

14Q4 Supplemental Answers – Texas

Connected Nation, Inc.

Grant Number 48-50-M09064

Reporting Period End Date 12-31-14

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)

Following the final semi-annual broadband data submission, maps were updated on the program website. Items updated during the quarter and per the October 1, 2014 datasets include the following:

- Broadband Availability Maps at 768 Kbps (kilobytes per second) Download/200 Kbps Upload
- Unserved Density Maps
- Broadband Availability Maps at 3 Mbps (megabytes per second) Download/768 Kbps Upload
- Maximum Advertised Download Speed Maps (Residential)
- Providers by County Lists (PDF and XLS)
- Underserved Area Maps
- Multi-Single Platform Maps
- Provider Density Maps
- My ConnectView Interactive Map
- County Availability Statistic Maps
- Broadband Growth Maps
- Congressional District Broadband Availability Maps

The program continues to maintain an interactive mapping web application, called My ConnectView. The application is housed in a highly available, monitored, and managed environment. My ConnectView is publicly available online at <http://www.connectedtx.org>. There were a total of 1,696 visits to the interactive map between October 1 and December 31, 2014.

During this quarter, the project received a total of five broadband inquiries. Additional information received through e-mail from consumers that was also used for verification purposes totaled two this quarter. Users can also request non-confidential mapping data produced for the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) grant program; 3 data requests were received between October 1 and December 31, 2014.

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

Since the October submission, program staff continued to review Community Anchor Institution (CAI) data in an effort to ensure every opportunity to update and submit new data. Outreach was also completed to contacts that have submitted data to the program via the online survey to ensure we have the most current broadband speeds. Local outreach and CAI outreach will continue through Q1 2015.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff created Connect America Fund maps that displayed census blocks challenged by both price-cap and non-price cap carriers.

Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) staff continued working with providers this quarter in an effort to maintain relationships that might further assist the state as well as the provider community. In conjunction with other program resources, ETS staff helped providers to process their service data and maps. Furthermore, as a result of the providers' comfort level with the program staff, ETS representatives responded to a number of varied questions and requests.

Additionally, special effort was made to keep providers and state stakeholders informed of broadband data collection activities. This included distributing materials and discussing information regarding the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Form 477, and changes that were implemented by the FCC for the SBI final semi-annual data submission. Staff kept providers up-to-date on the various changes that took place between October and December. ETS staff also assisted many providers in obtaining and formatting the necessary data for the deployment portions of the Form 477, as much of this data paralleled the SBI data collection activities.

The ETS group worked to conduct in-depth reviews of unserved and underserved areas, with particular interest paid to those areas with close proximity to existing services. The goal of this review was to bring awareness of these areas to existing local providers and to further understand the dynamics of particular census blocks and the challenges that exist to offering services.

14 b Project Attachment Capacity Building

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 next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Broadband Capacity Building Milestones Year 5, Quarter 4 per approved project plan:

Milestone: 2014, Quarter 4, Connected Texas program office administration

This milestone was met. The program office in Austin remains fully staffed and interacting with stakeholders, such as the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Public Utilities Commission, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Education Agency, Texas Computer Education Association, Texas Workforce Commission, statewide school technology consortiums such as TexServe and Northeast Texas Network, along with broadband providers, broadband-related partners, and other representatives throughout the state through the sharing of periodic status reports, experiencing continual direct interactions, addressing requests for information or data, and raising awareness of broadband-related news and information through a variety of media. Connected Texas remains the go-to subject matter expert for all state agencies with needs regarding broadband adoption, access, and use.

Milestone: Conduct 2014, Quarter 4, Stakeholder Group meeting

This milestone was met. Stakeholder group meetings occurred throughout the quarter, through group settings and/or individual meetings with stakeholders from multiple Councils of Government (COG) including the East Texas COG, Ark-Tex COG, Brazos Valley COG, Rio Grande COG, and Rural Capital COG, as well as meetings with various regional representatives of the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Education Agency, Texas Workforce Commission, and Texas Education Service Centers. The Program Manager set the agenda, met with the stakeholders, and utilized these recurring meetings in order to present stakeholders with programmatic updates and solicit feedback. Notable updates are communicated publicly via blog posts on the program website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. Stakeholder meetings have allowed staff to continue highlighting program successes with SBI projects such as local community engagement as well as provide updates on FCC universal service reform and its impact on broadband development.

