Southeast Community Development Corporation
Final Report for the California Emerging Technology Fund
March 2016

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Name of Project: *Get Connected!*
Grant Number: 11547379
Start Date: November 2013   End Date: March 2016

I.   Financial Summary

- Total Project Budget Spent: $643,489
- CETF Grant Amount: $250,000
- Number of First-Time Adoptions Achieved: 2,129
- Percentage of Match Funds Raised against Goal ($463,689):   85%
- Cost Per Unit of Outcomes: ($643,489/2129) $302

II.   Project Description, Goals and Objectives, and Outcomes

Project Description

The Southeast Community Development Corporation (SCDC), in conjunction with Good Tech America, developed a professional technology refurbishing and recycling program with a demonstration and retail center. The program was expected to: (1) Distribute 3,500 low-cost computers; (2) Provide 100 hours of basic computer repair training for 50 students and job placement for 25 students; and (3) Secure 2,117 new broadband subscriptions by selling affordable computers and Internet packages to low-income families. Clients of the Affordable Technology program will be able to receive technical support online and by phone.

Goals and Objectives Summary

Most goals and objectives have been completed. We achieved or exceeded the following targeted outputs and outcomes: number of SCDC staff trained by Good Tech America (100%), number of computers donated to SCDC (101%), number of relationship with downstream recycling and purchasing vendors (100%), number of prime targets for supply identified (104%), number of outreach activities for internship training programs (100%), number of participants trained through computer repair training program (104%) and number of broadband adoptions (101). SCDC did not complete the following outcomes: number of computers refurbished (81%) and number of trainees placed in technology-related jobs (44%).

Project Outcomes Summary

Outcome Description	Actual	Goal	Percent Completed
Number of SCDC staff trained by Good Tech America	5	5	100%
Number of computers donated to SCDC	6,073	6,000	101%
Number of computers refurbished	2,842	3,500	81%
Number of relationships with downstream recycling and purchasing vendors	10	10	100%
Number of prime targets for supply identified	52	50	104%
Number of outreach activities for internship training programs	10	10	100%
Number of participants trained through computer repair training program	52	50	104%
Number of trainees placed in technology-related jobs	11	25	44%
Number of first-time broadband adoptions	2,129	2,117	101%

III.   Accomplishments and Challenges

Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts of Project

SCDC had 9 outputs/outcomes and achieved 100% of 7 of them.

Assessment of Outcomes Achieved in Comparison to Grant Agreement

- Of the seven outcomes achieved, three exceeded over 100% completed. These outcomes included: number of computers donated to SCDC, number of prime targets for supply identified, and number of participants trained through computer repair training program.

Delineation of Deliverables and Outcomes Not Achieved and Explanation

- Of the two outputs not achieved, only one was under 50%. The other output was 81% completed. The number of trainees placed in technology-related jobs was a difficult output to achieve with our community partner, Hub Cities WorkSource Center. There was limited technology-related job opportunities in the southeast area for entry level positions. Most of our clients were Spanish-speaking individuals and had no computer related job experience.

- The number of computers refurbished was difficult to achieve during the beginning phase of the project. The remodeling delays of the Bell Tech Center limited the number of computers that could be refurbished on site. Also, the number of available volunteers limited the number of computers refurbished.

Discussion of Other Positive Results from Project

A major output of this project has been the ability to offer refurbished computers to individuals as well as 501(c)(3) organizations and schools, which are the usual recipients of SCDC computer donation programs. SCDC was able to establish a computer refurbishment, e-waste, retail and training center within 4,000 sq. ft. of donated space from the city of Bell. This center has become a valuable community resource for schools, non-profit organizations, small businesses, and low-income individuals seeking training, low cost computers, and broadband service. SCDC has also strengthened its partnerships with Hub Cities WorkSource Center, Huntington Park Adult School, and East Los Angeles Community College.

1. Computer Fairs and Distribution Events: SCDC coordinated over 45 events throughout Los Angeles County at schools and non-profit organizations. These events were labor intensive and successful. Most partners assisted with outreach and marketing promotion before the event.
2. Computer Repair Program: SCDC enrolled mostly middle-aged adults to the computer repair program because most classes were offered during the mornings. However, SCDC offered one class on Monday evenings and twice during Saturday mornings per month.
3. E-waste Program: SCDC had many challenges with this program. During the project implementation, the international commodity market declined which affected the price of plastic, metal and other computer related materials. As a result, SCDC had a difficult time recycling e-waste materials with reputable recyclers. SCDC had to store large amounts of e-waste before sending to recyclers.
4. Retail: SCDC major positive result of this project was the ability to provide low-cost computers to individuals and community agencies. Schools benefited by the SCDC Computer Donation program and students benefited having the opportunity to purchase low-cost Internet service and a computer.

Impacts of the Project

One of the most positive results from this grant has been the program's impact on the individuals who received the equipment. The following are some comments they shared with us:

- During the Clear-Sprint Transition, Mobile Citizen asked SCDC for assistance with public advocacy regarding the Sprint's unfair treatment of disconnecting over 300,000 customers from broadband service. SCDC students created video testimonials regarding the impact of being disconnected. These videos were shared with congressional representatives to help present the impact of Sprint's actions.

