	

1-D. Organization Classification

Non-Profit Corporation

1-E. Applicant Federal Debt Delinquency Explanation

Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt?
No

Federal debt delinquency Explanation:

1-F. Congressional Districts of:

Applicant: North Carolina - 10

Program/Project	North Carolina - 10
	North Carolina - 11

2. Project Title and Project Description

2-A. Project Title : Mitchell County Virtual Learning and Communications Center

2-B. Project Description: In collaboration with Mitchell County Public Library and Mayland Community College, the Center will provide access to broadband programs and services that will address specific



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educational and communication needs of displaced workers, farmers, high school dropouts, residents wanting college courses, health care workers, EMS personnel, educators, government officials, and small business persons.

3. Project Type

Classify the particular project type for which you are seeking federal funding.

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Project ID: 2

4. Application ID for Multiple Submissions for Identified Service Areas

5. Estimated Funding (\$):

Estimated Funding (\$):	
Federal	239,194
Applicant	
State	250,000
Local	5,000
Other	400,000
Program Income	
Total	894,194

B. Eligibility Factors

6. Eligibility Factors.

The application must be completed fully, and all required supplemental documentation must be attached.

The problem or need: During the past ten years, Mitchell county has lost all of its major manufacturing employers resulting in 2,710 layoffs. In 2006 alone, 340 workers were laid off. For more than 100 years, tobacco farming was the primary economic activity in this area. In 1985, 375-400 farmers were producing burley tobacco; today there are 8 tobacco farmers. Other farmers are now in a transition period. The 2009 unemployment rate for Mitchell County is 12.9% while the statewide rate is 11.2%. The economic situation is exacerbated by a high school drop-out rate averaging of 39%. Only 56% of the people over 25 years of age in this area have a high school diploma. The county is considered a Tier 1 rural county by the North

7. Executive Summary of Overall Proposal:

C. Executive Summary

Matching Fund Waiver Request Explanation

6-d. Applicant is providing matching funds of at least 20 percent towards to the total eligible project costs or is requesting a waiver of the matching requirements. **Yes**

Applicants must commit to substantially completing their Project (as defined in the NOFA) within two years of the award date, and completing the Project within three years of the award date.
Applicants must credibly demonstrate that their Project advances at least one of the five statutory purposes for BTOP.
Applicants must demonstrate that but for Federal funding they would not have been able to complete their project during the grant period.
The budget for the project must be reasonable and all costs must be eligible.

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Area(s) to be served: Mitchell County will be the primary target area; however, the Center will also be available to Avery and Yancey Counties for teleconferences and computer use as well. The immediate area has a population of 15,687 with the broader population being 52,062. Estimated number of potential users of your public computer center: By the end of the 2nd year of the project Mayland will graduate 150 GED's and provide 12 academic classes, 18 career classes (including those for EMS, health care, firefighter, and artisan groups). There will be at least 36 small business, agriculture, government, and artisan teleconferences. A total of 18 public performances will be presented and as many community group meetings as the schedule will allow. There will be a 25% increase in the use of public internet access and at least 12

proposed. Overall approach to addressing the need, and how approach is innovative: The Foundation will provide a state of the art technology facility in which Mayland Community College will provide G.E.D. completion, on site and distance education courses leading to degrees, continuing education classes for education and business professionals, a broad range of special interest courses and workshops for the general public, and much needed continuing education to firefighters, EMS personnel, and other human service providers. The NC Cooperative Extension Service will have access to classrooms, computers, internet and distance learning equipment that will be used to facilitate their alternative agriculture education activities and farm business training. In the facility, the Mitchell County Public Library will provide basic information literacy workshops for the general public and provide extended access to computers and the Internet. Businesses, farmers, private agencies, artisans, town and county employees, faith-based organizations and others can use the Center for classes, meetings, videoconferencing, and distance learning. With the increasing cost of travel, groups will be able to link with their colleagues in other parts of the state and beyond for conferences and meetings. They will have access to many education and information resources that would not otherwise be available or affordable. The activities described will directly serve 500-700 in classes and teleconferences and over 9000 internet users during the first year of operation with an anticipated user base of over 50,000 over 5 years. Our request is based on a comprehensive needs assessment with considerable community input with tested and proven equipment and techniques. The unique factor is the coalition of organizations and agencies that have come together to create and maintain this project in this rural mountain area.

