

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE BROADBAND ADOPTION

General Information

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| 1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration | 2. Award Identification Number 25-43-B10010 | 3. DUNS Number 956072490 |
| 4. Recipient Organization University of Massachusetts Lowell 600 Suffolk Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01854 | | |
| 5. Current Reporting Period End Date (MM/DD/YYYY) 12-31-2011 | 6. Is this the last Annual Report of the Award Period? <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No </p> | |
| 7. Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete for performance of activities for the purposes set forth in the award documents. | | |
| 7a. Typed or Printed Name and Title of Certifying Official Carol McDonough | 7c. Telephone (area code, number and extension) 978-934-2784 | |
| | 7d. Email Address Carol_McDonough@uml.edu | |
| 7b. Signature of Certifying Official Submitted Electronically | 7e. Date Report Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY): 02-27-2012 | |

| PROJECT INDICATORS | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <p>1. Does your Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) project foster a particular broadband technology or technologies? If so, please describe this technology (or technologies) (600 words or less).</p> <p>Our SBA project uses land-line coaxial and fiber-optic cable from both area providers (Comcast and Verizon) as well as WiFi technology. Our main technology is our training component. We have hired and trained talented college students to go into our partner and community sites to deliver tailored programs to youth (internet safety, how to use the internet for research and to socialize appropriately), un- and under-employed adults (basic web skills, resume writing, clerical skills, media technology) and seniors (email, skype, social networks, research). Training modules are adapted for the audience and constantly fine tuned.</p> | | | | |
| <p>2a. Please list all of the broadband equipment and/or supplies you have purchased during the most recent calendar year using BTOP grant funds or other (matching) funds, including any customer premises equipment or end-user devices. If additional space is needed, please attach a list of equipment and/or supplies. Please also describe how the equipment and supplies have been deployed (100 words or less).</p> | | | | |
| Manufacturer | Item | Unit Cost per Item | Number of Units | Narrative description of how the equipment and supplies were deployed |
| N/A | N/A | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Totals | | 0 | 0 | |
| Add Equipment | | | Remove Equipment | |
| <p>2b. To the extent you distribute equipment/supplies to beneficiaries of your project, please describe the equipment/supplies you distribute, the quantities distributed, and the specific populations to whom the equipment/supplies are distributed (600 words or less).</p> <p>No equipment defined as \$5,000 or more has been purchased under this grant.</p> | | | | |
| <p>3. For SBA access and training provided with BTOP grant funds, please provide the information below. Unless otherwise indicated in the instructions, figures should be reported <u>cumulatively</u> from award inception to the end of the most recent calendar year. For each type of training (other than open access), please count only the participants who <u>completed</u> the course.</p> | | | | |
| Types of Access or Training | Number of People Targeted | Number of People Participating | Total Training Hours Offered | |
| Open Lab Access | 970 | 2,678 | 2,678 | |
| Multimedia | 540 | 1,474 | 1,474 | |
| Office Skills | 500 | 680 | 1,360 | |
| ESL | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| GED | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| College Preparatory Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Basic Internet and Computer Use | 1,271 | 3,506 | 6,702 | |
| Certified Training Programs | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Other (please specify): Outreach activities & awareness activities | 813,719 | 224,231 | 0 | |
| Total | 817,000 | 232,569 | 12,214 | |
| <p>4. Please describe key economic and social successes of your project during the past year, and why you believe the project is successful thus far (600 words or less).</p> <p>During the past year we have had great economic success by significantly increased the number of job readiness courses we teach, and have even specifically targeted older individuals who are reentering the workforce. A number of individuals have reached out to the trainers after these courses to inform them that, due to their trainings, they were able to effectively find employment. After taking the job readiness workshop specifically aimed at older adults, quite a few returned to thank the trainer for her help. These individuals told her that they never thought they could learn new skills, or new ways to market themselves. Furthermore, at every graduation of our job readiness groups for young adults, someone from the class admits that they did not initially see the value in taking a computer course when they felt so confident using computers and navigating the internet already. However, they come to realize that skills such as word processing, email etiquette, and the many uses for the internet were not something they even realized they had a deficit in, and realize how important this knowledge is. Young adults receiving our trainings through the United Teen Equality Center, and YouthBuild learn</p> | | | | |

that computer skills can translate into business opportunities, and that the internet can be useful when job hunting, sending resumes, or even building your own online business.

