PLP Grant Replication Program Application (Category B)

1. **One paragraph project summary, including description of the unique aspects of the project.**

The goal of this project is to develop and implement a mobile internet Hotspot lending program in an effort to close the digital gap. The program will make Hotspots available for loan to Skyline College students through the Library to support success in accessing digital course materials (Zero Textbook Cost, Open Educational Resources and Inclusive Access) and online courses. Reliable and consistent internet service is crucial for supporting equity and student success in a digital learning world. The assumption that 21st century students have consistent and reliable internet access is false. As we move toward increasing digital course materials and online courses, low-income students or students facing housing insecurities, do not have internet service off-campus. Hotspots would be available for 7-days loan periods or longer. Our project would educate, engage, and empower Skyline College students with tools they need to succeed in a digital learning world.

2. **Explain what grant was selected to replicate and why.**

Skyline College Library would like to replicate Monterey County Free Libraries "Wi-Fi to go" program as well as the "Wi-Fi Hotspot Lending Program" at California State University Monterey Bay. These two programs' goal is to close the digital gap and, in particular the CSUMB program, aims to make the digital learning experience more equitable.

Skyline College has been expanding innovative online learning programs such as Zero-cost and inclusive access to textbooks. Our learning management system, Canvas, allows use of digital media to enhance the learning experience. To remove barriers, students can use computers, have access to Wi-Fi on campus, and can check out Chromebooks from the Library. Still, many students still face barriers to completing assignments or to fully participating in these modern learning experiences. Having a Hotspot Lending Program will then eliminate this last barrier that students face.

3. Explain how this project fits with the library's strategic directions.

This project not only fits the library's strategic direction but it also fits the mission of the College as a whole.

Students who do not have reliable internet access are unable to fully participate in a digital learning environment and are prevented from accessing valuable resources. This puts them at a disadvantage.

The Skyline College Library's strategic direction, as part of the Academic Support and Learning Technologies Division, is to support all students providing resources and ensuring their academic success. In essence, the Library contributes to the College's commitment to student equity as reflected in the value statement:

> **"Open Access:** We are committed to the availability of quality educational programs and services for every member of our community regardless of level of preparedness, socioeconomic status, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, cultural, religious, or ethnic background, or disability status. We are committed to providing students with open access to programs and responsive student services both in person and online that enable them to advance steadily toward their goals.

> **Student Success and Equity:** We value students' success in achieving their goals, ontime, and strengthening their voices as they transform their lives through their educational experience. We aim to identify and address equity gaps through evidence-based research to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed."

4. A detailed description of the proposed project including the population served and the demographics of that population.

Many of the current innovative instructional practices at Skyline College utilize digital learning resources such as ZTC, OER, IA, collaborative tools, communication applications, increased use of media (video, audio, screencast), and online homework systems. These practices rely heavily on use of the internet. Although these innovations foster transformative experiences for students they heavily rely on students having reliable and consistent internet access to fully engage while off-campus. Reliable and consistent internet access has become an additional cost barrier for community college students.

Research indicates that a "digital divide" remains in the United States despite rapid technological advances. Specifically, results from a study conducted by Educause indicated that "one-third of low-income and community college students in the United

States are unable to go online when at home" (Young, L. 2016). Additionally, a recent Pew Research (2019) found that only 66 percent of African American households and 61 percent of Hispanic households (compared with 79 percent of white households) had broadband Internet at home.

Over **9,000** students (Total credit students) attend Skyline College and the demographics are as follows: 19.7% Hispanic, 21.4% Multi-Race, 2.7% African American, 17.2% Asian, and 17.9% Filipino.

A study conducted by the San Mateo Community Colleges District in spring 2018 asked students about their food and housing security. Overall, nearly two-thirds of students reported experiencing some form of food or housing insecurity during the past 12 months. Acquiring and paying for internet access becomes a luxury for students facing these insecurities.

Dependable internet access is crucial for supporting equity and student success in a digital learning world. The goal of our project is to develop and implement a mobile Wi-Fi hotspot lending program for students, thus reducing the barrier of unreliable and inconsistent internet access that hinders participation in digital learning.