Carolina Department of Commerce with a per capita income of only \$13, 993. A comprehensive solution involving education, communication, and community development among several partners provided at the Virtual Learning and Communication Center is

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8. Project Purpose
The Mitchell County Virtual Learning and Communication Center will be located in the

Project Purpose: Recovery Act & BTOP Objectives

D. Project Purpose

Jobs to be saved or created: The Extension Service has evaluated farms that previously grew tobacco and estimates that 1500-2200 acres on those farms can be converted to alternative crop production. This change would involve 100-150 farmers and an investment of about \$250,000. This new production should create 50-75 seasonal and 5 full-time jobs. One job will be created to fill the position of Educational Program Director. While some of our efforts may not directly create jobs, we are establishing an educational and communications infrastructure that will support individuals to become better educated and workforce ready, businesses to operate more effectively, government to respond more knowledgeably, and a community with greater self esteem. This will lead to an improved economic condition for the county and surrounding area that will attract light manufacturing and knowledge based industries to Mitchell County. Overall cost of the proposed project: A final goal of \$1.2 million; this phase of the project being \$894,194 with \$239,194 requested from BTOP funds.

Qualifications of the applicant that demonstrate the ability to implement the project and achieve its intended results: The Chair of the Foundation and PI recently retired from the University of South Carolina as Director of the School of Library and Information Science which includes an outstanding record of achievement in the area of distant learning, rural library development, and information technology applications. He currently is the Director of the AMV Regional Library of which the Mitchell County Public Library a major partner in this project with the only free public computer access in the area. The unprecedented number of key local human service organizations whose leadership is represented on the Foundation Board is indicative of the commitment to the project and its sustainability.

Information literacy events will be presented in collaboration with the Public Library and taught by their staff. Last year we had a record of over 7,900 users of our library's internet facilities with a waiting list on most days. Over 5 years, we project over 50,000 users.

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Mitchell County Historic Courthouse which is being renovated in Bakersville, the County Seat, located in the northwestern section of Mitchell County. The service area for the project will be the entire county; however, two adjoining counties will have access to the services provided at the Center.

During the past ten years, the county has lost all of its major manufacturing employers resulting in 2,710 layoffs. In 2006 alone, 340 workers were laid off. For more than 100 years, tobacco farming was the primary economic activity in this area. In 1985, 375-400 farmers were producing burley tobacco; today there are 8 tobacco farmers. Other farmers are now in a transition period. The promise of Christmas tree plantations has peaked and future opportunities are diminished. Job development requires that they either change career fields or produce and market a new mix of crops such as organic vegetables, natural and humanely raised animal products, medicinal, berries and landscaping ornaments.

The 2009 unemployment rate for Mitchell County is 12.9% while the statewide rate is 11.2%. The economic situation is exacerbated by a high school drop-out rate averaging of 39%. Those young people who do graduate often leave the county to find employment, while most drop-outs stay in the county and often become additional negative statistics involving drugs and crime.

Residents of the northwestern area of the county are in a demonstrably worse situation because of lower economic and educational levels exacerbated by geographic isolation. The majority of tobacco farms were located in this area. Those who live in communities like Pigeon Roost, Poplar and Hughes Gap which have a driving time of over one-hour to Mayland Community College where opportunities exist to improve their education levels and job skills. Only 56% of the people over 25 years of age in this area have a high school diploma. The county is considered a Tier 1 rural county by the North Carolina Department of Commerce with a per capita income of only \$13,993. Providing closer access to educational opportunities will be an incentive for many who cannot (as opposed to "just reluctant") make the necessary trips to the current campuses of Mayland. Many who have had limited or poor experiences in organized education including drop outs and some farmers will find the Center to be more welcoming. Education and communication are the keys to a viable workforce and future economic development in Mitchell County. The Center will include: telecommunications and a portable public access computer system to support distance learning, videoconferencing, computer literacy, town-wide wireless internet access and a variety of classroom instructional configurations.

In collaboration with Mayland Community College we will provide G.E.D. completion, on site and distance education courses leading to degrees, continuing education classes for



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education and business professionals, and a broad range of special interest courses and workshops for the general public. Also much needed continuing education to firefighters, EMS personnel, and other human service providers in the area.

