

## **13Q3\_Supplemental Answers\_Iowa**

**Connected Nation, Inc.**  
**Grant Number 19-50-M09047**  
**Reporting Period End Date 09-30-13**

For Q3 2013, Connect Iowa's match percentage based on total expenditures was 17.97%. Thus Connect Iowa (CIA) will fall short of the required match percentage by 2.08%. CIA has identified additional sources of match that, if approved by the NTIA Program Office, will resolve the match shortfall. Connect Iowa is engaged in conversation with the NTIA Program Office regarding the budget modification process required in order to secure approval of the match value and source.

### **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).**

The semi-annual data update submission was presented to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) under the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) grant program. The update included datasets for 100 percent of the Iowa provider community, or 199 of 199 total providers.

Connect Iowa 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.connectiowa.org/interactive-map>). There were a total of 159 visits to the interactive map between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013.

During this quarter, the project received two broadband inquiries. Additional information received through e-mail from consumers that can also be used for verification purposes totaled four for this quarter. Users can also request non-confidential mapping data produced for the SBI grant program; one such data request was received between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013.

For this reporting period, 20 field verification tests were conducted. From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 186 companies (out of a universe of 199 viable providers) totaling 93.47% within the state of Iowa.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff created maps to show the status of the active and certified communities within the state for the Connected Community Engagement Program. This map is enclosed as a part of the "Planning Teams" section of the "13Q3\_Project Attachment\_Supplemental Answers" document.

Based on the release of information by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) related to the Connect America Fund (CAF), a statewide map was developed to visualize proposed areas for subsidized build-out under CAF Phase I, 2013. This map is available online at [www.connectednation.org/fcc-maps](http://www.connectednation.org/fcc-maps).

#### **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.**

Connect Iowa is committed to relationship building across all sectors. These relationships have provided great insight in how we can better engage sector-specific Community Anchor Institutions (CAI). During Q3, efforts to build awareness and collect connectivity data from the state's community anchor institutions (CAI) redoubled. A meeting was held with the state librarian in early August which led to an invitation to present at the Iowa Library Commissioners meeting later that month to encourage support of CAI data collection. Staff also met again with Iowa Department of Education to dig deeper into how schools might be better incited to provide data. This meeting opened doors to presenting at the Q3 Area Education Agency (AEA) district media and IT directors meeting. During the presentation, Connect Iowa was able to underscore the importance of obtaining connectivity data, especially in light of possible needs for some federal initiatives, such as ConnectED. Directors from the nine AEA districts attended and were willing to work with IT and media directors in their respective districts to increase CAI data collection efforts.

Additionally, meetings were conducted with the state E-Rate coordinator and representatives from Iowa Medicaid, and the Telligen Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center, which is designated to serve clinics and critical access and rural hospitals in Iowa by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, in their efforts to meet Meaningful Use and Health Information Technology (HIT) requirements. Telligen was willing to distribute the program's CAI survey to their members.

Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) staff has two main objectives in validating a provider's broadband service: 1) confirm the provider's presence in the target testing area, and 2) confirm that the provider's Internet service meets or exceeds the required minimum broadband speed.

Over the past three years, attempts to use any of our tailored validation techniques for satellite validation proved futile as the basic tools for validating other platforms do not exist for satellite. For example, residential satellite equipment for broadband is difficult to distinguish from satellite video gear as viewed from the street. Further, a satellite installer can serve several counties, and may not have a retail presence. As a result, confirming the presence of a specific satellite provider in any targeted community has been challenging. In trying to confirm broadband speeds, historically slow speeds and high latency on the satellite services have also prevented this level of validation.

The ETS team recently devised an approach to confirm both presence and speed by deepening the desk-top research in advance of field validation, accessing controlled use of satellite testing equipment, and leveraging Connected Nation's rich database of broadband inquiries. This new approach will commence next quarter and we hope to report successes from the effort.

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

*Broadband Capacity Building Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestones per approved Project Plan*

**Milestone: Year 4, Quarter 3 Connect Iowa Office Administration**

This milestone was met. Connect Iowa continued to provide administrative project oversight involving a variety of tasks that encompass administering the project plan, managing workflow and timeline, verifying work quality, gathering documentation in support of community outreach/projects, and preparing reports as required by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and other stakeholders. Program staff has been heavily involved through creating agendas, scheduling meetings with community champions, and attending meetings with all associated stakeholders in an effort to lead the project team. Additional efforts have also been made to document stakeholder interactions. The office continues to develop as a viable resource that many communities, institutions, and the state Governor's office seek advisory input concerning broadband availability and access throughout the state.

Staff continues to make outreach to the state legislature and the governor's administration to keep them apprised of the program and its progress. This has led to increased visibility of the program's initiatives that address the mission to increase broadband access, adoption, and use. In Q3 2013, program staff worked with the governor's office and IEDA to identify several short- and long-term program recommendations concerning the governor's "Connect Every Iowan" broadband initiative. Building on these recommendations, the state requested additional information regarding the Connected Community Assessment Program.

