

# EQUALITECH SBAEC 2020-2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RESPONSE

## APPLICANT

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### Organization

Equalitech  
www.equalitech.org  
5662 Calle Real #241  
Goleta, CA 93117  
EIN: 81-3312119

### Equalitech Mission

Our mission is to remove barriers to learning, career opportunities and life skills by expanding free access to technology and education.

### Contact:

Daniel Fitzgibbons, Executive Director  
805 722 8233  
danny@equalitech.org

### Applicable Noncredit Program Area

Adult Education (ABE, ASE, Basic Skills)  
English as a Second Language/Citizenship  
Entry or Reentry into the Workforce  
Literacy

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Please provide an executive summary of your proposed plan (to include overarching goals and outcomes) to create new programs or expand existing programs in one of the areas identified above.

Equalitech is requesting funds to continue expanding our Digital and Language Literacy Program (DLLP) which we launched in 2019 thanks to a grant from the Consortium. The program promotes lifelong learning in marginalized demographics which has subsequently expanded to include two subprograms: our Tech Promotoras Program, which encourages peer-to-peer tutoring, and our Whole-Staff Training Program that provides professional development to any size organization. Eurostat Statistics describes lifelong learning much how Equalitech has come to see it:

*In general, lifelong learning encompasses all purposeful learning activities, whether formal, non-formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences. The intention or aim to learn is the critical point that distinguishes these activities from non-learning activities, such as cultural or sporting activities.*

Equalitech has had a great deal of success with the DLLP in our first two years including the following highlights:

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- Expanded our core curriculum from six modules to eight. This instructor-supported course is designed to introduce absolute beginners to technology as well as strengthen their English language skills.
- Expanded our demographic reach to include seniors by adding a community access point at Encina Royale.
- Expanded to five community access points (pre-COVID) through our work with partners at Goleta Valley Community Center, Casa de Los Carneros, Isla Vista Community Room, Immigrant Hope, and Encina Royale
- Re-branded our peer-to-peer tutoring to make it an official program called the Tech Promotoras Program. We just graduated (and hired!) our first Tech Promotora
- Continued our partnership with United Way to provide our students with not only the foundational language program Lexia Core 5, used by GUSD, but also their more advanced programs, Reading Plus and Power Up for advanced students.
- Pivoted to online learning in March 2020, and hired two additional temporary teachers.
- Piloted our new Whole-Staff Training Program that has the potential to be a revenue generator. We trained 28 Isla Vista Youth Project staff members in various specific and general device literacy skills over four weeks.

Our second year has, of course, been complicated by the unforeseen challenge of providing services during a global pandemic. Fortunately for Equalitech, COVID-19 has opened as many doors as it has closed. With technology becoming the primary mode of communication for the world, the need to increase both technological access and literacy has become even more pronounced and Equalitech is in a position to provide both for our most vulnerable community members. In March, we distributed 25 laptops and provided approximately 40 hours of Zoom training to community members. We also quickly pivoted to online-learning providing 20-30 hours per week of our DLLP classes via Zoom per week and hired two additional teachers to handle the increased workload.

We truly are at the forefront of your **Regional Need #8**, as our full focus will be on distance learning, because, even post-COVID, distance learning will be our most productive method to scale our services to a wider community. We will also be implementing a professional development plan for our teachers, which will include Google and Microsoft certificates. Our Program Director/Lead Instructor is currently working towards both certificates. Of course, data will be a key component for Equalitech this year and we are excited to have a three-person volunteer data team being led by a very capable local community member and friend.

In our third year, we also look forward to expanding our new Whole Staff Training Program. With the onset of COVID, and many businesses now requiring their staff to work remotely, it became clear that there was a deficit in terms of technical skills. This past June we piloted a training program with one of our closest community partners, Isla Vista Youth Projects. Prior to starting training, we conducted the following research:

- A general needs assessment with organizational administrators
- A needs survey for the staff based on the results of the assessment with the administrations
- A concept based quiz to gauge existing knowledge

