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June 2016

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Name of Project:	Communities Wired!
Grant Number:	7990523
Start Date:	July 2013 **End Date:** June 2016

I.   Financial Summary

- Total Project Budget Spent: $ 417,925
- CETF Grant Amount: $ 49,800
- Number of First-Time Adoptions Achieved   641/756
- Percentage of Match Funds Raised   %68
- Cost Per Unit of Outcomes: (Total Adoptions/Total Budget) $ 652

II.   Project Description, Goals and Objectives, and Outcomes

Project Description

Eden Housing is not only one of the oldest, but stands out as one of the most productive, successful and fastest growing nonprofit affordable housing developers in California. Eden Housing has developed and acquired more than 10,000 residential units and 73,000 square feet of commercial space in cities throughout California. However, the work is not simply defined by the housing built for low-income residents. Housing development is one critical aspect of a neighborhood revitalization strategy that also includes professional property management and on-site resident services for residents. Eden currently manages nearly 8,500 affordable units in 15 counties across the state. Through the resident services division, Eden Housing Resident Services, Inc. (EHRSI), Eden links well-built and carefully managed housing with resources that support residents in their daily lives. EHRSI's Resident Services Coordinators are on-site to offer important information and referral services and to implement key programs, including: youth summer and after-school activities; an innovative and growing computer-assisted learning program; a scholarship program for deserving adults; financial literacy training; and support for the frail elderly. CETF funding helped Eden expand the technology program component, creating the Communities Wired! Program.

Communities Wired! is a portfolio-wide Eden Housing initiative that promotes Digital Literacy and broadband adoption across all Eden Housing communities. The program bridges the Digital Divide for those most in need—low-income families and seniors, people with special needs and limited English speaking minorities—providing them with computer training and low cost options for computer equipment and Internet service, with the goal of supporting them to subscribe to and utilize broadband access at home.

Communities Wired! has been integrated into the existing technology programs and resident forums at Eden. It is building on the success of the existing Digital Connectors and Generation Exchange programs. Together, these

programs provide a platform to educate and inspire residents to adopt broadband that support their social, physical, educational and financial well-being.

The target goal was to educate 1,150 residents through our digital literacy programming and track 833 new broadband adoptions.

Goals and Objectives Summary

Eden met or exceeded all goals for the Communities Wired! Program with the exception of adoption goals highlighted below. The following chart highlights the goals for the program:

	Staff Education	Residents Referred to Stride Center	Residents Receiving Digital Literacy	WISPS	Steering Committee Meetings	Toolkit Created
Goal	100%	600	1,150	2	16	1
Achieved	100%	600+	1,195	4	21	1
Variance	0	0	+45	+2	+5	0

Although the CETF Communities Wired! Grant is complete; Eden continues to have a goal of providing broadband access to 100% of our residents. As a community-based organization and nonprofit, Eden needs to be the best steward of resources and invest in the most successful models. Building infrastructure at the site level and providing digital literacy with onsite staff resources is a best practice for Eden. A plan is currently under development to expand access to 100% of the Eden housing portfolio, including new construction, acquisition, rehab, and existing sites. Input from CETF would be valued during this process. In addition to the actual infrastructure and equipment, Eden will also consider sustainability in the long term, determining how each property can pay for the service and then maintain the service ongoing. A key component of all efforts will involve digital literacy and education, making sure that residents understand the value of the tools are provided.

Project Outcomes Summary

Outcome Description	Actual	Goal	Percent Completed
Number of Adoptions for First-Time Subscribers	641	833	77%
Number of Adoptions for Reconnecting Subscribers	115	N/A	100%

III. Accomplishments and Challenges

Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts of Project

Assessment of Outcomes Achieved in Comparison to Grant Agreement
Eden was very successful in many areas of the grant. A great deal was learned about implementing this type of initiative within an affordable housing setting, including what works and what doesn't work. Eden successfully integrated the Communities Wired! program into the working culture and have recently set a goal of getting 100% of residents connected over the next five years. Eden fell short of the adoption goal. However, there are 641 adoptions that count towards our grant (77% of our goal), per the regulations of the grant. An additional 115, bringing the number to 756 adoptions (91% of goal), which includes people who previously had internet or had it at a higher cost and switched to a more cost effective service as a result of our program. Eden values the work and lessons learned to achieve these adoptions since the ultimate goal is to ensure connectivity at an affordable price regardless of past experience. Other key achievements and approaches include:

