

13Q2_Supplemental Answers_South Carolina

Connected Nation, Inc
Grant Number 45-50-M09044
Reporting Period End Date 06-30-13

14 a_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. My ConnectView is publicly available on the program website (<http://www.connectsc.org/interactive-map>). There were a total of 172 visits to the interactive map between April 1, 2013, and June 30, 2013.

During this quarter, the project received a total of 4 broadband inquiries. Additionally, one e-mail was received this quarter from a consumer that can also be used for verification purposes.

For this reporting period, 1,315 field verification tests were conducted. From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 42 companies (out of a universe of 46 viable providers) totaling 91.30% within the state of South Carolina.

Several broadband maps were updated and published on the Connect South Carolina website this quarter including:

- Broadband Growth
- Broadband Service Inventory
- Broadband Service Inventory (Advertised Speeds of at Least 3 Mbps Downstream and 768 Kbps Upstream)
- Broadband Service Inventory by Congressional District
- Density of Households Unserved by a Broadband Provider
- Density of Providers
- Maximum Advertised Download Speed
- Multiple/Single Platform
- Underserved Areas
- Underserved Areas with Mobile

Connect South Carolina's research from the April 2013 data submission shows that 91% of rural households in South Carolina have access to fixed broadband service of at

least 3 megabytes per second (Mbps) download and 768 kilobytes per second (Kbps) upload, increasing from October 2012 availability figure of 90.89%. This was the seventh comprehensive broadband availability data refresh since the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) data collection started in 2010. The findings of the new broadband availability research include: 93.22% of all South Carolina households now have access to fixed broadband service of at least 3 Mbps download and 768 Kbps upload, excluding mobile and satellite services; 77% of all South Carolina households have access to 50 Mbps download and 1.5 Mbps upload fixed broadband service, excluding mobile and satellite services; 1,744,455 out of 1,801,181 households in South Carolina have access to a fixed wireless or wired broadband service offering at least 768 Kbps downstream and 200 Kbps upstream. This figure excludes mobile and satellite services and leaves 56,700 households without access to fixed broadband service. Availability at 10 Mbps download and 1.5 Mbps upload, including mobile wireless, increased by 2.8% since October 2012, while fixed wireless availability at 768 Kbps download and 200 Kbps upload in South Carolina decreased by 3.25%. There are currently 8 providers in South Carolina that offer fiber-to-the-home broadband services, providing 8.4% of households with access to this type of service.

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.

The use of Mobile Pulse as a performance measurement tool for mobile broadband was introduced as a field validation methodology in Q1 2013 and significantly expanded during Q2 2013. Of the 1,315 total field verifications conducted on all platforms across South Carolina, Mobile Pulse represented 1,283 of these validations.

The Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) team has formulated a plan to conduct crowd sourcing and field validation testing to ascertain satellite broadband performance under specific conditions. With regard to crowd sourcing, an e-mail has been developed to respond to all broadband inquiries with known satellite connectivity to request they run speed tests on the program website during a specified window of time so we can capture and identify such tests. Early results have produced a 35% response rate to our initial e-mail.

Connect South Carolina continues to reach out to agencies across South Carolina to solicit Community Anchor Institution (CAI) support and participation. During the second quarter, program staff reached out to the South Carolina State Library for support in securing data from the library sector. The state library has pledged data from all local libraries to be submitted at the beginning of the third quarter.

14 b_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 4, Quarter 2 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Analyze 2013 business survey research results and present initial findings to stakeholders

This milestone was partially met. Program research staff finished the initial analysis of the 2013 business survey and provided these analyses to Dr. Mingjie Sun, the peer reviewer, for verification and recommendations. Dr. Sun has not yet finished reviewing the data. Once the peer reviewing is finished, Connect South Carolina will present initial findings to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) SBI program office, South Carolina Governor's Office, Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council (formally listed as the Task Force) and state stakeholders.

Milestone: Peer review of 2013 business survey research completed

This milestone was partially met. Dr. Mingjie Sun of Iowa State University has been contracted to conduct the peer review. Program research staff prepared the data and methodology document from the 2013 business survey, then provided the same to the peer reviewer along with the survey script. The survey script, methodology, and results are currently under review. Connect South Carolina anticipates receiving feedback and recommendations from the peer reviewer in early Q3. Feedback from the peer reviewer will be considered in the development of the 2014 business survey.