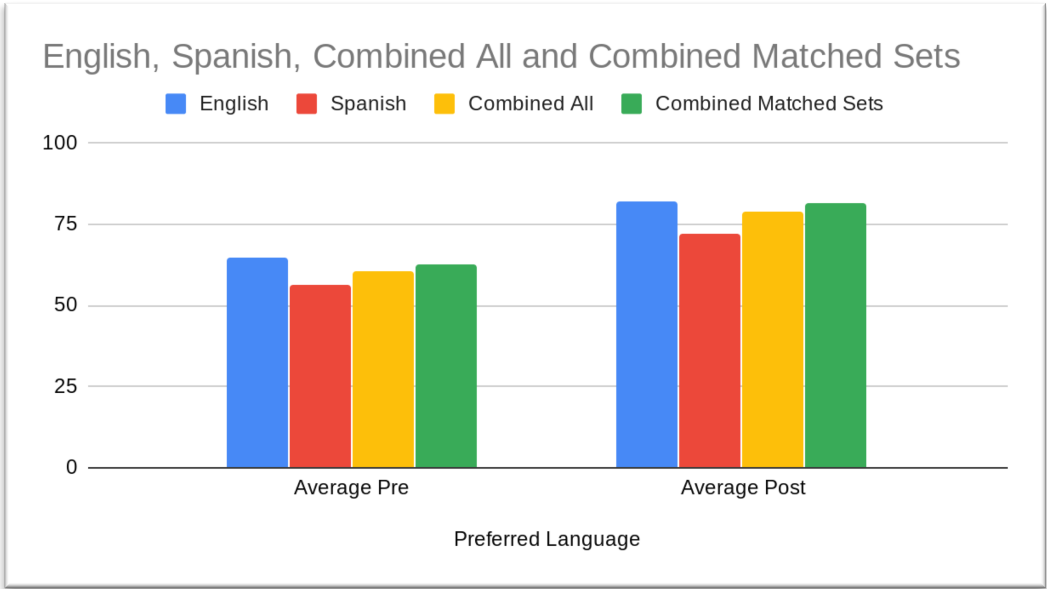
We then grouped the staff based on this research into three groups (high needs, moderate needs and advanced) and customized our training to accommodate each group as follows:

- A 2 hr webinar for the advanced group
- 4 weeks of weekly concept specific classes to the moderate needs group
- One-on-one appointments with Equalitech staff for the group with highest needs

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At the end of the program, we administered the same concept based quiz to measure student outcomes and solicited honest and detailed feedback from the students.

We saw approximately 20% proficiency improvement across all groups. The accompanying figure shows **Quiz Scores Pre vs Post Webinars Group Scores**.



After reflecting on both our successes and challenges, for our next year of the program we realize that our overarching goals remain the same. We have made great progress towards these goals as outlined below in our status report and have added the additional goal of expanding our new programs that have become especially relevant thanks to COVID-19.

	Goal	Outcome
#1	Increase student engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of our self-paced curriculum templates</li> <li>• Students engaged with our completed self-paced curriculum for professional skills development</li> <li>• Students enrolled in SBCC non-credit or credit programs including ESL and GED</li> <li>• Students finding employment as a result of improved technical and language skills</li> </ul>
#2	Scale our impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website redesign to allow students to easily sign up for our services</li> <li>• Over 100 students enrolled in our online program</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of metrics as to how students engage with the learning content which helps shape future curriculum and allows contributors to know the efficacy of the program.</li> </ul>
#3	Partner with established local businesses and organizations that can support our mission by combining resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of additional community partnerships for recruiting students</li> </ul>
#4	Expand/formalize new programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tech Promotoras</li> <li>• Staff training in device literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training Spanish speaking female students to be Equalitech ambassadors in their neighborhoods</li> <li>• Training students to be instructors</li> <li>• Allows organizations the option for whole-staff training</li> <li>• Formalize a staff training program that brings in revenue to cover costs</li> </ul>

We believe that Equalitech provides an essential service now more than ever. Before COVID, the digital divide directly contributed to the systematic marginalization of certain racial and ethnic groups; now that students and parents are forced to function in remote school and/or work settings, digital literacy has become a necessity rather than a desired skill set. Equalitech’s commitment to democratize access to the digital world promotes equity and provides a critical lifeline for connectivity.

**2. INTEGRATION**

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Please explain how your proposed program integrates adult education programs at SBCC and creates a transition to credit/transfer educational programs or creates a transition to the workforce (including, but not limited to, internships, jobs, pre-apprenticeships, self-employment).

