

12Q4_Supplemental Answers_South Carolina

Connected Nation, Inc
Grant Number 45-50-M09044
Reporting Period End Date 12-31-12

Project Attachment_Data Collection

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).

Connect South Carolina continues to maintain the interactive mapping web application, called My ConnectView. The application is housed in a highly available, monitored, and managed environment. New feedback features allow consumers to send comments directly to program Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff; a screenshot of the user's current interactive map view is also attached to the feedback to provide additional details.

Consumer feedback in the form of broadband inquiries is also collected. These inquiries represent any type of communications received from the public regarding broadband service. Once broadband inquiries are received across the state, this information is overlaid with the broadband availability information which was collected through the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) program. This allows for a real-world comparison of the broadband landscape to the information received from broadband inquiries. Broadband inquiries are able to provide three types of information: 1) residents who do not have broadband but want it; 2) residents who have broadband but want a different provider; and 3) residents who do not have broadband, but the broadband inventory maps indicate that they do. If residents within a region state that they are without broadband, but the broadband inventory maps show otherwise, this allows Connected Nation to approach the providers within that area in an effort to trim down their coverage to more accurately represent real-world availability on the ground.

My ConnectView is publicly available on the Connect South Carolina website (<http://www.connectsc.org/interactive-map>). There were a total of 176 visits to My ConnectView between October 1, 2012, and December 31, 2012.

During this quarter, the project received a total of 5 broadband inquiries. Additional information received through e-mail from consumers that can also be used for verification purposes totaled 4 for this quarter.

For this reporting period, 49 field verification tests were conducted. In some cases, field validation tests were completed on "then current" viable, qualifying providers that were subsequently acquired by another company or tests were completed on a viable, qualifying company that has since gone out of business. Accordingly, the following text

will reflect certain deletions, additions and mergers that have occurred during this reporting period. Following this section, any activity that has been identified under a merger and acquisition category will be called out independently.

To date, staff have conducted on-site validation tests in South Carolina on the following providers: AT&T; Atlantic Broadband; CenturyLink; Charter Communications; Chesnee Telephone Company; Chester Telephone Company (d.b.a. Fairfield Communications); Clearwire Corporation; Comcast; Countrywide Wireless; Electronics Service Company of Hamlet LLC; Family View Cable; Farmers Telephone Cooperative Inc. (d.b.a. FTC Communications); Frontier Communications of the Carolinas; Hargray Communications Group; Harron Communications (d.b.a. MetroCast); Home Telephone Company Inc.; Horry Telephone Cooperative Inc.; NTInet Inc.; Palmetto Rural Telephone (d.b.a. Low Country); Pee Dee Net; Pee Dee Online; PRT Communications; Rock Hill Telephone Company (d.b.a. Comporium Communications, PBT Communications, and Fort Mill Telephone Company); Sandhill Telephone Cooperative; SkyRunner; Southern Coastal Cable; Sprint; TDS Telecom; Time Warner Cable Inc.; T-Mobile; tw telecom; US Cellular; Verizon South Inc.; Wide Open West (formerly d.b.a. Knology); Windstream; and XO Communications.

There were no mergers or acquisitions identified during this time period.

From program initiation through this reporting period, in-the-field validation testing has been completed against 36 companies (out of a universe of 46 viable providers) totaling 78.26 percent within the state of South Carolina.

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

Thanks to communication from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) regarding the importance of Community Anchor Institution (CAI) outreach and data collection, this quarter has seen a newfound commitment from state stakeholders and CAI sector leaders. Multiple sector agencies and organizations have been engaged during the fourth quarter, and the program continues to have gains in data collection.

The Connect South Carolina initiative celebrated several media successes this quarter, including the monthly e-newsletter, now reaching more than 79 subscribers. Program outreach and awareness staff disseminated 4 press releases that helped account for mainstream media stories that reached more than 65 million people. Sixty-five project-relevant items were also posted on the program's Facebook page this quarter in addition to 71 Tweets that have helped grow the project's Twitter followers to more than 723. The program maintains a blog available at <http://www.connectsc.org/blog>. Eleven entries, which accounted for part of the 1,183 total visits to the program website, were posted this quarter.

