

13Q1_Supplemental Answers_South Carolina

Connected Nation, Inc

Grant Number 45-50-M09044

Reporting Period End Date 3-31-13

For Q1 2013, Connect South Carolina's match percentage based on total expenditures was 19.30%. Thus the program will fall short of the required match percentage by 1.27%. Staff is working with the State of South Carolina Office of the Governor to identify additional sources of match. The program is hopeful that through the receipt of in-kind match from volunteers participating in the Planning Teams, as well as through consultant agreements, and Task Force/Steering Committee participation, the program will meet the required match percentage in Q2 2013. Connect South Carolina filed a non-federal cost share waiver that was granted through Q2 2013.

14a_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 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 233 visits to the interactive map between January 1, 2013, and March 31, 2013.

During this quarter, My ConnectView underwent an upgrade to the server software and the application programming interface (API), as well as additional enhancements to improve the user experience. The server was upgraded to ArcGIS for Server 10.1 and the ArcGIS API for Flex was upgraded to version 3.0. A new button to create permanent links allows users to develop a customized display of My ConnectView with various data layers turned on with a specific zoom level and then send the permanent link to another user, who will then get the same display in the interactive map setting. A date display was also added to the legend to inform the user of the current nature of the broadband data. Lastly, the pop-up window style was enhanced to allow users to scroll through multiple record selections, as well as view a better display of the record's information.

During this quarter, the project received a total of 3 broadband inquiries. Additional information received through e-mail from consumers that can also be used for verification purposes totaled 5 for this quarter.

For this reporting period, 163 field verification tests were conducted. During this quarter Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) staff began using device embedded software for collecting data on mobile networks. These speed and platform tests are in addition to standard field verification and validation test enabling significantly more verification tests during this period. From program initiation through this reporting period, in-the-field validation testing has been completed against 36 companies (out of a universe of 46 viable providers) totaling 78.26 percent within the state of South Carolina.

During this quarter, broadband growth maps were developed and made public on the program website. The analysis behind these maps shows where broadband coverage has changed in comparison to the October 2010 datasets: where coverage 1) has been added where it already existed in October 2010, 2) has been removed, and 3) has been added in previously unserved areas.

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.

Connect South Carolina is currently working on efforts to implement last-mile solutions in Marion and Marlboro Counties and the Callico Farms community of Richland County.

During this quarter, maps and tables were completed and made public on the Connected Nation website, <http://www.connectednation.org/fcc-maps>, displaying the analysis of census blocks eligible for Phase I of the Connect America Fund broadband subsidy program in comparison with the most recent October 2012 State Broadband Initiatives (SBI) broadband data collection. The maps and analysis published reflect the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) data release of eligible census blocks on January 4, 2013.

In the Q1 2013, the program participated in a public safety campaign to educate stakeholders about the role of broadband in the public safety sector. The project team worked hard to establish meaningful relationships and partnership within the South Carolina Public Safety Sector. With the support of the South Carolina Firefighters Association, the Municipal Association of South Carolina, and the South Carolina Association of Counties, more than 150 survey responses were received regarding Community Anchor Institution (CAI) data during February. Program staff continues to build on relationships with sector leaders in order to reach as many CAI as possible.

14b_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 1 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2012 residential survey research results

This milestone was met. Results of 2012 residential survey were finalized and disseminated during Q1 2013. The 2012 residential survey was initiated during Q3 2012 and incorporated state stakeholders' recommendations. The final peer reviewed findings were presented to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). A final report, in the form of the 2012 residential survey results and methodology document, was provided to the South Carolina Governor's Office and other stakeholders, and will be presented to the newly developed Task Force next quarter. The results were subsequently publicly released via statewide press release and website updates including an interactive widget.

Milestone: Initiate 2013 business survey peer review

This milestone was not met. At this time, no contract has been executed for the peer review of the 2013 business survey instrument or results. Discussions are underway to name a suitable peer reviewer, and a contract is expected to be executed in Q2 2013. At that time, the survey instrument and the initial survey results are expected to be peer reviewed.

Milestone: Initiate 2013 business survey research

This milestone was partially met. A spreadsheet was created with census-defined quotas and weights for the 2013 business survey which is required for the start of the data collection process. However, the data file with weighted results has yet to be generated. Research staff will generate this file in Q2 2013 and subsequently the survey will commence.

Milestone: Commence development of the economic development survey script

This milestone was partially met. Connect South Carolina began writing the survey instrument for the 2013 economic development survey based on the feedback from state stakeholders. Finalization of the survey script, incorporating feedback from stakeholders, will be completed in Q2 2013.

