

## 12Q4\_Supplemental Answers\_Alaska

**Connected Nation**

**Grant Number 02-50-M09071**

**Reporting Period End Date 12-31-12**

### Data Collection Attachment

#### **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 Alaska continues to maintain the interactive mapping web application, called My ConnectView. The application is housed in a highly available, monitored, and managed environment. New feedback features allow consumers to send comments directly to program Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff; a screenshot of the user's current interactive map view is also attached to the feedback to provide additional details.

Consumer feedback in the form of broadband inquiries is also collected. These inquiries represent any type of communications received from the public regarding broadband service. Once broadband inquiries are received across the state, this information is overlaid with the broadband availability information which was collected through the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) program. This allows for a real-world comparison of the broadband landscape to the information received from broadband inquiries. Broadband inquiries are able to provide three types of information: 1) residents who do not have broadband but want it; 2) residents who have broadband but want a different provider; and 3) residents who do not have broadband, but the broadband inventory maps indicate that they do. If residents within a region state that they are without broadband, but the broadband inventory maps show otherwise, this allows Connected Nation to approach the providers within that area in an effort to trim down its coverage to more accurately represent real-world availability on the ground.

My ConnectView is publicly available on the Connect Alaska website (<http://www.connectak.org/interactive-map>). There were a total of 298 visits to My ConnectView between October 1, 2012, and December 31, 2012.

During this quarter, the project received one broadband inquiry. Additional information received through e-mail from consumers that can also be used for verification purposes totaled one for this quarter.

No field verification tests were conducted for this reporting period. However, to date, program staff have conducted on-site validation tests in Alaska on the following providers: Ace Tekk Wireless Internet; AlasConnect, Inc.; Alaska Communications Systems Holdings, Inc. (d.b.a. ACS); Alaska Power and Telephone Company; American Broadband Communications (d.b.a. TelAlaska Long Distance Inc.), AT&T, Inc.;

ATCONTACT COMMUNICATIONS; Borealis Broadband; Clearwire Corporation; Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Cordova Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Craig Cable, GCI Internet; Hughes.net, Ketchikan Public Utilities; Matanuska Telephone Association; SPITwSPOTS LLC; Verizon Wireless; and Yukon Telephone Company.

From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 19 companies (out of a universe of 25 viable providers) totaling 76.00 percent within the state of Alaska.

There were no mergers or acquisitions identified during this time period.

**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.**

On October 9, 2012 Connected Nation filed Reply Comments in response to the Petition for Waiver filed by ACS of Anchorage Inc., ACS of the Northland Inc., ACS of Fairbanks Inc. and ACS of Alaska Inc. (collectively "ACS") (See "In the Matter of Connect America Fund, High-Cost Universal Service Report, Petition for Waiver," Section 54.312(b)(2) and (b)(3)). In its waiver request, ACS alleges that the certain census blocks should be deemed as "unserved" by the FCC "...because of purported presence of a number of small providers of fixed wireless service" in which ACS goes on to suggest that these wireless ISPs are fundamentally incapable of providing broadband service to the households within the coverage areas identified on the National Broadband Map. The four providers identified by ACS were Ace Tekk Wireless, AlasConnect, SPITwSPOTS, and Yukon Tech.

Connected Nation stands by the Connect Alaska broadband map and the National Broadband Map data for Alaska, which is based on the same broadband inventory data. In Alaska and other states and jurisdictions across the country, Connected Nation has amassed a solid expertise on how to build accurate, comprehensive, granular broadband maps as well as how to verify that data through field verification activities.

In this case, Connected Nation had conducted field verification exercises on all 4 of the named wireless ISPs and included such evidentiary documentation in its Reply Comments. While this may seem insignificant on its surface, the existence and demonstration of such documentation (the catalyst for which is a result of footnote 27 of the SBI Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) issued by National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA)) played an important role in setting the record straight and providing monumental support to these 4 wireless ISPs (all of which have been active, voluntary participants in the Connect Alaska SBI project).

Program engineering staff conducted outreach to viable broadband providers in Alaska, requesting new or updated broadband data for inclusion in the April 1, 2013, Alaska broadband dataset update to the NTIA.