For Q4 2012, Connect South Carolina's match percentage based on total expenditures was 19.43%. Thus the program will fall short of the required match percentage by

1.14%. Program staff is working with the State of South Carolina Office of the Governor to identify additional sources of match. Through the receipt of in-kind match from volunteers participating in the planning teams, as well as through consultant agreements the program expects to meet its required match percentage in Q1 2013.

Project Attachment_Technical Assistance

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 the next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Technical Assistance Milestones Year 3, Quarter 4 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Peer review of 2012 survey research completed.

This milestone was partially met. In Q4 2012, Connect South Carolina executed a contract with and provided the 2012 residential survey initial results to Dr. Lori Dickes of Clemson University. Dr. Dickes serves as the program's peer reviewer. Peer review is in process and is anticipated to be completed in Q1 2013.

Milestone: Analyze 2012 statewide business survey research results.

This milestone was not met. In Q4 2012, the program presented an amended project plan to NTIA for approval. Upon approval of the revised project plan, the business survey will be initiated in Q1 2013. Potential topics for the business survey have been discussed with state stakeholders.

Technical Assistance Milestones Outstanding (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 3: Finalize and distribute statewide residential survey research results.

This milestone was not met. Approval from NTIA to initiate the 2012 residential survey was received in Q3 2012 and the survey was initiated in that quarter. As a result, subsequent milestones (analysis, finalization, and distribution) of the results were delayed. The survey results have been analyzed and are currently under peer review. Connect South Carolina will finalize and distribute the 2012 statewide residential survey results to state stakeholders in Q1 2013.

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 3: Upon approval from South Carolina stakeholders and NTIA, initiate 2012 statewide business survey research.

This milestone was not met. As a result of the residential survey initiation rescheduling, the 2012 business survey has been delayed. An amended project plan that reflects the revised timeline was submitted to NTIA. Program research staff discussed the business

survey script with the state partner in Q4 2012. Upon approval of the amended project plan, the business survey is anticipated to be initiated in Q1 2013.

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 2: Analyze 2012 statewide residential survey research results.

This milestone was met. In Q4 2012, Connect South Carolina analyzed the results from the 2012 residential survey and provided the survey instrument and results to the peer reviewer. Initial results will be provided to state stakeholders and NTIA and released publicly in Q1 2013.

Technical Assistance Annual Milestones Year 3 per approved project plan:

Annual Milestone 2012: Finalize and distribute 2011 statewide business survey research results. Incorporate stakeholder recommendations and create final report detailing results of 2011 business survey. Deliver in-person presentation of research results to the Task Force, South Carolina Governor's Office, and other stakeholders. Announce the release of data via press release, website update, and meetings with stakeholders.

This milestone was met. The 2011 statewide business survey research results were finalized, incorporating stakeholders' recommendations, and distributed to the South Carolina Governor's Office, the Task Force and other stakeholders, and announced the release via multiple media platforms in Q2 2012.

Annual Milestone 2012: Develop research plan for Years 3 through 5 through collaboration with South Carolina state stakeholders. Primary corresponding activities include developing research plan and seeking NTIA approval for Years 3 through 5.

This milestone was partially met in 2012. Connect South Carolina developed the program's research plan for years 3-5 in Q1 2012. The plan was incorporated into the amended project plan submitted to NTIA in 2012. Upon approval of the revised project plan, residential surveys will commence in Q3 2013 and Q3 2014, business surveys will be initiated in Q1 2013 and Q1 2014, and an Economic Development survey will be conducted in Q2 2013.

Annual Milestone 2012: Upon approval from South Carolina stakeholders and NTIA, initiate the 2012 statewide residential survey research and the 2012 statewide business surveys by writing survey instruments, creating spreadsheets with census-defined quotas and weights for 2012, collecting respondent data, and creating data file with weighted results.

