

## After-School Technology Training Program

### ABSTRACT

The Center of Hope's mission is to educate students on the use, study, and implementation of technology for learning purposes in order to provide a concrete learning foundation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom and workforce. The community of Starkville, MS has been notified via Starkville Daily News, online at [CenterofHope.com](http://CenterofHope.com) and our center's social media pages of our desired efforts and intent to apply to Mississippi Department of Education's RFP pertaining to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers grant. Our website, along with all social media accounts will include a link that displays information pertaining to application submittal. Current students and parents will be notified via email upon completion.

The Technology Learning Center at Stark High School provides a technology-centered learning environment for High school students in Oktibbeha county. This learning center enables classrooms to communicate with professionals all over the world in order to introduce exciting careers that are available to students upon graduation. It also provides a safe online learning environment for students as they engage in remote technical courses which allow them to gain skills that can be transferred into the workplace. Due the continuous technological advances of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century it is now more important than ever for students to become more knowledgeable as it pertains to how technology works and how to utilize it responsibly.

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT

"The imagination of our future in a networked society with unbounded access to information and sharing of data which is accessible to everywhere and every time for everyone and everything" (Gupta and Jha, 2015). The importance of knowing how these technologies and work and how they affect our lives is becoming increasingly vital to the success of the youth in

our community. With the rise of social media, instantaneous access to entertainment, games, and other forms of media the misuse of technology in the classroom has become an even greater distraction for youth of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Aaron & Lipton 2018; Kay, Benzimra, & Li 2017).

The Center of Hope believes that by allowing students to explore the function of these devices contrary to their uses can introduce the world of STEM to students in new and exciting ways. An estimate of 1,123 youth under the age of 18 in the Starkville, MS community live below the poverty level which can place undue hardships and disadvantages on students (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003-2017). Combining technology access and education on how to effectively use technology would aid in bridging the technology gap that underprivileged students experience. After school programs that promote building technology-related skills will empower students to use safe technology practices and build technical skills that will carry over into postsecondary education and afterwards into the workplace. This proactive approach will not only teach students about how computers work and function; but build a foundation in which they are able to troubleshoot their own technical issues. Ensuring the youth of Oktibbeha County have access to after school programs that add this unique value will enrich their community for years to come.

The intent of this grant is to enrich Stark high's current Technology Learning Center by purchasing gently used desktop computers and peripherals in efforts to reduce e-waste and promote healthy computer practices for students and instructors. These additions to our center will enable Stark High school to better serve a greater number of students and further enrich their learning experiences through technology. Equipment and devices obtained through grant funds would be available to all students who visit the center.

## PROGRAM PLAN

The implementation of this project will start by obtaining quotes from at least three Microsoft Certified Resellers. By purchasing refurbished systems, the Technology Learning Center is able to promote ethical practices that protect our environment and community as well as enable our school to obtain a greater number of resources with the funds allocated. After the equipment is received, students will utilize the technical skills that they currently have learned in order to setup and configure the desktop computer systems. After software and hardware tests are done by center personnel; students will then have the opportunity to use computers for research purposes, interactive online interviews, and Distance Education programs. Due to the unique focus on technology using it in an environmentally responsible manner; our program will be sustained by practicing e-cycling, which consists of finding new uses for older parts or machines in year one and two. As we enter year three of the program, we will offer internships to graduating students to encourage a continued commitment and desire to further enrich their communities with the information they have learned through our program. The Center of Hope's commitment is to enrich our community for decades to come.

