

13Q4_Supplemental Answers_South Carolina

Connected Nation, Inc.

Grant Number 45-50-M09044

Reporting Period End Date 12-31-13

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).

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff generated updates to the following maps occurred, based on the new State Broadband Initiative (SBI) datasets from the October 1, 2013 semi-annual submission to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA):

- a) Broadband Availability Maps
- b) Unserved Density Maps
- c) Broadband Availability at 3M/768K Maps
- d) Maximum Advertised Download Speed Maps
- e) Underserved Area Maps
- f) Multi-Single Platform Maps
- g) Provider Density Maps
- h) My ConnectView Interactive Map
- i) Broadband Growth Maps
- j) Congressional District Maps

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 website www.connectsc.org. There were a total of 155 visits to the interactive map between October 1, 2013 and December 31, 2013.

During this quarter, the project received a total of 5 broadband inquiries. Additional information received through e-mail from consumers that was also used for verification purposes totaled 4 for this quarter. Users can also request non-confidential mapping data produced for the SBI grant program. Three such requests were received between October 1, 2013 and December 31, 2013.

For this reporting period, 187 field verification tests were conducted. From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 44 companies (out of 46 viable providers) totaling 95.65 percent within the state.

Staff began outreach to the provider community regarding the April 2014 semi-annual data submission, both soliciting the data from providers for the upcoming submission, as well as outlining pertinent dates.

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.

In October, program staff reviewed provider challenges to the price-cap carrier filings to provide confirmation of the provider service area offering 3 megabytes per second (Mbps) download/768 kilobytes per second (Kbps) upload broadband within the challenged census blocks, or indicated the alternate situation as necessary. A copy of the filing can be found at the following link:

http://www.connectednation.org/sites/default/files/connected_nations_reply_comments_caf_phase_1_challenge_process.pdf. For your convenience, a copy can also be found in the “13Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina” attachment.

In December, staff created a statewide map of Connect America Fund authorization areas at the census block level; this was based on a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) dataset released on December 5, 2013, on the total number of locations authorized for funding and the total funding authorized based on location type. This map can be found at the following link: <http://www.connectednation.org/fcc-maps>. For your convenience, a copy can also be found in the “13Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina” attachment.

Outreach to agencies across the state continued in an effort to solicit Community Anchor Institution (CAI) support, data, and participation in the program. Program staff conducted an Economic Development campaign during November and December that included a call to action for community CAI data in support of the South Carolina SBI project. Results of this campaign will be compiled in Q1 2014. Program staff continued engagements with the South Carolina Association of Counties, the Municipal Association of South Carolina, and State Library System to obtain additional CAI data, and engaged South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV) to identify potential contacts in support of CAI data collection.

Program staff was contacted on December 30, 2013 by a local business in Greenwood that heard the success story of Piedmont Plastics and wanted to determine if assistance could be offered to their organization. Regency Park, an upscale executive housing condo community, claims that it is not receiving enough bandwidth through their commercial agreement with the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC). Staff offered to set up a meeting with the ILEC in an attempt to get to the root of the problems. Potential meeting dates are being circulated.

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 4 per approved project plan:

Milestone: Analyze 2013 residential survey research results and present to stakeholders

This milestone was not met as the data collection was delayed due to collection minor shift in scheduling. At this time, data collection is complete, and the results are being prepared for weighting. Data analysis and presentation of the initial results to state stakeholders and NTIA are anticipated to be completed in Q1 2014.

Milestone: Peer review of 2013 residential survey research completed

This milestone was not met. Survey data collection was not complete until late Q4 2013. As a result, staff did not have enough time to analyze and present the data for peer review. At this time, program research staff is preparing the survey data for its initial analysis such as recoding some open-ended questions and developing weighted responses. Once this process is finished, the research staff will be able to do an initial analysis and present these results to the peer reviewer. The program research team anticipates receiving feedback and recommendations from the peer reviewer in early Q1 2014.

Milestone: Commence development of the 2014 business survey script

This milestone was partially met. Meetings were conducted with state stakeholders in various sectors to discuss the 2014 business survey. After collecting all feedback together, the research staff will incorporate them into the survey script to reflect and address the issues among state businesses as identified by state stakeholders. Finalization of the survey script and creation of the survey instrument will be finished in Q1 2014.

Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2013 economic development survey research results

This milestone was partially met. The survey is now complete and the results from the survey are currently being finalized. Discussions with state stakeholders regarding the survey release are underway. Distribution of the finalized results and presentation to state stakeholders is anticipated to complete in Q1 2014. This includes media release of data via press release and website updates.

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

Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2013 business survey research results

This milestone was met this quarter. Connect South Carolina publicly released its 2013 business survey, and highlighted some key findings via infographics, during the quarter. The full information can be found through the program website:

<http://www.connectsc.org/survey-results/business>. For convenience, a copy can also be found in the “13Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina” attachment.

The 2013 Business Technology Survey featured data from 800 businesses across the state, and oversampled women-owned and minority-owned businesses to gather information on how these businesses are using and benefitting from technology. Survey results showed that broadband is a vital economic engine for businesses across the state, allowing businesses, industry sectors, and communities to grow and prosper. Based on these data, Connect South Carolina estimates that more than 26,000 South Carolina businesses – 26% of businesses across the state – still do not utilize broadband technology.

Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestone: Initiate 2013 residential survey peer review

This milestone was partially met. Data collection for the 2013 residential survey was completed late in Q4 2013; because data analysis is a pre-requisite for the peer review process, the peer review was not initiated. At this time, the survey data is being prepared for its initial analysis using a rim weighting process. The initial results are expected to be provided to the peer reviewer in Q1 2014 which will serve to initiate the peer review process. Program research staff is still in the process of selecting a peer reviewer and is currently reviewing two options at this time. A contract will be finalized with one candidate early next quarter.

Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestone: Initiate 2013 residential survey research

This milestone was met. The residential survey instrument, incorporating feedback from state stakeholders, was finalized and the data collection process completed.

Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestone: Analyze 2013 economic development survey research results and present initial findings to stakeholders

This milestone was partially met. Respondent data was collected in Q4 2013, and research staff conducted initial analysis on the economic survey. Distribution of the initial results is expected to complete in Q1 2014.

Year 4, Quarter 3 Milestone: Peer review of 2013 economic development survey research completed

This milestone was partially met. At this time, data collection and initial analysis of the economic development survey are completed and could be made able to a peer reviewer. However, program research staff is still identifying a peer reviewer. Staff anticipates the peer review to begin and be completed in Q1 2014.

Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Initiate 2013 economic development survey peer review

This milestone was partially met. Data collection of the economic development survey and initial analysis of the data is complete. At this time, program research staff is

identifying a peer reviewer. After a selection has been made and a contract put in place, program research staff will provide initial results to the reviewer. Peer review is expected to be completed in Q1 2014.

Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Initiate 2013 economic development survey research

This milestone was met. Program research staff created the spreadsheet with quotas for the 2013 economic development survey research. Since the survey was designed to sample economic development professionals rather than the statewide population no census-defined weights were needed. A data file with results from the 2013 economic development survey has also been created.

Technical Assistance Annual Milestones Year 4 per approved project plan:

Annual Milestone 2013: Finalize and distribute 2013 business survey research results. Incorporate stakeholder recommendations and create final report detailing results of 2013 business survey. Deliver in-person presentation of research results to the Task Force, South Carolina Governor's Office, and other stakeholders. Announce the release of data via press release, website update, and meetings with stakeholders.

This milestone was met. Program research staff completed respondent data collection in Q2 2013. The survey was peer reviewed, initial results were finalized in Q3 2013, and public release of the results via press release and website update occurred in Q4 2013. During Q3 and Q4 2013, results were presented to NTIA and a host of state stakeholders via meetings, conference presentations, and white paper release. More information about the survey research results is available on the program website, and an infographic can be found in the "13Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina" response.

Annual Milestone 2013: Initiate the 2013 residential survey research and the 2014 business surveys by writing survey instruments, creating spreadsheets with census-defined quotas and weights for 2013, collecting respondent data, and creating data file with weighted results.

This milestone was partially met. The 2013 statewide residential survey was initiated, incorporating feedback from state stakeholders, through the creation of survey instruments and generating spreadsheets with census-defined quotas in Q3 2013 and Q4 2013. Data collection was completed in Q4 2013 for the creation of data file with weighted results. Regarding initiation of 2014 business survey, this milestone is in process as discussions with state stakeholder regarding the survey script are in process. Program staff will incorporate feedback from these discussions into the final 2014 business survey script. Creation of the survey instrument and generation of data files with weighted results are anticipated to be complete in Q1 2014.

