13Q3_Supplemental Answers_South Carolina

Connected Nation, Inc
Grant Number 45-50-M09044
Reporting Period End Date 09-30-13

14 a_Project Attachment_Data Collection

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).

Connect South Carolina submitted the broadband provider mapping data update in accordance with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) semi-annual requirement on September 26. The submission included participation of over 97% of the provider community or 45 of 46 valid providers.

The program 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.connectsc.org/interactive-map). There were a total of 20 visits to the interactive map between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013.

During this quarter, the project received a total of two (2) broadband inquiries. For this reporting period, 1,006 field verification tests were conducted. From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 44 companies (out of a universe of 46 viable providers) totaling 95.65% within the state.

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.

4. Provide any other information or statistics that you think would be useful to NITA as it assesses your broadband data collection, Validation and publication activities.

The program's Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) team 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.

Connect South Carolina continues to reach out to agencies across the state in an effort to solicit Community Anchor Institution (CAI) support and participation. Program staff conducted an education-focused campaign during the month of September that included a call to action for school and library CAI data. The program staff continued engagements with organizations that had previously provided data including the South Carolina Department of Education and also worked with South Carolina Association of Counties to send out the CAI data collection survey during this quarter.   Additionally, efforts were made to increase the number of collected CAI IDs, or federal ID codes, for K-12 school and library across the state. The program team has now accounted for 87.61% of the K-12 schools CAI IDs and 82.01% of the state library CAI IDs.

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 Milestones Year 4, Quarter 3 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2013 business survey research results
This milestone was partially met. Program research staff finalized the research results of 2013 business survey, presented the finalized results to the NTIA State Broadband Initiative (SBI) program office, and shared key findings with state stakeholders such as; 1) nearly three-fourths of South Carolina business (74%) use broadband in their daily business functions; 2) on average, South Carolina businesses with online sales earn

$359,000 higher in annual revenue than businesses without online sales; 3) South Carolina businesses spent nearly $499 million on online purchasing from in-state vendors. An update to the program website and other materials for the public release of the data is still being designed and is scheduled for early Q4 2013.

Milestone: Initiate 2013 residential survey peer review
This milestone was partially met. The process of finalizing a contract with a peer reviewer for the residential survey is underway. The survey instrument was provided to the program's research contractor to begin data collection statewide. Once that data has been received the program research staff will create a data file with weighted results that will allow the peer review to commence. Staff expects to be able to identify a peer reviewer in Q4 2013.

Milestone: Initiate 2013 residential survey research
This milestone was partially met. Program research staff created a spreadsheet used for building quotas and weights for 2013 residential survey and developed the survey instrument for data collection. The survey instrument was provided to the program's research contractor to begin data collection statewide. Once that data has been received program research staff will create a data file with weighted results; until the data collection process is complete, this step cannot be undertaken Staff anticipates this will occur in Q4 2013.

Milestone: Analyze 2013 Economic Development survey research results and present initial findings to stakeholders
This milestone was not met due to the survey instrument needing more revisions than anticipated. This quarter, the program research staff finalized the survey script incorporating feedback from state stakeholders and identified the method of data collection. The survey instrument was finalized, and data collection will begin in early Q4 2013. The analysis and distribution of this survey is anticipated to be performed in Q4 2013.

Milestone: Peer review of 2013 economic development survey research completed
This milestone was not met. The data collection has not been completed since identifying the methodology of data collection that would be best suited for the economic survey to ensure a better response rate took longer than expected. Therefore, the survey instrument was not able to be finalized until the methodology was selected. At this time, the results of the survey research aren't completed, and the peer review cannot take place. The data collection is expected to be finished in Q4 2013. At that

time, program research staff will be able to provide initial results to the peer reviewer and present the results to NTIA.

<u>Technical Assistance Milestones Outstanding (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:</u>

Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Analyze 2013 business survey research results and present initial findings to stakeholders
This milestone was met this quarter. After Dr. Mingjie Sun, the peer reviewer, verified the initial results of 2013 business survey and reviewed its script and methodology, program staff presented these findings to the NTIA, South Carolina Governor's Office, Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council (formally listed as the Task Force), and state stakeholders.

Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Peer review of 2013 business survey research completed
This milestone was met this quarter. Program research staff received results of Dr. Mingjie Sun's review of the 2013 business survey that stated that the initial results can be duplicated, the survey script was well developed, and the methodology was solid and reliable to draw conclusions on some questions related to technology adoption and use.

Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Commence development of the 2013 residential survey script
This milestone was met this quarter. Program research staff finalized the script of 2013 residential survey incorporating feedback from state stakeholders.

Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Initiate 2013 economic development survey peer review
This milestone was not met this quarter. The data collection has not been completed since identifying the methodology of data collection that would be best suited for the economic survey to ensure a better response rate took longer than expected. Therefore, the survey instrument was not able to be finalized until the methodology was selected. At this time, the results of the survey research aren't completed, and the peer review cannot take place. The data collection is expected to be finished in Q4 2013. At that time, program research staff will be able to provide initial results to the peer reviewer and present the results to NTIA.

Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Initiate 2013 economic development survey research
This milestone was partially met this quarter. Program research staff finalized the 2013 economic development survey script, identified the data collection method, and began

the data collection process. The data file with weighted results will be completed in Q4 2013.