- During the FCC decision process to create a Lifeline for broadband service, SCDC staff and students were interviewed by NPR and Telemundo regarding the benefits and impact of a broadband Lifeline program.   See link https://www.scdcorp.org/press/

- SCDC has collected and recycled over 15,000 lbs. of electronic components.

- The Bell Technology Center has become a community resource for computer training, robotics for youth, refurbishment center, e-waste center, and retail center. These resources have assisted with increasing Digital Literacy and broadband adoption in a low-income community.

Overview of Major Challenges to Achieving Planned Results

Identify Major Challenges to Successful Implementation

SCDC faced several major challenges during the grant period. Our goal was to assist with employing 50% of students enrolled in computer repair but our partner, Hub Cities WorkSource Center (HCWC), had difficulty with identifying employment opportunities for entry level technology related positions.

The second major challenge was the remodeling of the Bell Technology Center. SCDC had to resolve issues with the City of Bell regarding the lease agreement and permitting. It took about 9 months to resolve these issues and complete construction. As a result, the Bell Technology Center was remodeled into a productive and efficient work area.

The final major challenge was the Clear-Sprint transition process. During June 2015, Mobile Citizen prevented SCDC from selling broadband services because the Clear network was going to be discontinued from service. Furthermore, Mobile Citizen informed SCDC that the Clear network was going to be disconnected in October 2015 and over 300,000 Clear customers were not going to have Internet service.

This issue caused stress and anxiety for many of SCDC customers reliant on the Clear service. In November 2015, Mobile Citizen won a court injunction to prevent the disconnection of Clear service until end of February 2016. Meanwhile, Mobile Citizen negotiated favorable terms with Sprint to transition and provide LTE Internet service to SCDC customers. Throughout this nine month process, SCDC had difficulty with meeting its broadband adoption outcomes.

Discuss Efforts to Address Challenges and Resolve Problems

HCWC was able to employ 11 students in clerical technology related positions within SCDC and HUB Cities under the TSE Federal Employment Program. HCWC paid for full-time positions for 8 months. SCDC will continue to partner with Hub Cities in employment development and placement for our students.
Regarding the Clear-Sprint Transition problem, Mobile Citizen asked SCDC for assistance with public advocacy regarding the Sprint's unfair treatment of disconnecting over 300,000 customers from broadband service. SCDC students created video testimonials regarding the impact of being disconnected. These videos were shared with congressional representatives to help present the impact of Sprint's actions.

IV.   Lessons and Recommendations

Summary of Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: The e-waste business is a volatile market. The price of raw materials (such as metal and plastic) may fluctuate throughout the year. E-waste businesses need lots of available storage space to hold materials until the market goes up. Also, e-waste needs volunteer labor in order to profit from recycled materials. The revenue from raw material sales is minor and infrequent.

Lesson 2: Retail providers need a robust Point of Sale (POS) system hosted online. SCDC made the mistake of purchasing a server-based POS system which was difficult to configure and maintain. Sometimes, the server would malfunction causing our POS system to be unavailable during sale transactions. Also the POS should have a comprehensive contact database component. Collecting client contact information is vital to marketing and communicating with your customers.

Lesson 3: Staff training for refurbishment, e-waste, and retail operations is important. Good Tech America was instrumental in providing customized training regarding these topics. Also, it's important to develop a realistic Work Plan to help guide daily operations.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations for Expanding the Project in Region or Scaling Up Statewide

Recommendation 1: Develop a strong Work Plan and startup capital before expanding this project to other regions or statewide. A new refurbishment center requires in-kind space and volunteer labor to maintain a sustainable operation.

Recommendation 2: Select non-profit managers that have some level of retail, sales, and marketing experience when implementing a social enterprise project. There are many challenges and issues that need to be addressed as a manager and having experience would be helpful.

Recommendations to Close the Digital Divide Based On Your Experience

Recommendation 1: Address three important components: first, clients need access to digital literacy education to understand how to operate a computer. Second, clients need opportunities to purchase low-cost computers. Third, clients need access to low-cost and reliable broadband service. The goal of this project was to focus on accomplishing these three components.

Recommendation 2: Allocate resources for outreach and awareness of the impacts of the Digital Divide in low-income communities. During this project, SCDC had the opportunity to work with Mobile Citizen to advocate on behalf of our clients to halt the discontinuation of Internet service of their Clear device from Sprint. SCDC recommends allocating resources for policy advocacy and media education.

Recommendations to CETF Regarding Grants Management

Recommendation 1: Our CETF program officer was great to work with. She was understanding and patient with us during our challenges. Her efforts and vision made this project possible for our community.

V.   Grant Agreement Requirements

Purchased Equipment

Date	Description	Purpose	Amount	How it will be used.
03/14	POS System	Collect customer contact and sales transactions	$2,700	Continue to collect customer contact and sales transactions.
03/14	Phone System	Communicate with customers	$1,800	Continue to communicate with customers.
01/14	Pallet jack	Move inventory	$500	Continue to move inventory.

Unspent CETF Grant Funds

All of the CETF grants funds were expended.