BROADBANDUSA
CONNECTING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

Organization:	**Future Generations Graduate School**
Project Name:	**Equipping West Virginia's Fire and Rescue Squads with Technology and Training to Serve Communities**
Project Type:	**Sustainable Broadband Adoption**
State(s):	**West Virginia**
Federal Award:	**$4,461,874**

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Equipping West Virginia's Fire and Rescue Squads project proposes a community-based approach to stimulate broadband adoption among, and extend computer access and training to low-income and predominantly rural communities across West Virginia. The project expects 60 volunteer fire and emergency rescue stations to participate in the program. Twenty-four squads in 12 counties already have committed to participate in the first year. This project plans to train more than 37,000 people and expects to increase broadband subscribership by more than 12,700 households and businesses during the life of the project. The project also features a broadband awareness campaign that will include peer-to-peer outreach, newspaper and radio advertisements, signage to promote services, social networking, and a support Web site. The project includes two contractors designated as Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs), additional small businesses not designated as SDBs, and proposes an "e-commerce academy" to assist small businesses.

The project proposes to:

- Equip each participating fire and rescue squad with 11 computer stations and real-time audio/video communication.
- Make these computer facilities available to the general public. Most of these facilities will be located in rural counties where unemployment is above the state average.
- Implement training programs such as emergency preparedness, health and substance abuse, and e-commerce.
- Recruit a mentor from each community who will offer basic digital literacy courses to the public.
- Offer fire and rescue squads the opportunity to enroll in online courses provided by local community and technical colleges.
- Refurbish and sell more than 1,600 computers as an affordable way for West Virginians to become home broadband subscribers and to enhance the project's sustainability.

ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY

Future Generations Graduate School specializes in community-based approaches to major social challenges and has a track record of successfully managing complex international and educational programs that rely on broadband. Twenty-four fire departments and numerous instructors, businesses, and state agencies are committed to this project.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Calhoun-Gilmer Career Center
- Johns Hopkins Public Health Preparedness Programs
- Key Train Career Readiness
- Lighted Signs Direct, d/b/a SIGNS by Saenz
- Literacy WV
- Mission West Virginia, Inc.
- Monongahela National Forest
- Partnership of African American Churches
- Pendleton Computers
- Regional Education Service Agency VIII
- TLTEK, LLC
- Volunteer fire, rescue and ambulance departments
- Workforce Investment Councils