

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE BROADBAND ADOPTION**

**General Information**

<b>1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted</b> Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration	<b>2. Award Identification Number</b> 25-43-B10010	<b>3. DUNS Number</b> 956072490
<b>4. Recipient Organization</b> University of Massachusetts Lowell 600 Suffolk Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01854		
<b>5. Current Reporting Period End Date (MM/DD/YYYY)</b> 12-31-2013	<b>6. Is this the last Annual Report of the Award Period?</b> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes    <input type="radio"/> No                 </p>	
<b>7. Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete for performance of activities for the purposes set forth in the award documents.</b>		
<b>7a. Typed or Printed Name and Title of Certifying Official</b>  Carol McDonough	<b>7c. Telephone (area code, number and extension)</b>  978-934-2784	
	<b>7d. Email Address</b>  Carol_McDonough@uml.edu	
<b>7b. Signature of Certifying Official</b>  Submitted Electronically	<b>7e. Date Report Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY):</b>  12-20-2013	

PROJECT INDICATORS				
<p><b>1. Does your Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) project foster a particular broadband technology or technologies? If so, please describe this technology (or technologies) (600 words or less).</b></p> <p>Our SBA project uses land-line coaxial and fiber-optic cable from both area providers (Comcast and Verizon) as well as WiFi technology. Our training approach has been designed for maximum effectiveness. During the extension phase of this grant, we have hired and trained talented college students to go into our partner community sites to deliver tailored programs to seniors (email, skype, social networks, research/information). Training modules are adapted to the audience and constantly fine tuned.</p>				
<p><b>2a. Please list all of the broadband equipment and/or supplies you have purchased during the most recent calendar year using BTOP grant funds or other (matching) funds, including any customer premises equipment or end-user devices. If additional space is needed, please attach a list of equipment and/or supplies. Please also describe how the equipment and supplies have been deployed (100 words or less).</b></p>				
Manufacturer	Item	Unit Cost per Item	Number of Units	Narrative description of how the equipment and supplies were deployed
N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A
<b>Totals</b>		0	0	
<input type="button" value="Add Equipment"/>		<input type="button" value="Remove Equipment"/>		
<p><b>2b. To the extent you distribute equipment/supplies to beneficiaries of your project, please describe the equipment/supplies you distribute, the quantities distributed, and the specific populations to whom the equipment/supplies are distributed (600 words or less).</b></p> <p>No equipment defined as \$5,000 or more has been purchased under this grant.</p>				
<p><b>3. For SBA access and training provided with BTOP grant funds, please provide the information below. Unless otherwise indicated in the instructions, figures should be reported <u>cumulatively</u> from award inception to the end of the most recent calendar year. For each type of training (other than open access), please count only the participants who <u>completed</u> the course.</b></p>				
Types of Access or Training		Number of People Targeted	Number of People Participating	Total Training Hours Offered
Open Lab Access		3,607	3,607	3,607
Multimedia		2,302	2,302	2,302
Office Skills		921	921	1,842
ESL		0	0	0
GED		0	0	0
College Preparatory Training		0	0	0
Basic Internet and Computer Use		10,206	9,176	55,056
Certified Training Programs		0	0	0
Other (please specify): Outreach, awareness, wifi access, other		824,889	229,969	0
<b>Total</b>		841,925	245,975	62,807
<p><b>4. Please describe key economic and social successes of your project during the past year, and why you believe the project is successful thus far (600 words or less).</b></p> <p>We believe that we have been successful in promoting the social and economic objectives of this grant. We have worked hard to achieve community partner satisfaction and participant success. We worked closely with our contacts, with several in-person meetings a year and innumerable phone and email communications as well, to ensure that we were providing high-quality programming in a way that was sensitive to the differential needs and abilities of the populations we served.</p> <p>The broadband training programs that had been conducted partnering with Community Teamwork Inc. focused on providing job-related skills to the unemployed and underemployed. The skills that participants acquired in the areas of resume writing and job application contributed greatly to their success in finding employment.</p>				

The training for seniors has enabled these participants to expand their social networks and to interact electronically with family and friends, medical providers, and to obtain news and entertainment. One participant at a public library was concerned that she would not be able to find employment given her age. Our trainer worked with this person to update her resume and work on her MS Word and Excel skills, and this individual was able to find the part-time employment she was seeking. This highlights a major success of the project, namely, that older women and men can work towards computer and internet literacy and find gainful employment in today's job market.

Another economic success of our project has been our trainers completing their time with our program and moving on to more advanced employment and/or accepted into graduate programs. A few examples include a trainer now employed by a prestigious local hospital in their web development department; our head trainer being accepted into a doctoral program, while teaching as an adjunct professor; and another gaining employment as a computer and internet literacy trainer in the very communities that she worked in throughout the project. Our project clearly did not just benefit the individuals we worked with on job readiness skills, but enhanced the skill sets and resumes of the trainers working on the project.

