

14Q1_Supplemental Answers_Texas

Connected Nation, Inc.

Grant Number 48-50-M09064

Reporting Period End Date 03-31-14

14 a Project Attachment Data Collection

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

Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) staff conducted and completed provider outreach in support of the semi-annual data submission. The completed submission, under the State Broadband Initiatives (SBI) program, included datasets for 93.95% of the Texas provider community, or 202 of 215 total providers. There were 184 participating providers and 18 additional non-participating providers whose estimated coverage areas were submitted. Of the 184 participating providers, 108 supplied an update to their network or coverage area(s), while 66 reported no change. The remaining 10 represent providers who previously supplied data but were non-responsive in the current update effort; therefore, their previous dataset was put forward as part of the compilation. Of the 13 providers that were not represented in the submission, 12 refused to participate in the voluntary program or were non-responsive to multiple contact attempts, and one provider was in some form of progress toward data submission but was unable to submit coverage areas at the time of the submission. The submission also included business/commercial providers; of the residential providers represented in the submission, 143 were providers that do not distinguish between serving primarily residential or primarily non-residential users. Nine business-only providers were also included in the submission.

An interactive mapping web application, called My ConnectView, continues to be maintained. The application is housed in a highly available, monitored, and managed environment. My ConnectView is publicly available on the program website (www.connectedtx.org). There were a total of 1,002 visits to the interactive map between January 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014.

During this quarter, the project received a total of 8 broadband inquiries. Users can also request non-confidential mapping data produced for the SBI grant program; 8 such requests were received between January 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014.

Maps of broadband availability for each State House and State Senate district were completed in January, and a custom community engagement map was created for the state.

For this reporting period, 576 field verification tests were conducted. From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 184 companies (out of 215 viable providers) totaling 85.58% within the state of Texas.

In an effort to provide the most accurate validation information available, project to date validation numbers are in the process of being reviewed and recalculated to consider the impact on the total percentage of providers validated when removing companies that have gone out of business and/or

have been merged with or acquired by other companies. As this review will continue in Q2, the validation numbers presented for this quarter are preliminary and conservative reflecting an adjustment to the percentage of providers validated in an effort to account for this variance.

ETS Staff completed propagation studies in the 2.4 Gigahertz (GHz) and 5 GHz spectrum bands on Bosque County vertical assets. These were provided to county representatives to be utilized by the county to seek a service provider who could offer service from these county assets.

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.

Based on information released by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on the Rural Broadband Experiments, program staff created maps of the eligible census tracts and assisted states, broadband providers, and other stakeholders with reviewing and understanding the information provided to help with expressions of interest as possible.

Tabular information on Community Anchor Institution (CAI) connectivity was updated using October 2013 datasets in an effort to assist with information being reviewed and prepared by Policy and Research Development staff.

14 b Project Attachment Capacity Building

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 5, Quarter 1 per approved project plan:

Milestone: 2014, Quarter 1, Connected Texas program office administration

This milestone was met. The program office in Austin remains fully staffed and interacting with stakeholders, such as the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Public Utilities Commission, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Education Agency, Texas Computer Education Association, Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Economic Development Council, Texas Department of Information Resources, Texas Natural Resources Information System, broadband providers, broadband-related partners, and other representatives throughout the state through periodic status reports, continual direct interactions, addressing requests for information or data, and raising awareness of broadband-related news and information through a variety of media. Connected Texas is a go-to resource within the state as a primary champion of broadband as it relates to adoption, access, and use.

Milestone: Conduct 2014, Quarter 1, Stakeholder Group meeting

This milestone was met. Stakeholder group meetings occurred throughout the quarter, through group settings and/or individual meetings with stakeholders from Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Public Utilities Commission, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Education Agency, Texas Computer Education Association, Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Department of Information Resources, Texas Department of Natural Resources, and Texas

Economic Development Council. The Program Manager set the agenda, met with the stakeholders, and utilized these recurring meetings in order to present state partners with programmatic updates and solicit feedback. Notable updates are communicated publicly via blog posts on the program website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. Stakeholder meetings have allowed staff to continue highlighting program successes with SBI projects such as local community engagement.

Q1 2014 Capacity Building Challenges and Mitigation:

No major challenges were encountered during the quarter.

Capacity Planning Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

- 2014, Quarter 2, Connected Texas program office administration
- Conduct 2014, Quarter 2, Stakeholder Group meeting

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

Program representatives conducted an informational webinar regarding the FCC Rural Broadband Experiments on March 14, 2014. The webinar drew substantial interest from stakeholders and representatives of partner organizations and entities in the state of Texas. In addition, staff supported over a dozen organizations including municipalities, providers, and regional entities with more specific information on the FCC Rural Broadband Experiments in order for the organizations to pursue the funds.