Socially, our successes are innumerable. Our courses are connecting people, from youth at the Boys & Girls Club to the elderly at senior centers, and showing them how to use complex systems such as Skype to keep in touch with family and friends at a distance. Furthermore, we are seeing that more and more seniors are using the computer labs when not in use for trainings. They are going to the labs to use the computers independently and also to help and learn from one another. We see this level of cooperation during job readiness classes as well. People who may have been too shy or uncomfortable asking questions to start are raising their hands and asking for peer-assistance by the end of their courses.

5. Please estimate the level of broadband adoption in the community(ies) and/or area(s) your project serves, explain your methodology for estimating the level of broadband adoption, and explain changes in the broadband adoption level, if any, since the project began.

| 5a. Adoption Level (%): | Narrative description of level, methodology, and change from the level at project inception (600 words or less). |
|-------------------------|---|
| 55 | <p>Our program is targeted toward increasing broadband adoption. In Year 1, our focus was on providing computer access and training, as well as outreach and awareness. In Year 2, we have seen the benefits of our work in year 1. Working with Lowell Telecommunications (LTC), we have installed two wireless routers in popular local business (with more planned). We have gathering numbers from LTC about usage directly attributable to the efforts of our project. Due to this increase in use, other local businesses are looking to be a part of increasing WiFi in the downtown area, and also downtown building owners. Our post-test analyses tell us that just over 60% of those without broadband access stated that they were very likely to sign up for broadband in the near future. We would estimate, using Pew Research Center broadband adoption statistics on adult home subscribers (2010) and the Connected Nation report (2011) on low-income household subscription, that broadband adoption in greater Lowell is roughly 55%.</p> <p>We are also conducting awareness and outreach activities at local libraries and community centers and offering to assist potential new subscribers in navigating the array of possible broadband plans. This included a forum we hosted at the Chelmsford Public Library (which was filmed and later aired on public access), where we invited broadband providers to come and discuss their services and options. We also are offering subscription assistance to participants in our training programs and hope to be able to participate in Comcast's \$9.95/month internet program for poor youth, since we service youth in this demographic at the Lowell Boys and Girls Club, UTEC and Community Teamwork Inc.</p> |

6. Please describe the two most common barriers to broadband adoption that you have experienced this year in connection with your project. What steps did you take to address them (600 words or less)?

First, for many individuals purchasing broadband may be out of their budget. Our project has started to hand out information regarding Comcast's Internet Essentials program, which provides low-cost internet access to families with children on the federal free lunch program. Secondly, Lowell is a culturally and ethnically diverse city, and citizens tend to be of a lower socioeconomic status. Access to information regarding broadband may be limited for a variety of reasons. To this end, in September we invited broadband providers (fixed-line and mobile) to speak at a forum held at a local public library. A member of our team first gave an overview of broadband (what is it, what are the different ways to get internet, what are the benefits of being connected via broadband, etc.) and then providers spoke about their company and its offers. Furthermore, this informational forum was recorded by a local access station and a copy of this forum has been made available at the local library. Through our connection at this particular library, we hope to reach out to others and hold similar forums throughout the area.

7. To the extent that you have made any subcontracts or sub grants, please provide the number of subcontracts or sub grants that have been made to socially and economically disadvantaged small business (SDB) concerns as defined by section 8(a) of the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. 647, as modified by NTIA's adoption of an alternative small business size standard for use in BTOP. Please also provide the names of these SDB entities. (150 words or less)

We have one subcontract, with the United Teen Equality Center (UTEC) located in downtown Lowell. UTEC is a youth-led, non-profit agency that seeks to empower the youth of Lowell and create a positive, safe environment for which they are able to grow and develop. We have purchased most of our computer equipment from a small business, NKC Systems, located in Dracut, Massachusetts.

8. Please describe any best practices / lessons learned that can be shared with other similar BTOP projects (900 words or less).

When hiring new trainers in January 2011, we looked for people who described themselves as "patient," and "a people-person," rather than individuals who were just proficient in computers and navigating the internet. This has paid off in an increase in participation at some sites that had been lackluster before, and also in confidence and trust in our project from those running the sites. We believe you can train the trainer, and we had lots of material and modules already created by that point, so what really mattered were people who could connect with both participants and the staff at our community partner sites. To anyone looking to hire trainers, we highly suggest hiring a "people-person."

Another best practice for our particular group is empowering trainers to suggest and implement changes in curriculum and methods. All major changes are approved by the program manager (who meets with trainers at least once a week to touch base), but the trainers are the ones actually interfacing with participants and conducting these trainings, making their suggestions and insight vitally important

to the project moving forward. Listening to trainers dilemmas and soliciting their advice on suggestions has resulted in more satisfied participants and trainers who feel more confident to speak up the next time they see room for improvement.