The Cooperative Extension Service will have access to classrooms, computers, internet and distance learning equipment that will be used to facilitate their alternative agriculture education activities and farm business training. The Extension Service has evaluated farms that previously grew tobacco and estimates that 1500-2200 acres on those farms can be converted to alternative crop production. This change would involve 100-150 farmers and an investment of about \$250,000.00. This new production should create 50-75 seasonal and 5 full-time jobs in collaboration with the Mitchell County Public Library, the Center will provide basic information literacy workshops for the general public and provide extended access to computers and the Internet. The Library will take full responsibility for the technology systems and provide extended hours for public access to computers and the Internet.

Businesses, farmers, private agencies, town and county employees, faith-based organizations and others can use the Virtual Learning and Communications Center for classes, meetings, videoconferencing, and distance learning. With the increasing cost of travel, groups will be able to link with their colleagues in other parts of the state and beyond for conferences and meetings. They will have access to many education and information resources that would not otherwise be available or affordable. All of the activities described above will directly serve 500-700 people during the first year of operation and over 50,000 in the next 5 years.

All of these activities will be sustained by Foundation and its partners in a number of ways including general maintenance and insurance provided by the County, GED and higher education classes by Mayland Community College similar to its other campuses, educational activities by the Cooperative Extension Service within its existing budget, professional conferences and seminars by the sponsoring agencies, cultural activities by the sponsoring group and/or participants, and technology applications by the Public Library and Mayland Community College. The success of the Agricultural Education and Marketing Coordinator position is expected to generate enough local interest to secure funding from the County Commission.

We propose that our efforts as described above meets 4 of the 5 statutory purposes of the BTOP initiative namely:

- Provide improved broadband access to consumers in underserved areas
- Provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support to community anchor institutions, job-creating strategic facilities, and vulnerable populations
- Improve access to and use of broadband by public safety agencies

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12. Public Computer Centers Availability
 The Mitchell County Virtual Learning and Communication Center will be available free of charge to all members of the general public for at least 60 hours per week on a regular basis and available for special uses additionally by community groups, organizations and government agencies on a scheduled appointment basis. The computers will be available during these hours for free as a part of the Public Library services. Teleconferencing service

Public Computer Center Capacity, Including Areas and Populations Served

**E. Project Benefits
 E-1 – Expanding Broadband and Public Computer Center Capacity**

11. Small and Disadvantaged Business Involvement

10. Enhanced Services for Health Care Delivery, Education, and Children

9. Recovery Act and Other Governmental Collaboration.
 Thus far, we have been fortunate to have received funding from several sources for the construction phases of our efforts to create the Virtual Learning and Communication Center. Most notable has been the North Carolina Center for Rural Development from which we have received a planning grant of \$25,000 and a construction grant of \$200,000. HandMade in America has provided funding of \$50,000 to test a prototype position for Marketing and Program Director for the Center. We applied for and were denied funding from the state-funded Golden Leaf program last year; however, we have reapplied for, but have not been notified of funding from the Golden Leaf Foundation this year to complete the final construction phases of the project. These funds are not required for opening the doors, but will be used for landscaping, LEED certification, and programming for the new Center. Local Mitchell County Government has invested over \$5,000 in the building and will provide daily maintenance for the facility once the doors open.

• Stimulate demand for broadband

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Public Computer Center: Mitchell County Virtual Learning and Communications Center Address Line 1: 11 North Main Ave Address Line 2: POB39 City: Bakersville State: NC Zip: 28705 Computer Center Name/Type: Mitchell County Virtual Learning and Communications Center Estimated # of Total Persons in your Service Area (or Specific Population Sub-Group): 15784 Hours Open to Public: Average Hours Open to Public Per 120-hour Business Week: 51
PCC - Center Locations & Center Capacity & Size and Scope of Target Audience.

15. PCC - Center Locations, PCC - Center Capacity, PCC - Size and Scope of Target Audience.

The Center will have an ADA compliant entrance with automatic door, a lift to the second floor with a remote access button, wireless headphones for the hearing impaired in the classrooms, spaces for wheel chairs in the classrooms, all ADA approved toilet facilities, all fire warning apparatus for visual and hearing impaired, staff who have had ADA workshop training in working with diverse and disabled populations, and a member of the Board who has responsibility for diverse and disabled population advocacy.

14. Public Computer Centers Accessibility

There will be no restrictions for using the Center except for any infractions of rules governing generally accepted behavior in a public use facility.

13. Restrictions on Public Computer Center Use

costs will be offset by virtue of the Center being a part of the e-NC Authority network (<http://www.e-nc.org/>) with users paying the costs of tuition, workshop fees, or other charges appropriately required by the sponsoring organization. For example, the proposed workshops and classes in alternative agriculture will be paid for by the NC Cooperative Extension and certain distance education classes for college students will be paid for with their tuition. Both will realize savings gained from less travel and realize advantages not available within 100 miles or more.

