



DATE: December 4, 2014
TO: Recycling Board
FROM: Wendy Sommer, Deputy Executive Director
BY: Meri Soll, Senior Program Manager
SUBJECT: Oakland Technology Exchange/OTX-West - Non Profit Update

BACKGROUND

The Recycling Board has awarded grants through the Grants to Nonprofits program for the past seventeen years via an open Request for Proposal process, totaling approximately \$7.25 million dollars in funding from the Competitive and Reuse grants program. The Board has requested periodic status reports on grant recipients. This month, staff has selected to Oakland Technology Exchange/OTX-West to provide an update and brief presentation to the Recycling Board on reuse and waste reduction activities they have been engaged in as a result of grant funding.

DISCUSSION

OTX West collects, refurbishes and distributes computers to low income Oakland families, schools and non-profits; adding years of life to what would otherwise be considered e-waste. They are an organization dedicated to eliminating the digital divide in Oakland by providing free and low cost computers to low income residents. The goal of the OTX program is to provide Oakland Public School students and their families with the technology they need to succeed in school and in the workforce while also benefitting the environment by promoting reuse of computers. OTX refurbishes computers using a largely volunteer workforce that triages, cleans and repairs equipment; loads software; distributes computers to individuals for home use as well as sets up computer labs in schools and at community centers. Students must attend a 3-hour training class which focuses on basic computer use and applications in order to be eligible to receive a computer. The OTX program addresses the enormous e-waste issue by promoting re-use or safe recycling of more than 150,000 pounds of e-waste annually.

The Agency has supported OTX since 2004 by providing \$150,000 in grant funding. Early grants enabled OTX to solidify and expand their operations to allow for more computer collection and redistribution. The more recent Reuse Grants allowed them to continue providing their needed services to Oakland Unified School District families and students. Bruce Buckelew, OTX Founder and Director, will provide a brief presentation and update on grant activities.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.