

14Q1_Supplemental Answers_Alaska

Connected Nation, Inc.

Grant Number 02-50-M09071

Reporting Period End Date 03-31-14

14 a Data Collection Project

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)

Engineering and Technical (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 100% of the Alaska provider community, or 27 total providers. Of the 27 participating providers, 20 supplied an update to their network or coverage area(s), while 5 reported no change. The remaining 2 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 this compilation. The submission also included business/commercial providers; of the residential providers represented in the submission, 20 are providers that do not distinguish between serving primarily residential or primarily non-residential users. Two business-only providers were also included in the submission.

An interactive mapping web application, called My ConnectView, continued 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.connectak.org). There were a total of 197 visits to the interactive map between January 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014.

Users can request non-confidential mapping data produced for the SBI grant program; 3 such requests were received between January 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014.

From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 22 companies (out of 27 viable providers) totaling 81.48% within the state of Alaska.

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.

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. Other specialty maps created this quarter include those of broadband availability for each State House and State Senate district.

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 Capacity Building Project

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: Year 5, Quarter 1 Connect Alaska program office administration

This milestone was met. The program office in Anchorage is fully staffed and interacting with stakeholders. Program staff meets at least weekly with representatives from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) to discuss the status of the project and receive guidance on the program. Multiple discussions were held specifically in relation to crafting an alternative plan, submitted for Department of Commerce approval, to utilize the remaining Application Development & Usage funds and Technical Assistance funds. During Q1, staff submitted a revised budget, budget narrative, and project plan to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) for approval inclusive of these changes.

Program staff provided administrative support to the Alaska Broadband Task Force this quarter and participated in the only scheduled Task Force meeting during the quarter, held on January 6, 2014.

Additional meetings were held with various representatives of other government agencies in Alaska, including the Department of Education and the Department of Transportation. These meetings focused on broadband topics and served to address inquiries, feedback, or concerns.

Milestone: Year 5, Quarter 1 Meeting of the Alaska Broadband Task Force/Advisory Committee complete

This milestone was met. The Alaska Broadband Task Force met on January 6, 2014 with 15 members attending in-person or via telephone. The agenda of the meeting included: finalizing the draft Task Force blueprint and updating any final recommendations, hearing from the Department of Transportation regarding how it interfaces with utilities and Internet providers on the deployment of high-speed broadband, discussing an Alaska Broadband Summit, and discussing the development of a \$150,000 contract program, from the remaining Task Force designated grant funds. Results of the meeting were the discussion of final Task Force recommendations, and the decision to use approximately \$100,000 for two \$50,000 contracts centered on economic development and broadband. The focus of these contracts would be on digital assistance/learning for entrepreneurs and businesses, ideally small and home-based

businesses. Approximately \$50,000 was also set aside for follow-up Task Force research with the University of Alaska Anchorage, Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER).

Staff prepared the necessary paperwork for the Task Force funding initiatives and raised awareness of the opportunities on the program website and through social media postings.

Broadband Capacity Building outstanding milestones (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:

Outstanding Milestone: Year 4, Quarter 4 Meeting of the Alaska Broadband Task Force/Advisory Committee complete

This milestone was met. The Alaska Broadband Task Force met on January 6, 2014 where business from both Q4 2013 and Q1 2014 was covered. Outcomes from the meeting are detailed in the Year 5, Quarter 1 Meeting milestone above.

Q1 2014 Challenges and Mitigation:

No major challenges were encountered during the quarter.

Capacity Planning Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

- Year 2014, Quarter 2 Connect Alaska program office administration
- Year 2014, Quarter 2 Meeting of the Alaska Broadband Task Force/Advisory Committee complete

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

Program staff attended and participated in the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference's (SWAMC) 2014 Annual Economic Summit, held in Anchorage. Program staff arranged for NTIA State Broadband Initiative Director, Anne Neville, to be a speaker at the event. Discussions were held on economic development fostered through broadband. Information about the event and visit, highlighting Connect Alaska's work, was posted on the White House Blog by Anne Neville.

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

Program representatives conducted an informational webinar on 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 Alaska.

14 b Technical Assistance Project

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: Year 5, Quarter 1 Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) Technical Assistance Activities

This milestone was met. During Q1 2014, the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) made multiple visits to three different communities in Alaska: Haines, Manokotak, and St. Paul Island. During those community engagement visits, AASB representatives conducted research via a survey with residents to find out how they use the Internet, and what level of connectivity they have. Digital entrepreneurship workshops were also held, in which the AASB representatives helped residents identify their e-commerce goals, build websites, photograph goods they were interested in selling, and establish a digital identity online for e-commerce purposes. Community engagements in Manokotak were very successful with presenters in meetings or workshops for 12 hours per day. A solid group of 11 citizens came to all presentations and all teachers are involved in some supported technology/broadband project within the community.

AASB representatives also laid the groundwork to start a videoconference series with St. Paul, Manokotak, Haines, and Metlakatla pending scheduling in April to support their efforts within the communities and to help start collaborations between the communities on broadband issues. A contractor skilled in systems engineering and broadband applications will lead the series with experts brought in from telecommunications, e-commerce, and e-government sectors.

