

February 20, 2019

Dear members of the committee,

On behalf of Robert B. Pitts Housing Partners and Westside Courts Housing Partners, I am submitting this letter of support for the adoption of the Digital Equity Strategic Plan.

As developers of the newly renovated 203-unit Robert B. Pitts Apartments and 136-unit Westside Courts, these formerly public housing properties have been physically transformed. However, the human transformation continues to be a work in progress. Specifically, the lifestyle, expectations and preparation needed to achieve a standard of living common to most San Franciscans is going to take considerably longer. While we believe we have achieved a physical environment conducive to a contemporary standard of living, we continue to devote time, attention and resources to the social and economic betterment of the very low income residents of these properties.

The Digital Equity Strategic Plan that is before you represents a long-term, sustainable blueprint for residents of formerly public housing properties to learn, access, and thrive in this digital age. Frankly, without it the gap will only continue to widen as many in these communities can neither afford the access nor equipment to participate. As one resident put it, "I never thought I would learn to use a computer and the internet. Now that I have completed the (basic digital literacy) class (sponsored by the Office of Digital Equity and MOHCD), I want to keep learning and put it to good use."

As stakeholders in the welfare of our residents, we view this as a high priority. Needless to say, this vital service is a pathway out of the low-income demographic and our hope is that it continues well beyond this 5-year strategic initiative. It should be institutionalized so future residents have the same opportunity, as the digital age we live in is here to stay!

Respectfully,

Todd W. Clayter

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Development Project Manager

Tabernacle Community Development Corp.



COMMUNITY LIVING CAMPAIGN

Creating Connections
to Help Seniors and
People with Disabilities
Age and Thrive at Home

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February 20, 2019

Committee on Information Technology (COIT)
City and County of San Francisco
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 352
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear COIT Members,

Sorry I cannot attend the meeting today where you will review plans for the future, including the goals and action steps for the **Digital Equity Strategic Plan**. But I welcome the opportunity to provide this letter in wholehearted support of the COIT's efforts to move this equity agenda forward.

The Community Living Campaign is part of the Dept of Aging and Adult Services SF Connected Program and organizational sponsor of the SF Tech Council. The SF Tech Council is a multi-stakeholder group that brings together leaders from the technology and business communities, city agencies, community-based organizations, philanthropy, academia, and healthcare. Its overall goal is to advance digital inclusion for older adults and people with disabilities so all can participate in the City's connected community.

As such, we see first-hand the importance of a high level commitment to equitable digital inclusion. COIT's new draft plan lays out a clear set of values, goals and specific deliverables that identifies areas where the City can provide leadership and where community partners can engage and support.

Alex Bahn has impressed us with his strong, steady leadership and his commitment to building bridges between the City and the wider community. As such, we stand ready to support the implementation of this plan once adopted and to help assure where ever possible that the specific deliverable outlined are met.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our strong support for the Digital Equity Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

Marie Jobling,
Executive Director

From Kami Griffiths (of Community Tech Network):

I'm sorry that I couldn't attend this public meeting to share my thoughts and support in person. I am the executive director and co-founder of Community Tech Network. Our mission is to transform lives through teaching digital literacy. The ability to use digital tools to find, analyze, create, and communicate information is a critical skill for the survival and quality of life of people everywhere. We currently partner with DAAS to provide an average of 500 training hours to over 20 seniors centers through a network of paid and volunteer trainers, many of whom are bilingual. We're working in partnership with MOHCD to deliver digital skills training and support at low-income housing developments and workforce access points.

We are working in exciting yet challenging times. Exciting because the internet provides amazing tools and resources, but challenging because those we serve face many barriers and because it is assumed everyone is connected, more and more critical services are being moved online. However, those we serve face many barriers to getting online. Cost is certainly a factor, and the prices of internet access and devices are too high for some to handle. Thankfully, we have companies who provide low-cost options, but a device and internet access isn't enough. Knowing how to use these tools are absolutely essential! There are still many who lack basic digital skills and are unable to use the devices they have, which have often been donated by well-meaning friends and family.

I urge you to approve the recommendations made by Alex Bahn. I have been thoroughly impressed by his understanding of the needs, his ability to bring stakeholders to the table to get their thoughts on solutions and he works very hard to move those solutions forward. I am always available to talk by phone or video should you wish to learn more.

From Reymon LaChaux (of Success Center San Francisco):

I am writing in support of the strategic plan laid out by COIT's Office of Digital Equity. The contributions by SF COIT and this office have been tremendous. The leadership, cultural humility and commitment exemplified by Alex and his team have been a key motivator factor in our successful partnership. Together, we've positively impacted over 5 underserved communities across San Francisco, communities who feel the pains of the digital divide. As an operator of a high traffic career center in the Western Addition, we see how important partnerships are in our community. In our first partnership, COIT made it possible for Success Centers to play an integral part in a "Community Technology Associate" initiative which gave youth ages 17-24 who reside in public housing, the opportunity to be professionally trained in IT and computer technology and in turn positioned these youth as computer literacy educators, IT supports for their respective public housing community "Tech labs". But, our great work together did not stop there. While hosting our "Refurb-a-thon" partnership event with SF COIT and Dev Mission, we noticed a spark in our community and how keen they are on finding their place in the growing 4th Industrial Tech revolution. Through our partnership, we were able to give out almost 30 computers refurbished by the youth to community members who participated in the Tech literacy workshops. Even after the event we've received gratitude and warm thanks.