



County of Santa Clara  
Board of Supervisors  
Supervisory District Four  
Supervisor Susan Ellenberg

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110883

**DATE:** May 18, 2022

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Susan Ellenberg, Supervisor

**SUBJECT:** Budget Inventory Item 20 - SJSU Research Foundation Digital Literacy

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Approve Inventory Item No. 20 to provide a grant to San Jose State University Research Foundation in the amount of \$15,906 relating to support for digital literacy employability workshops, and refer item for final consideration and approval on June 16, 2022. (Ellenberg)

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is a one-time cost of \$15,906.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The grant in the amount of \$15,906 is initiated by Supervisor Ellenberg to be used to deliver basic computer skill workshops increasing employability opportunities to justice-involved individuals during the coming fiscal year by the Service Navigation Program of the San Jose State University Research Foundation's Record Clearance Project.

The San Jose State University Record Clearance Project's (RCP) Service Navigation Program works with recently released justice-involved individuals to help them leave custody and work toward new futures. Many justice-involved individuals have minimal knowledge of technology. Consequently, applying for employment on their own is challenging, often leading to frustration and lack of success in finding suitable employment.

Digital literacy workshops will assist current clients by offering computer skills classes focused on increasing employability. Led by a RCP Service Navigation Program staff member, SJSU students will work individually with clients to develop their basic computer skills. With these skills, clients will feel confident using technology in applying for

employment. They will enhance their employability by bringing basic computer skills to their new jobs.

Five participants will enroll in an eight-week class, with four pilot classes during this initial pilot year. Open seats not filled by current SJSU Service Navigation clients will be available to other Santa Clara County service providers. Based on this pilot, the program hopes to expand in the future.

In each course, participants will learn basic skills necessary to operate a laptop computer, including typing skills, website navigation, and utilization of computer applications. In conjunction with the job search aspect of regular service navigation work, participants will have dedicated class time and assistance to apply for employment opportunities online. Participants will learn how to develop and submit a resume for employment. At the end of the 8-week cycle, participants who complete the course will receive the laptop they used during the course.

### **CHILD IMPACT**

The recommended action will benefit children through justice-involved parents gaining computer skills with a focus on enhancing employability, thereby enhancing family income.

### **SENIOR IMPACT**

Seniors are particularly in need of computer literacy classes to help with current employment searches.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2013, the SJSU RCP began its Service Navigation program with a seed grant from The Health Trust designed to engage motivated people in custody and guide them upon release. Santa Clara County provided matching funds in 2014, and The Health Trust funded an extension in 2016. In 2018, Santa Clara County, through the Reentry Resource Center (RRC), funded the program to provide service linkage focused on justice-involved women; the RRC has funded the program for all justice-involved populations for the last three years.

RCP's Service Navigation team employs peer mentors with lived experience who have cleared their records, supported by experienced program staff, to assist with housing, employment, transportation, and other immediate needs. Peer mentors provide guidance and

serve as role models to aid their clients in moving to new futures, thereby helping clients avoid returning to custody.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

County staff will contact grantee to execute agreement and distribute funds.