PROJECT PLAN  
TABLE

| Assumptions                                                                                                                                  | Inputs                                               | Activities                                                                                                                                                                                  | Outputs                                                                                                                             | Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The demand and use of technical skills in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century is vital to quality education.                                        | Desktop Computers<br>High Speed Internet Access      | Technical training courses that teach students how to use, repair, and upgrade computer.                                                                                                    | Four technical training classes per month.<br><br>Internet and computer accessibility for after school students five days per week. | <b>Short-Term:</b><br>In 1 to 3 years, students will become proficient on the use and functions of Desktop computers and Windows Operating Systems.<br><br>Students will use privacy and tools and practices for online browsing habits and communication. | Students of Oktibbeha county will excel in STEM related industries as they enter the workforce.<br><br>More Oktibbeha High school graduates will be more prepared to enter the workforce or higher education institutions. |
| There are over 1,000 low-income youth in the Starkville, MS, community.                                                                      | Computer Software<br>Teachers, Technical instructors | Learning how to create captivating graphics with software such as Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Office 2019, and Camtasia Studio.<br><br>Students will learn best practices for online safety. | Access to technical Distance education courses will be available five days a week.                                                  | <b>Long-Term:</b><br>In 3 to 5 years, students that complete the program will be able to troubleshoot and resolve technical issues.<br><br>Students will have extensive knowledge of technology & functions.                                               | Oktibbeha county's poverty rate will decrease as students gain more valuable skills in the workplace.                                                                                                                      |
| Children from low socio-economic backgrounds lack access to technology hardware and tools that enable them to perform well in the classroom. |                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN

Effective evaluation is a vital component to ensure the success of an after-school program. The Center of Hope will employ Dr. Christopher Brian of Mississippi Technical College to perform evaluations for our after-school technology training program. Dr. Brian is an Instructional Design professional with over 10 years of experience working as an external evaluator for educational institutions, technical schools, as well as after-school programs. He is well respected within his community for his thorough evaluation skills and comes highly recommended, as it pertains to his previous clients that have sought out his work, for grant evaluations. His compensation will be 3% of the annual grant award amount.

There are over one thousand youth in Starkville, MS that live below the poverty line. Although there are some after school programs within the community, ensuring the youth of today are prepared for the technological challenges of tomorrow is an essential component of long-term success. The Center of Hope wishes to bridge the technological gap that some students experience due to the inaccessibility of technology within their own homes. In this effort to adequately prepare the youth of our community for continuing education and/or the workforce, it is important that our program's evaluation is done in an efficient and effective manner. Our hope is that through continued assessment and evaluation our program will exceed our desired goals and continue to be a success for years to come.

Student curriculum and objectives for our after-school technology training program reflect the recommended Mississippi College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) for Information Technology along with the Skill Standards for Information Technology developed by CompTIA. Students will be introduced to the Information Technology field and will handle various computer hardware and peripherals, gain knowledge and skills on how to secure their computer systems, as well as other information outlined in MCCRS. Student attendance will be

maintained daily by requiring student to sign-in and date our daily attendance log. This information will be scanned into our internal database on a weekly basis. Student evaluations will be done in a quantitative and qualitative fashion in order to analyze the progress towards each program objective. Assignments and project scores will be archived in an online database and compared with local academic standards. Students, parents and other stakeholders will be given online surveys in the form of multiple choice, fill-in the blank, and true false statements in order to analyze curriculum as well as contribute to enhancing it. Each student will keep a portfolio that includes digital photos, videos, and a personal journal that highlight their technical journey throughout a traditional school year. Group and face-to-face interviews will be done with participants and their guardians. These interviews will be recorded by our external evaluator. They will be analyzed twice per semester and all findings of evaluation will be available to the public upon request.

After program evaluation, the staff of The Center of Hope will meet with our external evaluator to further discuss program recommendations for objectives that have not been met and those that are likely not to be achieved by the end of the program year. Each objective that has not been adequately met will be further analyzed and reviewed to assess what changes are needed in order to achieve the desired output. Objectives that may not be met based on the current design, development, and implementation will be reviewed to see what changes can be made to produce a more desired outcome in a timely manner. Our hopes are that through ongoing assessment and evaluation our staff at The Center of Hope can maximize its potential for success by employing methods that reflect positive learning outcomes and ensure quality academic enrichment.

## References

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