

**Information Systems Management  
Course 95-822**

**Spring 2007**

**Final Consulting Report**

**Jewish Family & Children's  
Service**

**Aarthi Prasad**



# Jewish Family & Children's Service

## Executive Summary

Student Consultant, Aarthi Prasad  
Community Partner, Katie Robson

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### I. Background Information

JF&CS is a beneficiary agency of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and the United Way of Allegheny County. It is located at 5743, Bartlett Street in the Squirrel Hill, Pittsburgh.

#### **Mission:**

*Jewish Family & Children's Service exists to improve the quality of life of individuals and families in the Jewish and general communities by providing psychological, employment and social services.*

It provides various kinds of services like mental health services, adoption & foster care, career services, services to the elderly, community services, scholarships, immigration services, guardianship, critical needs and basic services. The organization helps more than 5000 people each year and provides support to dozens of organizations.

Alayne Lowenberger is the director of CSLRS and she works full-time throughout the year for scholarship service and there are three more staffs to coordinate with Alayne during the period of application process and work temporarily for scholarship process only during that period. Katie Robson (community partner) is the director of Information technology of JF&CS and she is responsible for technical environment, technology planning and getting budget from the management.

The career development center of JF&CS administrates the Central Scholarship and Loan Referral Service program for the United Jewish Federation. Currently, Scholarship service is done manually. Applicants fill their application and send it to the scholarship administrator through mail. There are situations where applicants provide incorrect information and applicants have to redo the process again. Moreover, each applicant may be considered by different funding resources and it is a tedious process for the administrator to categorize students based on different protocols assigned by funding resources.

### II Consulting Tasks

The main consulting task was to automate the application process of scholarship service and to identify the vendors/package software that suit the scholarship service. Automation of scholarship process involved observing and documenting the existing process. The current manual process of scholarship service was well understood and areas of mechanizing were identified and documented. Requirements were gathered for scholarship service and documented in the form of Use cases. Use cases helped to create the test cases in order to test the system and also to estimate the cost and time required to develop the system. This task includes prototyping the application in order to validate the requirements and also to train the

staff. This task also involves identifying the vendors to develop the application and to estimate the cost to develop the software. The cost to develop the software was estimated with the help of Use case point estimation. Vendors to develop the application were identified on the basis of cost and time in which the application will be developed.

### III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

The major outcomes from the consulting task “Automating the application process of scholarship service was”

- Successfully gathered requirements and test cases were developed
- Estimated the project and developed Training plan
- Identified vendor to develop the application
- Developed prototype to train administrator and other users

Apart from providing a feasible solution to JF&CS for automating the process of scholarship service there were allied benefits as the fruition of the whole consulting exercise. Though the end result was the recommendation for automation, vendor identification and development of prototype, the means of coming to these outcomes such as requirements gathered, project estimation and training plan development, paved the way for making the services rendered by JF&CS more process-oriented. With the ultimatum of alleviating the people dependency and substituting it with mature process dependencies, there is no doubt that the whole exercise will enhance the professional demeanor of JF & CS. The major recommendations of the project are:

- Managing the project
- Make applicant information available on line for Board members

Project management comprises of various critical activities such as establishing a formal service level agreement (SLA) with the vendors, developing a training plan and providing training to staffs etc. It is obvious that the whole scholarship service is time bound. By providing online accessibility to the applicant’s information, lots of time and energy (e.g. the time taken for the administrator to consolidate the board members’ responses) can be saved and channelized for a more constructive task. This definitely will be a welcome recommendation by JF&CS due to the time saved and ambiguity resolved, in retrospect.

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Jewish Family & Children’s Services  
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About the Consultant  
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Aarthi Prasad is a Masters student in Software Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. He will begin working as a software engineer in Cerner Corporation

# Jewish Family & Children's Service

## Final Consulting Report

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### I. About the Organization

#### Organization

JF&CS is a beneficiary agency of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and the United Way of Allegheny County.

#### **Mission:**

*Jewish Family & Children's Service exists to improve the quality of life of individuals and families in the Jewish and general communities by providing psychological, employment and social services.*

The organization was founded in 1937 and provides various kinds of services like mental health services, adoption & foster care, career services, services to the elderly, community services, scholarships, immigration services, guardianship, critical needs and services basic needs. The organization helps more than 5000 people each year and provides support to dozens of organization.