Annual Milestone 2013: After analysis and the review process that includes collaborating with the South Carolina Governor's Office, the 2013 residential survey will be delivered in-person to the Task Force, South Carolina Governor's

Office, and other stakeholders. Also survey results will be announced via press release, website update, and meetings with stakeholders.

This milestone was not met. Data collection concluded late in Q4 2013. The data is currently being prepared for its initial analysis. Therefore, distribution of the research results and public release are anticipated to be complete in Q1 2014.

Annual Milestone 2013: Commence discussions regarding the 2013 economic development survey with the state stakeholders. Development of the economic development survey by writing survey instruments, creating spreadsheets with census-defined quotas and weights for 2013, collecting respondent data and creating data file with weighted results.

This milestone was met. The program research staff commenced discussion regarding the design of the 2013 economic development survey with state stakeholders in late Q2 2013, and incorporated this feedback into the survey instruments in Q3 2013. In Q4, data collection and initial analysis were completed. Because this survey sampled economic development professionals in the state and was not intended to be representative of all residents statewide; therefore, no census-defined quotas or weights were determined to be necessary to ensure data accuracy.

Annual Milestone 2013: Facilitate Year 4 peer review of survey results and resulting analysis for peer review. Review peer recommendation and update program as required.

This milestone was partially met. The 2012 residential survey was peer reviewed in Q1 2013 by Dr. Lori Dickes of Clemson University, and the 2013 business survey was peer reviewed by Dr. Mingjie Sun from Iowa State University in Q2 2013. Peer reviewers verified that the research results were correct, the methodology was solid and reliable, and the survey questions were well designed regarding the issues in term of technology adoption and use in the state. Peer review of the 2013 economic development survey and the 2013 residential survey are anticipated to be complete in Q1 2014.

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

Annual Milestone 2012: Develop research plan for Years 3 through 5 through collaboration with South Carolina state stakeholders. Primary corresponding activities include developing research plan and seeking NTIA approval for Years 3 through 5.

This milestone was partially met in 2012 and completed in 2013. In Q4 2012, program staff submitted an amended project plan to NTIA that included the revised Year 3 – Year 5 survey plan. NTIA approved the revised project plan in Q1 2013. Upon approval, staff commenced with the 2013 business survey in Q1, the economic development survey in Q2, and 2013 residential survey in Q3.

Annual Milestone 2012: Upon approval from South Carolina stakeholders and NTIA, initiate the 2012 statewide residential survey research and the 2012 statewide business surveys by writing survey instruments, creating spreadsheets

with census-defined quotas and weights for 2012, collecting respondent data, and creating data file with weighted results.

This milestone was partially met in 2012 and completed in 2013. Program research staff finished initial analysis on the data and generated weighted results for the 2012 statewide residential survey (named as 2013 residential survey in the revised project plan) in Q1 2013; the 2012 business survey (named as 2013 business survey in the revised project plan) was initiated in Q1 2013 through activities such as writing survey instruments and creating spreadsheets with census-defined quotas.

Annual Milestone 2012: After analysis and the review process that includes collaborating with the South Carolina Governor's Office, the 2012 residential survey will be delivered in-person to the Task Force, South Carolina Governor's Office, and other stakeholders. Also survey results will be announced via press release, website update, and meetings with stakeholders.

This milestone was met. The program research staff delivered the 2012 residential survey (named as 2013 statewide residential survey in the revised project plan) to NITA and state stakeholders in Q1 2013, and publicly announced these results in the same quarter via press releases, blog posts, social media announcements, and website updates.

Annual Milestone 2012: Facilitate Year 3 peer review of survey results and resulting analysis. Review peer recommendation and update program as required.

This milestone was met partially in 2012 and completed in 2013. Dr. Lori Dickes of Clemson University peer reviewed the residential survey, offering recommendations regarding how best to describe the survey methodology and offered input on information that could make the survey instrument more transparent for future peer reviewers. Feedback from Dr. Dickes will be incorporated into future documents when the 2013 and 2014 residential surveys are peer reviewed.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q1 2014):

- Initiate 2014 business survey peer review
- Initiate 2014 business survey research
- Finalize and distribute 2013 residential survey research results

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

Results from the 2013 business survey and two white papers regarding trends in technology adoption by demographic and geography, as well as the impact of socio-economic factors on this gap, and the technology impact on women-owned businesses were published this quarter. Some of the findings from those reports are located below.