Year 4, Quarter 1 Milestone: Commence development of the economic development survey script
This milestone was met this quarter. The economic development survey instrument was finalized, incorporating feedback from stakeholders and complying with the data collection method.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q4 2013):
- Analyze 2013 residential survey research results (Moved from Year 4, Quarter 2) and present to stakeholders
- Peer review of 2013 residential survey research completed
- Commence development of the 2014 business survey script
- Finalize and distribute 2013 economic development survey research results

14b_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 Team Milestones Year 4, Quarter 3 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Facilitation of local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 4, Quarter 3
This milestone was met. Connect South Carolina Community Tech Team Specialists aided community teams in completing four assessments and technology action plans this quarter in Greenwood, Hampton, Dorchester, and Marlboro Counties. In addition, four (4) communities were engaged this quarter including: Sumter, Beaufort, Barnwell, and Richland. These communities have been trained and armed with the Connected program information (toolkits, research, and mapping data) to assist them with managing their community assessment process. These counties will also continue conducting team meetings with and without the Community Tech Team Specialists and tracking their activities while working on their Connected program assessment.

The Community Tech Team Specialists assisted with the management of the logistics of planning team meetings which included scheduling, creating agendas, recording minutes, following up on action items, and recording attendance, adding any new contacts to the contact database for those meetings that they are leading. Several

South Carolina communities that have completed or are near completion with their technology assessments have expressed their dedication in implementing one or more recommended action items, including Upper Dorchester who is currently taking steps to take their new St. George Farmers' Market project online with the creation of a marketing page, business-to-business Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) portal, and to produce information in the coming year.

Counties in South Carolina that have walked through the community engagement process are receiving statewide recognition, particularly Anderson County who received and installed two road signs for their community, proudly announcing them as a "Certified Connected Community." To date, over 30 counties have been engaged in the Connected program and are continuing to work towards efforts that will maximize the broadband footprint in their community. In Greenwood County, program staff worked with the Community Champion to begin implementing the action plan. Steps included setting up meetings with local providers to talk about the gaps in access, as well as collecting research and information around data center recruitment.

On September 30, 2013, program staff coordinated a kick-off event in Richland County where over 50 attendees were introduced to the Connected program. The group broke up into three committees: access, adoption, and use where they spent 45 minutes talking about the assessment questions and began to map out their steps to complete the assessment in the coming months.

A Community Engagement map that displays the status of each community engaged in the Connected process was maintained. This map shows the most current view of where each community is in the process of becoming a certified Connected community. The most current version of the Connect South Carolina Community Engagement map has been provided as an attachment via the "13Q3_Project Attachment_Question 5" document.

Milestone: Conduct Year 4, Quarter 3 Task Force meeting
The milestone was met. On August 22, 2013, the statewide Task Force (renamed the Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council) convened to discuss the most recent happenings in national broadband policy, the importance of gathering information on CAIs, and outreach and education campaigns. During the meeting, project updates were provided from council members, and program representatives also reported on several items including the status of the local/regional planning initiatives and Technology Action Plans along with program research and survey updates. This meeting included a review of the previous meeting notes/minutes along with any action items and a status update of the Connect South Carolina program. After the meeting

the program team finalized meeting notes, action items, and recommendations to be included in the next council meeting.

A major outcome of the meeting was the Advisory Council determining that a key priority for the coming months would be to develop and implement an outreach campaign centered on increasing broadband adoption in the state. Members agreed to support this initiative as it would be laid out at the next Advisory Council meeting scheduled for November 19, 2013. The program team began preparations for this outreach campaign including drafting theme ideas and promotion plans to present in November.

Planning Teams Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q4 2013)
- Facilitation of local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 4, Quarter 4
- Conduct Year 4, Quarter 4 Task Force meeting

Planned major activities for next quarter include the third meeting of the South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council on November 22, 2013 where the committee will hear from program staff on the suggested campaign of "Life is Better with Broadband."

Also, in Q4 2012 Connect South Carolina staff is looking forward to presenting several new technology action plans around the state as well as engaging new communities. With over 30 engaged communities with a total of 426 planning team members active in the South Carolina Connected Community Engagement Program through the end of the third quarter, staff is well on its way of engaging all 46 counties in the state at some level.

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

An area in Richland County, called Calico Farms, that did not have access to broadband other than some light mobile options was identified. Calico Farms is just a few miles away from Blythewood, South Carolina, not far from the state capitol. Connect South Carolina has been working with a provider (TruVista) for more than a year to bring broadband service into the area, and we are happy to report that high-speed Internet service was launched in that community as of August 26, 2013.

Teams participating in the Connect South Carolina Connected Community Engagement Program have identified the following assets within their own communities:

Public computer centers: 44
Public computers: 659

Digital literacy programs: 35
Digital literacy program graduates: 6,230
Broadband awareness programs: 41
Broadband programs focused on vulnerable populations: 40
Economic development applications of broadband: 59
Educational applications of broadband: 54
Government applications of broadband: 66
Healthcare applications of broadband: 47

These assets can be leveraged to help the communities bridge their own community's digital gap and better understand what technological assets may be missing in an effort to continue to close the digital gaps in their communities.