PUGET SOUND CENTER

Technology Opportunity Project *Final Report*

PUGETSOUNDCENTER
for teaching, learning and technology

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HUD Technology Opportunity Project Final Report

The purpose of this proposal was to address the information and communications technology training needs of low-income youth and adults in the Puget Sound Region. By addressing these training needs in a variety of settings – high schools, community colleges, employment and training agencies, private non-profit centers, and participants homes through distance learning - disadvantaged adults and youth were able to gain computer skills to become more successful in school and more employable in the job market. Over the course of the grant, 971 youth and 843 adults were served.

The grant had two primary components:

1. Develop relationships with governmental, public schools and community colleges, and community-based organizations for potential training sites and low-income populations. These included Lynnwood WorkSource (WIA funded), Learning Center North, an out-of-school youth program funded through WorkSource (WIA), the local community colleges - Edmonds, Shoreline, and Seattle Vocational Institute. In addition, we worked with the Snohomish and King Counties' Workforce Development Boards, the City of Seattle, the King County Housing Authority, and Cleveland High School in Seattle. Finally, special relationships were developed with the Edmonds, Shoreline, Everett, Mukilteo, and Seattle School Districts. Finally, we worked with a private, non-profit TechCorps and the Cisco Networking Academy Program.

2. Provide entry-level Microsoft Office training and beyond for careers in office administration, Web design and development, help-desk and PC applications, and network administration. The classes offered depended on the needs of the clients at each location.

Project Descriptions

1. *Learning Center North* – an out-of-school youth program for GED and high school completion students. This project was a collaboration among Shoreline Community College, who provided the instructors, and the King County Workforce Development Council who provided the bulk of the funding for the Learning Center. The PSC provided funding for the Shoreline computer instructors and a computer lab. The computer lab was the most successful part of the Learning Center North's curriculum. High school age students naturally gravitated toward the lab and it kept many students in school who might otherwise dropped out. The teacher provided a wide range of individualized instruction and often the students were very advanced by the time they left, with Web Design & Web Development being very popular. A total of 399 youth went through computer instruction during the two years of the grant. Total cost was $36,000.

2. *Lynnwood WorkSource* – primarily an adult program for unemployed and dislocated workers as well as WorkFirst (welfare) participants. This project was a collaboration among the Snohomish County Workforce Development Council and Edmonds Community College. The PSC provided funding for Edmonds instructors and a substantial upgrade of the computer lab. Computer literacy and MS Office Suite were the primary instructional topics and the lab was run both as a drop-in center and as an instructor-led class. Some students completed with certificates from Edmonds Community College. A total of 152 adults and youth participated in the program over the course of the two years at a total cost of $36,000.

3. *Summer Technology Boot Camps* – week-long intensive computer training for middle school students from low-income families. In the summer of 2001 PSC partnered with the Edmonds School District, Giant Campus, and the Alderwood Rotary to provide a four-day technology immersion

experience for the youth in Web design, game design, 3-D animation, robotics, digital arts, and programming. The Edmonds School District recruited the low-income students, Giant Campus provided the curriculum and instruction and the Alderwood Rotary paid for the bus transportation. PSC hosted the event at the Bothell headquarters. The following summer, we worked with Giant Campus and NEVAC (the Northeast Vocational Area Consortium which represents 9 school districts) to provide a similar week long experience. A total of 62 teenagers went through the program at a cost of $17,050. These camps were so successful that the Sate of Washington funded one in Tacoma with the PSC, Giant Campus, and the University of Washington-Tacoma Branch that same summer. This summer, the State Office of Public Instruction has funded the PSC to put on 10 more camps in the Seattle - Tacoma region.

4. *King County Housing Authority (KCHA)* –- The PSC partnered with the KCHA and Shoreline Community College to provide computer literacy and MS Office training for low-income residents in North Seattle Low Income Housing Complexes. 188 residents went through the instructor-led classes at a cost of $36,000.