Milestone: Close Project

This milestone was not met. Per a grant amendment initiated by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the Texas State Broadband Initiative project will run through January 2015. Closeout procedures, as given by the NTIA, are currently underway and will conclude in 2015.

Broadband Capacity Building Annual Milestones Year 5 per approved project plan:

Annual Outcome: The Connected Texas Program Office, run by the Connected Texas Program Coordinator, will administer the Connected Texas program of activities and become a clearinghouse and resource for broadband deployment efforts within the state.

This annual outcome was met. The program office in Austin remained fully staffed and interacting with stakeholders, broadband providers, broadband-related partners, and other representatives throughout the state through periodic status reports, continual direct interactions, addressing requests for information or data, and raising awareness of broadband-related news and information through a variety of media. The Program Manager administered the project plan, prepared and delivered status reports, managed workflows, verified work quality, documented and evaluated recommendations, gathered documentation in support of community projects, and supported other information as requested. Connected Texas continues to be a go-to resource within the state as a primary champion of broadband as it relates to adoption, access, and use.

Annual Outcome: Connected Texas will work in tandem with TDA, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force, and members of the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) to convene a Stakeholder Group. It is projected that the Stakeholder Group will meet quarterly to review program progress and offer recommendations for the program and other related programs. Stakeholder Group meeting outcomes and recommendations will be communicated with all stakeholders via the Connected Texas website updates, blogs, press releases, reports or as required by Stakeholder Group. The Stakeholder Group will provide for and support outcomes such as: outreach and collaboration with experts, non-profits, and trade associations and assessing current programs and laws/regulations that may be used to overcome broadband growth and adoption barriers.

This annual outcome was met. Stakeholder group meetings occurred each month throughout the year. The Program Manager set the agenda, met with the stakeholders, and utilized these recurring meetings in order to present state partners with programmatic updates and solicit feedback. More notable updates are communicated publicly via blog posts on the program website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed.

Annual Outcome: The Connected Texas Program Office, with the term of the grant expiring, will perform project close-out activities.

This annual outcome was not met. Per a grant amendment initiated by NTIA, the Texas State Broadband Initiative project will expire in January 2015. Closeout procedures, as given by the NTIA, are currently underway and will conclude in 2015.

Q4 2014 Capacity Building Challenges and Mitigation:

No major challenges were encountered.

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

Media impressions garnered this quarter were the result of the Broadband and Education Report release. The report, revealing that almost 1 million students in the state are without home broadband access, was announced at the "Texas Broadband Symposium," co-hosted by Connected Texas and the Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) in October at the TCEA headquarters in Austin. The symposium highlighted challenges and best practices to provide broadband access in school districts across the state.

Throughout Q4 2014, two e-newsletters were drafted and distributed to program stakeholders highlighting the above-mentioned stories, as well as local outreach and community engagement efforts. Recaps of the Connected community engagement program were included, such as communities joining the program and plans to celebrate the completion of the Connected program, achievement of certification, and receiving Technology Action Plans.

Social media posts for the quarter were comprised of broadband and technology content taken from around the state and country, as well as Connected community engagement program updates. The program finished Q4 2014 with 283 fans on Facebook, up 7 from the previous quarter and on Twitter, Connected Texas finished with 1,162 followers, up 13 followers. There were also four photo albums added to the Facebook page showcasing Connected celebration events, the Texas Broadband Symposium, and staff participation at various community events.

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 next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Technical Assistance Milestones Year 5, Quarter 4, per approved project plan:

Milestone: Analyze 2014 residential survey research results

This milestone was met. The survey data collection was completed during the previous quarter. The results of the survey were weighted and analyzed, and the initial results were generated during Q4 2014. The initial results were peer reviewed by Dr. Sharon Strover of the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Strover approved all survey documents and provided no additional feedback regarding the survey. The initial results were sent to NTIA as well as state stakeholders.

Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2014 residential survey research results

This milestone was partially met. The survey was completed during the previous quarter. The results of the survey were weighted and analyzed, and the initial results were generated during Q4 2014. The initial results were peer reviewed at the end of Q4 2014 by Dr. Sharon Strover of the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Strover approved all survey documents and provided no additional feedback regarding the survey. Initial results of the survey were distributed to NTIA and state stakeholders; however, public release of the 2014 residential survey results are expected to be finalized and distributed in Q1 2015 via media release, website updates, and social media postings.

Milestone: Close project

This milestone was not met. Per a grant amendment initiated by NTIA, the Texas State Broadband Initiative project will expire in January 2015. Closeout procedures, as given by the NTIA, are currently underway and will conclude in 2015.

Outstanding Technical Assistance Milestones per approved project plan:

Year 5, Quarter 3 Milestone: Facilitate the 2014 Annual Statewide Strategic Broadband Planning Meeting

This milestone was met. Connected Texas partnered with the Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) to facilitate and conduct a joint Strategic Broadband Planning Symposium focused on education initiatives and broadband. The event was held October 7-8, 2014, at the offices of TCEA in Austin, Texas. The symposium highlighted challenges and best practices to provide broadband access in school districts across the state.

The event began with an announcement of the release of the Broadband and Education – Connecting Students in Texas report, and followed with panel sessions on challenges at the state and national level, historical and present funding of broadband access, success stories from around the state, approaches from other states, and school and community connections. Speakers included the Program Manager and Chief Policy Officer; Director of Telecommunications at Texas A&M University; Executive Director, Northeast Texas Consortium of Colleges and Universities (NETnet); Director of Communications of the Texas Library Association; and Senior Director of Learning Solutions Programs at Common Sense Media, to list a few. Attendees were divided into groups and were given the opportunity to collaborate on the identification of key barriers to providing broadband access to Texas schools, categorizing strategies that policymakers and practitioners can support to overcome barriers, as well as solutions and next steps. A press release was issued and updates were made on social media and the program website highlighting the event and outcomes of the symposium.

Year 5, Quarter 2 Milestone: Peer Review of the 2014 statewide residential survey

This milestone was met. The 2014 residential survey was weighted and analyzed, and the initial results were generated during Q4 2014. The initial results were peer reviewed by Dr. Sharon Strover of the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Strover approved all survey documents and provided no additional feedback regarding the survey. The initial results were sent to NTIA as well as state stakeholders.

Technical Assistance Annual Milestones per approved project plan:

Annual Outcome: Finalize and distribute 2013 statewide business survey research results. Activities include incorporating stakeholder requests and create final report detailing results of 2013 statewide business survey, delivering in-person presentation of 2013 statewide business research results to the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force and/or other Texas stakeholders and announcing the release of data via press release, website update and meetings with stakeholders.

This annual outcome was met in Year 4. The business survey research results were finalized in Q3 2013, updates to the website were completed in Q4 2013, and the results of the 2013 business survey, along with graphical information designed to highlight key findings of the survey, were released publicly in Q4 2013. Notifications were sent to stakeholders regarding the findings and public release of the same. Blog posts and social media announcements were generated to raise awareness of the survey results.

Annual Outcome: After the analysis and review process that includes collaborating with the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force, and/or other Texas stakeholders. The 2013 statewide residential survey research results will be finalized and submitted to the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force and/or other Texas stakeholders. Data will be released via in-person presentations, press releases, webinars, or website updates.

This outcome was met. Peer review of the 2013 residential survey was completed during Q2 2014 and the results were then finalized during the same quarter. The survey results were distributed in person to the Texas Department of Agriculture. Results were also released to other stakeholders and the public via an update to the program website, including posting the actual results and displaying interactive graphical trends designed to highlight data within the results. A media release and social media postings were also generated as part of the distribution.