Mobile Wi-Fi hotspots are small, electronic boxes that serve as a conduit to connect to the internet. Each hotspot delivers unlimited 4G LTE data and can be used both on and off-campus to provide students with reliable and consistent internet access. The program will make hotspots available for loan to Skyline College students through the Library to support success in accessing research databases, digital course materials and online courses. Hotspots would be available for 7-days loan periods or longer. Our project would educate, engage, and empower Skyline College students with tools they need to succeed in a digital learning world. Our students deserve equitable access to digital learning and instructional interventions that do not present additional cost barriers.

5. **Goals and objectives of the project. (Include here any rationale for changes to the original grant application).**

Our goal is essentially the same as those of Monterey Free Libraries and CSUMB, whose grant we are replicating. Slight rewording aligns the project to the College's values and mission.

Goal: to develop and implement a mobile Wi-Fi hotspot lending program for students, thus reducing the barrier of unreliable and inconsistent internet access that hinders participation in digital learning.

Our objectives are the same as CSUMB since we are targeting a similar college student populations:

• To implement a Wi-Fi hotspot lending program to students, providing access to the internet when they are off campus
• To target the students most in need of this service with our marketing efforts by collaborating with campus programs serving these students
• To continually evaluate the program and make improvements so that it best meets the needs of our users

6. **Project timeline (activities).**

October 2019: Notification of grant award

November 2019: Purchase equipment and data plans, develop assessment tools

December 2019: Data plans begin, staff training and development of documentation

January 2020: Start lending hotspots, advertise program

February 2020-June 2020: Ongoing lending and assessment

June-October 2020: Compilation of assessment results from spring 2020; plan any needed adjustments to lending or support procedures. Report to administration and publicize intentions to institutionalize the project and make it ongoing.

September- October 2020: Secure ongoing funding from San Mateo Community College District.

7. **Evaluation of the project.**

Building on the experience from CSUMB, we will be collecting statistics on the frequency of circulation. We will also develop a brief online survey designed to collect qualitative data on how this service impacts students. The survey will gauge how the program has contributed to the academic success of the respondent and gather suggestions for improvement. We will also collect feedback from circulation staff and IT support staff regarding practices and procedures.

Circulation statistics, survey results, and staff feedback will be reviewed and analyzed to determine if changes are needed. Data will be shared with the administration to secure 2nd year and ongoing funding.

8. **Project budget. (Indirect costs are not allowed).**

Item	Cost
25 hotspot devices (Tax only - $20 each)	$500
Yearly cost of data plan ($40 per month/ per device/ for one year)	$12,000
Portable Hard-cases	$500
Barcodes and other supplies	$400
Taxes and other fees (i.e. shipping) *estimated*	$800
TOTAL	$14,200

9. **Sustainability analysis.**

With this grant, we will make possible the launching of the Hotspot lending program. This program will allow the library to directly support Skyline College's objective to align its equitable technology plan with greater access and affordances. Once launched, usage statistics, research on demand, and qualitative studies on the impact of adding this service will allow the Library to request extra funding. Skyline College in its effort to redesign the college experience for students and ensure completion, has been dedicating funds to innovative practice that close the achievement gap. With that commitment, we are certain that internal budgets augmentations or internal special grants will make it possible for Skyline College Library to continue this program in the coming years.

Sources

"Demographics of Internet and Home Broadband Usage in the United States." Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech, 12 June 2019, www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/.

"Fact Sheet." Fact Sheet | About Skyline College | Skyline College, skylinecollege.edu/aboutskyline/factsheet.php.

"SMCCD Spring 2018 Food and Housing insecurities Student Survey" San Mateo Community Colleges District Report. https://www.smccd.edu/drc/DISTRICT%20Food%20Housing%20Report%20FINAL%201%2024%2019.pdf

Young, Lisa. "E-Learning, the Digital Divide, and Student Success at Community Colleges." EDUCAUSE Review, 22 Aug. 2016, er.educause.edu/articles/2016/8/e-learning-the-digital-divide-and-student-success-at-community-colleges.