

New Rochelle Public Library Public Computer Center Achievements

Focus: Workforce Development and Digital Literacy

September 30, 2010 - December 31, 2011

The New Rochelle Public Library Public Computer Center provides these essential services and resources:



An enhanced **Computer Lab**, with **ten computer stations, instructor's station and monitor** on the library's third floor is used for training classes instructed by librarians and contracted instructors.

Basic Digital Literacy Training for the Unemployed and Underemployed

During the grant period, the NRPL guided 2,425 individuals through successful completion of 335 technology training sessions, totaling 704 hours, in these areas: "Internet for Beginners", "Intermediate Internet", "How to Scan and Upload Documents" and "How to Download e- and Audio Books". On average, 29 classes were offered, benefitting approximately 202 participants each month. Once additional needs were identified, these sessions were also offered: "Computer Basics", "Keyboarding", "Basic Microsoft Word", and "Computers for Seniors".

Technological Tools for Advancement in Existing Jobs or Attaining New Jobs

772 patron reported that they received comprehensive, useable training in the 84 classes of "Microsoft Word" (four two-hour sessions), "Microsoft Excel" (four two-hour sessions) and "Fundamentals of Microsoft PowerPoint" the PCC provided during the grant period.

A newly-created **Lower Level Learning Lab**, with seven computer stations with Microsoft Word Language Pack (including one station that is wheelchair accessible,) an instructor station and a 32" monitor, is extensively used by ESL classes conducted by Westchester Community College (WCC).

Basic Digital Literacy Training for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Computer instruction in email account set-up, keyboard and computer basics and Microsoft Word is provided in English and Spanish. 873 individuals gained skills in these classes, conducted an average of 72 hours each month. Spanish speaking students are frequently referred to the Job Readiness coaches for additional assistance and are provided with one-on-one assistance in our Lower Level Learning Lab. In addition, 358 ESL students learned about NRPL's PCC resources through orientations conducted for each ESL class.

Basic Digital Literacy Skill-Building

Practice Sessions are offered 48 hours per month; the library's ESL classes utilize the Lower Level learning Labs 16 hours per month



Individual Computer Stations with Increased Broadband

The NRPL Broadband speed is currently at 10mbps. Our plan is to increase the speed to 15mbps by the end of December 2012. (Broadband WiFi is available throughout the library.) NRPL now maintains 72 public computers that are available 61 hours per week. This includes a designated 10-computer area for job-seekers, including those in wheelchairs.



The **BTOP Help Center** in the library's second floor conference room accommodates three computer stations and easy to read resource guides. The activities of the Help Center include these one-on-one services:

Job Search/Resume & Cover Letter/Employment Application Completion/Interview Skills

two human resources specialists provided one-on-one assistance to 859 individuals in 2011. Job readiness coaches met with patrons two times a week and helped them obtain job interviews and secure 28 jobs. Forty-eight resume and cover letter workshops were conducted. NRPL librarians, who received training at the start of this project, provided one-on one job search assistance to 684 unemployed or underemployed individuals. A class on job interview skills was added in December 2011 and is now conducted every other Saturday.

Basic Digital Literacy Assistance

AmeriCorps workers devoted approximately 75 hours per week, assisting an average of 200 individuals with basic Internet site searches, setting up email accounts, troubleshooting Microsoft Office applications and other software, PC reservation, computer logon and printing procedures.

Help with Barriers Preventing or Deterring Employment

A social worker and bi-lingual social worker (from Family Services of Westchester) provided 366 individuals with one-one-one assistance in navigating social service agencies, completing e-forms for food stamps and other benefits, on-line job applications, immigration papers, etc... by appointment with a librarian on dedicated time (three sessions a week).

Small Business Support

Small business counseling provided by **SCORE volunteers** on Monday evenings helped 30 start-ups.

Videoconferencing Capabilities

is available for free use by local businesses, organizations, and municipal departments. NRPL forged **new partnerships** with the New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce and the Business Improvement District (BID), providing 6 tailor-made programs for business owners and entrepreneurs.





The NRPL PCC has led to additional resources and services for job-seekers

Classes focusing on job-readiness skills are provided by partners such as Community Capital Resources, Women's Economic Development Center, WEBS Career & Educational Counseling Service, Small Business Association, and other library partners.

The Job Now Database is available to NRPL patrons through the BTOP webpage. Patrons get live job coaching and resume assistance when the library is closed. Job Now is available at no cost to all NRPL card holders. Three hundred thirty eight patrons benefitted from this service during its first five months.

Librarians and AmeriCorps workers direct job seekers to the library's **Learning Express** resource, which offers practice tests and tutorial course series designed to help patrons—students and adult learners—succeed on academic or licensing tests such as SAT, GMAT, Civil Service exams, GED and more.

One-on-one sessions, which are conducted by librarians and AmeriCorps workers and social workers, also help patrons with on-line learning tutorials and webinars.

GED Test Preparation Sessions, which are held four hours each week, utilize online resources. In 2011, a total of 40 programs were provided; 267 patrons attended, resulting in 12 patrons earning their GED diplomas.

New community partnerships have been developed through the New Rochelle Council of Community Services, a thirty-six member umbrella organization of New Rochelle's institutions, social service agencies and non-profits. Through this involvement NRPL has reached hundreds of new library-users and residents most in need of the PCC opportunities.



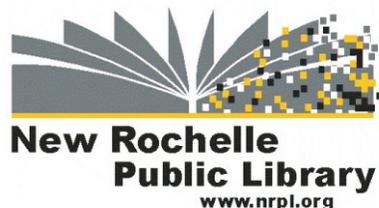
Effective, multi-layered promotions resulted in a continually-building level of participation, now nearly at capacity for many programs. NRPL is now considered a Workforce Development Center, largely due to positive references relayed via word-of-mouth and social media, coupled with traditional promotions: mass-distribution of thousands of individual flyers and bi-monthly newsletters that contain 11x17 inch insert with the PCC Calendar and information on all services and classes. Media outlets receive weekly and monthly press releases pertaining to the NRPL PCC services. NRPL PCC successes were highlighted in a W CBS radio interview with Sean Adams, host of "Stories From Main Street", that aired on July 11, 2011.



Every other month, the library's newsletter and PCC-BTOP calendar-listing are emailed or postal mailed to over 150 community organizations, schools, colleges, and religious institutions; and postal mailed to 670 individuals. Flyers are distributed to the same lists on a monthly basis.

NRPL also maintains a webpage dedicated to NRPL PCC activities on the library's Web site. The URL is http://www.nrpl.org/public_computer_center/. We also maintain a Wiki at <http://nrplbttop.wikispaces.com/>. This Wiki provides information about the NRPL PCC, user guides for technology instructions, job information and resources for social services and benefits. It is widely used by the staff when assisting patrons.

NRPL BTOP activities are discussed at monthly meetings of the New Rochelle Council of Community Services, the monthly meetings of Communities For all Ages, and at monthly meetings of NR-PR, a consortium of public relations managers for New Rochelle's major institutions and the City.



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