This milestone was partially met in 2012. The 2012 statewide residential survey was initiated in Q3 2012 that included: the writing of the survey instruments, creating spreadsheets with census-defined quotas and weights for 2012, collecting respondent data, and creating a data file with weighted results. The initial analysis of the survey results has been submitted for peer review prior to release. The topic of the 2012 statewide business survey was discussed with state stakeholders but was not initiated.

Pending approval of the revised project plan by the NTIA, the Connect South Carolina business survey will be initiated in Q1 2013.

Annual Milestone 2012: After analysis and the review process that includes collaborating with the South Carolina Governor's Office, the 2012 residential survey will be delivered in-person to the Task Force, South Carolina Governor's Office, and other stakeholders. Also survey results will be announced via press release, website update, and meetings with stakeholders.

This milestone was not met in 2012. The 2012 residential survey commenced in Q3 2012, and the initial results were analyzed in Q4 2012 and presented for peer review. Following the peer review process, results of the survey will be provided to the South Carolina Governor's office, state stakeholders, and publicly released.

Annual Milestone 2012: Facilitate Year 3 peer review of survey results and resulting analysis. Review peer recommendation and update program as required.

This milestone was partially met in 2012. In Q4 2012, Connect South Carolina executed a contract with and provided the 2012 residential survey initial results to Dr. Lori Dickes of Clemson University. Dr. Dickes serves as the program's peer reviewer. Peer review is in process and is anticipated to be completed in Q1 2013.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q1 2013):

Finalize and distribute 2012 residential survey research result.

Initiate 2013 business survey research.

Initiate 2013 business survey peer review.

Commence development of the economic development survey script.

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

The program's research team released three papers: (1) "Cost as a Barrier to Broadband Adoption: Structuring Subsidy Programs That Work" discusses cost as a barrier to broadband adoption and finds that 37% of South Carolina households that don't currently have broadband service at home would be willing to subscribe if cost were not a barrier and would subscribe to broadband if they could get it at a price they consider acceptable, (2) "Broadband: Helping South Carolinians Stay Healthy" finds that more than one-half of Internet users (52%) statewide go online to find medical information or communicate with their healthcare professionals, and (3) "Technology Adoption Among Agribusinesses and Rural Businesses" details the adoption and use of broadband by rural businesses and agribusinesses in South Carolina.

These papers have been included within the supporting document "12Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina."

Project Attachment_Planning Teams

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 the next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Planning Team Milestones Year 3, Quarter 4 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Facilitate local/regional broadband team planning activities in Year 3, Quarter 4.

This milestone was met. Connect South Carolina continues local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 3, Quarter 4. Community Tech Team Specialists continued facilitating meetings with local champions and community teams in Allendale, Anderson, Berkeley, Dorchester, Greenwood, Hampton, Marion, Marlboro, Oconee, and Saluda Counties. These counties are in various stages of completing their community technology assessments and identifying strengths and challenges to support the development of strategic priorities.

Milestone: Conduct Strategic Planning Meeting 2012.

This milestone has been delayed as program staff continued outreach to prospective Strategic Planning members during Q4 2012. A contributing factor to the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community action plans. The community tech team specialists continue to assist in this effort. Scheduling of this meeting is yet to be determined based upon feedback from the Task Force. Planning will continue for this milestone as Connect South Carolina stakeholders and staff progress in identifying key stakeholders and priorities.

Milestone: Conduct Year 3, Quarter 4 Task Force meeting

This milestone has been delayed as program staff continued outreach to prospective Task Force members during Q4 2012. Progress was made this quarter identifying and enlisting additional Task Force participants moving forward. The community tech team specialists remain focused and continue to assist in this effort, but one major reason for the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community action plans, which would be the cornerstone for the Task Force - to review and provide feedback of these plans. Planning and preparations will continue on this milestone looking toward an inaugural Task Force meeting in Q1 2013.