**5. Please estimate the level of broadband adoption in the community(ies) and/or area(s) your project serves, explain your methodology for estimating the level of broadband adoption, and explain changes in the broadband adoption level, if any, since the project began.**

5a. Adoption Level (%):	Narrative description of level, methodology, and change from the level at project inception (600 words or less).
70	<p>Our program is targeted toward increasing broadband adoption. We have worked to achieve this goal through intensive and targeted training programs, and outreach and awareness activities. Working with Lowell Telecommunications (LTC), we have installed wireless routers in popular local business and two other WiFi routers in the last year (at the local YWCA and with a community-based organization called Coalition for a Better Acre). We have gathered numbers from LTC about usage directly attributable to the efforts of our project. Due to this increase in use, other local businesses are looking to be a part of increasing WiFi in the downtown area, and also downtown building owners. Our post-test analyses tell us that just over 60% of those without broadband access stated that they were very likely to sign up for broadband in the near future. On the basis of this post-test data, as well as Pew Research Center broadband adoption statistics on adult home subscribers (2010) and the Connected Nation report (2011) on low-income household subscription, we estimated that broadband adoption in the areas that our project serves was approximately sixty-one percent.</p> <p>Since the project's inception, broadband adoption nationwide has risen from 60 to 70 percent (Pew Research Center, 2013). Broadband adoption among our targeted population of low-income persons and seniors is less than the national average. However, because we believe our efforts to promote broadband adoption have been successful, and our surveys tell us that many of our trainees have adopted broadband, we estimate that the population that we have served is now at the national average of 70 percent adoption.</p> <p>During the course of the project, there has been a surge in the adoption of wireless broadband, mostly with smartphones. However, as the Nielsen Mobile Insights (2012) reports, smartphone adoption has been largely among younger, wealthier and more educated consumers, rather than the targeted underserved population with which we have worked. We therefore estimate that a negligible fraction of those who have adopted broadband have done so by subscribing to smartphones. Our surveys of seniors conducted during 2013 confirm that the overwhelming broadband choice among senior adopters is fixed, not mobile, broadband.</p> <p>We also conducted awareness and outreach activities at local libraries and community centers and assisted potential new subscribers in navigating the array of possible broadband plans. We have been working with our partner organizations to spread the word about Comcast's Internet Essentials Program featuring low-cost internet to families with children enrolled in the Federal Lunch Program. Furthermore, we have held presentations with our partner sites to explain broadband and the many options for purchasing broadband internet .</p>

**6. Please describe the two most common barriers to broadband adoption that you have experienced this year in connection with your project. What steps did you take to address them (600 words or less)?**

The largest barrier we have experienced this year in our work with seniors is that computer usage, and broadband, seem overwhelming and difficult. Rather than appear inadequate or unknowledgeable, seniors tend to deny that the internet might be of interest or use to them. This observation was reported anecdotally by trainers and was also reported in our surveys. Participants also reported hesitation due to the many options available. Even if budget is not a factor, deciding what works best for their personal needs (wireless or land-line; desktop or laptop; many types of mobile devices available) can feel overwhelming and daunting. Even once a device or equipment is chosen, the many choices in carriers and brands can also feel insurmountable.

To address these concerns, we worked with seniors one-on-one or in very small groups, so that trainees would feel comfortable and be free to ask questions without embarrassment. We also provided advice on equipment and carriers.

Some seniors, but relatively few, reported that they would not subscribe to broadband because they could not afford it. To help these participants, we recommended relatively low-cost plans. If the senior lived in a multigenerational family setting with minor children, we advised them about Comcast Internet Essentials.

**7. To the extent that you have made any subcontracts or sub grants, please provide the number of subcontracts or sub grants that have been made to socially and economically disadvantaged small business (SDB) concerns as defined by section 8(a) of the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. 647, as modified by NTIA's adoption of an alternative small business size standard for use in BTOP. Please also provide the names of these SDB entities. (150 words or less)**

We had a subcontract with Lowell Telecommunications Corp to install and maintain wireless hubs in downtown Lowell.

**8. Please describe any best practices / lessons learned that can be shared with other similar BTOP projects (900 words or less).**

One best practice gleaned over the years of our program has been the need to work closely with community partner sites. Frequent meetings, e-mail, and phone calls all help to keep lines of communication open. Furthermore, making it clear to your partners that you are open to suggestion and change can make the difference between a sustainable program and one that falls flat. These contacts, after all, are the experts in their particular communities, organizations, and people and their opinions and needs are vitally important to your program.

The same is true of your trainers, and this point cannot be overstated. Trusting your trainers' opinions and taking their suggestions seriously can only benefit the program. They are the ones working in the field and working one-on-one with participants. The trainers, have insight and expertise that neither you nor your organizational contact could possibly have. They often know what works well, what doesn't, and tend to have tangible suggestions for improvement.