New research unveiled by Connect Alaska shows that the broadband availability gap in the state is shrinking, with 86% of Alaska households now having access to fixed broadband speeds of 3 megabytes per second (Mbps) download or higher, compared to 85% just six months ago. We've been working diligently with our local partners and providers since 2009 to ensure that Alaskans have access to the economic, educational, and quality of life benefits derived from increased broadband access, adoption, and use. A news release was distributed statewide to publicly announce the new availability numbers. An electronic copy of which has been included within the "12Q4\_Project Attachment\_Question 5\_Alaska" document.

Through outreach and awareness efforts the Alaska SBI program celebrated several milestone successes this quarter. The program's monthly e-newsletter now reaches more than 238 subscribers, and the initiative was mentioned in mainstream media stories that reached more than 3,400 people. Twelve project-relevant items were also posted on Facebook this quarter in addition to 20 Tweets that have helped grow the project's Twitter followers to 1,117. The program also maintains a blog (<http://www.connectak.org/blog>) and posted 8 entries, which accounted for part of the 3,466 total visits to the program's website this quarter. Additionally, program staff participated in a live radio interview to discuss the broadband landscape in the Aleutians East Borough and the state of Alaska. The importance of gathering Community Anchor Institution (CAI) survey information was also emphasized during the interview.

Thanks to communication from NTIA regarding the importance of CAI outreach and data collection, this quarter has seen a newfound commitment from the program's partners. Multiple sector agencies and organizations have been engaged during the fourth quarter.

### **Capacity Building Attachment**

**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 3, Quarter 4 per approved project plan:

**Milestone: Year 3, Quarter 4 Connect Alaska program office administration.**

This milestone was met. The Connect Alaska Program Office in Anchorage is fully staffed and interacting with our Alaskan stakeholders. Program staff meets weekly with representatives from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) to discuss the status of the project and provide briefings to the Alaska Broadband Task Force. The program team provided administrative support to the Task Force this quarter, including creating agendas and disseminating minutes following meetings and participating in the three regularly scheduled Task Force meetings during the quarter.

**Milestone: Year 3, Quarter 4 Meeting of the Alaska Broadband Task Force complete.**

This milestone was met. Program staff participated in Alaska Broadband Task Force meetings during the months of October, November, and December where broadband issues directly related to Alaska were discussed, including the status and development of a Broadband Plan by the Task Force.

Broadband Capacity Building Annual Milestones, Year 3, per approved project plan:

**Annual Milestone: The Connect Alaska Program Manager will continue to administer the Connect Alaska program of activities. Activities and deliverables from the program office include a variety of tasks that involve administering the project plan, managing workflow and the timeline, verifying work quality, gathering documentation in support of community projects, and preparing reports as required by DCCED, the Alaska Broadband Task Force, and/or other Alaska stakeholders.**

This milestone was met. The Connect Alaska Program Office in Anchorage is fully staffed and interacting with our Alaskan stakeholders. Program staff meets weekly with representatives from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) to discuss the status of the project and provide briefings to the Alaska Broadband Task Force. The program team provided administrative support to the Task Force this quarter, including creating agendas and disseminating minutes following Task Force meetings.

**Annual Milestone: The Program Manager will continue to support Connect Alaska, The state of Alaska, and the Alaska Broadband Task Force by participating in regular meetings and by providing regular project status reports and initiative updates to the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development and to the Alaska Broadband Task Force.**

This milestone was met. The Connect Alaska Program Office in Anchorage is fully staffed and interacting with our Alaskan stakeholders. Program staff meets weekly with representatives from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) to discuss the status of the project and provide briefings to the Alaska Broadband Task Force.

**Annual Milestone: Connect Alaska will continue to work in tandem with the state of Alaska to support the Alaska Broadband Task Force. The Task Force will meet at least 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 Alaska website updates, blogs, press releases, reports, or as required by Task Force.**

This milestone was met. The program team provided administrative support to the Task Force this quarter, including creating agendas and disseminating minutes following meetings, and participating in the three regularly scheduled Task Force meetings during the quarter. The Alaska Broadband Task Force is nearing completion of an Alaska Broadband Plan. No new recommendations are expected until the plan is finalized, released, and publicized.