The program manager participated in several state-led initiatives such as 1) working closely with the governor's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Advisory Council through participation on the broadband sub-Committee; 2) working with the Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board (the state's FirstNet Authority) by participating on the broadband sub-committee; and 3) working with the Iowa Department of Education. By participating with planning efforts as the state's schools move into online applications such as 1:1 initiatives, Connect Iowa has been able to share resources and expertise which has benefited the state as it looks to future broadband needs.

**Milestone: Conduct the meeting(s) of the Connect Iowa Advisory Committee in Year 4, Quarter 3**

This milestone was met. The Q3 Connect Iowa Advisory Committee meeting was held on September 12, 2013, with 16 members or member representatives present. During the meeting, program representatives provided committee members with an overview of 'Connect Every Iowan', a new broadband initiative announced by Iowa Governor Terry Branstad in early September. This effort will assist in long-term planning to increase broadband adoption, access, and use across the state in part through the Connected Community Engagement Program. Connect Iowa has a leadership role in the initiative. Additionally, members received an update on federal broadband initiatives including CAF Phase 1, FirstNet, and ConnectED. Committee member and Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications Coordinator provided attendees with further information on FirstNet efforts within the state. Accomplishments of the Committee are further documented and communicated thru various forms of media including blogs and press releases to stakeholders.

**Capacity Building major Activities for Next Quarter**

- Year 4, Quarter 4 Connect Iowa Office Administration
- Conduct Year 4, Quarter 4 meeting(s) of the Connect Iowa Advisory Committee

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

During Q3, program representatives participated in meetings with the Iowa Governor's Administration staff in preparation for the Governor's announcement of a new broadband initiative 'Connect Every Iowan.' As part of the initiative, the existing STEM Advisory Council broadband committee, of which Connect Iowa is a member, has been charged with three directives: 1) develop policy recommendations to increase broadband infrastructure, especially in underserved and unserved areas of the state, by December 2013; 2) research federal funding opportunities and public/private partnership opportunities to help advance broadband access, adoption, and use; and 3) develop a long-term broadband plan for Iowa by December 2014. Connect Iowa has been tasked in an executive directorship-type role to assist in these efforts. The initiative was announced by the Governor and Lt. Governor at a media conference on September 3, 2013. Connect Iowa provided comments during that event which received national media exposure. The STEM Broadband Committee held its initial meeting on September 10, with a second held September 24. The committee will meet at least twice monthly moving forward to December. Program staff has reached out to over 100 key stakeholders and sectors across the state to provide input for the committee's review, and much positive feedback for the initiative has been received.

The program has obtained significant recognition from the Governor's administration as a valued partner in the state's broadband initiatives. This relationship has been fostered over the course of many months, and some best practices can be outlined here. Of primary importance were the identification of the key administration staff, in Iowa's case the Governor's Legislative Liaison, and the establishment of a relationship with that individual through an initial invitation to sit on the Connect Iowa Advisory Committee. Throughout the following months, further conversations and meetings outside of the Advisory Committee led to the request for Connect Iowa and Connected Nation to present recommendations for increasing broadband access, adoption, and use. All responses to the Administration's request were timely and substantiated by solid research, mapping and policy statistics supported through the SBI grant. This information further demonstrated the knowledge and value the program could bring to the table in assisting the Administration's need for information. When the Governor's decision to launch a broadband initiative was finalized, Connect Iowa was well placed to play an integral role.

Program staff continues to participate on the broadband sub-committee for the Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board (ISICSB), which serves as the state authority for FirstNet initiatives. During Q3, Connect Iowa took part in two ISICSB meetings. Additionally, as part of the committee, a program representative participated in an LTE Coverage Mapping workshop presented by the Department of Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Management, in preparation for FirstNet activities.

The program manager continues to participate on the Iowa Rural Development Council, the state's arm of the USDA Rural Services division, and was named Council Secretary in Q3. This organization is comprised of stakeholders from USDA, the state universities and community colleges, telecommunications providers, Farm Bureau, the Small Business Administration, Sac and Fox Tribe,

Housing and Rural Development, Community Vitality Center, and local and state government. The Council serves as a clearinghouse for rural concerns and issues in the state, with members meeting quarterly to discuss current rural opportunities, issues, and to brainstorm solutions. As a member, the program manager has been invited to attend regular USDA rural roundtable events held across the state where information on the state's broadband landscape and offerings can be shared. Staff participated in several such meetings this quarter, where community members are invited to attend to learn more about resources available to them. Key emphases of what the program representative shares are related to program initiatives such as the Connected Community Engagement Program.