Annual Outcome: Initiate the currently proposed 2014 statewide residential survey research or modified research, if changes were recommended. Corresponding primary activities include writing survey instrument (script with appropriate programming notes), collecting respondent data, and creating data file with weighted results. Once surveys are complete they will be analyzed in consultation with the NTIA, Peer Reviewer, Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force, and/or other Texas stakeholders as appropriate.

This outcome was met. The 2014 residential survey was initiated in Q3 2014. Research staff offered state stakeholders the opportunity to offer recommendations on the survey. The recommendations were incorporated into the design of the survey, and a spreadsheet with census defined quotas and weights were created. The survey instrument was written and finalized. Survey data collection was completed, and the results of the data collection were weighted and analyzed, and initial results were generated during Q4 2014. The initial results were peer reviewed by Dr. Sharon Strover of the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Strover approved all survey documents and provided no additional feedback regarding the survey. The initial results were sent to NTIA as well as state stakeholders.

Annual Outcome: After the analysis and review process that includes collaborating with the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force, and/or other Texas stakeholders. The 2013 business survey research results and the 2014 statewide residential survey research results will be finalized and submitted to the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force and/or other Texas stakeholders. Data will be released via in-person presentations, press releases, webinars, or website updates.

This outcome was partially met. The 2013 business survey results were finalized in 2013. The survey results were distributed in person to the Texas Department of Agriculture. Results were also released to

other stakeholders and the public via an update to the program website, including posting the actual results and displaying interactive graphical trends designed to highlight data within the results. A media release and social media postings were also completed as part of the distribution.

The development of the 2014 residential survey script began in Q2 2014. Internal discussions and a draft of the survey script were completed. Feedback was solicited from the Texas Department of Agriculture. Research staff incorporated feedback from state stakeholders and finalized the survey script, generated a spreadsheet utilizing latest Census information for the purpose of data collection, and worked with the contracted data collector to create a survey instrument for telephone dialing. The 2014 residential survey data collection was completed in Q3 2014. The results of the survey were weighted and analyzed, and the initial results were generated during Q4 2014. The initial results were peer reviewed at the end of Q4 2014 by Dr. Sharon Strover of the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Strover approved all survey documents and provided no additional feedback regarding the survey. Initial results of the survey were distributed to NTIA and state stakeholders; however, public release of the 2014 residential survey results expected to be finalized and distributed in Q1 2015 via media release, website updates, and social media postings.

Annual Outcome: Conduct a 2014 business survey. Corresponding primary activities include writing survey instrument (script with appropriate programming notes), collecting respondent data, and creating data file with weighted results. Once surveys are complete they will be analyzed in consultation with the NTIA, Peer reviewer, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Public Utilities Commission (PUC), the Texas Broadband Task Force, and/or other Texas stakeholders.

This outcome was met. State stakeholders were provided the opportunity to offer input and make requests related to the 2014 business survey. The survey script and instrument were completed with input from stakeholders in mind during Q1. The 2014 business survey established sample quotas by company size (5 brackets) and industry sector (8 sectors). Within these 40 cells, a randomly-drawn sample of businesses listed with Dun & Bradstreet was contacted for the survey. In addition to the size and sector quotas, the data was subsequently weighted using a rim weighting process to ensure that the sample was representative of all employer business establishments statewide, with targets determined according to the 2011 United States Census Bureau's County Business Pattern report, the most recent data that were available at the time the survey was conducted. The survey was peer reviewed by Dr. Sharon Strover of the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Strover peer reviewed the survey script, methodology, and initial results of the survey, and provided no additional feedback regarding the survey.

In Q3 2014, research staff finalized the 2014 business survey research results and its methodology document, summarized research findings in various formats such as spreadsheet, a PDF infographic, and an interactive online tool. The results were distributed to NTIA and state stakeholders prior to public release.

Annual Outcome: Finalize and distribute 2014 business survey research results. Activities include incorporating stakeholder requests and create final report detailing results of 2014 business survey, delivering in-person presentation of 2014 business research results to the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force and/or other Texas stakeholders and announcing the release of data via press release, website update and meetings with stakeholders.