Outreach and Awareness staff drafted and sent three e-newsletters to stakeholders providing updates on the progress to expand broadband access, adoption, and use in Texas. The newsletters can be found attached to this report by way of the "14Q1_Project Attachment_Question 5_Texas" document.

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 next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Technical Assistance Milestones Year 5, Quarter 1 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2013 residential survey research results

This milestone was not met. The survey was completed during the previous quarter. Survey results were analyzed and the initial results were generated in Q1 2014; however, peer review of the survey was not completed during the quarter due to technical difficulties with the statistical software package being used by the peer reviewer. Staff is working through these difficulties with the peer reviewer and completion of the peer review and distribution of the survey's initial results are expected to take place in Q2 2014. Subsequent to completion of the peer review, survey results will be finalized and distributed via in-person presentations, media releases, website updates, and social media postings, as appropriate.

Milestone: Peer Review of the 2014 business survey

This milestone was not met. The 2014 business survey was initiated in Q1 2014. The survey data collection must be completed before a review of the survey methodology can be carried out. Once the data collection process is completed, staff will be able to analyze the data and provide the initial results, survey script, and methodology documents for peer review. Peer review of the 2014 business survey will take place in Q2 2014.

Milestone: Initiate 2014 business survey research

This milestone was met. The 2014 business survey was initiated in Q1 2014. A spreadsheet with census-defined quotas was created and data collection by a third-party survey collection agency began during the quarter. At the end of the quarter, collection of respondent data is underway.

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

Year 4, Quarter 4 Outstanding Milestone: Analyze 2013 residential survey research results.

This milestone was met. Residential survey data collection was completed during the previous quarter. During Q1 2014, results of the survey were weighed and analyzed, and the initial results were generated. The results are currently awaiting peer review, after which the residential survey results will be finalized and distributed.

Year 4, Quarter 4 Outstanding Milestone: Finalize 2014 business survey script

This milestone was met. State stakeholders were provided the opportunity to offer input and make requests related to the 2014 business survey during the previous quarter. With input from stakeholders in mind, the survey script and instrument was completed during Q1. The business survey was also initiated during the quarter, data collection is currently underway, and the survey is expected to be completed in Q2 2014.

Year 4, Quarter 3 Outstanding Milestone: Peer Review of the 2013 residential survey

This milestone was not met. The residential survey results were weighted, analyzed, and initial results were compiled. The peer review process began during the quarter, however during the peer review the reviewer encountered technical difficulties with the statistical software package being used to review Connected Texas' initial results. Peer review will be completed in Q2 2014 so as to allow enough time for the reviewer to access a different version of the statistical software.

Q1 2014 Technical Assistance Challenges and Mitigation:

No major challenges were encountered during the quarter.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

- Finalize and distribute 2013 residential survey research results
- Peer Review of the 2014 business survey
- Peer Review of the 2013 residential survey
- Analyze 2014 business survey research results
- Finalize 2014 residential survey script
- Plan the 2014 Annual Statewide Strategic Broadband Planning Meeting

14 b 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 next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Planning Teams Milestones Year 5, Quarter 1 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Conduct Year 5, Quarter 1 planning team meetings

This milestone was met. Program staff planned, scheduled, and facilitated community planning meetings across Texas in an effort to advance broadband adoption, access, and use on a local level. These planning meetings discussed the Connected community engagement program, identified broadband resources in the communities, conducted local broadband planning, and gathered information to assemble a Technology Action Plan and work toward meeting Connected certification requirements. Invitations were prepared, agendas were created, sign-in sheets were gathered, and meeting notes were taken during these meetings. Currently, there are 66 Texas communities involved in some stage of the local/regional planning team process.

During the quarter, Cass County and Fayette County completed Technology Action Plans with specific recommendations designed to make way for greater technology use and brighter economic futures in each community. The plans were released at public events in the communities attended by local officials, business representatives, and community leaders.

Q1 2014 Challenges and Mitigation:

No major challenges were encountered.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

- Conduct Year 5, Quarter 2 planning team meetings

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

A community engagement map that displays the status of each community engaged in the Connected community engagement program was maintained. This map shows the most current view of where each community is in the process of becoming a certified Connected community in Texas. The most current version of the map has been provided as an attachment via the "14Q1_Project Attachment_Question 5" document.