## **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 Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestones from approved Project Plan*

**Milestone: Release 2013 Business Survey results publicly**

This milestone was partially met. Even though the survey research results have been finalized, the updates to the program website and the design of the release documents have not yet been completed. Detailed results of the 2013 Business Survey and presentations are expected to be made available in Q4 2013 to members of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Connect Iowa Advisory Committee along with other stakeholders

**Milestone: Initiate 2013 Residential Survey research**

This milestone was met. The 2013 residential survey began in Q3 2013. The survey is designed to assess technology adoption of households across the state. It is expected that this survey will be completed in the field and initial results provided to the state partner by the end of Q4 2013. The survey will be trended with previous residential surveys in 2010, 2011, and 2012 to measure the change in technology adoption and usage by race/ethnicity, income, age, and urban/rural residency.

**Milestone: Residential survey instruments sent to peer reviewer**

This milestone was not met, as the program has been unable to obtain a commitment from a peer reviewer for the process. Once a mutual commitment has been obtained and the survey data collection has been completed, the peer review process will commence. Indications are that this milestone will be completed in Q4 2013.

*Outstanding Technical Assistance Milestones:*

**Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Develop Residential survey script and discuss with state stakeholder**

This milestone was met. Research staff reached out to the Iowa Economic Development Authority in developing the 2013 residential survey and received feedback. Staff edited the survey script in an effort to incorporate any recommendations from state stakeholders. The spreadsheet containing census-defined quotas and weights for the 2013 residential survey was created and completed in Q3. The survey was initiated in Q3 2013.

#### **Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2013 business survey research results**

This milestone was not met. Even though the survey research results have been finalized, the updates to the website and the design of the release documents have not yet been completed. Detailed results of the 2013 Business Survey and presentations are expected to be made available in Q4 to members of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Connect Iowa Advisory Committees along with other stakeholders.

#### **Technical Assistance Major Activities for Next Quarter**

- Peer review of the 2013 survey research completed
- Develop 2014 business survey script and discuss with state stakeholder
- Analyze 2013 residential survey research results

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

#### *Planning Teams Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestones per approved Project Plan*

#### **Milestone: Assist in development and implementation of local regional technology growth strategies**

This milestone has been met. Program staff, including a Community Tech Team Specialist, continues working with communities across the state helping to facilitate broadband visioning efforts via the Connected Community Engagement Program. Currently there are 49 communities involved in some stage of the Connected program.

Assessment efforts continue with Black Hawk, Union, and Story Counties, as well as with the cities of West Des Moines, Muscatine, and the Quad Cities. Movement to finalize assessments in these communities was slowed during Q3, with the loss of the program's second Community Tech Team Specialist.

On July 9, 2013, Webster City was awarded the honor of becoming Iowa's second certified 'Connected' community during a presentation and media event with representatives from the city, county, economic development, business and industry, library, and citizens attending. City Mayor indicates the city has begun initial steps in their efforts to develop a redundant fiber optic network which will support attraction of businesses with high capacity data needs. This is one of the priority action items identified during the assessment.

The City of West Des Moines will become Iowa's third certified community early in Q4, and will be honored alongside Iowa's first two 'Connected' communities at a media conference hosted by Governor Branstad. It is anticipated that with the increased awareness of the Connected program, along with the backing of the Governor's office, interest in participating in the assessment program will grow. To offset possible capacity issues and to further assist participating communities, Connect Iowa will increase consulting hours for the existing community tech consultant and begin a search to hire an additional consultant.

### **Planning Teams Major Activities for Next Quarter**

- Assist in development and implementation of local regional technology growth strategies

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

Many Iowa communities are working toward the goal of becoming certified as a Connected community to further their opportunity for economic growth and overall community wellbeing. The assessment process continues to serve as a means for communities to identify broadband gaps and develop implementation plans to provide mitigation strategies to implement projects to fix these technological gaps. To date, via the Connected broadband planning process, local volunteer teams have identified: 188 public computer centers; 1,674 public computers; 116 digital literacy programs; 18,593 digital literacy program graduates; 157 broadband awareness programs; 130 broadband programs focused on vulnerable populations; 418 economic development applications of broadband; 383 educational applications of broadband; 318 government applications of broadband; and 222 healthcare applications of broadband.

During Q3, the Community Tech Team Specialists continued efforts to re-engage communities familiar with the Connected program. Interest continues to be shown by many communities throughout the state and with the introduction of the Iowa Governor's "Connect Every Iowan" broadband initiative, through the Connected Community Engagement program announced by Iowa Governor Branstad in early September. Through this program, participating communities in Iowa will go through extensive assessment and planning processes focused on their broadband capabilities. Program staff will develop reports, based on each community's efforts to take part in the initiative, individual circumstances concerning unique assets, and unique needs. The goal for the Connected program is to assist towns large and small throughout Iowa to improve access, adoption, and use of broadband technology. Connect Iowa has a leadership role in the initiative. The level of interest in the broadband initiative continues to rise.