- Staff Education and Steering Committee: Through extensive experience, and as the organization has continued to grow, Eden has learned that in order to be successful with any company-wide initiative, there is need to gain buy-in from staff at the site level. They are the people interacting with our residents on a daily basis and have established rapport with residents at their sites. Therefore, Eden places a great deal of emphasis on training staff and providing a clear understanding of program initiatives and goals. Staff are provided with expectations, clearly outlining how their role is involved in achieving success. This is the same approach taken when kicking off our Communities Wired! Program. Training was provided to all staff through

company meetings as well as written communication. The steering committee was formed by staff in multiple different capacities, from across the company. The steering committee met regularly to discuss progress, celebrate successes and brainstorm challenges. Having staff from different positions as part of the committee assisted in creating buy-in and creating a culture of "connectivity."

- Installation of WISPS (goal was 2, 4 were achieved): Eden has concluded that the best way to provide access to residents is to install the infrastructure and, where feasible, pay for the internet connection through the operating budgets. Currently Eden offers, or will soon offer, free broadband at twenty-four sites, totaling 1,983 units. In these apartments, residents must use their own computer or tablet, but Eden also offers a computer lab on site for use by all. Eden is also looking at more effective ways to track access rates as well as other success measures for our sites.

- Digital Literacy: Eden successfully created an education toolkit in order to educate residents on the benefits of the internet.   Participation in Digital Literacy exceeded the goal and the model that was created can be replicated going forward. With the efforts to connect 100% of residents, Eden will also revamp and implement increased digital literacy across the whole portfolio.

Delineation of Deliverables and Outcomes Not Achieved and Explanation

The key deliverable for this project was internet adoptions for residents who had never been connected before. The goal was to connect 833 new individuals. There were many successes achieved with this program. Through the experience, we gained valuable information about best practices for connecting low-income residents within an affordable housing setting..

Discussion of Other Positive Impacts and Results from Project - Testimonials

Mr. & Mr. Cai (pictured) – Josephine Lum Lodge Apartments, Hayward CA
This was the first person (couple) to sign-up for the broadband program at Josephine Lum Lodge. They are very happy now and enjoying the high-speed Internet. They no longer have to go to the library to use the computers to access the Internet since they have it in their own home. It may sound like a simple thing but, it gives them a lot of freedom and they can pick and choose when they want to access things as opposed to the hours the library is open.

Overview of Major Challenges to Achieving Planned Results

Major Challenges to Successful Implementation

While we were successful in connecting 756 residents to the internet, either for the first time or at a lower price, we encountered challenges to reaching our goals. The following summarizes our challenges, including our efforts to address those challenges:

- Stride Center: When originally planning for our program, we partnered with the Stride Center. The intention was for the Stride Center to serve as the call center for the program, offering technical support and connecting Eden's residents to low cost service and, in some cases, equipment. Unfortunately, we had challenges with the Stride Center early on in the grant period. It seemed clear that Stride was not able to adequately manage the volume of calls received from Eden residents. For example, in the month of May, 2014 alone we successfully drove over 400 unduplicated calls to the Stride Center. Though we staggered our marketing initiative at the request of the Stride Center, they were unable to handle the volume of calls from Eden's residents. We received widespread reports from the community that they were unable to get through. In June, we continued to receive feedback that residents were not getting through which was leading to frustration and causing credibility issues for Eden staff that was conducting digital literacy sessions. Unfortunately, this performance issue coincided with a burst of Digital Literacy trainings where we were marketing the services available by the Stride Center. Though we worked closely with the Stride Center to ensure the performance issues were corrected, the reputation of the program was damaged and we struggled to rebuild it.

- Internet Service Providers: Our portfolio is spread out across 15 different counties in California, with varying low-cost options for internet service and some with very limited or no affordable service options. In some instances our residents don't qualify for ISP affordable services. An example is the Comcast Internet Essentials program which is for families with children in the free school lunch program. Many of Eden's residents do not fit these qualifications. Eden has been working closely with CETF as well as other organizations to advocate for increased low-cost options across our portfolio area. Additionally, we received a lot of negative feedback from those residents that do qualify with regards to responsiveness and timeliness of Comcast to new enrollment. Many became frustrated and were not interested in the Internet Essentials program after negative experiences with Comcast. Finally, we found that bandwidth options for the lower cost services do not meet the needs of our residents. Rather than paying for a service which doesn't adequately serve their needs, they opt not to spend limited funds on Internet access.

