

**To:** Department of Commerce  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

**From:** First Step Internet, LLC

**Subject:** Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) Extension Request, First Step Internet (Award ID:NT10BIX5570051) for Award Period March 1, 2010 to September 30, 2014

**Date:** August 27, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

First Step Internet, LLC requests a period of performance extension until September 30, 2015 to continue the successful implementation of our Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) award. This request includes this project's extension rationale and provides supporting documentation as attachments to the Award Action Request (AAR).

- 1) **Reason(s) for Extension Request:** First Step Internet, LLC has experienced circumstances that have caused the need for an extension beyond the original project end date. The narrative below provides an explanation of how the project-specific circumstances resulted in the need for a period of performance extension; our proposed plan for addressing any outstanding issues; and the project benefits that will be delivered during the extension period.

**First Step Internet, LLC (First Step) requests an extension to its BTOP-funded grant from September 30, 2014 to September 30, 2015 to enable it to complete its project and to ensure compliance with all BTOP-funded grant requirements. Our compliance project report has been submitted to EHP as well and the appropriate SHPO and THPO. We anticipate the review process may take an additional 60 days. Given that a portion of the remaining work is at a high mountain location, the winter weather may shut down any opportunity to complete any remaining work this year. Thus the request to extend into the summer of 2015.**

**First Step has completed almost 100% of its microwave network located in a five county area in northern Idaho. That network consists of 12 new towers and 21 existing towers/structures with connections to approximately 43 community anchor institutions (CAIs). In early 2013, First Step petitioned NTIA for approval to build an additional 7 paths to connect 5 new CAIs/schools and improve service to another 2 schools. Required approvals from the US Forest Service and the Nez Perce THPO are still pending, necessitating an extension to enable these entities to conduct their reviews.**

**In addition, First Step is required to ensure that all towers/structures and CAIs meet BTOP-funded grant conditions, which will require additional time and effort to complete.**

**Once we complete these activities, First Step and NTIA can be assured that the First Step project meets the BTOP goals of building a regional broadband network to expand capacity to schools, libraries, hospitals, safety agencies, and medical facilities throughout the un-served and under-served areas and communities in the Counties of Latah, Nez Perce, Lewis, Idaho, and Clearwater, Idaho impacting 46,308 residents, 21,228 households, 13,125 square miles and 8,925 census blocks.**



2) **Supporting Documentation:** First Step Internet LLC submits the following documentation to assist NTIA with the review of this extension request. The attached materials have been updated according to revised project plans for an extended award period and reflect the narrative provided above.

- **Revised SF-424C Budget and associated narrative** (documentation of how remaining Federal and match funds in each SF-424C category will be used)
- **Project Plan** (updated timeline/milestones needed to achieve benefits within the extension period, noted below)
- **Revised Performance Projections** (table below)

**Revised Performance Projections**

Performance Indicator	Revised Project Goals
New Network Miles Deployed	<b>572</b>
New Network Miles Leased	
Existing Network Miles Upgraded	<b>54</b>
Existing Network Miles Leased	
CAIs Receiving New Access	<b>22</b>
CAIs Receiving Improved Access	<b>28</b>

- **For recipients requesting an extension beyond September 30, 2013, a breakdown of planned expended award funding** (table below)

Funding Period	Planned Federal Amount	Planned Match Amount
Actual Funding Spent to Date and Planned <u>Expended</u> Funding to Sept. 30, 2014	\$1,981,758	\$549,491
Planned Funding Needed Beyond Sept. 30, 2014	<b>\$155,694*</b>	<b>\$38,923</b>

\*As noted in the attached 424C, \$161,617 of the required \$194,617 funds will pay for radio equipment with the remaining funds used to pay general construction/installation costs.

**Project Plan/Timeline** to include:

Activities	Timeline
Acquire all needed approvals from US Forest Service	September 2014 to September 2015
Acquire all needed approvals from Nez Perce THPO	September 2014 to September 2015
Acquire all needed approvals from Idaho SHPO	September 2014 to September 2015
Complete construction once all approvals received	Duration of about two weeks depending on weather conditions



First Step Internet, LLC understands that it must continue to comply with all statutory and programmatic requirements and that this is a no-cost period of performance extension request only (i.e., no additional BTOP funding will be provided under this extension request).

Sincerely,

Kevin Owen  
CEO  
First Step Internet, LLC

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**Recipients are encouraged to work with their Federal Program Officer (FPO) prior to submitting the extension request. Upon submission of the extension request and supporting documentation as an AAR, the FPO will forward to the Grants Office. The Grants Office reviews the request and communicates the decision to the recipient.**