

14Q2_Supplemental Answers_Alaska

Connected Nation, Inc.

Grant Number 02-50-M09071

Reporting Period End Date 06-30-14

14 a Data Collection Project

2. Describe any additional project milestones that have been accomplished over this reporting period (Ex. Updates to state broadband maps and websites, map outreach activities)

Program changes were approved, as part of a budget modification, during the quarter by the National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). These changes include the introduction of an Alaska School Connectivity Project. The purpose of the Alaska School Connectivity Project is to determine the extent to which Alaska schools are hampered by slow or unavailable broadband service; determine schools' normative, expressed, and perceived needs; and help determine the costs that would be required to improve school broadband connectivity to normative standards. The project will also include an assessment of connectivity inside the classrooms in Alaska's K-12 schools, which is of great importance to the state, as more than 120 schools in the state are beginning to utilize 1:1 student devices for instruction. The state of Alaska requested this School Connectivity Project in order to support its implementation of the President's ConnectED initiative and to position the state to take full advantage of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposal to modernize the E-rate program, both of which were announced last year, three years after the original budget for the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) program was approved. During the quarter, staff began project planning activities. Data collection and outreach efforts will commence in Q3 2014.

During the quarter, the following maps were updated using the most recent semi-annual datasets:

- Broadband Availability at 768K/200K
- Density of Unserved Households
- Broadband Availability at 3M/768K
- Maximum Advertised Download Speed
- Multi-Single Platform
- Provider Density
- Underserved Areas
- Broadband Growth

In addition, the interactive map was also updated with the datasets and analyzes listed above.

The program continues to maintain an interactive mapping web application, called My ConnectView. The application is housed in a highly available, monitored, and managed environment. My ConnectView is publicly available online at www.connectak.org. There were a total 247 visits to the interactive map between April 1, 2014 and June 30, 2014.

Users can request non-confidential mapping data produced for the SBI grant program; one such request was received between April 1, 2014 and June 30, 2014.

For this reporting period, 95 field verification tests were conducted. From program initiation through Q2 2014, field validation testing has been completed against 26 companies (out of 27 viable providers) totaling 96.30% within the state of Alaska.

Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) staff began the data collection process for the upcoming semi-annual update, by soliciting data and providing pertinent deadlines to ensure the highest level of participation during the submission cycle. Staff also worked with providers to give them information regarding FCC 477, in order to help providers become more familiar with the data collection process in the future and to help safeguard against issues that could arise between the SBI submission and the new FCC submission process.

4. Provide any other information or statistics that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses your broadband data collection, Validation and publication activities.

The list of providers by county, along with the maximum advertised download/upload speeds and websites, were updated and published on the program website; the list is available in both PDF and spreadsheet formats.

Broadband availability numbers were calculated at various speed tiers and technology types based on the most recent semi-annual datasets.

Based on information released by the FCC, maps were created of price-cap carriers and eligible census blocks after review and comparison of the information.

14 b Capacity Building Project

2. Describe your progress meeting each major activity/milestone approved in the Project Plan for this project; any challenges or obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies you have employed; planned major activities for next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Broadband Capacity Building Milestones Year 2014, Quarter 2 per approved project plan

Milestone: Year 2014, Quarter 2 Connect Alaska program office administration

This milestone was met. The program office in Anchorage is fully staffed and interacting with stakeholders. Program staff meets at least weekly with representatives from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) to discuss the status of the project and receive guidance on the program. Multiple discussions were held specifically in relation to the program's budget modification request and project plan shifts. Program changes were approved during the quarter by the National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Approved changes allow for the issuance of vendor contracts by the Alaska Broadband Task Force focused on digital assistance for entrepreneurs and businesses in Alaska, the audit and collection of Alaska public school broadband information, expansion of activities by the

Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), and the purchase of Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Software as part of the Application Development project.

Program personnel assisted DCCED and the Alaska Broadband Task Force with the Request for Quotes (RFQ) process relevant to the Alaska Broadband Task Force contracts, and the necessary paperwork to begin the purchase and implementation of the BRE technology.

Milestone: Year 2014, Quarter 2 Meeting of the Alaska Broadband Task Force/Advisory Committee complete

This milestone was met. Select members of the Alaska Broadband Task Force met on multiple occasions, via teleconference and in-person meetings, to discuss and plan for the Statewide Alaska Broadband Task Force Summit scheduled for July 2014. Venue, date and time, agenda topics, and logistics were the main points of discussion. Connect Alaska personnel supported members of the Task Force by creating registration processes, documents, and logistic support. Electronic registration is being hosted on the program website.

