



Community Christian College Final Report December 2009

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Name of Project: My Blueprint for Life Program
Grant Number: 1972076
Start Date: August 2008 **End Date:** October 2009

I. Financial Summary

- Total Project Budget Spent: \$ 318,000
- CETF Grant Amount: \$151,454
- Percentage of Match Funds Raised against Goal (\$454,362): 36%
- Cost Per Unit of Outcomes: (Total Outcomes/Total Budget) \$8,594

II. Project Description, Goals and Objectives, and Outcomes

Project Description

The program provides academic, soft-skills and employment training for at-risk, out-of-school youth in the San Bernardino County region. A series of personal and academic inventories that help students identify and leverage their abilities and strengths are at the core of the program. Successful completion of the program provides students a highly motivational foundation, a real direction and a blueprint to successfully pursue their vocational and academic objectives. The goal of the program is to graduate students who possess the skills needed to further their educational and eventually transition into meaningful employment.

Goals and Objectives Summary

The program encountered various challenges during the implementation phase. Additional information is provided below explaining why the program did not achieve all of its goals. First, the program had the goal of enrolling a total of 75 students. Instead, only fifty two (52) students enrolled in the program. In the staff's judgment, given the lack of recruitment staff, marketing recruitment materials, and limitations on places where we could recruit, we believe we did well in identifying 52 students for the program. More problematic for us was the retention of students. For a variety of reasons, a number of our students were unable to commit to attending the program four days a week over a span of 12 weeks. The number one factor preventing students from attending the program on a consistent basis was a lack of jobs and financial resources.

Project Outcomes Summary

Outcome Description	Actual	Goal	Percent Completed
Number of youth that completed basic digital literacy training.	37	75	49%
Number of youth that completed course work that prepares them for a job/career in the area of technology.	37	75	49%
Place 75% of program graduates into a college or vocational training program.	8	57	14%

Achieve increased broadband usage rates for more that 75%of program graduates.	37	57	65%
Number of refurbished computing systems distributed to program graduates	21	75	28%

IV. Accomplishments and Challenges

Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts of Project

Assessment of Outcomes Achieved in Comparison to Grant Agreement

Community Christian College had 5 outcomes and unfortunately it did not reach its goals for any of these outcomes. This is attributed to various challenges encountered by the program and explained in the report.

Delineation of Deliverables and Outcomes Not Achieved and Explanation

- The failure to meet the program outcomes stem from the fact CCC did not achieve its goal of enrolling a total of 75 students. Instead, only fifty two (52) students enrolled in the program. In our judgment, given the lack of recruitment staff, marketing recruitment materials, and limitations on places where we could recruit, we believe we did well in identifying 52 students for the program. More problematic for us was the retention of students. For a variety of reasons, a number of our students were unable to commit to attending the program four days a week over a span of 12 weeks. In my judgment, the number one factor preventing our students from attending the program on a consistent basis was a lack of jobs and financial resources.
- At least 3 students out of 52 or 6% are pursuing careers related to computer technology. However, the majority students continue focusing on the coursework involved in completing the requirements for the GED. This was and remains a daunting task for this target population. A great deal of excitement has been generated around the prospect of owning a computer once participants complete the program. Given this excitement, coupled with completing the requirements for the GED, we believe that more of our students will explore careers that require knowledge and understanding of computer technology.
- In an attempt to address the issue of affordability, a commitment was made to students that if they successfully completed the computer portion of the program they would be rewarded with a refurbished computer. At the closing ceremony of the program, and thanks to the Oakland Technology Exchange, we were able to fulfill our commitment. However, the program is currently in the process of contacting all eligible participants until all of the equipment is distributed.

Discussion of Other Positive Results from Project

The technology training portion of the program was by far the most successful and therefore allowed us to reach our target of achieving increased broadband usage rates for more than 85% of the graduates. While some students did not complete the academic portion of the program, a substantial number, 37 or 71%, did complete the digital literacy training of the program. The students used computers to complete assignments in Math, English, Science, History etc; their levels of ability were also assessed regularly on the computer. In addition to the program's academic offerings, students learned to access the Internet to find education and employment resources. Students also became proficient in the use of Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Skype.

The program successfully met its goal of identifying low-income Black and Latino youth who were in need of GED or social skills necessary to compete more effectively in a highly skilled labor force. These students were highly reflective of the City of San Bernardino demographics and its surrounding areas.

