

Meeting of Broadband ARRA Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA),
Public Computer Center (PCC) and State Broadband Data & Development
(SBDD) Program Grantees
November 2, 2010 – 1 PM – 5 PM
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Ste. 14000, San Francisco, CA

Central Coast Broadband Consortium–Public Computer Alliance
Award # 06–42–B10586
Monterey County Office of Education
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project involves a partnership between the Monterey County Office of Education (grant recipient) and six sub-recipients: Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey; California State University, Monterey Bay; Community Information Center; Hartnell College; Monterey County Free Library; and National Steinbeck Center. Additional participants include Access Monterey Peninsula and South Monterey County Center for Arts and Technology.

Each of these agencies already operates public computer centers. This project builds upon their individual experiences and resources, and involves them in an association through which they and related organizations can exchange ideas, coordinate outreach activities and new initiatives, and collaborate in efforts to expand and sustain their programs.

In addition, the Monterey County Office of Education operates a Career Technical Education Center that focuses on digital media production and supports its students' preparation for vocations and postsecondary studies in this field. The Office will develop this center into a charter high school with the same academic/vocational orientation.

A significant function of the project is the acquisition of a custom-designed mobile digital classroom with fifteen workstations. The Office and the Monterey County Free Library will use this vehicle to bring broadband Internet access and related training to rural areas of Monterey County.

END USERS

Our end users are residents of Monterey County's Salinas Valley, which includes the majority of the county's area and essentially all of the agricultural land. The State of California has designated the Salinas Valley Enterprise Zone (<http://www.salinasvalleyez.com/>), an economic development partnership of the cities of Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, and King City, and the County of Monterey.

The rest of the county, the Monterey Peninsula, includes the City of Monterey, Carmel and Pacific Grove, where the county's golf courses and tourist attractions are found.

TARGET POPULATION

This project targets all of the residents of Monterey County, with particular focus on the low income, mostly Hispanic residents of the Salinas Valley, including all age groups.

PROBLEM FOCUS

Given the diverse programs of our several partners, the project addresses access to and training in a broad range of knowledge and skills related to the broadband Internet. Our prospective users include elementary, secondary and postsecondary students, as well as adult/lifelong learners.

For most people in the target population, we are focused on the acquisition of basic computer literacy, including targeted search skills, and greater understanding of the benefits to be gained from the broadband Internet.

In addition, Monterey County Arts, Education and Technology (MCAET), a service of the Monterey County Office of Education, conducts a Career Technical Education program that focuses on digital media production and prepares students for both for entry-level employment and postsecondary studies in this rapidly expanding multidisciplinary field. MCAET is planning a charter high school with the same focus.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

For the general population, our objectives include application of basic skills, exploration of advanced skills, increased use of the Internet, and greater emphasis on goal-directed activities. Ultimately, the pursuit of these objectives should contribute to improvements in education and economic development for the target population.

For students in the MCAET's CTE program—and the future charter high school—the project's intended outcomes include higher levels of technical skill, stronger interest in the benefits of the broadband Internet, increased income-generating potential, improved preparation for postsecondary studies, and an increased college-going rate.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES ENCOUNTERED

We anticipate a challenge in keeping our diverse partners in a productive relationship, but we are still quite early in this project, and have not encountered any noteworthy problems. We are addressing this issue by establishing a regular schedule of in-person meetings, developing a Google Site for internal communications, and exploring the use of audio and video conferencing through the Internet.

INFORMATION FOR THE GROUP

We have been pleased by our partners' receptivity to working together and their positive response to the federal reporting requirements we have, as a group, discovered.

NEEDS FROM THE GROUP

We would welcome input from other projects regarding community outreach initiatives, particularly low-cost strategies that are aimed at increasing awareness of the benefits of the broadband Internet for personal growth and economic development.