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2-1-1 California Receives Federal Stimulus Grant to Increase High Speed Internet Access and Use Among Californians Least Likely to Connect

Coalition of California nonprofits led by the California Emerging Technology Fund will work to bridge the technology divide in vulnerable and low-income communities.

Los Angeles, CA – 2-1-1 California announced today that it had been awarded more than \$1 million in Federal Recovery Act funds to help increase awareness, access to, and adoption of broadband high-speed Internet connections by those Californians least likely to connect: low income, rural, Latinos and limited-English speaking, and people with disabilities. 2-1-1 California is part of a coalition of California nonprofit organizations, led by the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF), that received these federal funds for broadband adoption and expansion in California.

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announced a \$7.25 million Recovery Act investment granted to the CETF led coalition to bridge the technological divide and increase economic opportunities in vulnerable and low-income communities throughout California. The grant will fund digital literacy training for more than 675,000 individuals, enabling them to make use of key educational, employment, and health resources online.

"We're thrilled to be part of this coalition of nonprofits working to enhance broadband access and use by Californians most in need," said Peter Manzo, president of United Ways of California and co-chair of 2-1-1 California. "By expanding education and access to broadband services, and providing digital literacy and job training, we'll be working to enhance economic opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Californians at a time when they need it most."

The California Emerging Technology Fund will coordinate a multifaceted outreach campaign using local partner organizations, trusted ambassadors, and grassroots mobilization, to disseminate information about broadband training and services to 5 million California residents. The coalition will educate residents about the availability of relevant broadband resources, with emphasis on digital literacy and job training services that can help residents build skills and find employment or advance their careers.

2-1-1 California will help the CETF coalition identify appropriate digital literacy and job training resources, and broadband services, and help refer residents of underserved communities to find and access those services. 2-1-1 providers will receive reimbursement for assisting people seeking referrals to digital literacy/job training and broadband resources.

"2-1-1 California exists to expand Californians' access to essential community information and services," said Maribel Marin, Executive Director, 2-1-1 LA County and co-chair of 2-1-1 California. "This grant fits in with the mission of 2-1-1 California and local 2-1-1s by helping us connect Californians with the resources and services they need in today's technological world and job market."

Other members of the CETF led coalition include:

- Access Now
- Center for Accessible Technology
- Center to Promote Healthcare Access
- Chicana Latina Foundation
- Latino Community Foundation
- Radio Bilingue
- WE Connect

Among other benefits, this investment will upgrade California's One-e-App one-stop online screening and enrollment system that helps families apply for a range of health care and social service programs. The project expects to increase adoption of broadband Internet service among key vulnerable populations by more than 130,000 households.

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2-1-1 California is the statewide network of local 2-1-1 call centers, and is a partnership of United Ways of California and the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS). The mission of 2-1-1 California is to ensure that California develops the statewide infrastructure and support necessary to ensure quality 2-1-1 services for everyone. 2-1-1 is a free, confidential easy to remember phone number available 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week that connects callers to essential community information and services such as healthcare, rent and mortgage assistance, food and shelter, job training, transportation, childcare, senior care, veteran services and much more.