



Mission Economic Development Agency Final Report for The California Emerging Technology Fund March 2015

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Name of Project: *Get Connected!*
Grant Number: 8198257
Start Date: April 2013 **End Date:** June 2016

I. Financial Summary

- Total Project Budget Spent: \$386,924
- CETF Grant Amount: \$150,000
- Number of First-Time Adoptions Achieved Goal (1,250): 1,114
- Percentage of Match Funds Raised against Goal (\$476,785): 106%
- Cost Per Unit of Outcomes: (Total Outcomes/Total Budget) \$ 120

II. Project Description, Goals and Objectives, and Outcomes

Project Description

Through the Mission Promise Neighborhood (MPN), the Mission Economic Development Agency, in 2013, projected to connect 1,250 low- to- moderate income Latino households high speed broadband services with the hope of significantly diminishing the *Digital Divide* for Spanish speaking families through the implementation of a comprehensive approach to integrating technology as a crucial component of academic and economic success.

Goals and Objectives Summary

MEDA proposed the following goals as a part of its submission to CETF:

- Goal 1: Outreach to all 1,250 households in the Mission District and provide 5,000 clients with Digital Inclusions information and resources-11% of Goal 1 still remains incomplete.
- Goal 2: Provide Digital Literacy training to low-income community members to improve their capacity to manage personal, social and financial assets, and to increase parental engagement with schools.
- Goal 3: Educate partner organizations about how to support Mission District families in adopting broadband at home and provide broadband adoption counseling to MEDA clients creating 1,250 new subscriptions to home broadband.

Project Outcomes Summary

Outcome Description	Actual	Goal	Percent Completed
Documented Newly Subscribed Households	1,114	1,250	89%

III. Accomplishments and Challenges

Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts of Project

MEDA accomplished 2 of the 3 deliverables promised in the initial proposal. Those deliverables are as follows.

- Adults and Youth Trained in Digital Literacy and Workforce Applications, Goal: 320, Actual: 377
- Adults and Youth Trained for ICT Certifications / Training Participants Receiving ICT Certifications, Goal: 150, Actual: 88
- Training Participants Placed in Jobs, Goal:50, Actual: 102

Assessment of Outcomes Achieved in Comparison to Grant Agreement

- MEDA provided a single outcome measure as part of its *Get Connected* proposal to CETF, which was to have 1,250 households adopt high speed broadband service between April 2013 – June 2016. Within the given grant period, MEDA only enrolled a total of 1,114 households – 89% of the projected outcome.

Delineation of Deliverables and Outcomes Not Achieved and Explanation

- MEDA achieved 2 of the 3 deliverables stated in the original grant proposal. As previously mentioned, only 83% of the overall goal of connecting 1,250 households to high speed broadband Internet was achieved. The shortfall can be explained by 2 overarching reasons: (1) Intensive time is needed for outreach efforts in the community, as well as in enrolling individuals and families into the broadband program; (2) the staffing for the program experienced high rates of turnover both with the project manager, as well as the Family Success Coaches. MEDA's Broadband Coordinator, who was also the project manager for *Get Connected*, left the organization in 2015. Upon leaving, MEDA transferred the project manager role to its Technology Training Coordinator. The transferring of roles was a natural shift, yet, due to the Technology Training Coordinator's other duties, outreach efforts in order to connect community members to broadband high speed Internet suffered.

Discussion of Other Positive Results from Project

When MEDA first submitted its *Get Connected* proposal to CETF in 2013, we did so with the hope of not only increasing access to high speed broad band service for our MPN families, but also with the intent of increasing digital literacy, especially related to workforce training. This was done with the understanding that in a 21st century economy, digital literacy has taken on an even greater importance- not only do white-collar jobs require digital literacy in the use of media to present, record and analyze data, but so do many blue-collar jobs that are looking for a way to increase productivity, analyze market trends, and more importantly increase job safety. MEDA proposed the following outcomes as a ways to address the need for digital literacy in our community:

1. Adults and Youth Trained in Digital Literacy: MEDA proposed to Train 320 adults and youth in digital literacy and workplace applications. We are proud to report that MEDA trained a total of 377 adult and youth in digital literacy, which includes basics such as; *how to turn a computer on and off, how to operate a web browser, how to utilizes the Internet for job searches, how to create a free email account, etc.*
2. Adults and Youth Trained for ICT Certifications / Training Participants Receiving ICT Certifications: As MEDA has built and developed its Mission Techies program, a free seven-week ICT workforce training program; it has made it a point to offer certification for Microsoft Office Suite, Quickbooks Pro, Adobe Premiere Pro, among others. These same certification programs were offered to *Get Connected* program participants. MEDA provided 88 certifications over the grant period.
3. Training Participants Placed in Jobs: Understanding that training without employment leads to little transformational change, MEDA has also emphasized placing its workforce trainees into stable careers. Over the course of the grant period MEDA has placed a total of 102 in jobs.
4. Expanding Client Screenings and Integrating Intake/Benefits Across MEDA: With the reshuffling of the *Get Connected Initiative* staffing structure upon the departure of the Broadband Coordinator, MEDA's Technology Training Coordinator led the way in retraining staff to begin providing financial coaching and screening for public benefits across all of MEDA's programs and services. Furthermore, MEDA made the

decision to move away from having a single intake specialist, who screened all clients, to a screening process administered by all frontline staff, leading to greater accountability in regards to program tracking and measurement.