A video highlighting the AASB community engagement activities in Metlakatla was created and released on the program website and highlighted in blog and social media postings.

Milestone: Finalize and distribute AASB local survey research results

This milestone was not met. Fewer survey responses than anticipated have been collected, so additional data collection will need to continue through upcoming AASB engagements in rural Alaskan communities. Data collection continues as AASB representatives travel to various remote locations to raise awareness of the survey and encourage more individuals living in these remote areas to participate in the online survey. Data collection is scheduled to end in Q2 2014, at which point the survey results will be finalized, data will be analyzed, and results will be provided to state stakeholders and released publicly via blog posts, website updates, and social media postings.

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

Year 4, Quarter 3 Outstanding Milestone: Finalize and distribute AASB local survey research results

This milestone was not met. Fewer survey responses than anticipated have been collected, so additional data collection will need to continue through upcoming AASB engagements in rural Alaskan communities. Data collection continues as AASB representatives travel to various remote locations to raise awareness of the survey and encourage more individuals living in these remote areas to participate in the online survey. Data collection is scheduled to end in Q2 2014, at which point the survey results will be finalized, data will be analyzed, and results will be provided to state stakeholders and released publicly via blog posts, website updates, and social media postings.

Year 3, Quarter 4 Outstanding Milestone: Plan Alaska Broadband Summit**Year 4, Quarter 1 Outstanding Milestone: Conduct Alaska Broadband Summits**

These milestones were not met. An Alaska Broadband Summit was discussed during the Q1 2014 Alaska Broadband Task Force meeting. Ideas and merits were discussed for a summit, and the Task Force ultimately decided by vote not to conduct an Alaska Broadband Summit. DCCED does, however, want Connect Alaska to hold a Broadband Summit. The summit is expected to take place in Q2 or Q3 2014.

Q1 2014 Technical Assistance Challenges and Mitigation:

Data collection for the AASB local survey research continues to be slower than anticipated. As a result, data collection will continue through upcoming AASB engagements in rural Alaskan communities, and local survey research results will be released in Q2 2014.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

- Year 5, Quarter 2 AASB Technical Assistance Activities
- Finalize and distribute AASB local survey research results

14 b Application Usage & Development Project

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.

Application Usage & Development Milestones Year 5, Quarter 1 per approved project plan**Milestone: Year 5, Quarter 1 Administration of the Application Development Fund**

This milestone was met. Program staff participated in multiple meetings with stakeholders to discuss viable Application Development fund uses. During the quarter DCCED proposed to utilize funds to secure Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) technology. A dedicated BRE system will integrate essential state of Alaska government databases, communications, collaboration, and analytical tools within a web-based, user-friendly interface. BRE technology allows for tracking and communicating with businesses on an individual, regional, or state-wide basis and will monitor business trends and metrics within Alaska. A BRE system allows sorting of this information and the preparation of purpose-specific reports. The software would provide DCCED with a valuable tool that would bring together Economic Development Organizations (EDOs), chambers of commerce, regional governments, Alaska Native corporations, and a wide range of groups engaged in economic development work around the state.

Staff worked with DCCED to draft the necessary documents and sub-award agreements to move forward with the purchase and implementation of the BRE system pending approval from the Department of Commerce and the state of Alaska.

Milestone: Year 5, Quarter 1 Monitor application development projects

This milestone was met. Planning for the purchase and utilization of Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) technology occurred during the quarter with representatives from DCCED and the state of Alaska. Staff supported and monitored the BRE system proposal as it circulated within several Alaskan

government agencies, and worked with DCCED to draft the necessary documents and sub-award agreements to move forward with the purchase and implementation of the BRE system. The documents are pending approval from the Department of Commerce and the state of Alaska.

Application Usage & Development outstanding milestones (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:

Year 4, Quarter 2 Outstanding Milestone: Finalize the E-Government Assessment

The milestone has been partially met. The e-government survey is being used to examine how Alaskans, both urban and rural, utilize and perceive government services online in order to determine and inform future application development projects. Program staff has initiated the survey online through the program website. A preliminary analysis of the results found that a statistically significant sample was not achieved in order to finalize the assessment or compile results during the quarter. Therefore, further AASB engagements will need to continue, with the scheduled end date of Q2 2014. The survey will be conducted during these engagements, and it is expected that a statistically significant sample will be achieved and the survey results will be finalized and distributed during Q2 2014.

Q1 2014 Application Usage & Development Challenges and Mitigation:

Initial Application Development proposals were declined by state agency representatives due to concerns over the internal resources needed within the state to create and support the applications. The program team continued discussions with DCCED in an effort to scope alternative options for the Application Development fund. An alternative plan was presented to the Department of Commerce that includes utilizing Application Development and Usage funds for the purchase and implementation of Business Retention and Expansion technology for the state and re-categorizing the remaining funds for a school specific CAI project.

Application Usage & Development Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

- Year 2014, Quarter 2 Administration of the Application Development Fund
- Year 2014, Quarter 2 Monitor application development projects