Equalitech’s primary goal is to prepare marginalized or vulnerable people for lifelong learning. Our Digital and Language Literacy curriculum provides a basic foundation of technical literacy that will serve students as they pursue educational or professional development opportunities

*There is one basic skill that is becoming increasingly important in today’s fast-changing technological universe: being able to learn and adapt to the new skills and training that will be required. Globalization and the growth of the fast changing knowledge economy mean that people need to upgrade their skills throughout their adult lives to cope with modern life, not just in the area of work but also in their private lives (OECD, 2007).*

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Further, two of our eight modules, Workforce Readiness and Educational Readiness specifically address these needs and provide the technological skills necessary to transition to adult education courses at SBCC or to the workforce.

### 3. JUSTIFICATION

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Please justify the need of your proposed program and include research, labor market information, employer feedback, student surveys, or other relevant information and describe how funding will further your objectives. For programs that have previously received funding, please justify the need and provide a status report on your existing award(s) and remaining balance(s).

In a study entitled “Barriers to lifelong learning” Marjan Laal notes that “lifelong Learning is fraught with economic, personal, social, foundational, technological, access, and motivational barriers that affect all of us in different ways.” In a report commissioned by LSDA and prepared by the Institute of Employment Studies, Hillage and Aston (2001), split the barriers to LLL into 3 groups, as follows:

- Attitudinal barriers: negative attitudes to learning, lack of confidence or lack of motivation;
- Physical and material barriers; costs of learning (direct – fees, and indirect – transport, books, equipment, childcare), lack of time, lack of information, geographical, and;
- Structural barriers: lack of appropriate education or training opportunities, constraints of the benefit system.

It is for these reasons, which Equalitech has experienced with many patrons/students over the last three years, that we updated our mission to read: Our mission is to remove barriers to learning, career opportunities and life skills by expanding free access to technology and education. We understand these barriers and work tirelessly to remove them. This work has become increasingly important during the pandemic as technological literacy is no longer optional.

In a study on California’s Digital Divide, the Public Policy Institute of California noted:

*Though most demographic groups have seen significant increases in broadband subscriptions at home, gaps persist for low-income, less educated, rural, African American, and Latino households. Between 54% and 67% of these households had broadband subscriptions in 2017, compared to 74% for all households.*

That same study noted that 53% of low-income households without broadband cited lack of interest as a key barrier while 25% cited affordability.

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According to BroadbandNow, California ranks as the 13th most well-connected state, with only 70% of the population having access to internet that costs less than \$60/mo. Locally, we are no exception, as Goleta and Santa Barbara rank 419th and 513th respectively in affordable city connectivity rates. According to US Census data from 2017, in the tract of Santa Barbara County known as Old Town Goleta, approximately 75% of the population is minority with a median household income of \$57,905. This statistic is significantly lower than the rest of the City of Goleta at \$81,398. Of the 5,936 residents in 2017, 12.3% lived below the poverty line, again higher than the entire city at 8.43% overall (overall population in Goleta is 30,671). There is a significant difference between Old Town Goleta and the rest of the city and for that reason, Equalitech has positioned itself as a resource for those that face more financial challenges and less resources in order to assist these individuals with technology and skills that could help them change their situations and advance themselves and their careers.

Finally, while state and city statistics can help paint a general picture of why our services are needed, the best evidence comes directly from our students and teachers. Here are a few examples:

- “Fernando is making great improvements on pronunciation and listening skills. He said it helps him at work to ask follow up questions to the customers with more confidence and to be able to express himself more clearly.
- “This week Tom connected to Zoom by himself for the first time (for the past three classes, I gave him instructions over the phone). He also learned to send a picture via messaging and sent me a picture from his 90th birthday to practice.”

Equalitech’s overarching goal is to break down barriers that impede people’s desire and/or ability to learn and empower themselves.

## Status Report on 2019-2020 Reward

As of August 22, 2020 we have spent 97% of our budget from our first two-year cycle (2018), as well as 59% of our second two-year cycle (2019). We have completed the majority of the activities on our Activity Chart. Please see a summary below.

Activity #	Activity Description	Status Update
1	Reach new students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 (pre-covid) new students from Encina Royale. 19 remained with us when we moved to online learning</li> <li>• 56 new students enrolled in our general classes and one-on-one appointments</li> </ul>
2	Add a component to our program	<p>We did not add GED to our program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We did start a whole-staff training program</li> </ul>