Connect South Carolina estimates that 34% of households do not subscribe to home broadband service. This means that more than 1.2 million South Carolina adults do not

have residential broadband service. Those who subscribe to broadband are benefitting in numerous ways. More than two out of five broadband subscribers (43%) go online to search or apply for jobs. Statewide, nearly 170,000 unemployed South Carolina adults rely on the Internet for find or apply for jobs. Forty-two percent (42%) use broadband to take online classes or conduct online research for school.

South Carolina businesses rely on broadband to grow and thrive. Statewide, two out of five of those broadband-connected businesses (40%, representing approximately 30,000 businesses statewide) go online to advertise job openings or accept job applications.

Many women-owned businesses that use broadband do so to provide flexibility for their employees. One-third of broadband-connected businesses owned by women allow their employees to telework, 49% enable their employees to use mobile Internet service for their work functions, and 36% either provide the necessary equipment (such as computers, laptops, tablets, or smartphones) or support a Virtual Private Network (VPM) that allows their employees to work while outside of the business establishment. On average, women-owned businesses that sell goods or services online earn \$244,000 annually in online sales.

Each of the white papers published this quarter have been included within the "13Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina" response.

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 4 per approved project plan:

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

This milestone was met. Community Tech Team Specialists aided local/regional community teams in completing two assessments and Technology Action Plans this quarter - in Dorchester and Marlboro Counties. Four additional communities were engaged this quarter namely Lexington, Bamberg, McCormick, and Richland Counties. 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 will track their activities while working on their Connected assessment.

Community Tech Team Specialists assisted with the management and 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 of the 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 Dorchester County, whose rural town of St. George expressed particular interest in creating a digital farmers market to coincide with their newly developing brick-and-mortar farmers market.

On Hilton Head Island, for example, program staff worked with the Hilton Head Island Telecommunications Taskforce and town government to begin assessing the state of broadband, particularly as it affects the town's booming tourism industry. With mobile broadband of particular interest, the town is harnessing the mapping data and expertise of the South Carolina SBI program to ensure that residents and visitors of Hilton Head Island maintain the best level of connectivity possible.

Kick-off events were conducted in Bamberg, McCormick, and Richland Counties during the Q4 2013 reporting period. These kick-off events were coordinated by program staff and hosted 13 to 38 attendees at each event. Those in attendance were introduced to the Connected program before broking into three committees: access, adoption, and use where they spent 45 minutes talking about the Connected program assessment questions and began to map out their steps to complete the assessment in the coming months.

Over 32 communities statewide have been engaged in the Connected community engagement program, and staff continues to have the goal of engaging all 46 counties in South Carolina. A map that displays the status of each engaged community was maintained throughout the quarter. 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 Community Engagement map has been provided as an attachment via the "13Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina" document.

Milestone: Conduct Year 4, Quarter 4 Task Force meeting

The milestone was met. On December 13, 2013, the statewide Task Force (renamed the Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council) convened to discuss the drafted development and implementation plan for an outreach campaign centered on increasing broadband adoption in the state. The name of that campaign, "Life is Better With Broadband" will be used to develop an adoption campaign concept focused on educating South Carolina residents on the benefits of broadband with the goal of increasing adoption rates. The campaign, which was drafted by the Connect South Carolina and Connected Nation staff, was approved by the Council on December 13, 2013. The program team will work to keep the support and interest of the Council members to ensure their participation in the "Life is Better With Broadband" campaign either financially or through in-kind match and contributions.

During the same 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. After the meeting, the program team finalized meeting notes, action items, and recommendations to be included in the next Council meeting.

Planning Team Annual Milestones Year 4 per approved project plan:

Annual Milestone 2013: The regional technology consultants will schedule meetings, set agendas, taking meeting notes, and work with local regional teams to identify target sectors and regional and local subject matters for the train-the-trainer sessions. They will develop local regional training toolkit from local information, task force recommendations, research data, best practices, and provider data. They will also facilitate training session, provide training toolkits for team members to use in their own communities, document training session attendance, and add attendees to regional contact database. The regional technology consultants will hold 17 to 30 planning meetings in year 4.

