

Tech Fund, Silicon Valley City Name Digital Inclusion Leader

A Northern California city and the tech fund with which it collaborates have chosen the director of an organization aimed at helping bridge the digital divide.

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Charlene Tatis, director of the San Jose Digital Inclusion Partnership.

An organization dedicated to bridging the digital divide in the heart of Silicon Valley has made a key hire after a concentrated, monthslong search.

The city of San Jose and the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) announced the selection of San Jose native **Charlene Tatis** as director of the San Jose Digital Inclusion Partnership, after **a job search** that began in April and was extended three weeks to June 7. The position's annual base salary is \$120,000. Tatis' first day will be Monday. Among the takeaways:

- The city and the partnership, which is funded by the city of San Jose's Digital Inclusion Fund, didn't mount a national search, although out-of-state candidates did apply. Instead, seeking applicants with local experience, they mounted what CETF President Sunne Wright McPeak described as a "very intense recruitment" inside the city.

"There has to be a real working relationship already ... developed, more in terms of the community and the civic leaders in San Jose. That's where we really focused our outreach and recruitment. That was very highly valued. It's essential in this role," McPeak told *Techwire*, describing the recruitment and qualifications sought.

- Tatis, who is grants manager for **SJ Learns**, an afterschool educational program, has considerable local experience. She's been the Family Resource Center Initiative manager for Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County for more than a decade and was recently the assistant director of family engagement for First 5 Santa Clara County.

In a statement, Tatis highlighted her San Jose upbringing and said she's "committed to realizing the partnership's goals."

"From finding an apartment and applying for a job, to enrolling children in programs and managing healthcare and finances, fast Internet is critical to an engaged, healthy, and vibrant community," Tatis said.

Under Tatis' leadership of the Partnership, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said the city envisions "bridging San Jose's digital divide and expanding educational and economic opportunity for thousands of low-income families," also in a statement.

- Tatis' selection will likely commence a particularly active period for CETF, which helps manage grant-making under the Partnership. The Partnership's Advisory Board will hold its first meeting Aug. 22 with the goal of rolling out grant applications this fall, and receiving and vetting applications in time for the San Jose City Council to award the first Digital Inclusion grants in early 2020.

"The intent is that we have applications ready to release to the community by the beginning of October and have an application period that goes approximately one and a half months, 45 days," McPeak said.

- Both CETF and the Partnership focus on expanding the use and availability of high-speed Internet. In the Partnership's case, its goal is to "reach 50,000 unconnected households in San Jose over 10 years," according to a news release. San Jose has approximately 90,000 residents and 60,000 households that are unconnected, McPeak said, citing data from the city and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Connecting them, she said, will involve "the full spectrum of outreach to all stakeholders" including community input, recruiting community-based organizations, helping them incorporate digital inclusion into their work, and supporting them through grants.