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3	Empowerment and ownership	We began our Tech Promotoras Program with our first student turned instructor joining the staff on 8/17/20
4	Qualified help from community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We put together a 3-person volunteer data team</li> <li>We brought on a high school marketing intern</li> </ul>
5	Interest level data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our data team created helpful Google Form surveys and quizzes for our pilot whole-staff training project</li> <li>Team is currently working on a way to streamline the demographic data from our students</li> </ul>
6	Disseminate the curriculum for the DLLP to many more community members	<p>We did not create professional videos, as the budget did not allow for it. In retrospect, we realized that we did not need these videos for now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We did create a lot of marketing materials to inform community members of our services, including banners, flyers, and sandwich boards</li> </ul>
7	Reach more students on their own time and in a more convenient space	<p>We scrapped the idea of putting 2-3 computers and a printer in each of our access points when COVID shut everything down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instead, we are doubling down on creating the self-paced curriculum</li> </ul>
8	Raise awareness of SBCC Adult Extended Learning noncredit course options	Equalitech always promotes continuation of lifelong learning, especially with SBCC
9	Community members getting to know each other outside of the digital world	COVID forced us to scrap plans for get-to-know your community activities, but we will try to revive it when possible

## 4. OUTREACH & MARKETING

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Please describe your plans to conduct outreach and marketing to reach your target population and increase enrollments.

Through much trial and error, Equalitech has determined that the best way to conduct outreach to increase participation is to partner and/or collaborate with other organizations, as each organization brings its own strengths to the table. For example, we are collaborating with Partners in Education/Computers for Families to help educate parents on the digital platforms that schools are using. PiE/CFF excels in getting computers in the hands of families and providing them with a solid understanding of online security. We will take over from there by having a link to our education services on every computer they hand out. We are also beginning a collaboration with Gateway Education Services to provide device literacy skills to all of the families that they service. With our

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self-paced curriculum in place, we have the potential to help more than 1000 families with digital and language literacy.

Another outreach approach we are working on is based on the popular Health Promotoras that originated in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico in the 1970's. According to the *Annual Review of Public Health*, A **promotora** is a lay Hispanic/Latino community member who receives specialized training to provide basic health education in the community without being a professional health care worker. While most of their work entails educating target audiences about health issues affecting their community, they also provide guidance in accessing community resources associated with health care.

When we heard this term and what it meant, we realized right away that we had been inadvertently cultivating Tech Promotoras for more than a year. Our Program Director has created a training program to become a Tech Promotora and has enlisted a handful of our longtime students to join. He recently completed training for our first Tech Promotora and we were able to hire her 10 hours per week to engage current students and re-engage former students through phone calls. When COVID subsides enough, we will also implement our original plan of having Tech Promotoras conducting neighborhood outreach meetings and possibly house calls for device literacy training.

While we have come to realize that outreach really is our best marketing tool, Equalitech also stepped up its traditional marketing this year. We subscribed to a design company that can produce flyers, banners, and social media designs, etc. within 48 hours. Access to quick design turnaround has transformed our marketing strategy. We also brought on a wonderful high school marketing intern who has a passion for digital art. She is doing amazing Facebook and Twitter posts for us and is helping to develop and maintain a consistent branding presence.

### 5. PARTNERSHIPS

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Please provide 2-3 prospective CAEP Programs or Partners you plan to work with to maximize student and client participation and describe your prospective collaborative efforts; either with current CAEP programs and/or other external community entities.

The one CAEP program that we often collaborate with is the SBCC ESL Program. During the spring and summer of 2019 we hosted ESL classes at our main access point (GVTC). We were not able to provide enough of our own students who could consistently attend to keep the program going, but we are always in contact with and ready to collaborate with Sachiko. We are currently discussing how to help the families that she works with get training for the digital platforms that the schools are using for their children. Again, we know that the way we can be most effective for her is to have a self-paced curriculum in place that her clients can easily navigate and use from anywhere, anytime.

Equalitech will make it a goal this year to work more closely with the Workforce: One stop career center to see if we can direct our students who are seeking employment to this great resource.



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As mentioned in the Marketing/Outreach question, we are working hard to cultivate multiple partnerships/collaborations and will continue to do so, as this is the best avenue to reach new patrons/students. In late winter, early spring we were working closely with the City of Goleta, Isla Vista Youth Projects, and Goleta Education Foundation to provide and staff QAC's and QAK's for the census. Unfortunately, COVID shut everything down the week it was all supposed to begin. We are excited to announce that Equalitech safely re-opened on September 2 specifically to assist the city as a census QAK every Wednesday from 3-7pm until Sept. 30. We are the only computer center in the County offering this service.

### 6. SBCC NONCREDIT STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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Provide your plans to integrate SBCC Noncredit Student Support Services in order to assist students in obtaining abbreviated educational plans.