This outcome was met. In Q3 2014, research staff finalized 2014 business survey research results and its methodology document, summarized research findings in various formats such as spreadsheet, a PDF

infographic, and an interactive online tool. The results were distributed to NTIA and state stakeholders prior to public release.

The survey results, the infographic of the highlights, and the interactive online tool were uploaded to the program website and announced via press release and social media postings. Highlights include: 80% of businesses report utilizing broadband, leaving approximately 105,000 businesses not connected, with \$194.6 billion in online revenue earned over the course of last year and 296,000 Internet-connected Texas businesses that don't have redundant or backup Internet service, which means that if anything were to happen to their Internet service, they would be unable to connect to the Internet. Seventy-eight thousand (78,000) Internet-connected businesses want more bandwidth; of those, two-fifths (40%) report that they can't get faster service where they are located. More than four out of ten Texas businesses (45%) say they spend their own time and resources training new employees on the software that their business uses.

Annual Outcome: Facilitate peer review of 2014 residential survey results and resulting analysis. Review peer recommendation and update program as required.

This annual outcome was met. The survey script, methodology, and initial results of the 2014 residential survey were peer reviewed by Dr. Sharon Strover of the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Strover approved all survey documents and provided no additional feedback regarding the survey. The initial results were sent to NTIA as well as state stakeholders.

Annual Outcome: Connected Texas, in conjunction with the Texas Association of Regional Councils, Texas Broadband Task Force, and the Texas Department of Agriculture will plan and conduct a state strategic broadband planning session. The activities include preparing an agenda, securing a location, sending invitations, facilitating the meeting and recording meeting outcomes.

This outcome was met. Connected Texas partnered with the Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) to facilitate and conduct a joint Strategic Broadband Planning Symposium focused on education initiatives and broadband. The event was held October 7-8, 2014, at the offices of TCEA in Austin, Texas. The symposium highlighted challenges and best practices to provide broadband access in school districts across the state.

The event began with an announcement of the release of the Broadband and Education – Connecting Students in Texas report, and followed with panel sessions on challenges at the state and national level, historical and present funding of broadband access, success stories from around the state, approaches from other states, and school and community connections. Speakers included the Program Manager and Chief Policy Officer; Director of Telecommunications at Texas A&M University; Executive Director, Northeast Texas Consortium of Colleges and Universities (NETnet); Director of Communications of the Texas Library Association; and Senior Director of Learning Solutions Programs at Common Sense Media, to list a few. Attendees were divided into groups and were given the opportunity to collaborate on the identification of key barriers to providing broadband access to Texas schools, categorizing strategies that policymakers and practitioners can support to overcome barriers, as well as solutions and next steps. A press release was issued and updates were made on social media and the program website highlighting the events and outcomes of the symposium.

Annual Outcome: The Connected Texas Technical Assistance project will be closed out.

This outcome was not met. Per a grant amendment initiated by NTIA, the Texas State Broadband Initiative project will expire in January 2015. Closeout procedures, as given by the NTIA, are currently underway and will conclude in 2015.

Outstanding Technical Assistance Annual Milestones per approved project plan:

Year 4 Annual Outcome: Initiate the currently proposed 2013 residential survey research and the 2013 business survey research or modified research, if changes are recommended. Corresponding primary activities include writing survey instrument (script with appropriate programming notes), collecting respondent data, and creating data file with weighted results. Once surveys are complete they will be analyzed in consultation with the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force, and/or other Texas stakeholders as appropriate.

This outcome was partially met in Year 4 when the residential survey and business survey were both initiated, the survey instruments written, spreadsheets created with Census-defined quotas, and respondent data collected. Results from the 2013 business survey were released publicly in Q4 2013. The outcome was fully met in Year 5. Data collection for the 2013 residential survey ended in late Q4 2013. The results of the survey were weighted and analyzed, and the initial results were generated during Q1 2014. Dr. Sharon Strover from the University of Texas at Austin peer reviewed the survey in Q2 2014 and agreed with the survey instrument used and generally agreed with the survey results. Some minor discrepancies were noted in the findings; however, no changes were needed. The survey results were then distributed in person to the Texas Department of Agriculture. Survey results were also released to other stakeholders and the public via an update to the program website, including posting the actual results and displaying interactive graphical trends designed to highlight data within the results. A media release and social media postings were also completed as part of the distribution.