#### Facilities

JF&CS is located at 5743, Bartlett Street in the Squirrel Hill section of Pittsburgh. The organization has separate work areas allotted for each service. The organization has a reception area and all visitors must sign in and wear a visitor's badge. The counseling and immigration services are located on the first floor. Administrative offices and the Career Development Center including scholarship services are located in the second floor of the building. The organization has conference rooms with multimedia projector systems, white boards, and wireless internet connectivity. Conference room availability and booking is scheduled online through the Enterprise Resource Planning software *Unicentric*. The Director of scholarship service Alayne Lowenberger has her own office; the secretary and other two coordinators have separate cubicles with separate workstations.

#### Programs

#### **Central Scholarship & Loan Referral Service:**

The career development center of JF&CS administers the Central Scholarship and Loan Referral Service program for the United Jewish Federation. It is the largest Jewish scholarship program in United States and allows qualified students to apply for numerous scholarships and loans through JF&CS. To be eligible you must be a Jewish high school student, college, or graduate student with financial need and you also need to be a resident of Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Washington or Westmoreland County.

Almost 200-300 applicants apply for scholarship services. The grant amount of the scholarship scales up to \$300,000. The number of students awarded scholarship varies year after year on the basis of number of their competitiveness and total number of applications.

The Central Scholarship & Loan Referral Service is the main focus of my partnership with JF&CS. The other services provided by the organization include the following:

- Family Hope Connection
- Career Services
- Counseling and Consultation
- Critical Needs Services
- Guardianship
- Older Adult Services
- Pittsburgh Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center
- Special Needs Services
- Kosher Super Pantry

## Staff

Scholarship service has one full time staff and three temporary staffs. Alayne Lowenberger is the director of CSLRS and she works full-time throughout the year for the scholarship service. There is three more staff to coordinate with Alayne Lowenberger during the period of the application process and work temporarily for the scholarship process only during that period.

### **Alayne Lowenberger**, Director CSLRS

Alayne is responsible for compiling the application data and presenting that information to the funding sources. She is also responsible for sending information about the scholarship service to educational institutions. She interviews applicants, proofreads and edits applications, answers applicant questions via telephone & email, researches other financial aid solutions, reports to Linda Ehrenreich and the CSLRS Board, and produces the summary book for scholarship selection. She collects information regarding the applicants from Microsoft Access database and generates reports using Microsoft Excel.

### **Wendy Solomon**, Central Scholarship Coordinator

Wendy is responsible for the mass mailing of applications each year to former applicants and educational institutions. She enters data from hand-written application into the Microsoft Access database, proofreads and edits applications, interviews applicants in Alayne's absence, answers questions from applicants, run reports and queries, and attends board meetings.

### **Shannon Heim**, CDC Program Coordinator

Shannon is responsible for entering data from hand-written application into the Microsoft Access Database, and proofreading and editing applications.

### **Donna Kolodzieski**, CDC Secretary

Donna is responsible for entering data from hand-written applications into the Microsoft Access Database, and proofreading and editing applications. She is also responsible for scheduling/coordinating interviews between the applicants and Alayne Lowenberger.

## Technical Environment

All the employees have their own PC and each of them have different configurations. Following table shows the configuration of PC used by different employees.

Alayne Lowenberger	Dell xps-z, PII, 40 gig HD, 256 mb ram, Win-XP pro sp1, CD-Rom, Toshiba copier, access 2003
Wendy Solomon	Dell L933r, PIII, 20 gig HD, 256 mb ram, Win-XP pro sp2, CD-Rom, Toshiba copier, access 2003
Shannon Heim	Dell inspiron 2500, PIII, 80 gig HD, 256 mb ram, win-2k sp4, CD-Rom, Toshiba copier, access 2003
Donna Kolodzieski	Dell Dimension 4550, P4, 20 gig HD, 256 mb ram, Win-XP pro sp1, CD-Rom, Toshiba copier, access 2003

The organization has a dedicated T1 high-speed internet connection as well as a secure wireless connection. All computers are connected through the network. The agency has an intranet for internal communications.

## Technical Management

The Director of Information Technology, Katie Robson, is responsible for managing the technical environment. She is responsible for maintaining and fixing network problems. She is also responsible for backing-up the database nightly and fixing critical errors in the system. The organization is dependent on external vendors for Tier II network support. The agency's websites are hosted by external vendor Blue Archer. Shellyn Shoenthal, Public Relations Specialist is responsible for maintaining the website through the use of a content management system. All web updates that come from department directors are sent to Shellyn Shoenthal and she is responsible for final approval and posting changes using the content management system. The CSLRS staff developed their access database themselves and it is used to store the information about the scholarship applicants.