We welcome the opportunity to work with SBCC Noncredit Student Support Services (NSSS). We would be happy to host NSSS at anyone of our access points to provide information to our students. Furthermore, we plan to integrate SBCC's offerings into our curriculum by showing students where they can sign up for classes online and continue to advertise course offerings at our various access points.

### 7. ALIGNMENT

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Please describe how your program is in alignment and furthers the Consortium's goals and objectives as stated above.

Equalitech has been working to eliminate, or "Bridge the Digital Divide" since its founding in 2016. Our first mission to provide free community access to computers and high-speed WiFi quickly evolved into teaching computer literacy, which then continued to evolve into digital and language literacy. Today we find ourselves more relevant and nimbler than ever before to be able to address the current crisis that has forced the entire world to go on to devices. Notice how we changed our vernacular to say devices rather than computers, because just as the Consortium needs to evolve its goals and objectives, Equalitech success depends on identifying current needs and problem solving to address these needs. Lifelong learning is a bumpy journey and we need to always try to put ourselves in the shoes of our patrons/students in order to be able to best serve them.

*Learning often comes from confusion, problems, the uneasy realization of lacking adequate skills and knowledge, and discomfort (Joyce, B. R., Weil, M. & Showers, B. 1992).*

*"To successfully navigate the permanent whitewater of today's work world, managerial learning cannot be left to training courses and degree programs. It must become a day-by-day, integrated discipline practiced on the job, a journey of exploration that corrects its course as it proceeds" - Peter Vaill,*

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*former dean of the school of Business and Public Management at George Washington University.*

**Objective #7:** Support new activity to support distance learning and ensuring continued educational support for adult learners, faculty, and staff in response to COVID-19;

**How we align:** This is our #1 goal for the year. We are focused intently on completing our self-paced curriculum templates so that we can not only offer our existing online group classes and one-on-one appointments, but also be available for anyone, anywhere to be able to learn digital and language literacy skills anytime.

**Objective #1:** Short--Term CTE in career skills training courses

**How we align:** Our mission is to break down barriers to learning and empowerment and foster the love of learning so that any given person can feel comfortable seeking higher education or more professional development.

**Objective #4:** Noncredit English as a Second Language

**How we align:** Our main education program is called the Digital and Language Literacy Program because we offer access to digital English language development programs as well as Spanish language development. Furthermore, our go-to free language program, Duolingo, has a dozen other languages anyone can access.

**Objective #8:** Develop a strategic plan that addresses systemic racial injustices within our membership, partners and programs.

**How we align:** This is something that is simply baked into who we are. We exist because of systemic racial and economic injustices that helped create digital divides around the world, the nation, the county and our city.

## 8. LEVERAGING FUNDS

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Please describe what other funding sources, and the percentage of those funding sources, will be used to support your CAEP proposed program.

Over the last year, Equalitech has received multiple grants from the City of Goleta, Fund for Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara Foundation. We also typically bring in about 12% of our budget from individual and corporate donations. We used about 50% of the first FFSB grant for our DLLP program and we are using 100% of the the second FFSB and the SBF grants for the DLLP program by hiring two temporary teachers to help our program director alleviate his full teaching schedule. We typically use about 25% of the City grants for our DLLP program. Monies not used for the DLLP program go towards rent, utilities, insurance, advertising, and helping patrons who use our computers but do not participate in the DLLP program.

Finally, during this past year Equalitech has benefited greatly from the In-Kind support of our wonderful volunteers. They contribute in a wide variety of ways from keeping track of purchased/donated tech equipment, creating Google Form quizzes for our Whole-Staff Training Program and our self-paced curriculum templates to wiping the tables clean and sweeping the floors on Fridays. We would not be where we are today without volunteers and we are always looking for more.

## 9. DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY

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Please describe how your program will create a diverse, inclusive, and equitable educational experience for adult learners.

As mentioned in how we align with objective #8, these characteristics are what spurred the creation of EqualiTech. The idea for a community tech center came from the implicit economic and racial injustice of not having free, public access to computers and high-speed WiFi in Old Town Goleta. Equalitech envisions a world in which every person, regardless of socioeconomic status, has the opportunity to thrive in today's technologically driven society. In the three years we have been in operation, we have helped all adults, including unsheltered, physically challenged, economically disadvantaged, immigrants, marginalized seniors, and folks from numerous ethnic backgrounds. We will continue to seek out the most vulnerable members of our community to try to offer confidence, dignity, and therefore the empowerment to experience and enjoy lifelong learning. Our board is half women and all three of our teachers are bilingual immigrants.