This milestone was met. Program staff has currently engaged over 32 communities in the state, and the goal continues to be that of engaging all 46 counties in South Carolina. The program team conducted over 60 meetings in 2013 and more than 70 over the life of the program. Although not all meetings were formal they were all conducted to support the local planning team process. The South Carolina SBI program has offered an avenue for which communities could comprehensively discuss and assess their current state of broadband assets as they pursue improvements in the areas of broadband access (often a concern for more rural areas) or broadband adoption and use. Through the planning team meetings, communities could identify their strengths and weaknesses in broadband-related areas, catalog their technology inventory, and review the mapping and data available to them by the program.

Annual Milestone 2013: Assist in development and implementation of local regional technology growth strategies by helping to track local Broadband projects, add to regional database, and bring awareness to projects through Connect South Carolina website, blog, press releases, reports, or as required by local regional team and providing technical assistance (research data) and mapping tools to assist teams in implementation of local initiatives.

This milestone was met. Program staff has been working with South Carolina communities in the development and implementation of local regional technology growth strategies through the use of the Connected community engagement program. Through these efforts greater awareness on a local, state, and national level has been demonstrated including local broadband projects being publicized through various communication channels such as the www.connectsc.org website, blog postings, press releases, e-newsletters, or reports. Research data has been provided to communities and Community Tech Team Specialists have offered technical assistance and mapping tools to assist teams in the implementation of local initiatives. As of the end of Q4 2013,

there were 32 communities working to attain the certification status of being a Connected community. Through collaborative work with local community team members and two program consultants, Connect South Carolina has facilitated efforts to create awareness of the necessity of broadband expansion and use throughout the state.

Various blog posts, press releases, and e-newsletters have been presented via the "13Q4_Project Attachment_Question 5_South Carolina" enclosure.

Annual Milestone 2013: It is projected that the Task Force will meet quarterly to review program progress and offer recommendations for the program and other related programs. Task Force recommendations will be communicated with stakeholders via stakeholder meetings, Connect South Carolina website updates, blogs, press releases, reports, or as required by Task Force.

This milestone was met. Staff held the inaugural Connect South Carolina Task Force (renamed to Connect South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council) meeting in May 2013. Subsequent meetings were held in June, August, and December. At this time, the Broadband Advisory Council will be made up of individuals from the following organizations: Clemson University Strom Thurmond Institute, Municipal Association of South 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, South Carolina Division of State Information Technology, and South Carolina State Library. Each of the Advisory Council meetings included a review of the previous meeting notes/minutes along with any action items and a status update of the South Carolina SBI program. After the meeting, the program team finalized meeting notes, action items, and recommendations to be included in the next council meeting. The Council's mission and members are posted on the program website, and the Advisory Council is updated via phone conversations, e-mails, and in-person meetings, as those are the preferred communication avenues for the council members.

Planning Team Annual Milestones Outstanding (not met or partially met) from previous year:

Annual Milestone 2012: The regional technology consultants will schedule meetings, set agendas, take meeting notes, and work with local regional teams to identify target sectors and regional and local subject matters for the train-the-trainer sessions. They will develop a local regional training toolkit from local information, task force recommendations, research data, best practices, and provider data. They will also facilitate training session, provide training toolkits for team members to use in their own communities, document training session attendance, and add attendees to regional contact database. The regional technology consultants will hold 20 to 30 planning meetings in year 3.

This milestone was met. With two full-time planning team consultants in place for a majority of 2013, the number of community meetings reached 7 for this quarter and 63 for the year. The program got into full swing engaging these 32 communities: Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Chester,

Clarendon, Fairfield, Greenville, Greenwood, Hampton, Hilton Head Island, Horry, Jasper, Kershaw, Lexington, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Richland, Saluda, Savannah Lakes Village, Sumter, Union, and Upper Dorchester. These counties/communities are in varied stages of their community engagement process where the Community Tech Team Specialists are striving to support local efforts of development of strategic priorities. This quarter an additional part-time specialist was hired to support the local planning team efforts. This consultant began in November.

Annual Milestone 2012: It is projected that the Task Force will meet quarterly to review program progress and offer recommendations for the program and other related programs. Task Force recommendations will be communicated with stakeholders via stakeholder meetings, Connect South Carolina website updates, blogs, press releases, reports, or as required by Task Force.

This milestone was met. The Task Force (renamed the South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council) held its inaugural meeting in Q2 2013 with a robust group of newly identified members. The initial meeting offered introductions, mission and vision for the Council, and an overview of the efforts of South Carolina's SBI program. In Q3 2013, a second Council meeting was held and out of this meeting came a charge to the staff to create a campaign and messaging focused on increasing broadband adoption statewide. At the Q4 2013 meeting, staff presented the "Life is Better With Broadband" overview and received favorable feedback.

