BROADBANDUSA
CONNECTING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

Organization:	Auburn University
Project Name:	Equipment and Training for Rural Alabama Public Computer Centers
Project Type:	Public Computer Center
State:	Alabama
Federal Award:	$4,636,354

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Auburn University, in partnership with the Tuskegee Institute and the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS), proposes to expand and enhance public computer centers in 94 rural libraries and 21 public schools in Alabama as part of a strategy to address unmet user demand for computer resources. In a recent study conducted by the University, Alabama libraries reported that more than 60 percent of their patrons were economically vulnerable. This project proposes to improve service for these populations by providing access to broadband-enabled computers that would allow users to search for jobs online, prepare resumes, use career development materials, and apply for employment, training, or related assistance.

Auburn plans to offer over 1,000 online courses for users seeking educational opportunities, along with distance learning and telemedicine applications. Auburn's Harrison School of Pharmacy plans to test the feasibility of using video conferencing to facilitate transactions between rural residents and pharmacists. Further integrating the schools with their surrounding communities, student interns from Auburn and Tuskegee will work with library staff to maintain the computer centers and equipment.

The Equipment and Training for Rural Alabama project also proposes to:

- Deploy approximately 1,000 new workstations and upgrade approximately 470 more in one new and 114 upgraded computer centers, increasing public access to computer centers by up to 85 hours per week and accommodating an estimated 11,000 additional weekly users.

- Train as many as 100 public library professionals with up to 2,800 hours of teacher-led training annually over the three years of the project.

ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY

Auburn University was established in 1856 and currently has an enrollment of about 25,000, offering degrees in 13 schools and colleges at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels. Auburn is experienced in managing the requirements and regulations of federal grants.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Alabama Public Library Service
- Tuskegee University