- Staff Transitions: Over the course of the grant period, there were numerous staffing transitions which created some delays in program delivery and consistency. The lack of consistency directly impacted the ability to gain momentum with adoptions and effectively track our data. These transitions also led to poor communication between program staff and site staff which led to frustration all around.

- Scholarships: In an effort to increase our adoption rates, we implemented a scholarship program entitling residents to either a computer or tablet and one year of free internet service or 18 months of free internet service. The service was to be provided using Mifi equipment (a personal hotspot). There were challenges in timing for the delivery of the equipment and staff capability to deliver the equipment to residents who were approved for a scholarship. This led to a large gap in time between promise of a scholarship and delivery of equipment to connect. The equipment also proved unreliable in several of our locations and didn't offer sufficient bandwidth. Some residents returned the devices as a result of their lack of functionality and the delay in receiving the equipment.

Efforts to Address Challenges and Resolve Problems

Stride Center: After trying to find solutions to the productivity problem, Eden determined that it was in our best interest to end the relationship with Stride and we contracted with another call center, Touch and Connect, to better meet the needs of our program and residents. They were able to more effectively accommodate the call volume and achieve adoptions. During the first two quarters with the new center, 127 new adoptions were recorded vs. four quarters with the previous arrangement with only 94 adoptions. While this relationship worked much more effectively, the transition created some delay in our ability to move forward with adoptions and multiple residents no longer wanted to participate.

IS Providers: Through our efforts to connect residents we have reached the conclusion that if we truly want residents to be connected, we need to set up the infrastructure to provide the service for free. We have been working hard to incorporate the infrastructure into all new developments as well as significant rehabs. We have also sought, and secured, funding through the CPUC to set up infrastructure at existing sites. We will continue to work to secure more funding and to work with local ISP's to find solutions to challenges we encounter, all with the ultimate goal of getting all of our residents connected. Currently Eden offers, or will soon offer, free broadband at twenty-four sites, totaling 1,983 units. This represents nearly 25% of our currently managed portfolio.

Staffing: As a result of multiple staffing issues during the grant period, we determined a need to bring in extra staffing support on a temporary basis, to support in program implementation. We worked with two temporary program managers to help move the program forward. We were able to advance the program and get much closer to our adoption goal, but still fell slightly short at the end. We also determined that the model originally proposed through this grant is not the best model for residents in affordable housing settings. There are simply too many barriers that get in the way. Our assessment led us to develop our new goal and plan for incorporating the required infrastructure into our building as part of the development or rehab process.

IV.   Lessons and Recommendations

Summary of Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: There are many challenges working with the different ISPs and many do not offer adequate affordable options for our resident population. When embarking on this project we didn't anticipate all of the struggles we encountered related to the various ISPs in our communities. Even for the residents that did qualify for the 'affordable' programs such as Internet Essentials, the process to enroll was painfully slow, the customer service was poor and there were often hidden expenses. It became clear that affordable, user friendly options are not really available for most of population in Eden housing. This is what led Eden to consider providing the service. Eden is committed to continue to work with ISPs to encourage them to create relevant effective programs that meet the needs of our residents.

Lesson 2: Lack of broadband Internet access for our residents greatly impedes our efforts to connect these residents to services. They are at a disadvantage when it comes to basic daily needs—making an appointment with a doctor, monitoring children's school attendance and progress, homework completion accessing a bus schedule, paying a bill, looking for work, etc. Eden is also trying to move towards an online platform for things like payment of rent and completion of work orders. If our residents aren't connected we won't be as effective in our goal of facilitating these work processes for our staff. In other words, getting our residents connected is a true necessity not only for them but for us as well.

Lesson 3: We have had great success, albeit at moderate investment cost, where we have been able to establish infrastructure on-site providing free access to our residents. We have seen close to 100% adoption at sites where we provide even a minimum level of bandwidth. Because of the urgency of connecting our residents to broadband Internet and the adoption success we've had in building our own infrastructure, we will pursue that approach and utilize our resident services division to provide digital literacy. We will not continue with the model set forth in our Communities Wired! grant. Infrastructure is more sustainable for us since it stays with the building and unit. In addition to searching for ways to fund infrastructure internally, we are also seeking external funding to help us in this area. We have submitted multiple applications to the CPUC for infrastructure support and have been awarded more than 400K for infrastructure to date. We plan to submit additional requests during future funding cycles as well. We have also received funding to support our digital literacy efforts.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations for Expanding the Project in Region or Scaling Up Statewide

Recommendation 1: It is absolutely critical to have a key staff position dedicated to running this type of program. It is essentially a full time job, particularly when looking at a portfolio the size of the one at Eden. Eden had staff allocated part-time working on different components of the program and struggled throughout the grant period. We also experienced staff turnover during the grant period which further compromised the program. What is needed is a project manager who can negotiate effectively with ISP providers, develop community partnerships, train staff across the board, monitor partners, and track program goals.