Overall participation has been good with the group with meetings alternating between in-person and webinar. Staff continues to monitor the makeup of the members and seeks to identify additional potential members to approach for participation. The Council's mission and member names are posted on the www.connectsc.org website and the Advisory Council is updated via phone conversations, e-mails and in-person meeting, as those are the preferred communication avenues for members.

Annual Milestone 2012: Connect South Carolina, in conjunction with the South Carolina Governor's Office, the task force, local/regional planning teams and other key stakeholders will host the 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting. Corresponding primary activities include preparing 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting agenda in collaboration with the Governor's Office, developing status report that shows broadband accomplishments in the state of South Carolina, best practices and identify areas of need in the overall South Carolina Broadband Plan and documenting meeting outcomes.

This milestone was met. On May 16, 2013, program staff facilitated the first annual Connect South Carolina State Broadband Summit "Connections 2013" in partnership with IT-oLogy. Over 120 participants attended the event; furthermore, the summit was streamed live over the Internet and reached approximately 70 people in addition to those in attendance. The goal of the summit was to gather South Carolina's local and state leaders, technology champions, technology providers, and state educators together in an effort to increase awareness of the role of technology and broadband in economic development planning and workforce readiness. The summit also allowed

the program staff to educate state 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.

Challenges encountered and mitigation strategies employed

The South Carolina Chief of Staff for the Governor's Office, with whom program staff had made great strides towards both involvement in the South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council as well as in our general state client relationship left to take another position. His departure left the South Carolina SBI team with a void in this important administrative office. Equally, there have been several key leaders in South Carolina's Division of State Information Technology (DSIT) who have retired within a few months of one another, making communication into the state's IT agency difficult. These challenges have not impacted the successes of program milestones as staff have been able to overcome these obstacles. Staff continues to work toward building new relationships in these offices.

Planning Teams Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter (Q1 2014)

Planned major activities for next quarter include the fourth meeting of the South Carolina Broadband Advisory Council on February 4, 2014 where the committee will continue discussing and began to finalize the campaign of "Life is Better With Broadband." Also, in Q1 2014 Connect South Carolina staff is looking forward to presenting several new technology action plans around the state as well as engaging new communities.

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

In an effort to further engage Lexington County in the Connected community engagement program staff has meet with the county administrator on several occasions. In a recently held meeting the administrator shared a story about a letter he received at his office from a local citizen who had been out of work for some time. The man didn't know how to create a resume, didn't have access to the Internet at his home due to the expense during his time of unemployment, and hadn't interviewed in some time. The citizen offered acclaim to the local library for allowing him access to the Internet free of charge, where he was then able to search for and apply for jobs. He also worked with library staff to create a resume and conduct mock interviews. The citizen is now employed by Amazon in the local community and gives credit to the access of public Internet at the Lexington County Library for getting him back on his feet. Staff is hopeful that through further involvement in the Connected program Lexington County will experience additional successes in increased broadband access, adoption, and use.

The rural area of Upper Dorchester County completed an assessment of their broadband inventory this quarter and developed specialized action items. Through this process, the community began to think about how they could harness technology to benefit economic development. The area, which is currently in the process of building a farmers market for residents and visitors, developed an action item to create a digital market that would enhance the business for local farmers who are looking to sell their products. This digital farmers market will serve as an online marketing tool for the community and is being propelled by the local Economic Development office and the Mayor of St. George in Upper Dorchester County.

In Q1 2014, program staff is looking forward to presenting several new Technology Action Plans around the state as well as engaging new communities. With 32 engaged communities, including one certified Connected community, and a total of 550 planning team members active in the South Carolina Connected community engagement program through the end of Q4 2013, staff is well on its way to engaging all 46 counties in the state at some level.

Multi-sector technology planning teams participating in the Connected community engagement program have identified the following technology assets within their own communities:

Public computer centers: 61

Digital literacy programs: 41

Broadband awareness programs: 60

Broadband programs focused on vulnerable populations: 58

These assets are inventoried during each community's assessment of local broadband access, adoption, and use and can be leveraged to develop locally relevant digital inclusion strategies during the community team's action planning process in an effort to continue to close the digital gaps in their communities.