California Connects: Bridging the Digital Divide

Presentation to the Board of Governors
September 2013

Background

- $4.7 billion invested nationwide through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) to:
  - Support broadband infrastructure
  - Expand public computer centers
  - Encourage broadband service adoption
  - Maintain broadband service availability nationwide

- $10.9 million awarded in August 2010 to the Foundation, in partnership with the Chancellor’s Office, from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), funded through the Recovery Act

- The Foundation is one of the largest recipients of BTOP funding
Program Goals

- The California Connects Program was designed to help bridge the digital divide and boost the California economy
  - Increase broadband internet usage and adoption
    - Award 5,800 laptops to underserved students
    - Enlist 61,000 new broadband adopters in the Central Valley Region
  - Use digital literacy training and outreach campaigns to help people understand the relevance of broadband technology in their everyday lives
  - Improve access to education, healthcare and other community-based services
  - Improve economic development for communities held back by limited or no access to broadband

Program Design and Partnerships

Foundation for California Community Colleges and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office

Partnered to provide:

- Statewide leadership, including technical and operational support for program operations
- Coordination with partner colleges, community-based organizations and corporate vendors
Program Design and Partnerships

California Community College Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) centers and The Great Valley Center

Partnered to help break down barriers to access by:
- Increasing awareness of public computing centers
- Educating new users about affordable broadband options
- Providing training in multiple languages

Great Valley Center

- Community-based organization operating across an 18-county region in the Central Valley
- Amplified program reach in providing outreach, training and learning support, especially with underserved low-income Hispanic residents
  - Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Nevada, Placer, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yuba counties
California Community College MESA Program

- Long-standing program designed to help students reach their academic and career goals in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)
- Largest partner for California Connects - statewide outreach from 35 California Community Colleges
- 5,800 MESA program students were awarded laptops equipped with state-of-the-art technology made possible by a number of critical corporate partners

Corporate Partners

- **Hewlett Packard (HP) and Insight** - provided HP “plug and play” laptop computers for Community College MESA students
- **AT&T** - equipped laptop computers with 6 months of AT&T 4G Wi-Fi Service
- **Adobe** - equipped laptop computers with Adobe PDF reader and flash
- **Microsoft** - equipped laptop computers with Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010 software and provided students with access to Microsoft IT Academy
- **Certiport** - established testing centers at 35 Community Colleges to provide students with access to certification exams in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and/or Access
American River College

- MESA program student participation
- Developed “Living with Technology” - an online training tool that includes:
  - Job hunting
  - Resume development
  - Exploring higher education opportunities
  - Accessing healthcare and finance resources

EL CAMINO COLLEGE

"I appreciate the support. Now I will be able to help others. Thank you so much!" — Miresha Vasquez

Overall Impact

5,800 underserved MESA students were provided meaningful resources to improve and enhance their daily lives and increase their ability to ultimately succeed and be competitive in an increasingly digital world.
Check out California Connect! Help your city get connected to web-wide opportunities and learn how to keep up in this technological age while acquiring Microsoft education.

— Chrylyn Lawrence

68,000+

Californians were provided information, resources and choices regarding effective utilization and access to broadband technology resources that were not previously within their reach.

Overall increase

in broadband technology knowledge and access in the homes and lives of traditionally underserved Californians which ultimately directly contributes to improving statewide economic development.
Sustainable low-cost internet service

- Through the California Connects program we have recently partnered with Mobile Citizen to pilot a low-cost wireless technology program.
- Mobile Citizen is a non-profit funded by five foundations that have been committed to bringing technology to education and non-profit communities for over 25 years.
- In partnership with CLEAR, Mobile Citizen is the first 4G broadband service provider in the US to offer low-cost mobile internet exclusively to education and non-profit organizations.
- Through the pilot program we aim to:
  - Provide free 4G wireless service to at least 500 users within the CLEAR coverage area through December 2013.
  - Assess the long-term viability of providing low-cost wireless 4G technology to students located within available coverage areas in California through our CollegeBuys program.
Discussion and Questions

Thank you