



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

Status:

Laureate

Year:

2013

Organization Name:

Youth Policy Institute

Organization URL:

www.ypiusa.org

Project Name:

YPI Educational Technology

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:

Human Services

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

The Youth Policy Institute's (YPI) Educational Technology Department (Ed Tech) provides technology, training, and broadband access to low-income communities in Los Angeles through collaborations with multiple public and private partners that include Los Angeles Unified School District, the City of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department and Housing Authority, 20 charter schools, 13 local community-based nonprofits, and two faith-based organizations. These collaborations are significant, as they have greatly expanded access to broadband technology and training in schools, parks, public housing, community centers, and churches. 21st Century technology access and skills are essential for realizing economic, social, and educational gains, yet many Angelenos

currently lack access. The Public Policy Institute of California found that Los Angeles has the lowest broadband adoption rate statewide (69% compared to 71% and 78% for other major metropolitan areas), and that Latinos, low-income individuals, and people with low educational attainment have notably lower rates of broadband access. YPI Ed Tech strives to target these underserved groups by spearheading partnerships with a diverse variety of stakeholders positioned to support expanded broadband access and training. Since 2010, YPI Ed Tech opened 80 Public Computer Centers (PCCs) throughout Los Angeles, deploying 1,716 computers and providing 484,031 training hours, with as many as 22,000 clients served weekly. Developing and installing 80 PCCs with 37 distinct partners presented bureaucratic and logistical challenges, but the perseverance of Ed Tech staff enabled them to overcome the challenges. YPI is the umbrella agency for the LA County Regional Broadband Consortia, which is engaged in a \$2.3 million project to address the "digital divide" in LA County. Project activities include outreach to residents on the benefits of broadband adoption, educational workshops, and establishing 15 Metropolitan Area Networks and 45 hot spots in LA County.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

YPI's Educational Technology Department began operations in October 2010 when YPI was awarded a U.S. Department of Commerce Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant for \$5.6 million to open 80 Public Computer Centers. The grant runs through September 2013, but YPI Ed Tech successfully surpassed that goal by opening all 80 PCCs by September 2012. The early completion of the PCCs has enabled Ed Tech staff to focus on innovative curriculum design and training in response to community needs. For entrepreneurs YPI Ed Tech offers Creating Your Own Business workshops and How To Make Money Off Your Hobbies. Students interested in future careers in digital technology can take Video Game Design, Digital Media Design, or Film and Video workshops. Other educational technology trainings for students include SAT Math Prep, Typing for Kids, Applying to College, and College Financial Aid. Workshops targeted to adults include Introduction to Computers (Mac or PC), Introduction to the Internet, Introduction to Microsoft Word and Excel, Internet Safety, Adult Typing, Leamos (a pre-ESL course in Spanish literacy), English as a Second Language, and GED Preparation. These workshops are very popular, as are the open hours that make the PCCs available for people to work on their resumes, do job searching, research health information, or check email. During October 2012, over 22,000 clients were served by the PCCs in a single week.

If this is a previously submitted project that has been significantly updated and/or expanded, please describe the nature of the update here. (In 300 words or less.)

In 2012 YPI Ed Tech completed the deployment of 80 Public Computer Centers in Los Angeles, which began in 2010. 31 PCCs were opened in 2012, and now all 80 labs offer open hours and free youth and adult education and training.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

The implementation of YPI Ed Tech's 80 Public Computer Centers is complete; however, Ed Tech staff ensure the sustainability of the PCCs through the partnerships developed over the course of the grant. Ed Tech staff have trained teachers and other school staff, and other partners' staff to offer digital literacy trainings at the Public Computer Centers. In addition the partnerships with schools have resulted in increased use of technology in the classroom by both teachers and students. YPI Ed Tech staff will continue to provide this support in future years through separate funding sources obtained by YPI, in particular a recent \$30 million Promise Neighborhoods implementation grant that will significantly expand educational technology services in the communities of Hollywood and Pacoima as part of a comprehensive cradle-through-college-and-career pipeline. While the deployment of Public Computer Centers is complete, YPI Ed Tech views this project as ongoing so as to continue to serve the local community with access to high quality educational technology services.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

Sherry Robb, a local entrepreneur, was able to keep her small business operating after her personal computers crashed. She wrote this letter of thanks to YPI Ed Tech: We, the community of San Fernando, are blessed to have your service in our neighborhood. I have witnessed its value to the young and older citizens who did not have a computer but who wanted to communicate. I saw its value to those who wanted to learn a new computer skill, like Excel -- a program that could enable them to upgrade their job or make them more experienced for the job market in general. But, what I had not anticipated was me learning of the Center's value to me personally as a Literary Agent. Within a five day period I lost both my desk and laptop computers...they just suddenly blew up. Living on a limited Social Security monthly check that barely covers rent and some food, how was I going to continue building my freelance business without a computer? My



company was in jeopardy without a constant and consistent means of communication. Then, one day as I was exiting the library I saw the Youth Policy Institute, saw rows of computers, went in to inquire and discovered the nicest people who ran the center, and a program that was so efficiently ran. Without it, I would of lost all the progress and relationships that I have been building back up this past year. Being able to use their computers has allowed me to maintain my business during this transition period while I have been saving up and looking for a reasonable laptop to buy. Thank you for helping me keep my business alive. I could not have done so without the use of your center's equipment and services.

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

YPI Ed Tech's successful public and private collaborative partnerships are an innovation. These partnerships break down funding and programmatic silos by integrating training and technology centers through shared resources between YPI Ed Tech and partners. Over the past decade, YPI as an organization has striven to build relationships with diverse partners, including all levels of government, community-based organizations, health providers, schools, and faith-based organizations. The time and effort put in to developing these partnerships could easily be replicated by other organizations dedicated to technology access; however, it must underscored that these partnerships are the result of years of relationship building work by YPI staff.