## Technology Planning

The Director of Information Technology is responsible for technical environment, technology planning and getting budget from the management. There is no technology planning committee and the technology planning is done only to meet short term goals. There is a work plan that gives you information regarding the requirements that are needed to be addressed in developing the website for scholarship service. They have allotted \$12,000 to develop custom built application for scholarship service and 3000\$ to maintain it.

## Internal and External Communication

All the staff in the organization communicates internally via telephone, email and by face to face meetings. All the employees have email address and they communicate through email. All the computer systems used in scholarship service have access to the shared database and all the information about applicants is available to all employees. The staffs have email accounts and can access the internet.

The communication to the applicants is primarily done through advertisement pamphlets distributed in schools, website, telephone, email, fax, US postal service and face-to-face meeting. The

organization manages the email id and contact information of the funding providers and the applicants. The organization has website to support their missions and website is updated very frequently by the vendor (Blue Archer) and it acts as good external communication medium. On the other hand, communication to donors is done through telephone, fax, email, face-to-face communication and US Postal Service.

### Information Management

The information regarding the applicants (close to 300 applicants apply every year) that are provided in the applications are critical. It is not shared within the organization and it is secured. It is stored manually in to the Microsoft Access database and reports regarding applicants are generated from the database. The generated reports are then transferred to funding agencies via paper. The scholarship administrator has archives of information regarding the applicants and contact information of the funding agencies and the educational institutions. Backup of these data are periodically taken and stored.



## II. Scope of Work

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### Detailed problem description:

In the Central scholarship and loan referral service, applicants download applications from the website, fill it manually and mail it to central scholarship and loan referral service. The director or coordinators of scholarship service will enter data from hand-written application into Access Database. There are many occasions in which applicants provide incomplete and irrelevant information and the applications are not able to be processed further. In this situation, the director or other coordinators will send mail to appropriate applicants to get the necessary information and the application are processed again. This is tedious process as the applications are need to be re-done again and all the application are need to be validated and entered in to database manually.

The scholarships are given by different funding agencies and each of the agencies has their own norms and considerations in order to give scholarship to applicants. The applicants that fit in to particular norms of agencies are eligible to get scholarship from the appropriate agency. Each applicant will fit in to different funding agencies and categorizing the applicants to different funding agencies is a challenging process. It takes lot of time to director to categorize the applicants to different agencies.

All the above problems increase the application process time. It also decreases the opportunity for applicants to get the scholarship as some of the applications are received at end date without any necessary information. The scholarship service may not be able to process the application. Moreover, it takes lot of resource to complete the application process.

### **Task 1: Description of Scholarship Mechanization**

The application process is currently done manually and it need to be automated in order to eliminate the above problems and the approach to making changes need to give careful consideration to the current existing process and to the individuals who are familiar to it. The proposed application should capture all the information that the existing manual process does today and have the direct link to the same database schema used by staff at the office to eliminate data transfer and provide applicants a way to stay in touch with the process electronically. The application should help the director categorize the student to financial agencies automatically. Moreover the staff should be able to communicate application status to all applicants.

Cost of software development will be estimated. This will be followed by identification of an effective vendor to carry out the development task. In case of availability of cost-effective and efficient packaged software, the same will be utilized in the development effort. Henceforth, Package Software identification will be in the scope.

The approach to mechanize the scholarship process is described below

### **Approach:**

- Need to observe and document the existing process. The current manual process of scholarship service needs to be understood in order to identify the areas of mechanizing and to identify the critical areas of the current process

- Identify opportunities for improvement in the current process and there are redundant information captured in the current application process and need to identify the areas where the current areas can be optimized. Proposing and gaining consensus on changes
- The above are the base for gathering requirements from the directors and other coordinators in the scholarship service. Need to document the requirements collected and verify and validate with the appropriate person. Creating the test cases based on the requirements
- Scoping the project and providing guidelines to implement the application based on the budget allotted to develop and maintain the software
- Developing prototype and training plan to train staff to make use of scholarship application that are going to be deployed for scholarship process
- Cost estimation with the aid of use-cases
- Identifying the vendors that develop similar kind of application and identifying the software package suits scholarship service

### **Expected Outcomes**

Time is flying and the economies of scale that can be achieved by mechanizing repetitive portions of the application process will create several benefits to organization.

