

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Public

Date: January 5th, 2016

To: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilmembers

CC: Heidi Holland, Heidi Hansen, Josh Copley, Barbara Goodrich, Jerene Watson, Leadership Team

Subject: Data and Outcomes on Job Training Programs and Partnerships

This is in response to a request for data and outcomes on job training programs and partnerships at the library.

DISCUSSION

The library's educational role has always included teaching users how to access desired information. In today's technology-heavy environment, helping patrons use the computers effectively, including teaching them how to look for jobs and complete applications online, is an essential function of our duties as librarians and educators. In our continual efforts to meet the needs of our community, including those seeking employment as well as those looking to improve their computer skills, the library provides a variety of resources. These resources include one-on-one technology instruction where participants receive personalized help from our highly trained staff through beginning- and intermediate-level career advancement classes on Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, to name a few, and point-of-need assistance and research at the library's information desk during all hours the library is open. Additionally, in 2012 the library received a grant that provided funding for extra hours to an employee already on staff specifically to give job seekers professional guidance on online applications, résumés, cover letters, how to search for available jobs, and how to dress appropriately and properly for an interview. The grant also provided funds for an additional computer at the downtown and East Flagstaff libraries along with each County Library specifically for job seekers, laptops for trainings throughout Flagstaff and the County, video recorders to be used in mock interviews, and a scanner. The increase in hours allowed staff to engage in partnerships with local organizations that are also committed to providing aid to job seekers, including the Coconino County WorkForce Connection and the Goodwill One Stop Center. The library also participates in many outreach events in order to reach underserved and at-risk populations, including events aimed at veterans and the homeless and a monthly presentation at the Halo House.

The library's contribution to these outside organizations was invaluable. As the heart of the community, the library is able to meet job-seekers at a centralized location and outside of the normal business hours that often restrict other government agencies. Additionally, as firmly established experts in the activities of teaching, instructing, and imparting knowledge, help from library staff is readily accepted by those who may be embarrassed or too proud to ask for help otherwise. The library's public access computers

allow job seekers appreciated anonymity, as they are “just another library user,” whereas at other organizations it is obvious that they are job seeking.

Although the economy has experienced a slight improvement and the grant period has ended, the need for staff to continue to help our community find jobs hasn't decreased. In fact, the need and even expectation for highly trained help in the library is higher than ever. The expertise found in the library is utilized to an astonishing degree daily. In the past year alone, the library served 252 individuals through our one-on-one technology classes. We continue to offer additional computer time on a workstation specifically assigned for job-seekers. In 2012, that station served 435 individuals, 535 were served in 2013, 585 were served in 2014, and 545 were served this past year. The help offered at the library's Information Desk during all open hours is substantial: there was an average of 4,800 questions answered monthly this past year at the desk, 1/10 of which can be attributed to those actively looking for work or looking to further their career goals. Additionally, because of the benefits we saw through our partnerships, the library has continued to collaborate with the County Workforce Connection group and attend the monthly meetings, offering information to participants about our efforts as well as receiving valuable knowledge from local organizations.

RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSION

This report is for information only.