#### Q4 2012 Challenges and Mitigation:

Program staff continues to assist the Alaska Broadband Task Force in order to make up time for delays in broadband planning that occurred earlier in the year and to expedite the release of the Task Force's broadband plan.

#### Capacity Building Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

Year 4, Quarter 1 Connect Alaska program office administration.

Year 4, Quarter 1 Meeting of the Alaska Broadband Task Force/Advisory Committee complete.

### **Technical Assistance Attachment**

**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 3, Quarter 4 per approved project plan:

##### **Milestone: Analyze 2012 statewide business survey research results**

This milestone was not met. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan to NTIA for approval that includes deviating from statewide surveys and conducting localized research in collaboration with the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) in rural areas.

##### **Milestone: Peer Review of the 2012 business survey**

This milestone was not met. The 2012 business survey was not initiated in 2012, and therefore the peer review could not take place. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan to NTIA for approval, containing updated research plans, that include deviating from statewide surveys and conducting localized research (in place of the statewide surveys) in collaboration with the AASB in rural areas.

##### **Milestone: Year 3, Quarter 4 ARDOR Partnership Activities**

This milestone was not met. Connect Alaska has experienced difficulty in formalizing partnerships with the Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs) for the purpose of the program's Technical Assistance project. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan for NTIA approval containing an alternative course which would reallocate some of the current Technical Assistance funding and substitute the ARDORs with the AASB for community engagement activities.

#### Technical Assistance outstanding milestones (not met or partially met) from previous quarters:

##### **Outstanding Milestones:**

**Year 3, Quarter 1 Upon approval from Alaska stakeholders and NTIA, initiate 2012 statewide residential survey research,  
Year 3, Quarter 2 Analyze 2012 statewide residential survey research results,  
Year 3, Quarter 3 Peer Review of the 2012 statewide residential survey, and  
Year 3, Quarter 3 Finalize and distribute 2012 statewide residential survey research results.**

These milestones were not met. The 2012 statewide residential survey was not initiated. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with state stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan to NTIA for approval, containing updated research plans, that include deviating from statewide surveys and conducting localized research in collaboration with the AASB in rural areas.

**Outstanding Milestones:**

**Year 3, Quarter 1 ARDOR Partnership Activities,  
Year 3, Quarter 2 ARDOR Partnership Activities, and  
Year 3, Quarter 3 ARDOR Partnership Activities.**

These milestones were not met. Connect Alaska has experienced difficulty in formalizing partnerships with the ARDORs for the purpose of the program's Technical Assistance project. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with state stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan for NTIA approval containing an alternative course which would reallocate some of the current Technical Assistance funding and substitute the ARDORs with the AASB for community engagement activities.

**Outstanding Milestones: Year 2, Quarter 4 Plan Alaska Broadband Summit and  
Year 3, Quarter 1 Conduct Alaska Broadband Summit.**

These milestones were not met. Connect Alaska and its stakeholders have decided to adjust their approach to the summit; instead of hosting a single summit a robust round of presentations are being scheduled for 2013. Several conference venues have been identified to date. The round of conferences will be held in 2013 in conjunction with the release of the Alaska Broadband Task Force's broadband plan. It is anticipated that several members of the Task Force and Connect Alaska representatives will present the draft Task Force report to conference attendees and collect feedback.

Technical Assistance Annual Milestones Year 3 per approved project plan:

**Annual Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2011 statewide business survey research results. Activities include incorporating stakeholder requests and create final report detailing results of 2011 statewide business survey, delivering in-person presentation of 2011 statewide business research results to the Alaska Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development, Alaska Broadband Task Force, and/or other stakeholders and announcing the release of data via press release, website update and meetings with stakeholders.**

This milestone was met. The 2011 Statewide business survey results were released via in-person presentation to stakeholders, press release and blog updates, and publicized and highlighted on the Connect Alaska website in Q2 2012.