- Increases the speed in which the application will be processed
- Reduce errors in applicants data
- Reach more students in need by making the process easier to navigate
- Reduction in time to process applications will increase the time that can be spent on other parts of the process such as personnel interviews
- Will eliminate the problem of categorizing the student to the funding agencies as the process of categorizing is automated
- Will eliminate the process of validating the applications manually and eliminate the process of entering information in to the database manually
- Will help to make use of the scholarship application to easily integrate in to their existing process
- It will help to identify the vendors or any software package to develop the software at the specified cost. It will also help to identify the cost of software development

The task will decrease the cost that need to spend on resources to administrate the tasks of scholarship service. It will induce other service in the organization to automate their process. It will decrease the usage of external communication mediums such as telephone and mail.

### III. Outcomes and Recommendations

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#### Part 1 Analysis of Outcomes

##### **Task 1 – Gather Requirements to automate scholarship service**

The base for gathering requirements from the directors and other coordinators in the scholarship service are twofold.

Firstly, I have observed and documented the existing scholarship process. The manual process of scholarship service is well understood and areas of mechanizing are identified. The critical areas of the scholarship process are identified and documented.

Secondly, I have identified opportunities for improvement in the current process and identified areas where the current process can be optimized. Proposed and gained consensus on changes.

These tasks contain several sub-tasks and they are listed below, as performed:

- I. Documented the requirements collected, verified and validated with the appropriate person. Developed the Use Case based on the requirements document and validated with the administrator. Developed test cases and estimated the project based on the UseCase.
- II. Scoped the project and provided guidelines to implement the application based on the budget allotted to develop and maintain the software. Estimated cost and time to develop the software with the help of Use case point estimation.
- III. Involved in identifying vendors to develop application with allotted cost and time.
- IV. Developed prototype to train the scholarship administrator and other vendors. Developed training plan and involved in establishing Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the vendors

For greater understanding, the outcomes are elaborated below.

##### **Outcome I: Gathered requirements and developed test cases**

###### *Previous state*

In this project, the main task is to gather the requirements. Initially there is no requirement specification developed to implement the application.

###### *Evidence of outcome*

Currently, the requirement specification is developed and requirements are represented in the form of Use Cases. My community partner and I jointly developed the requirements specification and it helped my community partner to identify and also to develop the Use Cases. Test cases were developed based on the Use Cases and helped in user acceptance testing of the application.

**Outcome II: Estimated the project***Previous state*

Initially there was no proper way by which project was estimated. Projects are estimated in ad-hoc manner where vendors are involved in estimating the project cost. Moreover, there was no training plan developed to maintain and train the end users to make the best use of the applications developed.

*Evidence of outcome*

I have estimated the cost that will take to develop the project. Development cost and time to develop the project have been estimated with the help of Use Cases. Use case point estimation technique was used to estimate the cost and time needed to develop the project.

**Outcome III: Identified vendor to develop the application***Previous state*

In this project, the main task is to identify the vendors to develop the application. JF&CS was not able to identify the vendors that can develop the application within the allotted budget and stipulated time. JF&CS was not able to estimate the cost to develop the application and also was not aware of software packages that might suit their process.

*Evidence of outcome*

I was involved in successfully identifying the vendors to develop the application within the budget and time. I have provided guidelines to successfully establish service level agreement between Vendor and JFCS.

**Outcome IV: Developed prototype to train Administrator and other users***Previous state*

Initially there is no prototype developed to train the administrators and also the other user of the application. The validation of the requirements is done only through the requirement specification and not with the help of the prototype.

*Evidence of outcome*

My community partner and I have developed the prototype for the application using HTML screenshots, which helped to validate the requirements with the administrator. It also helped to train the administrator and also to get feedback to make changes in the application. The prototype also helped to communicate with the vendors in explaining about the requirements.

**Risks/Sustainability**

The administrator and other users should be able to understand the application and make use of the application in to the scholarship process without any impact in their existing process. Training plan should be successfully implemented to train the staff and also to maintain the application.

Developed template for project management plan and it will help community partner to manage and track the project successfully. Provided guidelines to develop protocols with vendors regarding budget and time to develop the project, maintenance etc. This will help community partner to get the project done with estimated cost and time. The project will be deployed in cycles and it will help community partner to plan for testing and training. Deploying

application in cycles will help JF&CS to deploy application on time. Higher priority requirements such as online application process can be done in the first cycles and other requirements can be deployed in other cycles.

The protocols for funding agencies will change very frequently and it might lead to major changes in the application which in turn lead to increase in cost in maintaining the application. Hence existing scholarship process should be maintained for long time and should not impact the existing application.

