2010 Final Report for the
California Emerging Technology Fund

Name of Executive Director: Anita Aaron
Name of Project Manager: Tom Foley/Mary Lester
Manager Phone Number: 510-251-4312
Manager Email: tom@wid.org
Name of Project: A-Team
Grant Number: 2318340
Start Date: July 2008   **End Date:**   July 2010

I.   Financial Summary

- Total Project Budget Spent: $380,000
- CETF Grant Amount: $380,000

II.   Project Description, Goals and Objectives, and Outcomes

Project Description

This grant sought to level the playing field from the outset among California Emerging Technology Fund grantees, as opposed to fixing access barriers once grant projects are implemented. The A-Team, comprised of the World Institute on Disability (WID), Center for Accessible Technology (CforAT) and Alliance for Technology Access (ATA), partnered with each CETF Grantees to evaluate access barriers in websites, programs, facilities, and communications as well as assist Grantees to reach more people with disabilities. The A-Team will work with each Grantee to identify access barriers and recommend solutions to remove barriers or find reasonable work around.

Goals and Objectives Summary

All goals and objectives have been achieved. The A-Team conducted an orientation to assist grantees complete a self-assessment (SA) in the six (6) focus areas: Disability Awareness and Etiquette; Outreach and Communication; Facility; Program; Assistive and Accessible Technology; and Website Access. The A-Team
- Prepared materials for each focus areas to orient grantees to the process.
- Helped grantees complete all self-assessments.
- Informed California disability organizations about the work of CETF and its grantees to encourage disability organizations to refer clients to grantees or their websites for services and information.

The A-Team designed and organized trainings for each of the focus areas and customized trainings for some grantees after analyzing the self-assessments. Ultimately small group trainings were organized to increase disability competency of grantees in five focus areas. Grantees for the sixth area, Website Accessibility, received a written report for use by the organization website support team and a website designer as well as basic training on features that could increase accessibility in the near term. Lastly the evaluation data was collected and analyzed to continuously improve the project training, technical assistance, and materials.

Project Outcomes Summary

	Actual	Goal	Percent Completed
Grantees have the tools they need to obtain access information and are clear about the expectations and timeline.	23	23	100%
A-Team has complete self-assessments for each grantee.	20	20	100%
Final customized curriculum in each module.	7	5	140%
Training modules completed.	7	5	140%
All four (4) in-person and all nine (9) online trainings conducted.	13	13	100%

Accessibility Plans are complete for focus areas 1- 5.	18	20	90%
Final review demonstrates enhanced accessibility of grantees websites.	3	17	18%
Training Evaluation Report - verbal	Complete	Complete	100%

IV.   Accomplishments and Challenges

Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts of Project

Assessment of Outcomes Achieved in Comparison to Grant Agreement

- The program achieved its goal of raising the awareness of all CETF grantees on issues of disability access and the importance of full inclusion and non-discrimination in serving the entire community.

- All grantees received technical assistance and materials and now have a greater understanding on how to eliminate barriers to accessibility.

- Training was provided for all CETF grantees – the majority of grantees participated.

- Almost all grantees received general exposure to Web accessibility principles and accessibility issues with their own sites in particular. 17 grantees received detailed reports listing recommendations for improving access on their sites.

- All grantees are in a better position to serve people with disabilities from both a physical and programmatic access perspective.

Delineation of Deliverables and Outcomes Not Achieved and Explanation

- Statistics on the number of people with disabilities being served by grantees before and after the work of the A-Team were not obtainable. This is due to a number of factors. Grantees did not gather disability information from participants in a consistent way. There is a great deal of sensitivity around the issue of requesting this kind of information. For the most part, unless someone has an obvious disability he or she is not likely to be identified as having a disability. This is especially true in light of the fact that so many types of disability are invisible and/or undiagnosed.

- It is expected that more websites than are reported here will have been improved for disability access. The three reported here are the ones that contacted us for a final review. They had all made improvements. As far as the others, it was difficult to obtain information about their progress on implementing the recommendations they received from the A-Team. In some case the use of outside web developers made it hard to intervene. Website development is a long and complicated process. Many sites were at stages in their development when a final review for access would not have been appropriate. Over time there should be significant improvement observed in grantees' sites as a result of the work of the A-Team.

Discussion of Other Positive Results from Project

- The Accessibility Plans developed by grantees were well done and showed clear understanding of the values and goals endorsed by CETF on disability inclusion and accessibility. They also reflected the training and support provided by the A-Team. Several were exemplary and can serve as models for all current and potential grantees. Five grantees received awards from CETF and the A-Team: CDTech; Computers for Youth; Goodwill of San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo; Southeast Community Development Corporation, and TechSoup.

- Grantees are more open and better able to serve people with disabilities.