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10. ACTIVITY CHART

Please use the Activity Chart provided in the link under the instructions and email to [sbaebg@gmail.com](mailto:sbaebg@gmail.com). The Activity Chart should outline your program's specific objectives and activities, along with a timeline for completion, the person/agency responsible, outcomes and data capture methods. Please attach additional pages if necessary. \* I certify that the Activity Chart has been completed and emailed to [sbaebg@gmail.com](mailto:sbaebg@gmail.com) Total Budget Requested \* Your answer 1000 (Instructional Salaries) \* Total dollars requesting for INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL (include 25% for BENEFITS in 3000 section

YOUR PROGRAM/AGENCY NAME:					
Equalitech					
NO	OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION (Month/Year)	PERSON OR AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	OUTCOME
1	Complete self-paced learning, Google Classroom concept templates	Creating templates that we can plug in any device literacy concept that needs to be learned	Oct 2020	Dawer	Self-paced device literacy curriculum becomes easily accessible
2	Updated website	Completely overhaul our website to create more of an education focused site that can be easily navigated	Oct 2020	Danny Dawer Julie	A student friendly website that allows inexperienced users to easily navigate their choices for learning
3	Enroll at least 100 new students in the DLLP	Collaborate/partner with organizations who can refer	Aug 2021	Danny	When organizations work together, we are able to service more specific needs for the most

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		constituents to our services and vice versa			vulnerable in our community. We would like to enroll hundreds of students over the next two years
4	Add two more Tech Promotoras	Train and promote two more students to Tech Promotora status	June 2021	Dawer	Our Tech Promotoras can become peer-to-peer instructors, as well as post-COVID neighborhood outreach ambassadors
5	Streamline data collection	Our 3-person volunteer data team will continue to craft an efficient data collection strategy	June 2021	Dawer Jeff Christian Alexi	Good data will reveal our most needy demographics and help show the effectiveness of our programs
6	Enroll 3 organizations in our Whole-Staff Training Program	Advertise our nascent Program that we piloted over the summer	Aug 2021	Danny Dawer	Help organizations become more efficient and effective through digital literacy. The fee-for-service will cover our costs and help us begin to self-sustain.
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11. BUDGET REQUESTED

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<b>Category</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
<b>1000 (Instructional Salaries)</b>	\$55,000
Taxes for Instructional Salaries	\$8,000
Salary and Taxes for Lead Instructor/Program Director at 45K annual salary + 2 more teachers	
<b>2000 (Non-instructional Salaries)</b>	\$5,760
Taxes from Non-instructional Salaries	\$240
Salary and taxes for Tech Promotora Position -- 10 hours per week at \$12 per hour	
<b>3000 (Benefits from 1000, 2000)</b>	
<b>4000 (Instructional Supplies and Non-Instructional Supplies)</b>	
Program Marketing (Radio, newspaper, busses)	\$2,000
Auto Expenses / Travel	
<b>5000 (Consultants, Meetings, Prof. Development)</b>	\$14,000
Educational Consulting fee for Danny Fitzgibbons, including payroll tax	
<b>6000 (Capital Outlay)</b>	
Computers	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>

## 12. POTENTIAL BUDGET REDUCTIONS

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Please describe what specific programming needs and/or services your program would reduce or eliminate should the CAEP grant budget be reduced (range 10-25% at any point during the grant cycle). Please note that final budget reductions would be determined by the Santa Barbara Adult Education Consortium based on the Consortium's priorities and goals.

Equalitech would begin by reducing the Consultant fee and then move on to the Marketing budget, as we would not want to cut into our teacher salaries.

Do you currently receive other NON-CAEP funding that supports the proposed activity? If yes, please describe how additional funding expands or supports that activity.

Yes. This year we used two emergency COVID grants to hire two temporary teachers to meet the demand for online, distance learning.

What is your sustainability plan for this activity when funding is no longer available?

First, we are cultivating local foundations to help spread the costs. For example, we also just applied for a multi-year grant from the Fund for Santa Barbara.

Second, we have piloted a Whole-Staff Training Program that we hope will become a fee for service program.

Total number of adult students served in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 (for CAEP awardees).

250

Target number of adult students you plan to serve from 2020-2022

1000