Milestone: Commence development of the 2013 residential survey script

This milestone was partially met. Internal and external meetings were held in order to discuss the design of 2013 residential survey. Based on feedback from the state stakeholders program research staff started to develop survey scripts. The script has not yet been finalized in order to accommodate further state stakeholder input that staff anticipates receiving in July.

Milestone: Initiate 2013 economic development survey peer review

This milestone was not met. At this time, Connect South Carolina is searching for a peer reviewer, preferably within the state of South Carolina. Discussions are underway to identify a peer reviewer, and a contract is expected to be executed in Q3 2013. At that time, the survey instrument, along with the survey results are expected to be peer reviewed.

Milestone: Initiate 2013 economic development survey research

This milestone was partially met. A spreadsheet with census-defined quotas and weights for the 2013 economic development survey were created. Staff is still in the process of renewing the contract with the quantitative data provider (QDP) who will assist with the data collection; however, the data collection process is expected to occur in Q3 2013, and the data file with weighted results will also be generated in Q3 2013.

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

Year 4, Quarter 1 Milestone: Initiate 2013 business survey peer review

This milestone was met in Q2 2013. Dr. Mingjie Sun of Iowa State University was named as peer reviewer and the 2013 businesses survey results and methodology were provided to Dr. Sun for verification and recommendations.

Year 4, Quarter 1 Milestone: Initiate 2013 business survey research

This milestone was met in Q2 2013. A spreadsheet was created with census-defined quotas and weights for the 2013 business survey last quarter (Q1 2013). Data collection of the 2013 business survey concluded, and program staff conducted the analysis using the weights created last quarter, and generated a data file with weighted results.

Year 4, Quarter 1 Milestone: Commence development of the economic development survey script

This milestone was partially met. Connect South Carolina is finalizing the survey scripts of 2013 economic development survey, incorporating feedback from the state stakeholders. This quarter, staff facilitated discussion with state stakeholders and the quantitative data provider (QDP) regarding what methodology would be best suited for collecting responses from economic development officials statewide, and these discussions have resulted in methodology changes that necessitate changes to the script. As such, the survey was not able to begin in Q2 2013 as scheduled; we anticipate initiating this survey in Q3 2013.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q3 2013):

Finalize and distribute 2013 business survey research results

Initiate 2013 residential survey peer review

Initiate 2013 residential survey research

Analyze 2013 economic development survey research results and present initial findings to stakeholders

Peer review of 2013 economic development survey research completed

14b_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 4, Quarter 2 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Facilitation of local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 4, Quarter 2

This milestone was met. Community Tech Team Specialists completed the second Community Technology Action Plan and had its first Certified Connected Community, Anderson County. Fifteen (15) South Carolina communities are currently active in the Connected program: Abbeville, Allendale, Barnwell, Berkeley, Clarendon, Darlington, Dorchester, Greenwood, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Kershaw, Marion, Marlboro, and Oconee. These communities have been trained and provided the Connected program information (toolkits, research, and mapping data) to assist them with managing their community assessment process. These counties will also continue conducting team meetings with and without the Specialists and tracking their activities while working on their Connected program assessment. The Community Tech Team Specialists have provided and will continue to provide support to all South Carolina communities as they move through the assessment process. The technology action plan is generated once community assessments are complete.

Connect South Carolina has developed a Community Engagement map that provides the name and status of each community engaged in the Connected process. The map defines and tracks all phases of the Connected community program from interested to completed or certified. This map serves the purpose of providing the most current view of where each community is in the process of becoming a certified Connected community. The most current version of the Connect South Carolina Community Engagement map has been provided as an attachment via the "13Q2_Project Attachment_Question 5" document.