Year 4 Annual Outcome: After the analysis and review process that includes collaborating with the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force, and/or other Texas stakeholders. The 2013 statewide residential survey research results will be finalized and submitted to the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas PUC, the Texas Broadband Task Force and/or other Texas stakeholders. Data will be released via in-person presentations, press releases, webinars, or website updates.

This outcome was met. The data collection for the 2013 residential survey ended in late Q4 2013. The results of the survey were weighted and analyzed, and the initial results were generated during Q1 2014. Dr. Sharon Strover from the University of Texas at Austin peer reviewed the survey in Q2 2014 and agreed with the survey instrument used and generally agreed with the survey results. Some minor discrepancies were noted in the findings; however, no changes were needed. Survey results were then distributed in person to the Texas Department of Agriculture as well as to other stakeholders and the public via an update to the program website, including posting the actual results and displaying interactive graphical trends designed to highlight data within the results. A media release and social media postings were also completed as part of the distribution.

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

This outcome was met. The 2013 business survey was peer reviewed in 2013. However, data collection for the 2013 residential survey was delayed as the data collection process did not finish until late in Q4 2013, providing insufficient time for analysis or peer review. During Q1 2014, results of the survey were weighted and analyzed, and the initial results were generated. Dr. Sharon Strover from the University of Texas at Austin peer reviewed the survey in Q2 2014 and agreed with the survey instrument used and generally agreed with the survey results. Some minor discrepancies were noted in the findings; however, no changes were needed.

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

According to the 2014 Residential Technology Assessment, 74% of households in the state subscribe to home broadband service, up from 62% in 2010. Mobile broadband usage has also grown in Texas. Nearly two-thirds of Texas adults (65%) use mobile broadband service, up from 37% in 2010 when Connected Texas began measuring this trend. Statewide, more than 2 million households still do not subscribe to home broadband service. For many of these households, the main barrier to home broadband adoption is the belief that broadband is not relevant or beneficial to them.

A report titled “Broadband and Education – Connecting Students in Texas” was released in support of the Strategic Broadband Planning Symposium. The report, based on data from the 2013 residential survey, determined how children are using the Internet, and whether other options are available for those students who do not have broadband access at home. The research found that many students still do not have broadband access at home, but schools are making an effort to ensure that all students receive the digital literacy training they will need to succeed in college and the workforce. Key findings of the report show:

- Only 8% of Texas households with K-12 students do not own a computer, but more than 950,000 students in the state do not have broadband at home.
- Students living in homes with annual household incomes below \$35,000, rural students, and Hispanic students are less likely to have home computers or broadband service at home.
- Not all students use the Internet at school – one in four rural parents of K-12 students in Texas (25%) say their child does not use the Internet at school.
- The top barrier to broadband adoption among Texas parents of K-12 students is the parents’ own lack of digital literacy skills.
- One in five Texas parents of K-12 students (20%) say their children’s school provides students with laptop or tablet computers; Hispanic parents, those with annual household incomes below \$35,000, and those living in rural parts of the state are more likely to report that their children’s schools provide computers to students.
- Over one-half of parents of K-12 students whose schools provide computers say that they have helped their children’s grades, and six out of ten parents who do not have broadband at home agree that having Internet service at home would make it easier for their child to do homework.

14 b 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 next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

Planning Teams Milestones Year 5, Quarter 4, per approved project plan:

Milestone: Conduct Year 5, Quarter 4 planning team meetings

This milestone was met. Program staff planned, scheduled, and facilitated meetings with multiple communities during Q4 2014. These planning meetings discussed the Connected community

engagement program, identified broadband resources in the communities, conducted local broadband planning, or gathered information to assemble a Technology Action Plan to work toward meeting Connected certification requirements. Invitations were prepared, agendas created, sign-in sheets gathered, and notes taken during these meetings.