Planning Teams Outstanding Milestones (not met or partially met) from previous quarters per approved project plan:

Outstanding Milestone from:

Year 3, Quarter 3: Conduct Task Force meeting

Year 3, Quarter 1: Secure Task Force and Initiate First Task Force meeting;

Year 2, Quarter 4: Work with the South Carolina Office of the Governor to create a South Carolina Task Force.

These milestones have been delayed as program staff continued outreach to prospective Task Force members throughout 2012. Community Tech Team Specialists remain focused and continue to assist in this effort, but one major reason for the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community action plans, which would be the cornerstone for the Task Force - to review and provide feedback of these plans. An initial Task Force meeting is anticipated to take place during Q1 2013.

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 3: Prepare for the 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting.

This milestone has been delayed as Connect South Carolina program staff continued outreach to prospective Strategic Planning members during Q4 2012. A contributing factor to the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community action plans. The community tech team specialists continue to assist in this effort. Scheduling of this meeting is yet to be determined based upon feedback from the Task Force.

Planning Teams Annual Milestones Year 3 per approved project plan:

Annual Milestone 2012: The regional technology consultants will schedule meetings, set agendas, take meeting notes, and work with local regional teams to identify target sectors and regional and local subject matters for the train-the-trainer sessions. They will develop a local regional training toolkit from local information, task force recommendations, research data, best practices, and provider data. They will also facilitate training session, provide training toolkits for team members to use in their own communities, document training session attendance, and add attendees to regional contact database. The regional technology consultants will hold 20 to 30 planning meetings in year 3.

This milestone was partially met. As a result of the delay in hiring the community tech team specialists, the number of community meetings held this quarter fell short of the range specified within the approved project plan. Seventeen fully documented meetings were held in 2012. The program's local/regional broadband planning activities launched in Year 3 as expected, and the community tech team specialists were able to facilitate meetings with local champions and community teams in Allendale, Anderson, Berkeley, Dorchester, Greenwood, Hampton, Marion, Marlboro, Oconee, and Saluda Counties. These counties are in various stages of completing their community technology assessments and identifying strengths and challenges to support the development of strategic priorities.

Annual Milestone 2012: It is projected that the Task Force will meet quarterly to review program progress and offer recommendations for the program and other related programs. Task Force recommendations will be communicated with stakeholders via stakeholder meetings, Connect South Carolina website updates, blogs, press releases, reports, or as required by Task Force.

This milestone has been delayed as program staff continued outreach to prospective Task Force members during 2012. Community Tech Team Specialists remain focused and continue to assist in this effort, but one major reason for the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community action plans, which would be the cornerstone for the Task Force - to review and provide feedback of these plans. Progress was made toward this annual milestone as Task Force members continued to be identified, engaged, and confirmed. Activities and accomplishments were communicated via stakeholder meetings, website and blog updates, press releases, and reports. An inaugural Task Force meeting is anticipated to take place during Q1 2013.

Annual Milestone 2012: Connect South Carolina, in conjunction with the South Carolina Governor's Office, the task force, local/regional planning teams and other key stakeholders will host the 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting. Corresponding primary activities include preparing 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting agenda in collaboration with the Governor's Office, developing status report that shows broadband accomplishments in the state of South Carolina, best practices and identify areas of need in the overall South Carolina Broadband Plan and documenting meeting outcomes.

This milestone has been delayed as program staff continued outreach to prospective Task Force members. The community tech team specialists remain focused and continue to assist in this effort, but one major reason for the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community action plans. Scheduling of this meeting is yet to be determined based upon feedback from the Task Force. An initial Task Force meeting is anticipated to take place during Q1 2013. The Connect South Carolina team made progress on this milestone as the South Carolina Office of the Governor was consulted regarding strategic priorities and local/regional planning teams contributed to analyses of the local landscape and the identification of strengths and challenges. A preliminary report was prepared analyzing South Carolina broadband accomplishments and analyses of specific areas of interest.

Planning Teams Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q1 2013)

Facilitation of local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 4, Quarter 1

Conduct Year 4, Quarter 1 Task Force meeting