



## Tech Exchange Final Report for the California Emerging Technology Fund June 2017

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**Name of Project:** Get Connected! Oakland and Neighborhood Transformation Project  
**Grant Number:** 33445566  
**Start Date:** October 2013      **End Date:** June 2017

### I. Financial Summary

- Total Project Budget Spent: (Attachment A contains the detail) • \$965,000
- CETF Grant Amount: • \$260,000
- Number of First-Time Adoptions Achieved • 1,933
- Percentage of Match Funds Raised against Goal: \$260,000 • 100%
- Cost Per Unit of Outcomes: (Total Outcomes/Total Budget) • \$499

### II. Project Description, Goals and Objectives, and Outcomes

#### Project Description

Thanks to support from the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF), Tech Exchange has made accessing the Internet at home via a personal computer a reality for thousands of low-income East Bay families. Tech Exchange worked to close the Digital Divide by providing assistance accessing affordable broadband Internet and tracking successful client broadband adoptions and equipping students and adults with free or low-cost personal computers to ensure they had the necessary hardware. Tech Exchange's digital literacy trainings and follow-up tech support services enabled clients to gain the skills necessary to use their new computers, navigate the Internet successfully, and to feel supported rather than frustrated in the face of using technology. With the combination of providing home computers and assistance accessing affordable Internet support, Tech Exchange helped low-income students to beat the "homework gap" providing them with a means to complete research and assignments which increasingly must be completed online. For adults, Tech Exchange provided the opportunity to do job searches online, for parents the critical opportunity to interact with their childrens' school communities and engage with their student's schoolwork.

Tech Exchange provided 1,933 broadband adoptions to low-income residents within Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The tech fair model of computer distribution was the most successful for Tech Exchange. Schools where a majority of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch request that a tech fair be held at their campus. A liaison at the school advertises the event to eligible families and on the day of the fair, the Tech Exchange team distributes free personal computers to low-income families and individuals. For individuals who are not low-income, but have a need for affordable computers and for community organizations and schools, Tech Exchange offers affordably priced desktops, laptops, Chromebooks, printers, USB drives and more. During the 2016-17 school year, Tech Exchange held an average of two tech fairs per week that served between 20 to 50 families per event.

Tech Exchange supported Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and was also able to intensely focus on servicing West Oakland, a historically under-resourced community with both schools and residents in need of higher levels of technology access. Through a partnership with the CETF School2Home initiative at West Oakland Middle School (WOMS), Tech Exchange collaborated with CETF to make WOMS a technology-rich campus. Tech Exchange held events at WOMS for free computer distribution and broadband sign-ups, built out the school’s computer labs and outfitted classrooms with computers and supported CETF work to ensure that WOMS parents were connected to the school portal and that teachers received on-site training for using technology in the classroom. Additionally, Tech Exchange worked closely with Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) to equip West Oakland sites with computer labs, and provided computer and Internet access for the highest-need West Oakland residents. Through the Housing Authority’s Jobs Plus program, Tech Exchange staff provided digital literacy trainings at Campbell Village, a housing facility in the lower bottoms neighborhood of West Oakland.

**Goals and Objectives Summary**

Tech Exchange met or exceeded 90% of the original grant goals. The exception was launching integrated human services teams in West Oakland. Notably Tech Exchange exceeded the original goal of securing 1,925 broadband adopters, with a total of **1,933** successful adoptions. Tech Exchange established a contract with The Stride Center to interface with clients through its call center for help with broadband adoption and verification. Tech Exchange also collaborated and produced promotional outreach materials with Sustainable Systems and East Bay Broadband Consortia (EBBC) for work with The Stride Center. Tech Exchange worked with the OHA priority Jobs Plus program, developing and distributing promotional materials for digital literacy trainings. To further support OHA residents in getting connected and increasing digital literacy skills, Tech Exchange frequently tabled at housing site events and established a presence and reputation within housing site communities. Lastly, Tech Exchange ran roadshows in conjunction with CBOs in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, tabling at partner organization events, and bringing computers for distribution and providing digital literacy workshops at events. With regard to the West Oakland Neighborhood Transformation, Tech Exchange worked to develop plans with EBBC and Sustainable Systems, partnered with CETF to implement Schools2Home at WOMS and directly served residents of OHA sites through computer distribution, broadband adoption and digital literacy training.