5. *Seattle Vocational Institute (SVI)* – SVI is a pre-vocational training institution that is part of Seattle Central Community College. Located in Seattle's Central area, SVI serves primarily WorkFirst and WIA eligible participants. PSC helped fund two of their training labs. Over a one-year period 479 students went through MS Office Training in the labs at a cost of $16,242.

6. *Cleveland High School* – Cleveland High School is in an empowerment zone in South Seattle. A group of business leaders helped fund the "Infotech

Academy" within the school to try and engage youth who might otherwise stay away from computer classes PSC provided $5000 for teacher stipends to teach computer classes after school. With help from private donors, 300 students participated the after school activities.

7. *Learn@Home* – An innovative initiative serving welfare-to-work participants. The program promotes job retention and wage progression by making it more convenient for low-income parents to continue skill development while maintaining work and family obligations. PSC provided the computers for the   participants to use in their homes. Shoreline Community College provided the distance learning courses. The students were "loaned" computers for use in their homes to enroll in distance learning classes over two quarters. If the students maintained a C average or better, they were eligible to keep the computer. This project solves the two major barriers for welfare recipients to participate in training: daycare and transportation. The total cost for the program was $30,000 for computers.

- 24 students participated in the project

- 17 students completed a minimum of 8 credits with a grade of C (2.0) or above and were able to keep the computer

- the average grade was 3.2 – higher than all SCC students (2.73)

- three students were able to complete their degree

- five students are still attending Shoreline Community College including one of the students who returned the computer as she decided she needed to take classes on campus

Students in the program made the following comments:

> *"The program did more for me than I first expected. I now see that this was a   changing point in my life. I continue to build more confidence in myself and am well on the way to personal success. I attribute it to your confidence and belief in me at a crucial time in my life."*

> *"Every time I sit at my computer, I feel blessed that I am a part of this program. It has not only helped me get a raise at my job, but let me know that I am smart enough to go to college. I will be continuing to take classes even if I have to pay for them myself."*

8. ***SKILLS4SUCCESS PROJECT with TECH CORPS and Cisco Systems*** – The Puget Sound Center partnered with TechCorps and Cisco Systems to expand the Skills4Success program in area high schools. Skills4Sucess involved getting industry IT professionals into the Cisco Networking classrooms in local high schools to talk about work ethic and job retention skills. The industry "mentors" take part in the Cisco Networking Academy classes. Over 50 volunteers were recruited in July and August 2002 to participate in the delivery of the Skills4Success (aka "soft skills") curriculum in the following 14 high schools in King and Snohomish Counties: Roosevelt, Ballard, West Seattle, Ingraham, Franklin, Nathan Hale, Garfield, Edmonds-Woodway, Jackson, Lake Stevens, Kamiak, Mariner, Inglemoor, and Shorewood. 45 volunteers actually participated in the program over the 2002-03 school year. The Skills4 Success includes the following modules in the areas of oral communication, written communication, teamwork, personal and professional development, preparing for the workforce, attributes for success,

performance workforce behavior and understanding the workplace. The PSC's Cisco Networking Program/TechCorps program reached 210 high school age students. The cost to the grant was $10,000 to help with the coordination.

"I learned how to respond to different types of people in a work environment and how to effectively defuse a situation. We also learned a lot of different things on what is appropriate in the work place and other things that will be helpful once I have a job."

Mike Wells, student

Summary

1,814 youth and adults were served in the project. This many participants could be served because of the collaboration with other agencies. Of the eight projects that were supported with the HUD funds, six are continuing:

Learning Center North
Lynnwood WorkSource
Seattle Vocation Institute
Cleveland High School InfoTech Academy
TechCamps Northwest (technology boot camps)
TechCorps/Skills4Success

The strength of this project was letting the local agencies, schools, and community-based organizations determine how best to use the funds and use matching funds to make the projects successful.