

May 5, 2014

Dear Members of the Digital Technology Committee,

I am writing on behalf of East Madison Community Center, the Community Development Authority, the Truax Neighborhood Association, and the Joining Forces for Families north-eastside office to encourage the Committee to select the Truax Neighborhood as a pilot site for the Residential Internet Access Assistance pilot program.

From humble beginnings in a church basement in 1966, the East Madison Community Center has evolved over the past four and a half decades into a thriving multipurpose Center in the heart of the Truax Housing area. The Center provides social, educational, nutritional, vocational, and recreational services for the east side community with a small paid staff and 250 volunteers. EMCC is open 7 days a week and offers over 12,000 hours of programming annually.

The Center's primary goal is to promote positive youth development through leadership training, skill building, strong role models, positive values, fitness and nutrition, community service projects, cultural appreciation, and mutual respect. Neighborhood residents look to the Center as the community focal point and have deemed EMCC as the "only show in town" for local families. EMCC is actively involved in neighborhood development efforts and provides ongoing assistance and encouragement to help empower area residents in their climb toward self-sufficiency.

To this end, job training/job search assistance and adult education are two things that are brought up most frequently as a major community need. Job searching and education are no longer possible without technological skills, and many people in this neighborhood simply don't have the skills they need to compete in today's marketplace. EMCC has a small, 7-station public computer lab and free wifi within the building (already networked to MUFN), but the lab is often used by our youth programs or overcrowded.

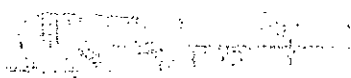
There are 120 units of housing in the Truax neighborhood with over 500 residents. The average household income is less than \$15,000 annually. Most families are headed by a single female and almost all residents are minorities (predominantly African-American and Hmong). Due to these challenges, most residents are not able to afford a monthly internet bill and EMCC's wireless currently does not extend to the buildings due to the heavy concrete and other dense materials the buildings are constructed from. Residents frequently ask Center staff how they can access the Center's wireless network from home.

Between the fact that EMCC and the CDA office are already linked to the MUFN and the long-term history of quality programming, administration, and experience EMCC, CDA, and JFF bring to the Truax neighborhood, there is high capacity for a very successful program connecting residents to trainings and technological access. The Truax neighborhood would greatly benefit from this increased technology capacity and we very much appreciate your consideration of this site.

Thank you,



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"The Center of Opportunity"

Starczewski, Leslie

From: Ahlgrim, Alison
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2014 2:45 PM
To: Kronberger, Paul; Faust, Dave
Subject: Digital Divide Project
Attachments: EMCC Digital Divide Proposal.pdf

Hi,

I received the information about the request for projects to address the "Digital Divide" in Madison. I wasn't sure from the initial email if you are looking for a fully flushed out project proposal by Monday 5/5, or just an initial contact. Attached is my initial information and letter of intent. I am happy to provide more information or flush out details further if necessary. I would also like an invitation to the DTC meeting on 5/8.

Thank you for your consideration!

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