**Project Outcomes Summary**

Outcome Description	Actual	Goal	Percent Completed
Number of Total Internet Adoptions	1,933	1,925	<b>100%</b>

**III. Accomplishments and Challenges**

**Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts of Project**

Tech Exchange had two primary outcomes through our CETF grant: broadband adoption and neighborhood transformation in West Oakland. Tech Exchange met the broadband adoption outcome. Tech Exchange met approximately 75% of the neighborhood transformation outcomes and was able to expand upon the original scope of work in the grant agreement to support low-income West Oakland community members in becoming digitally connected and digitally skilled. Tech Exchange also provided 196 digital literacy trainings and trained 3,853 families on basic digital literacy skills ranging from keyboarding and mouse manipulation, to more advanced work such as making a LinkedIn profile, and drafting a resume.

**Assessment of Outcomes Achieved in Comparison to Grant Agreement**

- As of June 15, 2017, Tech Exchange reached 1,933 home sign-ups for broadband, exceeding the goal of 1,925 adoptions. Tech Exchange also worked to bridge the digital divide for low-income

residents by holding 196 training sessions, refurbishing and distributing 4,271 free personal computers and training a total of 3,853 families during the CETF grant.

### ***Delineation of Deliverables and Outcomes Not Achieved and Explanation***

- Tech Exchange worked toward launching integrated human services teams in West Oakland, but the goal was not ultimately achieved, primarily due to a lack of alignment and prioritization among stakeholders. Tech Exchange partnered with Sustainable Systems to convene and engage key stakeholders, but traction toward the ultimate goal proved difficult. Tech Exchange is grateful for the investment CETF has made to move the data sharing and integrated human services team work forward in West Oakland.

### ***Discussion of Other Positive Results from Project***

A major project result was the ability to bring refurbished computers to low-income individuals, schools and partnering nonprofit organizations across the East Bay. Tech Exchange distributed 4,271 computers to East Bay individuals alone. Another positive outcome was a refined school-based tech fair strategy, which enabled Tech Exchange to reach significant scale of computer distributions and internet sign-ups.

An additional result has been increased levels of communication and the development of new partnerships with schools and 501(c)(3) organizations that Tech Exchange partnered with to increase digital literacy among low-income populations. Tech Exchange installed community computer labs in both rec centers and low-income housing units, including: City Towers; Campbell Village; Prescott; Peralta; and the YMCA. Tech Exchange's work with fellow CETF grantee Building Blocks for Kids led to Tech Exchange serving the Richmond community more deeply and to increase organizational knowledge and strategies about how to best provide services in the community. Through the OHA partnership, Tech Exchange provided digital literacy trainings for the Jobs Plus program for resident job seekers at Campbell Village. Campbell Village has included Tech Exchange as the digital literacy partner in a pending CASF proposal for Lockwood Gardens that enables Tech Exchange to provide computers, Internet sign-up assistance and trainings to residents of a large OHA property. At WOMS, Tech Exchange leveraged philanthropic and in-kind resources to upgrade all of the school's computers, including a full computer lab in the library of 30+ devices, outfitting the family resource center, providing 30+ computers for the school's STEM lab and equipping classrooms with new, refurbished computers. Beyond computer contributions and set-up for the school, Tech Exchange served the WOMS community holistically by equipping parents and nearby community members with personal computers and Internet access. Lastly, thanks to CETF's investments in Get Connected Oakland, the group of partners is currently meeting monthly for strategy and alignment of services discussions, carrying the initiative's work into the future.

### ***Impacts of the Project***

One of the most positive results from the grant has been the program's impact on the individuals and service providers who received the equipment. The following is an example of comments shared with Tech Exchange:

*"Tech Exchange has been an incredible resource for our community. Aside from the computer lab deployment of six machines, they facilitated the low-cost internet sign-up process, provided free computers and support as well as digital literacy training to our residents. We are forever grateful."*

- Eddie Gray, Senior Resident Coordinator, Campbell Village

## **Overview of Major Challenges to Achieving Planned Results**

### ***Identify Major Challenges to Successful Implementation***

Tech Exchange faced two major challenges; one was leadership transitions within Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), and the second was client frustrations with Internet services providers.

- Through Tech Exchange's Neighborhood Transformation objectives, the goal was to convene Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), City of Oakland and Alameda County officials to establishing integrated human services teams in West Oakland. In large part, Tech Exchange's work on these goals was stymied because of relationship consistency and difficulty coordinating the various players and securing project buy-in. A significant obstacle was related to the transitions of Superintendent Antwan Wilson, OUSD's Chief Technology Officer and the Director of Technology, who all transitioned out of their roles within the CETF grant funding period of Tech Exchange.
- Initial client interactions with Internet service providers were problematic during the first months of the project as company representatives were unfamiliar with the new affordable Internet programs and were not able to help clients to finalize the sign-up process.

