ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE BROADBAND ADOPTION

General Information

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) 12-31-2012	6. Is this the last Annual Report of the Award Period? ◯ Yes ◉ No

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 Nancy Desjardins	7c. Telephone (area code, number and extension)
	7d. Email Address Nancy_Desjardins@uml.edu
7b. Signature of Certifying Official Submitted Electronically	7e. Date Report Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY): 01-30-2013

PROJECT INDICATORS

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).

Our SBA project uses land-line coaxial and fiber-optic cable from both area providers (Comcast and Verizon) as well as WiFi technology. Our training approach, or "soft" technology, has been designed for maximum effectiveness. 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 to the audience and constantly fine tuned.

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).

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

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).**

No equipment defined as $5,000 or more has been purchased under this grant.

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.

Types of Access or Training	Number of People Targeted	Number of People Participating	Total Training Hours Offered
Open Lab Access	970	3,607	3,607
Multimedia	540	2,302	2,302
Office Skills	500	921	1,842
ESL	0	0	0
GED	0	0	0
College Preparatory Training	0	0	0
Basic Internet and Computer Use	1,771	5,735	11,252
Certified Training Programs	0	0	0
Other (please specify): Outreach activities & awareness activities, other activities	824,889	229,668	0
Total	828,670	242,233	19,003

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).

One large economic success of our project has been our trainers completing their time with our program and moving on to more advanced employment and/or accepted into graduate programs. A few examples include a trainer now employed by a prestigious local hospital in their web development department; our head trainer being accepted into a doctoral program, while teaching as an adjunct professor; and another gaining employment as a computer and internet literacy trainer in the very communities that she worked in throughout the project. Our project clearly did not just benefit the individuals we worked with on job readiness skills, but enhanced the skill sets and resumes of the trainers working on the project, enabling them to move on successfully during these tough economic times.

With another year also came numerous graduates of our varied courses, and many additional stories of success in landing employment. One participant at a public library was concerned that they would not be able to find employment given their age. Our trainer worked with this person to update their resume and work on their MS Word and Excel skills, and this individual was able to find the part-time employment they were seeking. This highlights a major success of the project in total. Namely, that older women and men can work towards computer and internet literacy and find gainful employment in today's job market.

We have made a number of social gains this year as well. It became clear what an impact our project had made on our local communities. We believe we did our due diligence in regards to partner satisfaction and community contributions. We worked closely with our contacts, with several in-person meetings a year and innumerable phone and email communications as well, to ensure that we were providing high-quality programming in a way that was sensitive to the differential needs and abilities of the populations we served. As we have considered next steps for funding, we have found that every one of our community partners has volunteered to speak or write on our behalf. Certainly we have solidified positive relations between the larger UMass Lowell community and our surrounding areas.

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).
61	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 wireless routers in popular local business and two other WiFi routers in the last year (at the local YWCA and with a community-based organization called Coalition for a Better Acre). 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. On the basis of this post-test data, as well as Pew Research Center broadband adoption statistics on adult home subscribers (2010), the Connected Nation report (2011) on low-income household subscription, and the Pew Research Center findings in 2012, we estimate that broadband adoption in the areas that our project serves is approximately sixty-one percent. 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. We have been working with our partner organizations to spread the word about Comcast's Internet Essentials Program featuring low-cost internet to families with children enrolled in the Federal Lunch Program. Furthermore, we have held and are planning additional presentations with our partner sites to explain broadband and the many options for purchasing broadband internet in their home. With our recent award of a no-cost extension we will also be working more closely with our partners at several senior centers, and expect to see subscription rates increase as a result of this effort.

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)?

Budgetary constraints continue to be the most prominent barrier to broadband adoption in our area. While we work with community partners, and often with individuals participants as well to inform and educate them of their options, often purchasing internet for their homes is just not feasible.

Another large barrier we have seen this year has been hesitation due to the many options available to participants. When budget is not a factor, deciding what works best for their personal needs (wireless or land-line; desktop or laptop; many types of mobile devices available) can feel overwhelming and daunting. Even once a device or equipment is chosen, the many choices in carriers and brands can also feel insurmountable.

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 two subcontractors, one 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. The other is with Lowell Telecommunication Corp who has installed and maintains wireless hubs in the city.

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).

One best practice gleaned over the years of our program has been the need to work closely with community partner sites. Frequent meetings, e-mail, and phone calls all help to keep lines of communication open. Furthermore, making it clear to your partners that you are open to suggestion and change can make the difference between a sustainable program and one that falls flat. These contacts, after all, are the experts in their particular communities, organizations, and people and their opinions and needs are vitally important to your program.

The same is true of your trainers, and this point cannot be overstated (as evidenced by the fact that we're mentioning it two years in a row). Trusting your trainers' opinions and taking their suggestions seriously can only benefit the program. They are the ones working one-on-one with participants, and have insight and expertise that neither you nor your organizational contact could possibly have. They often know what works well, what doesn't, and tend to have tangible suggestions for improvement.