

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Technology Access Foundation

Project Title: TAF Community Learning Space (CLS)

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

High school dropouts are far more likely than graduates to be unemployed, living in poverty, and/or incarcerated. Too many students across the U.S. are failing to graduate from high school on-time, if at all. In Washington State, nearly 30% of public high school students fail to graduate in four years. Low-income and minority students fare worse: 42% of low-income students, 40% of African American and Latino students and 45% of Native American students statewide fail to graduate from high school on-time, according to Washington's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

TAF's current programs ensure that more students graduate high school on-time, ready for college and professional careers: TechStart, a free after-school program for students in K-8th grades that delivers academic enrichment through project-based learning and advanced technology tools, and TAF Academy, a sustainable, replicable 6-12th grade public school academy model facilitated through partnerships with public school districts.

Concurrently, TAF is developing Teach 21, a professional development program for public school teachers in schools with at least 70% students of color. Teach 21 will strengthen instructional skills, teach best practices and provide additional resources to ensure that their students graduate on-time and college ready.

In 2005, as part of its White Center Community Enhancement Initiative, King County contacted TAF about potential sites for the construction of facility designed to increase area broadband access and serve White Center youth. White Center is a prime location for delivering our mission to prepare underserved K-12th grade youth of color for higher education and professional success. The three-level, 22,600 sq. ft. CLS will be ADA accessible and contain four wireless learning labs, an academic support center, a floor of office space and a large multipurpose/meeting room with a commercial kitchen all served by a DS-3 broadband connection. In compliance with TAF's contract with King County, 75% of the building will be available for community use. TAF will rent space to other community organizations for their education programs and meetings when not in use by TAF. Rental fees will be used to offset the

CLS's operating expenses. We anticipate that the facility could be in use up to seven days a week, 12 hours a day.

The CLS will serve neighborhood residents of all ages. White Center is located in an unincorporated, underserved area in southwest King County. The population includes a diverse working class, predominantly low-income, with people of color making up nearly 50% of the community; 27% of the population is foreign-born. White Center is a neighborhood in transition, with inherent pressures from poverty and population growth. With one in six living below the Federal Poverty Level, the poverty rate in White Center is twice as high as that of King County as a whole. Over a quarter of the residents are under the age of 18. King County budget constraints have all but eliminated youth programs and the community faces a variety of workforce development challenges due to decades of area economic decline that cross many economic, educational and cultural classifications.

TAF is actively working to reform the public education system to ensure that all students can access a quality public school education that prepares them for college and careers. The organizational growth and development supported by this project will enable TAF to annually change the educational trajectory of 20,000 students of color across Washington State public schools by 2020.

This project addresses the primary problem of poor student achievement by increasing educational training, support and broadband access for underserved students through the construction and operation of the CLS. A secondary goal of this project is to improve broadband access for White Center community residents. The CLS will directly benefit residents by providing a community learning space that can be used for educational and training programs as well as community-building functions throughout the year. Within a year of opening the CLS, TAF's programs at the CLS will be able to provide more than 1,000 students annually with meaningful educational experiences and technological skills.

Additionally, partnerships with organizations such as Youth Media Institute (YMI), Highline School District, Greenbridge and Park Lake Homes II, Thrive by Five and the White Center Community Development Association (WCCDA) will ensure that the facility is also used to increase broadband access for community residents of all ages. Partners will offer classes and activities for youth and families aimed at building the skills necessary to succeed in school and on the job.

TAF has a reputation as a pioneer in education reform with a solid track record (100% of our students have entered college) for delivering results. We have 13 years of success educating students of color with unique programs that provide them with the foundational readiness needed to graduate high

school on-time and enter college with proven leadership and technical skills. We have developed numerous long-term public and private partnerships over the years to successfully develop and facilitate our programming. These include local and county government agencies, the Seattle, Highline and Federal Way school districts, the University of Washington, national funding partners such as the Gates Foundation, Stuart Foundation and the Paul Allen Family Foundation, corporations such as Microsoft, Safeco Insurance and Alaska Airlines, as well as a wide variety of community-based organizations. These partnerships have prepared TAF for an endeavor such as the successful construction and operation of the CLS.

The cost of the proposed project is \$4,865,652. TAF has secured \$973,130 in matching funds for this project which constitutes 20% of the total project budget.