Thanks to a grant from the Gesner Johnson Foundation, Community Christian College was able to leverage the funds received from CETF to provide wiring and purchase 6 computers to be used during the program. When these computers are not being used only by the Gateway program, they are available for use by the Temple Community Outreach Center and the residents of West San Bernardino.

Overview of Major Challenges to Achieving Planned Results

Identify Major Challenges to Successful Implementation

At the mid-point of the first cohort, the program suffered a major setback as a result of the pulling out of the initiative, by one of our partner providers, the LLRC. Because they provided GED training and life skills, the program was especially hard hit. Their departure however provided an opportunity for CCC. We were able to restructure the program so that there was more of a focus on what students had been asking for which was more individual attention in preparing for the GED. As a result of the Lighthouse's departure, we were able to hire a number of tutors who provided yeoman assistance especially in the areas of math and English.

The lack of resources was a perennial issue. Despite funding by CETF and WIA, the program always felt as though it operated on a shoe string budget. The college was unable to meet its match fund obligations and this adversely impacted the program. We were not able to do everything identified in the proposal and things that we simply would have enjoyed doing with our students. Despite, the above, we nevertheless feel encouraged that we made a difference in the lives of many students that successfully participated in the program. I am confident that those students who have earned the GED will go on to earn associate degrees, hopefully at Community Christian College, or find meaningful employment. I am confident that others in the pipeline will do the same.

Discuss Efforts to Address Challenges and Resolve Problems

- Address affordability concern by providing computers (to build, and then keep) for 100% of program graduates who complete computer hardware training portion of the program: The program was pleased to purchase refurbished computers from one of the CETF partner organizations, the Oakland Technology Exchange. Computers were purchased for 21 of 37, or 57%, students who were eligible to receive them. At the closing ceremony, the program was able to present computers to the 21 students. The other students had computers.
- Resolve conflicts between partners by having MOU's in place.

V. Lessons and Recommendations

Summary of Lessons Learned

Lesson #1. Consider the level of students' commitment and motivation. Simply put, if students are to succeed they will need to make a strong time commitment to the program. The exact language that I used with our students was that they needed to come early, and be prepared to stay late if they were going to succeed in the program and in life. Unfortunately some, but not all, of the students that the programs accepted were willing, given a low level of motivation, to make the commitment of time and effort necessary to succeed in the program.

Lesson #2. Assess the array of personal issues student have that the program will address or will require students to address before enrolling. Many may preclude their given their all to program. Among some of the issues were the need for child-care, the need for employment, court related issues, and homelessness. Because the program did not have sufficient trained staff to address these issues, their impact had adverse implications for student success and persistence in the program.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Expanding the Project in Region or Scaling Up Statewide

Recommendation #1: When working in collaboration with various partners across the region, it is essential to have MOU's in place that can be used to resolve any disagreements between partners.

Recommendation #2: Although we were fortunate to partner with a CETF grantee to access low cost refurbished equipment, there is a clear need for additional refurbishing operations in the region.

Recommendations to CETF Regarding Grants Management

Recommendation #1: This year was an anomaly for the program as the person who developed the program and the college President both left the institution shortly after the program was launched. Some of the commitments and decisions made by them were burdensome to this director throughout the existence of the program. Going forward, it will be important to get commitments, if possible, from the person(s) that developed the program that they will be around to shepherd the program, at least, in the early stages.

Recommendation #2: As programs of this magnitude are developed, it is important to get letters of commitment from contributors before the program begins regarding the amount they will be donating as well as a time frame indicating when the donation will be received.

Recommendation #3: In programs such as this, it will be important to make certain that the Project Manager has direct access to and can make budgetary decisions.

Recommendation # 4: There should be agreed upon times when the CETF Program Officer visits a program throughout the course of the year. In my judgment, three visits a year makes sense as opposed to one visit; and if necessary, additional visits should be arranged.

VI. Grant Agreement Requirements

Purchased Equipment

The project purchased a total of \$21,160 in computers and related equipment to offer wireless connectivity and 4 additional workstations in the media lab.

Date	Description	Purpose	Amount	How it will be used.
01/2008	Wireless Router	Computer Lab	\$160	It will continue to serve the students at the center.
09/2008	Refurbished Computers	Distributed to graduates	\$21,000	All equipment will be distributed to students

CETF of Grant Funds

All of the CETF grants funds were expended.