

PLP Grant Replication Program Application

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

While many college students have consistent and reliable internet access, those who do not face a significant barrier to academic success. This barrier, which disproportionately affects students who are low income or living in rural areas, is what this project aims to reduce. PLP funding would be used to purchase 10 wifi hotspot devices with unlimited data plans, to be loaned to CSUMB students for a period of one week with the option to renew as long as no other students are waiting to borrow a device. The funding would be used to conduct a two-year pilot program, during which time we would collect circulation data as well as qualitative information from students about whether and how the program contributed to their ability to succeed in their academic endeavors.

Assuming positive results, we would use that information to seek ongoing funding from the Division of Academic Affairs to continue the program. We believe this is timely, as the campus is currently engaged in Graduation Initiative 2025, a directive from the CSU Office of the Chancellor which aims to dramatically increase student retention and four-year graduation rates. As nearly all CSUMB courses make use of iLearn, the campus online learning management system, and many courses require students to access library-owned electronic reading materials, conduct research, and complete assignments online, this program would remove a barrier to success for students who do not have internet access at home.

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

We have chosen to replicate Monterey County Free Libraries' (MCFL) "Wi-Fi to Go" program for a number of reasons. It is appropriate in scale, and we would benefit from work already done and experience gained by MCFL. MCFL has developed a lending policy and agreement, instructions for users, and promotional materials we could adapt for our purposes. Importantly, there is significant overlap between MCFL's user population and CSUMB's. A number of CSUMB students come from the rural areas of Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties, and MCFL has found their program to be particularly successful in the rural areas of Monterey County.

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

The CSUMB Library's Strategic Plan outlines our values, three of which are particularly relevant to this project:

Student Success: We value the success of all students and employ a forward-thinking, creative, and multifaceted approach in supporting their diverse needs and interests.

Innovation: We aim to anticipate users' evolving needs, and provide a more satisfying, efficient, and successful library experience.

Access: We offer all members of the CSUMB community the opportunity, support, and tools to engage meaningfully with a wide variety of information resources relevant to their academic, intellectual, and creative endeavors.

A wifi hotspot lending program would contribute to the success of students who do not have reliable access to the internet when they are off campus. Reduced internet access means reduced access to CSUMB's course management system and to the online library resources that students need to successfully complete their coursework. We would like to adopt the innovative approach of Monterey County Free Libraries to enable more students, particularly low income and nontraditional students, to have improved access to the internet.

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

The primary goal of the program would be to remove the barrier to success that exists when a student does not have internet access at home. Many of our students live off-campus in rural areas, and balance their academic lives with work and family responsibilities. 36% of our students qualify as low-income, and in a recent survey, 50% and 16% of respondents reported having experienced food and housing insecurity, respectively. Due to their rural location or lack of a steady place to live, for some students, acquiring internet access at home is not an option or not practical, and for others it would impose a significant financial burden. To reach the students who are likely to have the greatest need, we would promote the program by collaborating with the campus food pantry, financial aid office, Center for Student Success, and Early Outreach and Support Programs, whose mission is to support low-income and underserved students.

Library circulation staff would be responsible for circulating the devices and ensuring that all the component parts of the wifi hotspot "kit"--including device, charger, instruction sheet, and case--are returned. We have included in our budget funds to replace lost devices but also plan to work with the student fee advisory committee to obtain authorization to charge students for lost devices at the library's discretion.

Usage data would be gathered via the library's circulation system as well as a concise SurveyMonkey survey, to which users would be directed via a shortened URL on the device's case and/or enclosed instruction sheet. MCFL has indicated that the support needs of users have been minimal, but in addition to the instruction sheet, we would offer in-person support at both the library's Research Help Desk and IT Service Desk.

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

Our goals are essentially the same as those of MCFL, whose grant we are replicating, but we have reworded them to reflect our unique user population and to separate our overarching goal from the specific objectives that will help us achieve it.

Goal: To contribute to the academic success of students without reliable internet access at home.

Objectives:

- To implement a wifi 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 2018: Notification of grant award

November 2018: Purchase equipment and data plans, develop assessment tools

December 2018: Data plans begin, staff training and development of documentation

January 2019: Start lending hotspots, advertise program

February 2019-November 2020: Ongoing lending and assessment

June-July 2019: Compilation of assessment results from Spring 2019; plan any needed adjustments to lending or support procedures

August 2019: Additional program advertising targeting incoming students

December 2019-January 2020: Compilation of assessment results from Fall 2019; plan any needed adjustments to lending or support procedures

June-July 2020: Compilation of assessment results from Spring 2020; write up recommendation to the Division of Academic Affairs for ongoing funding to support student success

7. Evaluation of the project.

In addition to collecting statistics on the frequency of circulation, we will 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. At the end of each semester, we will review the circulation statistics, survey results, and staff feedback and implement any necessary improvements.

If the lending program has the anticipated impact on student success, we will use the circulation statistics and survey results to make a case to the Division of Academic Affairs for potential ongoing funding of the program.

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

CSUMB qualifies for a government discount through Verizon, which allows us to pay only the tax for the hotspot devices and a discounted rate for the monthly data plan.

Verizon service plan for 10 devices unlimited data	10 x \$45 x 24 months	\$10,800
10 Verizon Wireless Jetpack MiFi Hotspot AC791L (tax only)	10 x \$20	\$200
Hotspot device portable hard-sided case	10 x \$20	\$200
Demco vinyl bag for barcode + shipping	10 x \$15	\$150
Equipment replacement for lost or broken items*		\$150
	Total	\$11,500

* We anticipate that normal wear and tear might necessitate the replacement of some items. We will work with the student fee advisory committee to obtain authorization to charge students for lost devices; however, since our target audience for the wifi hotspots is students with modest resources, we would like to be able to waive fines at our discretion.

9. Sustainability analysis.

If granted, the funds requested from PLP would support the program for two years. At the end of the two-year period, we would review circulation data and survey results, and if it is evident that the program contributed to the success of the students we sought to reach, we would seek continuing funding from the Division of Academic Affairs. The library currently receives funds from Academic Affairs that are intended to support

Graduation Initiative 2025, and uses them to purchase textbooks for course reserve for courses that either have high textbook costs or high enrollment and low success (pass) rates. Also, the library actively promotes its ebook and electronic journal article collections as alternatives to expensive, commercially-published textbooks. We anticipate the library continuing to play a role in reducing financial burdens and related barriers to student success and timely graduation, and believe the wifi hotspot lending program would fit well with those efforts and be a strong candidate for support by the campus over the long term.