Technical Assistance Milestones Outstanding (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 4: Peer review of 2012 survey research completed

This milestone was met. Dr. Lori Dickes of Clemson University provided research staff with a final review report regarding the results and methodology of 2012 residential survey. Dr. Dickes was able to confirm the survey results and did not find any discrepancies. Furthermore, the reviewer found that the methodology utilized in this survey is sound and allows researchers and policy analysts to draw important conclusions from the results.

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 4: Analyze 2012 statewide business survey research results

This milestone was not met but has been moved to Q2 2013. In Q1 2013, Connect South Carolina received approval from NTIA on an amended Project Plan, which revised the research schedule for the program for Years 3 through 5. Upon approval, research staff began to develop the upcoming business survey. Within the newly approved Project Plan, this milestone is now reflected in Year 4, Quarter 2. As a result of the adjustment, additional reporting will be included within the Q2 2012 Performance Progress Report (PPR). Therefore an analysis on the survey is anticipated to start in Q2 2013.

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 3: Finalize and distribute statewide residential survey research results

This milestone was met. The 2012 residential survey was initiated during Q3 2012 and incorporated state stakeholders' recommendations. The final peer-reviewed findings were presented to NTIA along with the 2012 residential survey results and methodology document. A final report, in the form of the 2012 residential survey results and methodology document, was provided to the South Carolina Office of the Governor, and other stakeholders during the Q1 2013 reporting period and are scheduled to be presented to the newly developed Task Force next quarter. The results were subsequently publicly released via press release and website update using an interactive web widget.

Outstanding Milestone from Year 3, Quarter 3: Upon approval from South Carolina stakeholders and NTIA, initiate 2012 statewide business survey research.

This milestone was met. Connect South Carolina initiated the statewide business survey and sent it to the field for data collection. In Q1 2013, the program received NTIA approval of an amended Project Plan. Consequently, development of the business survey began this quarter. Within the newly approved Project Plan, this milestone is now reflected in Year 4, Quarter 2. As a result of the adjustment additional reporting will be included within the Q2 2012 PPR.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q2 2013):

Initiate 2013 economic development survey peer review

Initiate 2013 economic development survey research

Commence development of the 2013 residential survey script

Peer review of 2013 business survey research completed

Analyze 2013 business survey research results and present initial findings to stakeholders

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

A paper entitled “Mobile Broadband Helps Bridge the Gap in Internet Utilization Across South Carolina,” which focuses on how 1.8 million South Carolina adults use mobile broadband via a cell phone or mobile device, was released this quarter.

A survey was conducted by the program in 2012 to better understand the landscape of mobile broadband adoption and usage across the state of South Carolina. The study found that while a small share of mobile users rely exclusively on their mobile Internet service, most treat their mobile broadband as a complement to their other broadband options. Across the state, over one-half of residents age 18 or older (51%) access the Internet via cell phones or subscribe to mobile wireless service via a laptop or tablet. This represents approximately 1.8 million South Carolina adults who go online via their cell phones or through a mobile device. This is significantly higher than the mobile usage rate of 39% in 2011. Furthermore, four out of five mobile users (80%, representing nearly 1.5 million South Carolina adults) also subscribe to home broadband service, while 20% (approximately 366,000 South Carolina adults) only access the Internet via mobile broadband (Figure 1). This indicates that the majority of mobile users still rely on home broadband service to take full advantage of broadband.

More detail can be found in the “13Q1_Project Attachment_Question 5” document and via the following link: http://www.connectsc.org/sites/default/files/connected-nation/South%20Carolina/files/sc_mobile_usage_final.pdf

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 1 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Facilitation of local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 4, Quarter 1

This milestone was met. Community tech team specialists assisted Saluda County in completing their Community Technology Action Plan during the Q1 2013 reporting period. Twelve other South Carolina communities/counties are currently involved in the Connected program: Allendale, Anderson, Berkeley, Dorchester, Greenwood, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Marion, Marlboro, Jasper, and Oconee. These communities have been trained and were provided with the Connected program information (toolkits, research, and mapping data) to assist them with managing their community assessment process. These counties will continue conducting team meetings with and without the specialists and also tracking their activities while working on their Connected program assessment. Program staff has provided and will continue to provide support to each community as teams move through the assessment process. Community Technology Action Plans are generated once a team has completed their assessment.

