



Community Centers, Inc. Final Report for the California Emerging Technology Fund

March 2017

I. Financial Summary

- Total Project Budget Spent: \$276,367
 - CETF Grant Amount: \$100,000
 - Number of First-Time Adoptions Achieved: 828
 - Percentage of Match Funds Raised against Goal (\$78,750): 224%
 - Cost Per Unit of Outcomes (\$276,367/828): \$334

II. Project Description, Goals and Objectives, and Outcomes

Project Description

Community Centers, Inc. (CCI) was responsible to train a minimum of 1,500 South Los Angeles community residents in basic Digital Literacy and facilitate 833 first-time high-speed Internet subscriptions at home. Our organization sought to enlighten the community about technology, Internet, computer availability, affordability, and usage. Our goals were to introduce the Internet as well as technological uses of the Internet and computers and applications to those who were otherwise not previously exposed. Our clients were provided computer access, computer training, and Internet availability on a daily basis. We introduced web-based learning, Microsoft office skills (including Excel, Word, PowerPoint, etc.), social media and networking in order to provoke creative avenues to community and collaborate with others. Through these programs CCI has been able to increase computer and technology literacy in our surrounding community.

Goals and Objectives Summary

Nearly all goals and objectives have been completed. CCI achieved our target for distribution of broadband literature and digital literacy training. However, as discussed in the Accomplishments and Lessons Learned sections below, we facilitated 828 new subscriptions to high-speed Internet at home, which represents 99% of the total expected outcomes.

Project Outcomes Summary

Outcome Description	Actual	Goal	Percent Completed
Number of Participants Completing Digital Literacy Training	1,500	1,500	100%
Number of First-Time Internet Subscriptions at Home	828	833	99%

III. Accomplishments and Challenges

Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts of Project

Assessment of Outcomes Achieved in Comparison to Grant Agreement

- CCI achieved its goal of providing computer training to the community it serves but it did not achieve its goal of 833 adoptions. Instead, only eight hundred twenty eight (828) clients became new Internet subscribers. In our judgment, limitations on income as well as client follow-up to provide proof of service contributed to not completing this goal. For a variety of reasons, a number of our clients were unable to afford internet monthly service fees. In our judgement, the primary reasons were unemployment and lack of disposable income.

Delineation of Deliverables and Outcomes Not Achieved and Explanation

- CCI was 5 adoptions short of reaching the goal for new subscriptions. While clients were eager to obtain Internet access, it was a major challenge getting those clients to return their proof of adoptions to our office. In many cases CCI staff sat with clients and went through the process of applying for Internet service together. However, CCI was unable to count some adoptions due to clients not returning proof of obtaining the new Internet subscription. The goal was to achieve 833 verifiable adoptions but CCI was only able to reach 99% of this outcome by verifying 828 adoptions.

Discussion of Other Positive Results from Project

A major output of this project has been the ability to educate the community on low-cost Internet options, digital literacy and low-cost computing devices. Through our partnerships with T-Mobile, Time Warner Cable, ACN, and other small entities throughout the community, we were able to incorporate the following strategies successfully:

1. Digital Education Fairs and Distribution Events: During employment fairs and events, CCI was able to provide classes and seminars on Internet and technology.
2. T-Mobile Program: CCI purchased hotspots which were readily available for low-cost purchase at our facility. Upon obtaining a hotspot, clients were enrolled in T-Mobile Internet service through CCI's T-Mobile representative.
3. Other Training Programs: Computer classes were provided on site.
4. Community Partnerships: Community members facilitated many adoptions through ACN and Time Warner Cable.

Impacts of the Project

The most positive impact of this program was providing digital literacy training and access to connectivity. Clients were particularly happy with learning to be digitally proficient and gaining Internet access either at our center or in their own homes.

Overview of Major Challenges to Achieving Planned Results

Identify Major Challenges to Successful Implementation

- One major challenge was obtaining proof of adoptions. Although, in many cases, we sat with our clients and completed the enrollment process for new Internet subscriptions, it was very difficult to rely on clients to bring in their letters from the companies outlining their new subscription. Our goal was 833 but we fell short due to lack of follow through.
- Many clients wanted higher Internet speeds, which they were never able to obtain because they could not afford them. Therefore, they opted not to subscribe to Internet service. CCI was unable to locate high-speed Internet offers for the low \$10 rate which was affordable for most of our clients.
- The ending of our partnership with T-Mobile due to clients not paying taxes on their devices, resulting in service interruptions.

Discuss Efforts to Address Challenges and Resolve Problems

- In order to get proof of adoptions, our T-Mobile representative was able to forward some adoptions directly to CCI. Other methods of obtaining proof of adoptions from clients included being very persistent with asking for Internet enrollment documents and having clients forward bills from Internet providers.
- We had difficulty overcoming the issue of slow Internet. However, we were able to find higher speeds of Internet for slightly increased prices and data caps.
- Upon ending the partnership with T-Mobile, we put all our efforts into using our other Internet options resulting in enrollments in AT&T and Time Warner Cable/Spectrum services.

IV. Lessons and Recommendations

Summary of Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: Use insightful research to provide a better scope of programs that are best suited for the population we serve. In our effort to achieve all outcomes, we enrolled many students needing basic levels of Digital Literacy while neglecting those students needing more advanced skills to compete in the ever-increasing digitally literate employment market.

Lesson 2: Seek to enroll younger students with commitment and motivation. Many of the younger students do not have the same motivation as those with more experience. We would like to incorporate programs that entice younger students to be just as committed as their older peers in the program.

Lesson 3: Assess student needs prior to enrolling in classes to place them in their appropriate level. It will also be necessary to offer leveled classes in order to keep all students learning and progressing forward.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations for Expanding the Project in Region or Scaling Up Statewide

Recommendation 1: While the technology program has done very well, the Internet subscription portion needed major modifications. It would have been a good idea to develop corporate relationships prior to beginning the grant in order to be able to have a more expedited process from start to finish.

Recommendation 2: CCI provided digital literacy to numerous families. There are several families in our area who still lack the necessary technological and digital experience and tools to keep up with the current digital movement. Follow-up programs that continue to educate families and provide additional resources would be a great next step.

Recommendations to Close the Digital Divide Based On Your Experience

Recommendation 1: Find ways to provide low-cost devices to more low-income households.

Recommendation 2: Convince more funders (foundations, government) to support digital literacy and the work of helping people adopt broadband at home.

Recommendations to CETF Regarding Grants Management

Recommendation 1: The proof of adoption process is extremely time-consuming and cumbersome. In many cases our staff sat with clients and signed them up for internet service but in many cases clients never brought in the proof of the new subscriptions. It would have been a financially better use of time and funds to put more emphasis on helping more people and allowing proof to be in the form of clients signing off on new subscriptions.

Recommendation 2: In programs such as this, it will be important to make certain that the Project Manager has direct access to and can make expedited budgetary decisions.

Recommendation 3: Our CETF program officer was a pleasure to work with. As far as grants management, the Work Plans, templates, trackers, and funder charts were more complex than most of our other funders. While most funders require timelines or Work Plans as part of the proposal, most ask for progress towards the overall objectives twice yearly. They do not generally ask for the progress on each line of the Work Plan. We found the reporting a little cumbersome for a small non-profit organization.

V. Grant Agreement Requirements

Purchased Equipment

Not applicable.

Unspent CETF Grant Funds

All of the CETF grants funds were expended.