Recommendation 2: Once the infrastructure is part of the building and residents are connected, having a robust digital literacy curriculum to accompany infrastructure is a must. We have found that many of our residents are not aware of how the internet can benefit them on a daily basis. Some, especially seniors, have had very little to no experience using the internet in the past and, in some cases, are quite fearful of new things. We have found that having the curriculum toolkit was very beneficial in educating our residents and in preparing our staff to be able to deliver the curriculum across the portfolio.

Recommendation 3: Organizational commitment to infrastructure and long-term sustainability is a must. Eden is committed to getting 100% of our residents connected. This requires not only a commitment to incorporating the cost into property operating budgets but also concentrated fund development efforts and focus on long term sustainability of the infrastructure as well as digital literacy. Work around advocacy for free or low-cost internet in affordable housing is also necessary. Eden has been working and will continue to work closely with CETF and other groups to advocate for this basic service for all low income residents.
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Recommendations to Close The Digital Divide Based On Your Experience

Recommendation 1: If the Digital Divide is truly going to get closed, increased advocacy efforts are needed. Eden has been working closely with CETF as well as other groups such as NHC (National Housing Coalition) around incorporating connectivity into affordable housing as a basic resource. However, there is much more work

to be done. More housing organizations need to be committed to the effort and dedicate staff time to doing the legwork. Eden looks forward to continuing our work with CETF and other entities going forward in order to achieve our goal of 100% connectivity.

Recommendation 2: Establishing infrastructure at the site level, providing on-going digital literacy and sustaining the system long term isn't cheap. The funding from CASF has been hugely helpful but more is needed. As we continue to advocate for free or low-cost broadband options, hopefully more funders will see the need to support the efforts of Eden and other similar entities. Increased funding channels will help Eden and others achieve their goals and lessen the impact on property operating budgets.

Recommendations to CETF Regarding Grants Management

Recommendation 1: CETF provided a great deal of support throughout our grant period. This was especially true as related to our efforts to look for new ways to tackle the challenge of getting adoptions. Eden is grateful for the support and looks forward to our continued partnership going forward.

Recommendation 2: Throughout the grant period there were opportunities to network and meet with other organizations that were working towards the same kinds of goals. These are helpful for sharing best practices and learning from one another. Eden is always willing to share our efforts and we appreciate the ability to learn from others and not re-create the wheel. We hope that there are continued efforts to network, partner and learn from each other in the future.

V.   Grant Agreement Requirements

Purchased Equipment

Date	Description	Purpose	Amount	How it will be used.
9/25/15	MiFi devices	To provide connectivity for residents	$414	This was included as part of our scholarship incentive

Unspent CETF Grant Funds

There is a balance of $33,600 yet to be disbursed remaining from the original 100K. Through discussions with our grant Manager, we requested approval to re-direct the remaining funding towards our infrastructure goals. As mentioned throughout this report, Eden strongly believes that our plan going forward needs to focus on our providing the infrastructure within the buildings, paying for the internet service (a minimum of 1.5 mbps) for residents and providing robust digital literacy. We have 3 sites currently being rehabbed in Hayward, CA and intend to direct the funding towards those sites. Funding in the amount of $50,200 (includes $16,600 recently disbursed and $33,600 outstanding) will be utilized as follows:

The grant money will pay the majority of the costs for the infrastructure to provide community-wide Wi-Fi service at Harris Court, 24 units, Huntwood Commons, 40 units, and Cypress Glen, 54 units, for a total of 118 households served. We integrated the installation of the infrastructure with the substantial rehabilitation of these three properties that serve families between 40% and 60% of Area Median Income.

Construction began during the first week of March, 2016 and we anticipate substantial completion of the project by early December of this year. At all three sites, we completely de-skinned the buildings, removing all of the old stucco and siding, which provided the perfect opportunity to integrate the new wiring into conduits that will be hidden behind the new siding. At this time, we are at approximately 20% completion at Harris Court, 30% completion at Huntwood Commons, and 35% completion at Cypress Glen.

In addition to our infrastructure work, Eden also commits to working with CETF to advocate for free or low-cost internet for all low income individuals. Eden has made many advances in this area (such as our work with the CPUC) but there is much more work to be done.