Milestone: Conduct Year 4, Quarter 1 Task Force meeting

This milestone was partially met as staff began finalizing the Connect South Carolina Task Force membership and met with several Task Force members during this reporting quarter. At this time, the Connect South Carolina Task Force will be made up of individuals from the following organizations: Clemson University Strom Thurmond Institute, Municipal Association of South Carolina, New Carolina, AT&T, Farm Bureau, South Carolina Economic Developers Association, South Carolina Department of Commerce, Original Six Foundation, South Carolina Telecommunications Association, South Carolina Cable Association, and South Carolina Division of State Information Technology. Program staff are excited to pull together such a great group for the Task Force and are looking forward to conducting the first official Task Force meeting during Q2 2013.

Planning Teams Outstanding Milestones (not met or partially met) from previous quarters per approved project plan:

Outstanding Milestones from:**Year 3, Quarter 4: Conduct Strategic Planning Meeting 2012****Year 3, Quarter 3: Prepare for the 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting**

This milestone has been delayed as program staff continued outreach to prospective Strategic Planning members during Q1 2013. A contributing factor to the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community technology action plans. Scheduling of this meeting is yet to be determined based upon feedback from the Task Force which is currently being formed and will conduct their first meeting during the second quarter of 2013. Planning will continue for this milestone as Connect South Carolina stakeholders and staff progress in identifying key stakeholders and priorities.

Outstanding Milestones from:**Year 3, Quarter 4: Conduct Year 3, Quarter 4 Task Force meeting****Year 3, Quarter 3: Conduct Task Force meeting****Year 3, Quarter 1: Secure Task Force and Initiate First Task Force meeting;****Year 2, Quarter 4: Work with the South Carolina Office of the Governor to create a South Carolina Task Force.**

These milestones have been delayed as program staff continued outreach to prospective Task Force members. The community tech team specialists remain focused and continue to assist in this effort, but one major reason for the delay on this milestone is the fact that several communities are still pending completion of the development of their community action plans, which would be the cornerstone for the Task Force - to review and provide feedback of these plans. An inaugural Task Force meeting is anticipated to take place during Q2 2013.

Planning Teams Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q1 2013)

Facilitation of local/regional broadband planning activities in Year 4, Quarter 2

Conduct Year 4, Quarter 2 Task Force meeting

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

Staff worked with a Greenwood County manufacturer, Piedmont Contract Manufacturing Group (CMG), to resolve their site and plant connectivity issues. After experiencing years of broadband connectivity issues that hampered productivity and response time to customers across the U.S. and internationally, Piedmont CMG, a contract manufacturer to the medical analytical and medical device industry, was in need of a fast solution. It just so happened that almost at the same time, leaders from Greenwood County decided to enroll their community in the innovative Connected program, through Connect South Carolina, to boost the local economy and quality of life for residents through increased access, adoption, and use of high-speed Internet.

At the initial kick-off meeting of the Connected program, held in January, local Internet service providers were able to meet with an existing business to address broadband issues in the Ware Shoals area, and representatives from Piedmont CMG (Contract Manufacturing Group) were at that meeting. Just a few months later and as a result of that kick-off meeting and various subsequent interactions between state agencies, local business leaders, and Piedmont CMG, a construction contract with Piedmont Rural Telephone Cooperative was signed to bring fiber optics to both the Greenwood and Abbeville County facilities, ending years of frustration. The speeds offered through fiber optics are positioning Piedmont CMG to more efficiently support its national and international customers.

The 1st Annual Connect South Carolina State Broadband Summit, in partnership with IT-oLogy, will be conducted on May 16, 2013, in Columbia, South Carolina. The goals of the summit will be to gather South Carolina's local and state leaders, technology champions, technology providers, and state educators in order to increase awareness of the role of technology and broadband in economic development and planning and workforce readiness. The summit will also educate stakeholders about technology connections through broadband infrastructure and applications by laying out the possibilities (highlighting innovative ways technology is impacting different sectors) and reiterating the demand for quality broadband to support such applications. A summit focused webpage has been created at www.connectsc.org/broadband-summit.

Team members presented at a multitude of meetings during the Q1 2013 reporting period: the Original Six Foundation's Barnwell County Leadership Summit, South Carolina Automotive Summit/South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance, South Carolina Economic Developers' Association Board of Directors Meeting, South Carolina Governor's Rural Summit, Annual Economic Review with South Carolina's Electric Cooperatives, Original Six Foundation's Barnwell County Day Event, and Southeast Association of Telecommunications Officers and Administrators Conference.