### **Expanded Capacity**

In this consulting task, my consulting partner (CP) has learned how to gather the requirements and also to document the requirements. The CP also learned to identify and develop the Use Cases from the requirements and also to prioritize the requirements. CP has also successfully learned to estimate the project based on the Use Cases. This will help in automating the other services that are done manually in JF&CS. She is also involved in developing the training plan and implementing the training plan to educate the end users regarding the application. She also learned to develop the prototype and also to establish Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the vendors.

Administrator successfully transferred knowledge regarding the application to other users with the help of prototype. It greatly reduced dependency over the external vendors and also to the community partner.

### **New Vision of How Technology Can Support the Mission**

As part of JF&CS, the scholarship service will reduce the cost that has been spent on resources to administrate the tasks. The numbers of applicants that apply for scholarship process will increase and scholarship service will be able to meet their missions with the help of technology. Though the projected vision is as stated above, the new vision it brings along is that it will induce other services in the organization to automate their process. It will make the whole organization to realize how technology will help the organization to improve their process and increase their capacity. This in turn makes them to create the technology plan for the whole organization.

## **PART 2 Recommendations**

### **Vision:**

JF&CS is a beneficiary agency of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh and it provides various services like mental health services, adoption & foster care, career services, services to the elderly, community services, scholarships, immigration services, guardianship and critical need services.

Apart from scholarship process, JF&CS has many different services and they can make use of the technology to automate their process to expand their capacity and to decrease their cost.

Following are the recommendations that will help to implement and maintain the scholarship project successfully and also to JF&CS to automate other process.

- Administrate the project successfully in order to maintain the vendors, implementing the training plan, testing the application and also to maintaining the application

- Making the information about the applicants available to board members through online – helps in allotting scholarship to the applicants through online

## **Recommendations 1: Managing the project**

### ***Details of Recommendation:***

In this project, the application to be developed will be maintained by the community partner. She should be aware of all the technologies that are used in the application and should be capable of maintaining and trouble shooting the application. She should be able to upgrade the application without getting major help from the vendors.

The project will be developed by the external vendor and it's very important to establish the service level agreement between JF&CS and vendor. Managing the project as per the SLA will help in getting the project done successfully. The project should be developed with fixed budget and time and it should be included in the SLA. Based on proposals, the project will be delivered during the first week of September and the scholarship process will start at first week of September. Any delay in implementing the project will delay the scholarship process. The SLA should provide information regarding the change requests, the cost and time to implement the changes, if request was made.

There should be enough time dedicated to perform user acceptance testing before the project gets implemented. Test cases developed can be used to perform user acceptance testing. Moreover, enough time should be allotted to implement the training plan. Training plan should be implemented before the scholarship process begins.

There are two major requirements in the scholarship process: Developing on-line application form, Categorizing student information and managing funding sources. Developing on-line application form has higher priority and it should be done before September. Rather than deploying whole project at the first week of September, the project can be deployed in cycles with the major tasks done at the earliest. Vendors will be identified before first week of May and assuming the project starts by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007, the project can be deployed in cycles as described below.

Cycles	Requirements	End Date
1	Developing on-line application form	July 10, 2007
2	Categorizing student information and managing funding sources.	September 30, 2007

Categorizing students to different funding resources will start by April 2008 and it can be obtained as cycle 2 at the end of September.

### **Approaches:**

- Develop a plan to track the project. It should include implementing the user acceptance testing, implementing the training plan

- Get proper documentations regarding the project from the vendors to maintain the application
- Get the application done in cycles, So that training and testing can be done in subsequent intervals and can get higher priority task done as soon as possible
- Perform user acceptance testing before the project got implemented with the help of test cases developed
- Implement the training plan and train administrators and other users with the help of vendors
- Community partner should get knowledge transfer about the application developed from the vendors in order to maintain the application

### **Outcomes:**

- Planning will help in administrating the project successfully in managing the vendors, implementing the training plan and maintaining the application
- Implementing the training plan will help the administrator and other staff members to understand the application and make better use of the application in their process effectively
- Community partner can understand the technology used in the application and will be able to maintain the application successfully

### **Internal Resources:**

Community partner is involved in creating the plan to manage the project and she is also involved in maintaining the application. Administrator and other staff members are used to test the system and are also involved in getting training over the system. Community partner will be involved in establishing the contract with the external vendors and also in implementing the training plan.

### **External Resources:**

External vendors are the ones who will be implementing the system and also in training the staff members of JF&CS to use the application developed for scholarship service. They will also support the community partner in maintaining the system.