#### ***Discuss Efforts to Address Challenges and Resolve Problems***

- To mitigate the negative programmatic consequences of district-level turnover, Tech Exchange revised strategies to develop site and school-based relationships while also maintaining district-level partnerships. Relationships with principals and their teams enable Tech Exchange to work more effectively with individual school communities and create multiple lines of communication at schools to prevent starting the relationship building process over each year.
- With regard to initial client frustrations with carriers, as the program saw increased longevity and representatives became more familiar with the program offerings, many of the earlier complaints about difficulty accessing internet packages were solved. Carriers also built in improved features including an online verification tool to determine whether clients were approved for service and had received their welcome kit. Bringing representatives from AT&T and Comcast directly to Tech Fairs to remove barriers for clients signing up was another impactful solution identified. Additionally, the advocacy performed by CETF on behalf of the community has been extremely beneficial and Tech Exchange had the opportunity to provide both formal and informal feedback to CETF regarding initial carrier challenges.

## **IV. Lessons and Recommendations**

### **Summary of Lessons Learned**

#### ***Lessons Learned***

Lesson 1: Work in tandem with a trusted partner such as a school or nonprofit community partners to distribute services. Tech Exchange staff time is best spent on securing, refurbishing and distributing technology, assisting clients with internet sign-up and providing trainings on digital literacy. By working with a partner, Tech Exchange is able to share in the outreach workload, and also ensure that target client demographics are reached. This strategy has led to Tech Exchange's full adoption of the school-based tech fair model.

Lesson 2: Distribute or provide services at existing celebratory events such as reading nights, STEM showcases, science fairs, etc. being held at schools and other community partner organizations. Piggy backing on opportunities for parent engagement enables the organization to emphasize the importance of being connected at home for student performance, rather than a sole emphasis on low-income status, making the offerings and services more attractive.

Lesson 3: Consider reducing barriers for clients to receive access to service. Tech Exchange made the decision at certain tech fairs and events to move away from requiring proof of Internet to receive a free computer, to providing clients with the computer and then following up to ensure that the client signed up for Internet. This strategy was successful but required more resources, as it led to increased computer distribution.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

### ***Recommendations for Expanding the Project in Region or Scaling Up Statewide***

Recommendation 1: While Tech Exchange has scaled tremendously over the grant period and is now distributing 3,000 computers across the East Bay annually, the organization's most significant barrier to further growth is limitation in computer/device contributions. Tech Exchange has already seen success serving more low-income families thanks to corporate partnerships such as the Gap. Forming new, large-scale technology donation partners will enable the organization to continue growing throughout the Bay Area, ensuring that all families have access to a home computer and the Internet.

Recommendation 2: Raw access to hardware and broadband Internet is undoubtedly the first step toward closing the digital literacy gap, however Tech Exchange has identified that more work must be done to educate new adopters on digital literacy. An expansion of Tech Exchange's digital literacy classes would provide structured support for new users to interact successfully with their technology.

### ***Recommendations to Close the Digital Divide Based on Your Experience***

Recommendation 1: Develop systems for anchor institutions to ask clients about their Internet and computer status.

Recommendation 2: As more critical services, such as healthcare and government services, move online, there is a need to help community members learn how to access these services online. If agencies held events to help community members, the events could be coupled with Tech Exchange's services to ensure community members have a computer, are online, and know how to access what they need. Tech Exchange has seen success with this model by partnering with OUSD on student enrollment.

### ***Recommendations to CETF Regarding Grants Management***

Recommendation 1: CETF staff has been responsive, helpful and a pleasure to work with throughout Tech Exchange's grant period. We have no feedback for improvement except to continue the collaborative and thoughtful relationships with grantees.

Recommendation 2: For a lean nonprofit team with limited capacity, the initial work plan upkeep was daunting and took a fair amount of Executive Director time. The monthly calls were more beneficial, as it kept communication levels high, but reduced some of the more time consuming work.

Recommendation 3: Working with grantees, particularly those with limited fundraising capacity, to think about and plan for identifying new funding sources as a grant approaches its end date would be an added benefit for grantees.

## **V. Grant Agreement Requirements**

### **Purchased Equipment**

CETF funds were not used to purchase equipment.

### **Unspent CETF Grant Funds**

All of the CETF grants funds were expended.