The Alaska Broadband Task Force issued a request for quotes focused on digital assistance for entrepreneurs and businesses in Alaska. Three proposals were selected. The University of Alaska Anchorage Business Enterprise Institute was selected to mold the existing AKSourceLink website into a statewide collaborative resource site. This new website will promote resources and collaboration between the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development, the Alaska Small Business Development Center, and the state of Alaska DCCED. The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) was selected to implement a multistage economic development program. AEDC will conduct research, develop education opportunities, and create outreach strategies to spur rural economic growth and provide entrepreneurs with the skillsets they need to thrive, not only in Alaska, but in markets outside the state. A joint project by the Annette Island School District and the Metlakatla Community was also selected to create a sustainable local innovations incubator and a statewide online entrepreneurship training center for remote Alaska Native entrepreneurs.

Q2 2014 Challenges and Mitigation:

No challenges were encountered.

Capacity Planning Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

Year 2014, Quarter 3 Connect Alaska program office administration

Year 2014, Quarter 3 Meeting of the Alaska Broadband Task Force/Advisory Committee complete

4. Provide any other information that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses this project's progress.

Outreach and Awareness staff drafted and sent two e-newsletters to subscribers and stakeholders providing updates on the progress to expand broadband access, adoption, and use in Alaska. The newsletters can be found attached to this report by way of the "14Q2_Project Attachment_Question 5_Alaska" document.

Connect Alaska staff participated in a teleconference with a representative from NTIA regarding the development of an SBI project summary. Discussion centered on rural workshops and community engagement activities being done in partnership with AASB, the broadband plan completed by the Alaska Broadband Task Force and the legislation inspired from it, and the high rate of provider participation in the mapping program.

DCCED notified Connect Alaska of a transition in personnel. DCCED's Assistant Commissioner, the Alaska SBI program's primary contact, has resigned her role and will be leaving DCCED in Q3. Her role and responsibilities will be transitioned to another individual not yet identified. Program staff will support DCCED through the transition process.

14 b Technical Assistance Project

2. Describe your progress meeting each major activity/milestone approved in the Project Plan for this project; any challenges or obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies you have employed; planned major activities for next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Technical Assistance Milestones Year 2014, Quarter 2 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Year 2014, Quarter 2 AASB Technical Assistance Activities

This milestone was met. The Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) conducted community technology workshops and conducted a presentation on broadband strategies in the rural Alaskan community of Manokotak. AASB personnel delivered a seminar to residents on the basics of setting up e-commerce websites. AASB identified a local contact person to assist in their activities and provided additional tutorials to the individual for the purpose of assisting other residents. The on-site contact person is now able to assist other locals who were unable to attend the presentations by explaining the importance of broadband and launching local e-commerce websites.

A Manokotak elder who makes knitted clothing and beaded jewelry brought a variety of her handmade items to the AASB presentation. AASB used a seamless photography background to take pictures of her items and added the photos to a demonstration website along with pricing information, item descriptions, and an artist biography. The artist's daughter also attended the presentation and is interested in maintaining and expanding her mom's e-commerce site, now named Nellie's Crafts. The site, including both browser and mobile versions, is actively under construction and can be viewed at <http://manokotaktest.jimdo.com>.

AASB discussed topics for upcoming videoconference seminars in several rural Alaska communities. Manokotak residents believe these distance-delivered workshops are a timely and much needed strategy for providing ongoing education about broadband and technology use to local residents.

AASB facilitated a group discussion, with a select group of faculty and staff members of the Dillingham City School District, on assessing the school's readiness for 1:1 technology using broadband. The importance of technology in education was emphasized, best practices were reviewed, and possible strategies were discussed to assess, plan, and implement a 1:1 program. The District Superintendent, IT Director, and several teachers, including the 2014 Alaska Teacher of the Year were in attendance.

As previously mentioned, through a budget modification request, additional funding was allocated for AASB to continue their community engagement activities and conduct technology workshops revolving around K-12 schools in rural communities within Alaska. AASB conducted videoconference sessions with local schools in order to plan for the expansion of activities, and continues to determine a schedule of activities for the upcoming 2014-2015 school year.

Milestone: Finalize and distribute AASB local survey research results

This milestone was met. Between October 2013 and March 2014, Connect Alaska and the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) conducted an online survey of residents living in select remote villages. During this time, representatives from AASB participated in town hall-style meetings and invited those present to participate in this online survey. The survey was made available via the website www.connectak.org. The purpose of the survey was to measure broadband adoption and usage among residents of these remote areas and to determine the usage of broadband services both at home and at locations outside of the home. Program research staff has finalized their analysis of the survey data collected. A key finding of the research showed 76% of the rural respondents use the Internet some place other than home. A presentation of the survey results was created and released publicly on the Connect Alaska website. The survey results were also distributed to stakeholders including DCCED and AASB.

Milestone: Plan Alaska Broadband Summit

This milestone was met. Connect Alaska, in partnership with DCCED and the Alaska Broadband Task Force, planned for the Statewide Broadband Task Force Summit to be held on July 15, 2014, at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center in Anchorage. The summit is designed to promote discussion about the task force report including draft recommendations for education, public safety, and e-commerce, and to discuss broadband access issues across the state. Participants will hear about the state of Alaska's broadband infrastructure and the FCC's proposals and their impacts on Alaska and will conclude with final recommendations to state policymakers.