### **Budget:**

No additional cost is required to perform this task. Planning for all the above tasks is already done. Planning to track the project will take 5 man hours and implementing training plan and testing the application will take 36 man hours.

## **Recommendations 2: Make applicant information available on line for Board members**

### ***Details of Recommendation:***

In the current scholarship process, after all the eligible applicants are sorted, they are given scholarship by different board members from the JF&CS. All the board members are grouped and they will allot funds for applicants based on different criteria. Each of the board members will be given a booklet that contains information regarding all the applicants. They will, then, discuss about each applicant and allot funds for the particular candidate. The discussions will be conducted within two weeks, approximately on three days each week. There are many possibilities that the board members may not be able to attend the meeting and proceed with the scholarship process successfully.

This process can be automated by providing all the information about the students online to the board members, following which they can view the student data and recommend the funds for applicants. The allotted funds are reviewed by the JF&CS administrator and can assign the funds to the applicants. This will decrease the time to process the applicant data and provide recommendations in scholarship process.

**Approaches:**

- Gather requirements from administrator and also from board members to check the feasibility of implementing the process
- Estimate the cost that might be needed to implement the requirements in to the application using Use Case Point estimation
- Perform cost-benefit analysis for incorporating this feature into the application

**Outcomes:**

- Updated requirements document with this feature incorporated and benefits of feature in the application
- Estimated cost incorporating this feature in the application

**Internal Resources:**

Community partner will play key role in gathering requirements from scholarship administrator and also from the board members. Board members and administrator will decide about incorporating the feature into their existing process.

**External Resources:**

Software vendors who develop application for scholarship process will be used to check the feasibility of incorporating this feature into the scholarship process.

**Budget:**

Gathering new requirements will take 40 man hours and no additional cost will be incurred to perform any other tasks.



## About the Consultant

Aarthi Prasad is a master's student in Software Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. He will begin working as a software engineer in Cerner Corporation.

## Glossary:

**Use Case:** A technique for capturing functional requirements of the system.

**Test Case:** It is a set of conditions or variables under which a tester will determine if a requirement or use case upon an application is partially or fully satisfied.

**Use Case Point estimation:** An estimation technique to estimate cost and time required to develop the software.



## Past Community Partners

4 Kids Early Learning Centers	Every Child, Inc.
Addison Behavioral Care, Inc.	Fair Housing Partnership
Alafia Cultural Services	Faison Development & Opportunities Center
Alcoa Collaborative	FAME
Allegheny County Housing Authority	Family Services of Western PA
Allegheny General Hospital Pastoral Staff	Family Tyes
American Association of University Women	First Charities/First United Methodist Church
Animal Friends, Inc.	Friendship Development Association
Animal Rescue League	Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc.
ASSET, Inc.	Gateway to the Arts
ASTEP-Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church	Girl Scouts - Trillium Council
Auberle	Glen Hazel Family Reading Center
Bedford Hope Center	Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Bedford Initiatives	Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
Bethany House Ministry	Greenfield Senior Center
Bethlehem Haven	Guide Runners
Bishop Boyle Center	Gwen's Girls
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation	Hazelwood Senior Center
Borough of Crafton	Hazelwood YMCA
Boys & Girls Club of Duquesne-West Mifflin	Heritage Health Foundation
Boys & Girls of Wilkinsburg	Hill House Association
Braddock Carnegie Library & Community Center	Hill/Oakland Workforce Collaborative
Braddock Redux	Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh
Brashear Association, Inc.	Hope Academy of Music and the Arts
Breachmenders	Hosanna House
BTC Center	Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Calliope: The Folk Music Society	HUB Downtown Street Outreach Center
Career and Workforce Development Center East	Hunger Services Network
Carnegie Library of Homestead	Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	Jane Holmes Residence
Carnegie Science Center	Jewish Family & Children's Service
Center Avenue YMCA	Jewish Residential Services
Center for Creative Play	Joy-Full-Gospel Fellowship After School Program
Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Inc.	Just Harvest
Center of Life	KidsVoice
Central Academy	Kingsley Association
Central New Development Corporation	Lawrenceville Development Corporation
Child Watch of Pittsburgh	League of Young Voters
Children Youth Ministry	Light of Life Family Assistance Program
Children's Museum	Madison Elementary School
Christian Life Skills	Manchester Academic Charter School
Citizens to Abolish Domestic Apartheid	McKees Rocks Terrace
Community Day School	McKeesport Collaborative
Community House	McKelvy Elementary School
Community Human Services Corporation	Mental Health Association of Allegheny County
Community Technical Assistance Center	Message Carriers
Competitive Employment Opportunities	Methodist Union of Social Agencies
Conflict Resolution Center International	Miller Elementary School, Principal's Office
Consumer Action Response Team	Mon Valley Initiative
CONTACT Pittsburgh	Mon Valley Providers Council
Creative Nonfiction Foundation	Mon Valley Resources Unlimited
Dance Alloy	Mon Valley Unemployment Committee
East End Cooperative Ministries	Mon Yough Community Services
East End Neighborhood Employment Center	Mount Ararat Community Activities Center
East End Neighborhood Forum	NAACP National Voter Fund
East Liberty Development	National Alliance of the Mentally Ill
East Liberty Presbyterian Church	National Association of Minority Contractors /
East Side Community Collaborative	Black Contractors Association
Eastminster Child Care Center	Negro Educational Emergency Drive
Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center	New Beginnings Learning Center
Education Center	New Penley Place