Milestone: Conduct Year 4, Quarter 2 Task Force meeting

This milestone was met as staff held its first Connect South Carolina Task Force (renamed to Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council) meeting in May, 2013, and the second meeting in June, 2013. Meeting notes were compiled and recommendations were made for the program. At this time, the Broadband Advisory Council will be made up of individuals from the following organizations: Clemson University Strom Thurmond Institute, Municipal Association of South Carolina, AT&T,

Farm Bureau, South Carolina Economic Developers Association, South Carolina Department of Commerce, Original Six Foundation, South Carolina Telecommunications Association, South Carolina Cable Association, South Carolina Division of State Information Technology, and South Carolina State Library. Program staff was excited to pull together such a great group for the council members and is looking forward to conducting quarterly meetings in an effort to work together and close the digital gap in South Carolina. The next Council meeting is currently scheduled for August 22, 2013.

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

Outstanding Milestones from:

Year 4, Quarter 1: Conduct Task Force meeting

Year 3, Quarter 4: Conduct Year 3, Quarter 4 Task Force meeting

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 were met as staff held its first Connect South Carolina Task Force (will be renamed to Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council) meeting in May, 2013, and the second meeting in June, 2013. Program staff worked with various statewide entities, including the Office of the Governor, to identify key statewide stakeholders to serve on the Broadband Advisory Council. Council members are tasked with identifying and removing barriers to broadband access and identifying opportunities for increased broadband applications and adoption in unserved and underserved areas of the state. In addition, the Council will oversee all necessary duties and responsibilities to reach the goal to expand broadband technology including the application of federal funding/grants, grant compliance, mapping, and data management.

Outstanding Milestones from:

Year 3, Quarter 4: Conduct Strategic Planning Meeting 2012

Year 3, Quarter 3: Prepare for the 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting

These milestones and the surrounding activities were fulfilled by the holding a statewide technology summit. A request to revise the annual Strategic Planning Meeting, and related activities, to Summit(s) will be presented via a revised Connect South Carolina Project Plan which will be submitted to NTIA next quarter. The newly formed Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council will also provide feedback for the topic of the Connect South Carolina summits.

On May 16, 2013 program staff facilitated the first annual Connect South Carolina State Broadband Summit “Connections 2013” in partnership with IT-oLogy. This summit was attended by over 120 participants; furthermore, the summit was streamed live over the internet and reached approximately 70 people in addition to those in attendance. The goal of the summit was to gather South Carolina’s local and state leaders, technology champions, technology providers, and state educators together in order to increase awareness of the role of technology and broadband in economic development planning and workforce readiness. The summit also allowed the program staff to educate state stakeholders about technology connections through broadband infrastructure and applications by laying out the possibilities (highlighting innovative ways technology is impacting different sectors) and reiterating the demand for quality broadband to support such applications.

Planning Teams Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q3 2013)

Facilitation of local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 4, Quarter 3
Conduct Year 4, Quarter 3 Task Force meeting

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

Connect South Carolina reports that the new fiber line running to Piedmont CMG (Contract Manufacturing Group) is complete and the company is pleased with the speeds and connectivity that they are now receiving about both facilities. This advancement of infrastructure stemmed from the kick-off meeting held in Q1 2013 in Greenwood County. The company there was experiencing slow speeds and inconsistency of service. Connect South Carolina team members were able to connect the company in danger of closing with a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) that ended up providing a cost-effective solution to the company. Since the fiber install, the company has been able to receive a loan to upgrade the facility and is planning on hiring 7-12 new employees this year.

Anderson County became the first Certified Connected Community in South Carolina. They started the Connected community engagement program last August with leadership from the Senior Grant Writer for Anderson County fulfilling the role of the community champion. They were recognized as the first certified Connected community in South Carolina and the fifth certified Connected community in the nation on May 14, 2013. The Anderson County Technology Team and Connect South Carolina held a celebration at the Anderson County Public Library, unveiling the county’s completed Technology Action Plan.

Program representatives presented at the Original Six Foundation Board of Directors meeting in June, which is the Governor's personal foundation. After hearing of the good work that Connect South Carolina is doing, the Governor asked that the project team be a part of the Original Six's permanent partners and provide representation at each of the County Leadership Days that she sets up around the state. This allows our planning team the opportunity to gain credibility at the hand of the Governor and to immediately connect with local stakeholders in each of the counties.

Connect South Carolina presented at the South Carolina Telecommunications Association Conference in April.