Technical Assistance outstanding milestones (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:

Year 5, Quarter 1 Milestone: Finalize and distribute AASB local survey research results

Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestone: Finalize and distribute AASB local survey research results

During Q2 2014, Connect Alaska received approval of a revised project plan that moved this milestone to Q2 2014. Previous to the approval this milestone was listed as an outstanding not met from a previous quarter. Nonetheless, as detailed above, this milestone was met.

Year 4, Quarter 1 Milestone: Plan Alaska Broadband Summit

Staff received approval of a revised project plan during Q2 2014 that moved this milestone to 2014, Q2. Previous to the approval, this milestone was listed as an outstanding not met from a previous quarter. Nonetheless, as detailed above, this milestone was met.

Year 3, Quarter 4 Milestone: Conduct Alaska Broadband Summit

During Q2 2014 NTIA approved a revised project plan that moved this milestone to 2014, Q3. Previous to the approval this milestone was listed as an outstanding not met from a previous quarter. This milestone is on track to be met next quarter

Q2 2014 Challenges and Mitigation:

No challenges were encountered.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

Year 2014, Quarter 3 AASB Technical Assistance Activities
Conduct Alaska Broadband Summit

14 b Application Usage & Development Project

2. Describe your progress meeting each major activity/milestone approved in the Project Plan for this project; any challenges or obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies you have employed; planned major activities for next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Application Usage & Development Milestones Year 2014, Quarter 2 per approved project plan

Milestone: Year 2014, Quarter 2 Administration of the Application Development Fund

This milestone was met. Connected Nation granted a sub-award to DCCED in order to secure Business Retention and Expansion technology for the purpose of integrating essential state of Alaska government databases, communications, collaboration, and analytical tools within a web-based, user-friendly interface. The BRE technology allows for tracking and communicating with businesses on an individual, regional, or statewide basis and will monitor business trends and metrics within Alaska. The technology will provide DCCED with a valuable tool that would bring together Economic Development Organizations (EDOs), chambers of commerce, regional governments, Alaska Native corporations, and a wide range of groups engaged in economic development work around the state.

Milestone: Year 2014, Quarter 2 Monitor application development projects

This milestone was met. Personnel monitored the development and implementation of Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) technology. DCCED, a sub-recipient of the Alaska SBI program, developed a plan to serve as a framework to guide the BRE program operating and implementation process.

During this quarter, DCCED researched and conducted online demonstrations of three BRE Content Management System (CMS) platforms and ultimately, selected, licensed, and purchased Executive Pulse, Inc. as the preferred software platform to manage the BRE database and program. DCCED obtained state of Alaska approval for sole-source contract based on Executive Pulse's unique platform design that caters to economic development organizations. The arrangement allows DCCED to hold the Master License to manage and administer the program and to issue sub-licenses to various municipalities and economic development organizations to utilize Executive Pulse to execute a BRE program within their respective communities and regions throughout the state.

DCCED conducted outreach to advise Alaska economic development organizations about the upcoming BRE services and activities as well as how they can be used as a resource to promote economic development within a community or region.

DCCED contracted with the Economic Development Association of British Columbia to review the Alaska BRE plan and offer two economic development/BRE training events. Presentations were conducted by the Economic Development Association of British Columbia in Anchorage, Alaska on June 18 and 19 and included “Economic Development for Local Government Leaders” and a “Business Retention and Expansion” workshops. Participants were invited through an extensive outreach campaign (email, letter, and personal phone calls), resulting in 96 participants for the “Economic Development for Local Government Leaders” seminar and 64 for the “Business Retention and Expansion” workshop.

Application Usage & Development outstanding milestones (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:

Year 4, Quarter 2 Outstanding Milestone: Finalize the E-Government Assessment

This milestone was met. Between October 2013 and March 2014, Connect Alaska and the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) conducted an online survey of residents living in select remote villages. During this time, representatives from AASB participated in town hall-style meetings and invited those present to participate in this online survey. Special attention was paid to the use of e-government services, demand for such services, and the impact that those e-government services had on respondents in these remote areas of the state. The survey also included questions regarding current use of e-government services and respondents’ interest in using such applications. In Q2 2014, research staff finalized its analysis of the data collected. A presentation highlighting the survey results was created and released publicly on the website www.connectak.org. The survey results were also distributed to several stakeholders including DCCED, AASB, and members of the Alaska Broadband Task Force. The large majority of respondents indicated they would prefer to conduct a variety of government tasks online, rather than over the phone or in person at the office. This includes tasks like requesting forms, paying bills, learning about office hours or available services, communicating with elected officials, or learning about recent activities at the government office.

Q2 2014 Application Usage & Development Challenges and Mitigation:

No challenges were encountered.

Application Usage & Development Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

Year 2014, Quarter 3 Monitor application development projects