

e-Skills Shop – a Public Computer Center
Wayland Free Library
101 W. Naples Street
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(585) 728-5380
[http://www.gunlockelibrary.org/PUBLICCOMP
UTINGCENTER/tabid/852/Default.aspx](http://www.gunlockelibrary.org/PUBLICCOMP
UTINGCENTER/tabid/852/Default.aspx)

Our Program

The e-Skills Shop began providing training in digital literacy on October 1, 2010, with the primary focus being to improve skills of underemployed people and to provide skills to the unemployed. In the beginning, there was no data to support either a need or demand for such services. Over the following 15 months, it became clear that the unemployed were not taking advantage of the services. Most of the people who came to the e-Skills Shop were either retired or gainfully employed and presented us with specific training needs.

At the beginning of the grant, we recognized that the people who came to the library seeking help with computer related issues had varying levels of skills. We also recognized that because of the nature of the rural community, sustainability was going to be difficult to obtain. For these reasons, we focused on two efforts: one-on-one training and self-paced web-based training modules.

The one-on-one training allows us to focus our efforts on a person's specific needs without delays due to lesser skilled participants or frustration because of more highly skilled participants. We address the specific objectives of the participant. Initially, we limited these sessions to one hour, not wanting to overwhelm the participant. We found that many had the capacity and the desire to lengthen the sessions

to two hours and a few have extended as long as 5 hours.

The self-paced web-based training modules, while much more time consuming and expensive to produce, provide instructions to our patrons past the end of the grant with little maintenance. People, both within the Library's service area and anywhere on the world wide web, can access these modules in the comfort of their home using their personal computer. Alternately, they can request one-on-one training with a specific module serving as the point of interest. These self-paced modules were immediately picked up by the other PCCs in the Southern Tier Library System and used in their training programs.

In January 2011, we began offering formal training sessions on topics that were the most requested in one-on-one training. Initial response to these training sessions was good but not overwhelming. We tried different days, different times, but found one time that seemed to draw the biggest crowds: Saturday at noon. (A crowd in a rural area can be defined as: "where two or more gather...")

Our Target Audience

During the development of the grant document, we determined that the population of our local school district (Wayland-Cohocton Central School District) would be the primary target population. In addition, because local newspapers were actually distributed to a broader geographic region, we included a neighboring town and village (Dansville) in our target population estimates.

The total geographic region encompasses 209 square miles with a population of 24,500. The greatest population density occurs within a 6 mile radius centered at the Wayland Free

Library, 9150 people, and includes the villages of both Wayland and Dansville.

The primary industry is agriculture, but few are employed in that field. Two school districts, a hospital, and a division of Hon Industries are the largest employers. Most of the employed population works either north toward Rochester or south toward Corning. Unemployment figures of the individual communities vary from 7.7% in Dansville to 9.3% in both Wayland and Cohocton. Approximately 15% of the population is impoverished according to US Census records.

Another consideration resulting from the rural nature of our service area is the lack of internet service to many parts of the community. While this intuitively might inflate the target population, in fact it actually deflated our target numbers because those living in the low service areas generally do not participate in training activities.

Observations

Success is extremely subjective and hard to characterize. However, when you see people who come to you with little confidence and few digital skills, managing e-mails, creating documents, spreadsheets and slide presentation, you know that they have grown as a result of the attention they received from our trainers. When your students show you the project they just finished at work which used some of the skills they learned from you, you know that you have succeeded.

The patrons of the Wayland Library and the e-Skills Shop are delighted with the training opportunities that this grant provides. Many are amazed that they don't have to pay a fee for the service. More than a few have

wondered what will happen when the grant ends.

As trainers, we have grown technical, teaching, and personal skills that were never imagined at the beginning of the grant. The range of inquiries we field at this point in the grant is far wider than when the grant began. And while we cannot hold ourselves out as experts in every field of computer training, the level of expertise we provide to our community is invaluable way beyond numbers served.

If we had any true disappointment in this grant, it is that few people ask us for help in seeking work or fashioning resumes and cover letters. We have seen more referrals from agencies for some skill enhancements in the last six months. That trend may continue as the economic trickle-down affects more small businesses in our area.

e-Skill Shop Statistic Summary*

One-on-One Tutoring Sessions	1352
One-on-One Tutoring Hours	1852
Workshops Presented	64
Workshop Participants	212
Workshop Hours	434
One Hour Study Courses	27

*Data through March 31, 2012