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Age Distribution: 70 and above
Age Distribution: 60-69
Age Distribution: 50-59
Age Distribution: 40-49
Age Distribution: 30-39
Age Distribution: 20-29
Age Distribution: 5-19
Age Distribution

16. PCC-SBA Population Demographics

<p>Proposed Hours Open to Public Per 120-hour Business Week: 68 Average Hours Open to Public Per 48-hour Weekend: 3 Proposed Hours Open to Public Per 48-hour Weekend: 8</p> <p>Broadband Workstations: Current # of Broadband Workstations: 12 Proposed # of Broadband Workstations: 36</p> <p>Facility Broadband Connection Speed (Mbps): Current Facility Broadband Connection Speed (Mbps): 3.00 Proposed Facility Broadband Connection Speed (Mbps): 5.00</p> <p># of Persons Served: # of Persons served per 120-hour business week (current): 7900 # of Persons served per 120-hour business week (proposed target): 10500 # of Persons served per 48-hour weekend (current): 30 # of Persons served per 48-hour weekend (proposed target): 60</p>

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Ethnicity or ethnicities	Ethnicity: Hispanic
	Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic White
	Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic Black
	Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic American Indian
	Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic Asian
	Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
	Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic Other
	Ethnicity: Two or More Races

Gender	Gender: Female
	Gender: Male

Median Household Income	Median Household Income: Less than \$9,999
	Median Household Income: \$10,000 - \$14,999
	Median Household Income: \$15,000 - \$24,999
	Median Household Income: \$25,000 - \$34,999
	Median Household Income: \$35,000 - \$49,999
	Median Household Income: \$50,000 - \$74,999
	Median Household Income: \$75,000 - \$99,999



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Median Household Income: \$100,000 - \$149,999
Median Household Income: \$150,000 - \$199,999
Median Household Income: \$200,000 and above

Educational Levels
Educational Levels: None
Educational Levels: Nursery school - Preschool
Educational Levels: Elementary - Kindergarten - Grade 5
Educational Levels: Middle - Grade 6 to Grade 8
Educational Levels: Secondary - Grade 9 to Grade 12
Educational Levels: College
Educational Levels: Masters
Educational Levels: Doctorate/Post-Doctorate

Disabilities status
Disabilities status : Blindness, Deafness or a severe vision or hearing impairment
Disabilities status : A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying

Unemployment Rate
Unemployment Rate: 12.90

Language

The equipment listed will allow us to use the broadband access to provide distance learning opportunities for all the groups included in our proposal. A large meeting room with 176 seats will be equipped with codec, cameras, audio system, document camera, and projector to

18. **Public Computer Centers Peripherals and Equipment**
 Please see Supplemental Information A (Mpac1 systems (Mpac1-5) detailing the teleconferencing systems required and B Mitchell County Historic Courthouse Public Computer Access List and Budget. We put out a call for bids, received three, and made the decision to accept the Mpac one based on cost, reputation of the company, and service options available. Our selection of computers and software are based on the equipment we currently have in the Public Library to maintain a standard for IT support.

Public Computer Center Capacity: Training and Educational Programs

17. **Public Computer Centers Outreach**
 Using the term, Center, literally, the Foundation has and will continue to make the renovated building the center for learning, communication and community development in the northern end of Mitchell County, but also a center for government and professional education for the entire county and surrounding areas. The Center will take advantage of the marketing and public relations efforts of its major partners in providing access to public computing and technology. This includes the existing programming which will be extended by numbers of hours and opportunities by the Mitchell County Public Library, Mayland Community College, NC Cooperative Extension Service, EMS and Public Safety, and the other human service and government agencies whose members will continue to be involved in the planning and implementation of educational and communication programs in the Center.