Program staff is leading a regional community engagement effort, in the northeastern part of the state, in partnership with the East Texas and Ark-Tex Council of Governments (CoG) to lead the twenty-three (23) counties under the CoGs' jurisdictions through the Connected community engagement program. As of Q4 2014, six (6) of the twenty-three (23) counties have completed Technology Action Plans.

At the end of Q4 2014, three actively engaged communities remain: Tom Green County, Culberson County, and Glasscock County.

Tom Green County held a kick-off meeting during Q4 2014 where program staff presented on the Connected community engagement program, a representative from the Tom Green County Library shared information on the technology programs currently offered by the library, and next steps in the technological assessment were identified. The county's planning team anticipates completion of the assessment in Q1 2015.

Program staff met with the Culberson County judge and staff regarding the Connected community engagement program and it's call to assess and increase the county's access, adoption, and use of broadband. A follow up presentation is being scheduled for identified community team members who will work toward the completion of a county assessment in Q1 2015.

Nineteen (19) communities submitted their assessment data during Q4 2014. Program staff will utilize the assessment data submitted from these communities (Cameron County, Hidalgo County, Willacy County, Hudspeth County, Kleberg County, Montague County, Northern Grimes County, Van Zandt County, City of Jacksboro, Fort Bend County, City of Marfa, Brewster County, Comanche County, Lamar County, Titus County, Anderson County, Harrison County, Jim Hogg County, and Cherokee County) to draft of a Technology Action Plan.

A total of thirty-five (35) Texas communities have now completed the technology assessment process over the life of the program, with three communities recording scores high enough to attain Connected certification (Bastrop County, Young County, and Fort Bend County). Community teams across Texas, including the three active ones, contain a total of 328 planning team members.

Coryell County and the City of Valentine completed Technology Action Plans and held public events, in Q4 2014, to officially unveil them. Coryell's Technology Action Plan was unveiled October 30 during a celebration in the Old Commissioner's Courtroom in Gatesville, Texas, and the City of Valentine unveiled its Technology Action Plan on October 25. Social media postings were also made to announce each plan's release.

Milestone: Close project

This milestone was not met. Per a grant amendment initiated by NTIA, the Texas State Broadband Initiative project will expire in January 2015. Closeout procedures, as given by the NTIA, are currently underway and will conclude in 2015.

Planning Teams Annual Milestones per approved project plan:

Annual Outcome: Connected Texas will continue to facilitate regional planning and training sessions. Activities include scheduling meetings, setting agendas, taking meeting notes, and working with regional planning teams to identify target sectors and regional and local subject matters for the train-the-trainer sessions. The Planning Specialist will support each regional planning team in implementing regional broadband plans based on broadband benchmarks and goals established from Connected Texas' broadband mapping, broadband provider data, research, best practices, and existing data from other sources. They will also facilitate a 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 Planning Specialist will hold 1 planning meeting for each of the established regions, every quarter, in Year 5. We anticipate having 29 regional planning teams.

This annual outcome was met. Connected Texas facilitated nearly 250 community planning meetings across the state in 2014. Program staff scheduled meetings, set agendas, recorded notes, and worked with local and regional community planning teams from 35 communities. Staff supported these planning teams through the use of the Connected community engagement program where planning teams are led through a process to assess their local or regional broadband landscape through the use of broadband resources made available via the Texas SBI program and data from other sources. Planning teams identify gaps and create a Technology Action Plan with specific recommendations designed to make way for greater technology use and brighter economic futures in each community.

A total of 35 Texas communities have received, to date, a completed Technology Action Plan through the community engagement program. Program staff will continue to work with officials in these communities in an effort to assist in implementing some of the recommendations that were made within these reports. Team member attendance is documented at each meeting and contacts are added to a database. There are a total of 328 planning team members actively involved in some stage of the local/regional planning team process.

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

Multi-sector technology planning teams, made up of 328 team members, participating in the Connected community engagement program have identified the following technology assets within their own communities:

Public computer centers: 125

Digital literacy programs: 84

Broadband awareness programs: 118

Broadband programs focused on vulnerable populations: 140

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.