- Grantees have tools they can adapt and use for providing training within their own organizations as part of staff orientation on appropriate interaction with people with disabilities.

- Grantees are connected with disability organizations close to home for ongoing support, training and referrals.

- One grantee purchased a wheelchair accessible mobile computer lab as a direct result of the A-Team's work.

- In some cases, the plans created are being adopted by the parent organizations of the grantees thereby achieving greater systemic outcomes.

- The A-Team assisted CETF staff in dealing with issues related to the disability community and their access to broadband technology.

- WID personal traveled to Washington D.C. to represent this ground breaking work and discuss the CETF best practices at both Whitehouse meetings and the conference of National Council on Disability in 2010.

Overview of Major Challenges to Achieving Planned Results

Identify Major Challenges to Successful Implementation

The major challenge faced by the A-Team during the grant period had to do with getting the attention, time and commitment by grantees to follow through on accessibility by attending trainings, completing documents and responding to offers of support and technical assistance.

- Grantees were overcommitted. They were all focused on achieving the goals and objectives of their main grant, and creating and implementing an accessibility plan was an added responsibility that took time and resources that many did not have available. Staff and resources were stretched too thin.

- The players kept changing. Despite of efforts to identify a single accessibility point person for each grantee, it proved a difficult goal to achieve. Staff turnover contributed greatly to this difficulty, especially in relation to the technology position and assistive technology training. In larger organizations, the people attending the trainings and benefitting from the technical assistance offered were not the same people responsible for creating and implementing the subsequent accessibility plans. This created significant continuity problems resulting in accessibility plans that lacked insight and specificity.

- The grants that had multiple partner organizations were very challenging. The nature of each partner organizations, its role and involvement in the project varied a great deal. This made it sometimes difficult to obtain self-assessments and Accessibility Plans from all of the partners, especially those less involved.

- In the work on website accessibility there were several challenges in addition to the ones already mentioned. Some grantees were using outside website developers. Some developers declined the A-Team's offer because of ongoing site development. These sites did not become available for review during the course of the project.

Discuss Efforts to Address Challenges and Resolve Problems

- Multiple efforts were made to contact grantees by phone, via email, and in person. Duplicate copies of documents and materials were provided to staff at organizations. Conference calls were held to provide technical assistance and training to assist grantees in completing the accessibility self-assessment and the accessibility plan templates. We added additional calls to the schedule when grantees at the last minute were unable to attend.

- In a few cases to facilitate a grantee's participation attempts to get staff attention proved unsuccessful. In these cases, members of the A-Team drafted the accessibility plan and submitted it to the grantee for their revision and approval.

_____

IV. Lessons and Recommendations

Summary of Lessons Learned

Lesson #1: It is important to set expectations for disability access at the point when organizations are working on proposals to CETF so that people are aware of the requirements and able to allocate the time and resources necessary. In this way access can be built in from the beginning inline with the stated purpose of the project. It should also deal with dispelling some of the resistance encountered with some grantees.

Lesson #2:   There is an ongoing need for training in the use of accessible and assistive technology. Due to the high rate of staff turnover in organizations (especially in tech positions) and the constant change in technology it is recommended that training in this area be conducted frequently.

Lesson #3:   In-person training is the most effective method of training due to the connections and contacts made and the experiences shared among organizations. This is especially important when it comes to assistive and accessible technology.

Lesson #4: There is a need for more general collateral so that grantees can be informed about web access, regardless of their readiness to have their website reviewed. This could take the form of mandatory attendance at a webinar once the grant has been accepted.

Lesson #5: Most grantees are eager to reduce discrimination against people with disabilities and increase access. Ongoing support from CETF and community organizations is critical to grantees' ability to be successful in these efforts.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Expanding the Project in Region or Scaling Up Statewide   **N/A**.

Recommendations to CETF Regarding Grants Management

Recommendation #1: Improving disability access does not have to be very costly, but it does take some financial resources. Many things can be done for no or low cost, but not everything. Resources need to be set aside for implementing accessibility plans, including barrier removal, obtaining outside services (e.g. sign language interpreters), and purchasing assistive and accessible technology.

Recommendation #2: Organizations need to know about the requirements for creating and implementing an accessibility plan upfront so that they can build the staff time and money needed into their grant.

Recommendation #3: It may help to provide clearer incentives and clearer penalties to promote cooperation, especially on website access.

Recommendation #4: Achieving disability access is a process. The A-Team recommends that CETF continue to provide training and services to grantees in all of the critical areas: Awareness/Interaction, Communication, Facility, Program, Technology and the Web.

VI. Grant Agreement Requirements

Purchased Equipment

The project purchased no equipment.

CETF of Grant Funds

All of the CETF grants funds were expended.