

Connect Lorain County Program Brief

September 2018

Background

Connect Lorain County (CLC) is a by-product of Connect Your Community (CYC), an \$18.7 million investment which used innovative and collaborative strategies to expand broadband adoption in low-income communities throughout the country. In this, grantees provided free computer training, free – low cost computer equipment, and technical assistance in obtaining low-cost internet to low-income families. Lorain County Community College (LCCC) received grant funds from 2010 – 2012 to execute this program. It was administered throughout the county in partnership with various community partners, and successfully served over 2,000 residents.

In 2012, LCCC took the lessons learned and content gained from Connect Your Community and transitioned to Connect Lorain County. By applying an entrepreneurial eye to this highly needed and successful model of community service, LCCC built on partnerships with local school districts and began offering training to parents and guardians of students who attend schools in high poverty neighborhoods. Having access to a free or low-cost, internet ready computer at the end of the program continued to be a significant draw to engage participants. Through careful management of program costs, the CLC program continued operating as a fully self-sufficient program, including revenue generation via contracts with local school districts and in-kind support provided by LCCC through the waiver of indirect costs.

Program Enhancements

In 2016, the format and curriculum for the Connect Lorain County program was reviewed under new leadership. As a result, this program was repurposed as a computer skill remediation training program, with an overall goal of building computer skills and connectivity of county residents as a means to advance their career awareness and opportunities – with an emphasis on opportunities in advanced manufacturing. While considering this enhancement, LCCC recognized that participants could benefit as the digitalization of skills in manufacturing have increased.

Contracts with local school districts were continually pursued as a revenue source for CLC.

During the 2016-17 school year, LCCC entered into a contract with the Lorain County School District and four (4) CLC training sessions were delivered at different sites.

Inquiries were received from over 130 residents. As a result:

- 73 individuals registered
- 30 participants completed training
- 29 computers were distributed

During the 2017-18 school year, LCCC entered into a contract with Elyria City Schools and four (4) CLC training sessions were delivered at two locations in the district.

Inquiries were received from more than 40 residents. As a result:

- 36 individuals registered
- 27 participants completed training
- 27 computers were distributed

Challenges & Recommendations

Computer Supplier

Maintaining partnership with computer suppliers with reasonable costs has been an ongoing challenge. Further research on optimal computer supplier and/or reconsideration of computer distribution as a program component is recommended.

LCCC historically obtained desktop computer donations through the Lorain County Solid Waste Management District's Refurbished Computers Distribution Program. After Lorain County ended its Refurbished Computers Distribution Program in 2016, LCCC began using contract revenue to purchase desktop computers and laptops from a nonprofit agency that refurbishes computers (RET3). In 2018, RET3 assumed new leadership and partnership with LCCC was discontinued. At this point, a local computer supplier (Dr. Dave's PC Clinic) began being utilized. While the local supplier was able to provide equipment at reasonable costs and was helpful in providing support to participants, issues with programming and delivery have occurred.

Participant Retention

Several participants commented on the time commitment, stating that classes were too long in duration. Additionally, some participants had difficulty in obtaining childcare and/or had commitments that conflicted with the training schedule. Shortening the class duration and/or decreasing frequency may address retention challenges. Further, flexible scheduling may aide in retention.

Curriculum

Computer skills of participants ranged. As a result, engagement of participants was a challenge. Flexibility in curriculum delivery may address this concern.

Looking Ahead

CLC is a crucial and significant tool for LCCC educational and community partners, and provides valuable services to participants. As LCCC implements Vision 2020, which includes an increased focus on meeting the needs of the adult learner, CLC is one unique component. Curriculum can be tailored to meet the needs of participants in an array of settings. Integration into manufacturing career pathways to assist in remediation of adult learners is a consideration as this program is refined.

Appendix A: CLC Program Handout

About Connect Lorain County

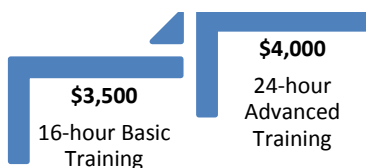
Connect Lorain County (CLC) is a computer skill remediation training program, offered in a 16-hour basic or 24-hour advanced format. The overall goal of CLC is to build the computer skills and connectivity of county residents as a means to advance their career awareness and opportunities. This training occurs over a 4 or 6 week period, which includes two 2-hour training sessions each week. Also, as part of this training, free to low-cost computer equipment is offered to those who successfully complete the program and low-cost internet service providers are referred. Maximum class size is 30.

Program Design

16-hour Basic Training	24-hour Advanced Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introduction and Computer Basics •Internet Basics and Parent Information Tools •Computer Security •Personal Security •Computer Applications •Career Awareness/Training Resources •Home Connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introduction and Computer Basics •Internet Basics and Parent Information Tools •Computer Security •Personal Security •Advanced Computer Applications and Social Media •Career Awareness/Training Resources •Advanced Online Training •Computer/Internet Lifestyle Management Tools •Home Connect

The Investment

Curriculum and program resources have been reviewed and improved, and as a result, costs have modified. Training curriculum is flexible and can be adjusted to suit the audience. We are now offering 24-hour advanced training at \$4,000, and 16-hour basic training at a rate of \$3,500. Costs include support resources, instruction costs, supplies, etc.



Program Contacts

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Appendix B: CLC Flyer Template

ATTENTION PARENTS!

**FREE COMPUTER
TRAINING FOR ALL
[SCHOOL DISTRICT]
PARENTS!**

Sign Up Now
(440) 366-7292




What You Will Learn

- Basic Computer Skills
- Internet Basics
- Parent Information Tools (PowerSchool)
- Computer/Internet Security
- Personal Security
- Computer Applications (Word, PowerPoint, Excel)
- Training/Career Resources
- Computer Set-Up
- Lifestyle Management Tools

[Location]
[Dates]
[Days]
[Time]

**FREE COMPUTER UPON
TRAINING COMPLETION**
(ASK ABOUT OUR LAPTOP OPTION)

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