Language : English - Primary
Language : English - Second Language
Language : Non-English Speakers

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20. Public Computer Centers Training and Education Programs
 Currently, the Director of the AMY Regional Library System is responsible for coordinating planning for the educational and teleconferencing uses for the building. His background is in distant learning and information technology at the University of South Carolina. This planning will take the Center into its first year of operation. One of the goals of the project is to hire a full-time Education Director; however, those funds are not yet available. Until then, the AMY Director will be responsible for that aspect of the project. Likewise, he will work with the staff of the Mitchell County Public Library to expand internet access services and information literacy classes. The AMY Regional Library is a member of the Foundation Center's Cooperative Collection Program, which means that workshops in grant

19. Public Computer Centers Workstation Software
 All public access computers will be loaded with Microsoft Office 2007, Dreamweaver, and internet browsers. Access to specialized software to support classes and workshops by Mayland Community College and the NC Cooperative Extension Service will be provided by them on an as need basis through their centralized servers and/or installed on the machines according to their purchase or lease agreements. The public library emphasis will be on using Office software with a special emphasis on accessing online resources such as NCLive (<http://www.nclive.org>) and other services available to the public by virtue of the Library's membership in the Regional and State networks. Specialized software packages will be added on a case by case basis based on the requirements of the groups being served.

The 24 laptops will be equipped with personal productivity software including Office 2007 and Dreamweaver as well as security software. The building will have hardwired access as well as wireless access. The wireless cloud will cover the immediate downtown area of Bakersville. Copiers and scanners will be provided by the Library.

accommodate lectures as well as interactive teleconferences for large groups. We will also have a portable unit that can be used in our smaller classroom and seminar rooms for smaller teleconference communication for small business persons, government leaders, artisans, or other community members who need to use the broadband access to communicate with colleagues.

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E-2-Project Benefits – Sustainable Broadband Adoption

21. Innovative Approach to Sustainable Broadband Adoption

22. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Household Subscribers.
 How many total new home subscribers (household accounts) to broadband do you expect to generate through use of BTOP funds over the entire life of the program funded?

23. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Institutional Subscribers.

writing and non-profit organizational management will also be included from the Library.

Over the process of the first year, the Director will work with all partners, especially Mayland Community College, NC Agricultural Extension Service, and Toe River Arts Council by the end of the 2nd year of the project to graduate 150 GED's and provide 12 academic classes, 18 career classes (including those for EMS, health care, firefighter, and artisan groups), and 36 small business, agriculture, government, and artisan teleconferences.

The NC Cooperative Extension Service will provide distant learning and on site learning opportunities related to all aspects of farming and gardening. The outcomes will include 25-50 seasonal and 5-full time jobs, at least \$250,000 new investments in alternative agricultural crops and careers, 150-200 farmers educated/trained in alternative agriculture, 100-150 alternative crop farmers established, and 1500-2200 new acres of alternative crops allocated.

We have begun exploring options for artisans to provide master classes via the system as well as providing them, as small business persons, with the opportunity to use the system for business related teleconferences.

A total of 18 public performances will be presented and as many community group meetings as the schedule will allow.

There will be a 25% increase in the use of public internet access and at least 12 information literacy events will be presented in collaboration with the Public Library and taught by their staff.

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How many total new business and/or institutional subscribers to broadband do you expect to generate through use of BTOP funds over the entire life of the program funded?

24. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Users of Public Access Facilities.
How many total users of broadband in public computer centers or users of broadband outside the home (e.g., in a community college) do you expect to generate through use of BTOP funds over the entire life of the program funded? **49,375**

25. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Population Demographics.
Please refer to PCC – SBA Demographics section (Section E1 - Question 17)

26. Sustainable Broadband Adoption People Trained/Educated.
If you intend to provide training or education, how many people in total will your program(s) reach? **1,445**

27. Sustainable Broadband Adoption - Scope of Training/Education Programs.
How many hours of training do you expect to provide *per person on average* for each participant in your training program(s), through completion of training for that individual? If you will offer multiple programs, provide estimates for each program. **2**

28. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Instructor Qualifications.
How many (FTE) instructors/facilitators will you employ for broadband and digital literacy training purposes, and what are their qualifications (training and experience)?

29. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Equipment Purchased.
How many broadband-related equipment units (e.g. computers, wireless devices) do you intend to purchase overall? **239**

30. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Cost of Devices.
What is the total up-front cost of this equipment? **192,603**

31. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Loan Program Participants.
If you are providing an equipment purchase or loan program, for how many households, businesses and/or institutions do you expect to provide equipment or computers?
Number of Households:
Number of Businesses:
Number of Institutions:

32. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Loan Cost to Borrower.
If you are employing a loan program for purchases of service or equipment, what will be the total cost to the typical customer you assist over the life of the loan, including all interest and fees?
33. Sustainable Broadband Adoption Target Population, Awareness Campaign.
If you are conducting an awareness campaign, how many people do you expect your campaign will reach? **52,062**