Impacts of the Project

However, one of the most positive results from this grant has been the program's impact on the LMI individuals / families that received either equipment or Internet access or both as a part of the *Get Connected Initiative*. The following is one of the comments Emiliano, a 19 year program participant, shared with us:

"I always felt I couldn't be part of the tech world. I see all those buses in the neighborhood now. I see people out to change the world. This panel made me realize I can be part of that, too. I learned that MEDA offers free computer classes, so I plan on checking that out soon."—Emiliano, 19 years old

Overview of Major Challenges to Achieving Planned Results

Identify Major Challenges to Successful Implementation

- As previously mentioned, MEDA fell short of its outcome by having only provided 1,114 households with high speed broadband services. The biggest challenge in achieving the stated outcome was the high rate of turnover amongst the Broadband Coordinator and the MPN Family Success Coaches. Midway through the grant period, MEDA's Broadband Coordinator left the organization. The Broadband Coordinator functioned as the project manager for the *Get Connected Initiative* and thus was responsible for not only ensuring that families were being signed up to high speed broadband services, but also for all outreach efforts associated with the initiative.

Discuss Efforts to Address Challenges and Resolve Problems

- In order to address the loss of the Broadband Coordinator, MEDA placed the project manager role under the purview of its Technology Coordinator. Though the Technology Coordinator was the natural successor to the Broadband Coordinator, due to other responsibilities, namely administering the Mission Techies Workforce program, they were unable to keep pace with the needed outreach efforts in order to continue recruiting LMI households to the initiative, thus affecting overall all adoption numbers.
- Furthermore, MEDA originally anticipated providing 1,250 households in the Mission with high speed broadband services over the course of 2 years. With approval from CETF, MEDA extended the grant period in order to reach its projected goal- with the grant period extended to June 30, 2016, MEDA was able to provide broadband services to 83% of the total projected goal.

IV. Lessons and Recommendations

Summary of Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: One of the biggest lessons learned by MEDA through the Get Connected Initiative is the realization that broadband adoption is much more complicated and time intensive than simply having a household or individual sign up for services. Other than the established language barrier for many of our clients, there are multiple factors that can effect broadband adoption including whether a client or family is owns or rents their home and whether that home has the established infrastructure for Comcast or AT&T to install high speed broadband services. Furthermore, our Family Success Coaches reported requiring extensive time, especially in scheduling appointments between clients and Internet Essentials.

Lesson 2: MEDA also learned that simply providing an option for high speed broadband Internet service at home is not enough. Due to the high cost, many of our clients do not have access to physical computers, thus limiting their need to tether themselves to a traditional high speed broadband service in their homes- thus affecting overall adoption numbers.

Lesson 3: Lastly, MEDA learned that a lack of stable housing means a lack of access to high speed broadband services. Due to the Mission experiencing some of the highest housing rental rates in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, many of our clients have been forced to vacate their homes and thus lose the opportunity to access traditional high speed broadband services.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations for Continuing High Speed Broadband Adoption in The Mission and Beyond

Recommendation 1: Allow clients greater options to receive high speed Internet services, such as through their phones, which in turn can also be utilized as a hot spot- a physical location where a household may obtain Internet access through Wi-Fi technology.

Recommendation 2: Hire a full-time Broadband Coordinator.

Recommendations to Continue to Close the Digital Divide in the Mission

Recommendation 1: Continue to reduce the Digital Divide by offering tech based workshops and classes, through the Mission Techies, aimed at the Mission's LMI Adults and Youth.

Recommendation 2: Continue to provide ICT certifications to the Mission's LMI population. This provides formalized recognition of what program participants learn during the tech based workshops, thus strengthening their digital skills and also their resumes / CVs.

Recommendations to CETF Regarding Grants Management

Recommendation 1: MEDA is grateful to CETF for allowing us to extend the grant period to better address the projected goal stated in the original proposal. That said, the grant agreement, and the accompanying funding from CETF was based on a results based model, meaning, MEDA received funding based on how many total individuals adopted high speed broadband services. MEDA's only recommendation to CETF, in regards to grant management, is to NOT tie funding to the number of households who adopt high speed broadband services. Instead it is our recommendation that CETF focus on data points and outcomes that demonstrate deeper impact, such as, for example, "How many individuals, who received access to the Internet, also received training on how to utilize a web browser?"

V. Grant Agreement Requirements

Purchased Equipment

MEDA did not purchase any equipment with funding from CETF in regards to the *Get Connected!* Initiative.

Unspent CETF Grant Funds

All of the CETF grants funds were expended.