## Past Community Partners (continued)

Northside Coalition for Fair Housing	Rx Council of Western PA
Northside Institutional Children Youth Ministry	Salvation Army Family Crisis Center
Northside Leadership Conference	Sarah Heinz House
OASIS Senior Center	Schenley Heights Community Development Center
Opera Theater of Pittsburgh	Second East Hills Social Services Center
Operation Better Block	Sharry Everett Scholarship Fund
Orr Compassionate Care Center	Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church
Outreach Teen & Family Services	Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health
Parental Stress Center	St. James School
Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership	St. Stephen Elementary School
Pennsylvania Low Income Housing Coalition	Sustainable Pittsburgh
Peoples Oakland	Thomas Merton Center
Phase 4 Learning Centers, Inc.	Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape	Three Rivers Youth
Pittsburgh Citizens' Police Review Board	TLC-USA
Pittsburgh Foundation	Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments
Pittsburgh Health Corps	Tzu Chi Wen Chinese School
Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network	Union Project
Pittsburgh Mediation Center	United Cerebral Palsy
Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners	Univ. of Pittsburgh - Division of Applied Research and Evaluation
Pittsburgh Toy Lending Library	Urban League of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh Vision Services	Urban Youth Action
Pittsburgh Voyager	Ursuline Services
Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra	Vintage Senior Center
POISE Foundation	Weed & Seed Program, Mayor's Office
Program for Health Care to Underserved Populations	Wesley Center
Project Educate	West Pittsburgh Partnership
Providence Family Support Center	Wireless Neighborhoods
Radio Information Service	Women's Enterprise Center
Reading Is Fundamental Pittsburgh	Working Order
Regional Coalition of Community Builders	YMCA McKeesport
River Valley School	YMCA Senior AIDE Center
Rodef Shalom	Youth Fair Chance
Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church	YouthBuild
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh	YWCA Bridge Housing
Rosedale Block Cluster	YWCA of McKeesport
Sacred Heart Elementary School	

# **Community Partner Information FAQ**

## **(continued from back cover)**

### **7. What does it cost to be a Community Partner?**

The cost for participating in this experience is your time and your commitment to follow through as agreed. As leaders of community organizations, we know your time is of premium value. Those who have made this investment of time have reaped returns many times over.

### **8. What does the Community Partner have to offer Carnegie Mellon students?**

- Students learn to structure unstructured problems. Community organizations are complex environments with complex problems. Your organization provides excellent environments in which to practice the art of structuring problems.
- Students come from different cultural backgrounds and most have never been in a nonprofit organization. They are practicing how to communicate across cultural differences and across technical knowledge differences. They need to be able to make mistakes and learn from them. Community partners provide a supportive relationship in which students can take risks and learn about how to communicate, how to relate, and how to maintain professionalism.
- Students get the opportunity to practice process consulting. They are learning that expertise is only as valuable as the ability to help others solve authentic problems. You provide a context in which students can practice these skills.
- We've found that Community Partners are very appreciative for the students' assistance. There is nothing more rewarding than to experience your efforts as valuable and rewarding for others. You provide that experience for students.
- Finally, you offer a glimpse into career opportunities in the nonprofit arena. Students learn to appreciate those who work in the nonprofit sector, and they grow to appreciate the role and function of community organizations. We hope this appreciation not only informs the choices they make in life, but also encourages them to care and give back to the community throughout their professional careers.

