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<b>Organization:</b>	Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs
<b>Project Name:</b>	Connecting Alabama: Boosting Broadband to Bridge the Digital Divide
<b>Project Type:</b>	Sustainable Broadband Adoption
<b>State:</b>	Alabama
<b>Federal Award:</b>	\$1,181,348

**ABOUT THE PROJECT**

To bridge the digital divide and promote engagement in the digital economy across all 67 Alabama counties, the **Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs** is proposing an outreach campaign and interactive training program in partnership with several major community serving organizations. The project has been designed and will be coordinated by the Economic & Community Development Institute at Auburn University. To help foster demand, the project proposes to educate and train residents in the social and economic benefits of broadband technology and practical applications of computers and software. The project plans to employ targeted outreach to economically vulnerable populations in the state including Hispanic, African American, disabled, low income, and senior citizen residents through mobile facilities. Among the anticipated beneficiaries is the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, whose members will receive training, access to new public computer facilities, and other broadband opportunities.

The Connecting Alabama project also proposes to:

- Provide computer skills and broadband training to as many as 11,500 residents over the life of the project, offering approximately 115,000 training hours focusing on online connectivity, career building, entrepreneurship and business development, community resources, and education.
- Partner with the BEACON Consortium of six state community colleges, including historically black colleges, to provide local and regional outreach campaigns, project assistance and computer-equipped training sites for the project.
- Develop and deliver specially-designed training modules for the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, as well as educational tools for English as a Second Language programs.

**ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY**

Under its founding legislation, the Alabama Department of Economics & Community Affairs provides a mechanism to "encourage comprehensive and coordinated planning and programming of economic and community affairs." Established in 1983, the Department is one of the Alabama state agencies responsible for performing the state government's economic development function, and has extensive experience receiving and complying with federal funding.

**PROJECT PARTNERS**

- Connecting Alabama
- Economic & Community Development Institute (Auburn University)
- Alabama Community College System
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
- Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind
- Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority
- Alabama Community Leadership Network
- AARP
- Alabama Rural Action Commission
- Alabama Community Services Block Grant Programs

Data provided in the project description is based on information supplied by the applicant. An executive summary of this application can be found on [www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa).

For press-related inquiries, contact 202-482-7002 or [press@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:press@ntia.doc.gov). For the general public, contact [BTOP@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:BTOP@ntia.doc.gov).

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