### **9. How do I become a Community Partner**

Contact an instructor, Joe Mertz or Scott McElfresh. Send your contact information: name, title, name of organization, address, phone, fax, location of organization and your interest in being a Community Partner. You will have a telephone conversation and possibly an on-site visit. All organizations are considered, though preference is given to organizations providing services to a low-income community or a community at risk for falling into the "digital divide."

**Send email to  
instructors@tcinc.org  
(email preferred)**

**Or call  
Joe Mertz: 412.268.2540  
Scott McElfresh: 412.268.4859**

### **10. Caveats**

- We do our best to ensure that students who sign-up for the class are committed to completing the class, however, occasionally, a student ends up withdrawing from the class during the semester. Typically, this happens when a student has under estimated the time they need for this class. We do our best to advise students so this does not happen. When it does happen, there is nothing we can do except to invite the Community Partner to participate in the following semester.
- The semester is short and the student has to do a lot of work in a short amount of time. For this reason, it is critical that you keep your scheduled appointments, do the work you agree to do, and maintain communication with the student. The student will need your feedback on reports quickly, often the next day. When we get to the final consulting reports, we will need fast turnaround time from Community Partners because we also need to get the reports published in time for the Community Technology Forum.
- If there is any chance that you think you will not be able to follow through with the requirements of this partnership, please wait until such time as when you are able to do it. Since the Community Partner is the focus for the student's learning, it is essential that the partnership be sustained for the semester.

# **Community Partner Information FAQ**

## **1. What is the goal of the partnership in this course?**

The goal of this class is to expand the capacity of the Community Partner to use, plan for, and manage technology, administratively and programmatically. The student is learning process consulting, project management, communication, relationship management, problem identification, and analysis.

## **2. As a Community Partner, what can I expect to happen?**

Once you match with a student consultant, you will set a meeting schedule that you and the student will keep for the remainder of the semester. The student comes to your location for 3 hours a week. During this time you and the student work together. This is not an internship in which the student merely works on site. Rather, it is a consulting partnership in which you must work together to achieve your technology goals. The student facilitates a process that moves from assessment, to analysis of problems and opportunities, to defining a scope of work, to developing a work plan, to analyzing outcomes and finally presenting that analysis. As the Community Partner, you are the consulting client. You provide information and discuss that information with the student. But you are more than a client; you are also a learner. In process consulting the client "owns the problem" as well as its solution. The consultant facilitates the client in achieving that solution. The consultant doesn't "do for" the client. Rather, the consultant works with the client.

## **3. What types of activities are typically included in a scope of work?**

Each scope of work is unique and depends solely upon the specific needs and opportunities of the individual Community Partner. Partnerships have focused on a wide range of activities, including: personal information management (how to use Windows, organize files, backup files, use various software packages, use time managers, use Palm Pilots and other personal information management tools, e-mail, etc.), developing a plan for how to train staff and how to incorporate knowledge and skill into job description, designing a local area network, implementing Internet connectivity, designing and developing a web site, determining effective data storage methods, analyzing the needs for an information database, designing and implementing a database, solving technical problems, designing a public community technology access center, determining the specifications for computers, developing disaster recovery plans, and more.

## **4. Who can be a Community Partner?**

This course target individuals playing an administrative or programmatic leadership role within a community organization. Typically Community Partners are Executive Directors, Directors, Assistant/Associate Directors, Coordinators, and Managers. But, we make the selection based on the organization and the role that the individual plays within that organization, regardless of title.

## **5. Why do you focus on organizational leaders?**

For an organization to use information technology effectively, its leaders must have a vision for how it can support the organization's mission, they must be comfortable enough to integrate technology into their personal work practices, and they must know enough to budget, staff, and subcontract appropriately. By partnering one-on-one with a student consultant, the leader has a unique opportunity to build that vision, comfort, and knowledge, no matter where they are starting from.

## **6. What are the requirements for being a Community Partner?**

- Hold a leadership role within your organization.
- Have a computer in your office or one you could or do use in your job.
- Reliably meet with the student consultant 3 hours per week, every week, for about the 13 weeks.
- Come to an on-campus gathering 2 times during the semester. Once at the beginning and once at the end.
- Share information about your organization with the student consultant.
- Read project reports prepared by the student and give the student immediate feedback.
- Complete a brief response form after reading each report and return to the instructor.
- Keep a log of consulting sessions and send to instructors twice during the semester.
- Read the final consulting report. Give feedback to the student immediately.
- Make a brief presentation at the end of the semester (with the student) at the Community Technology Forum.  
(This is the 2nd on-campus gathering you are required to attend.)

**(continued inside back cover)**