**Annual Milestone: Develop research plan for years 3 through 5 through collaboration with the Alaska Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development, Alaska Broadband Task Force, and other stakeholders. \*\*Connect Alaska along with the Alaska Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development, the Alaska Broadband Task Force, and other stakeholders will reevaluate the research efforts after the Year 2 research is complete to determine whether to proceed with scheduled research or refocus funding on target areas determined in previous years. Connect Alaska will seek NTIA approval of new research plans. Primary corresponding activities include developing research plan and seeking NTIA approval for Years 3 through 5.**

This milestone was met. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan to NTIA for approval containing updated research plans that includes deviating from statewide surveys and conducting localized research in collaboration with the AASB in rural areas.

**Annual Milestone: Initiate the currently proposed 2012 statewide residential 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.**

This milestone was not met. The 2012 statewide residential survey was not initiated. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with state stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan to NTIA for approval, containing updated research plans, that include deviating from statewide surveys and conducting localized research in collaboration with the AASB in rural areas.

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

This milestone was not met. The 2012 residential and business surveys were not initiated, and therefore, the peer review could not be facilitated nor conducted. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan to NTIA for approval containing updated research plans that includes deviating from statewide surveys and conducting localized research in collaboration with the AASB in rural areas.

**Annual Milestone: The CAK Digital Literacy Program Coordinator will engage in ARDOR partnerships by providing training on a quarterly basis to ARDOR employees to assist them in developing a deeper understanding of broadband issues. Primary corresponding activities include identifying and documenting target sectors and regional and local subject matters for the train-the-trainer sessions; beginning development of local regional training toolkit with information derived from local community resources, Task Force recommendations, case studies, research data, best practices, and provider data. The coordinator will also schedule planning sessions and 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.**

This milestone was partially met. Connect Alaska has assisted one ARDOR in executing a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Opportunities Grant which focuses on broadband applications for economic development that can be exploited once last-mile broadband service commences with the new USDA Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP)-funded TerraSW fiber/microwave middle-mile transport project. During Q4 2012, in collaboration with state stakeholders, Connect Alaska submitted an amended project plan for NTIA approval containing an alternative course which would reallocate some of the current Technical Assistance funding and substitute the ARDORs with the AASB for community engagement activities.

**Annual Milestone: Connect Alaska, in conjunction with the Alaska Broadband Task Force and the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, will conduct a broadband summit. The summit activities include publicizing the summit through website updates, blogs, press releases, or as required by the Alaska Broadband Task Force and the state of Alaska, executing the summit, reviewing status report that shows broadband accomplishments in the state of Alaska, best practices, and identify areas of need or concern at the summit and documenting recommendations from participants.**

This milestone was not met. Connect Alaska and its stakeholders have decided to adjust their approach to the summit; instead of hosting a single summit a robust round of presentations are being scheduled for 2013. Several conference venues have been identified to date. The round of conferences will be held in 2013 in conjunction with the release of Alaska Broadband Task Force's broadband plan. It is anticipated that several members of the Task Force and Connect Alaska representatives will present the draft Task Force report to conference attendees and collect feedback.

Q4 2012 Challenges and Mitigation:

Connect Alaska has experienced difficulty in formalizing partnerships with the ARDORs for the purpose of the Technical Assistance program. As a result, an alternative Technical Assistance program element was planned with DCCED, which will reallocate some of the current Technical Assistance funding and substitute the ARDORs with the AASB. The AASB has a long and successful presence in community engagement and digital learning in rural Alaska, and it is also represented on the Alaska Broadband Task Force. The new proposal would utilize program staff members in a similar supporting capacity to the original Technical Assistance proposal and directly enable the AASB to begin pilot technical assistance projects in remote native Alaskan villages that will develop local institutional capacity to exploit broadband for economic development, as originally intended by NTIA. An amended project plan reflecting this revision was submitted to NTIA for approval during Q4 2012.

Technical Assistance Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

AASB Technical Assistance Planning.  
Conduct Alaska Broadband Travelling Summits.

**3. If the project team anticipates requesting any changes to the approved project plan in the next quarter, describe these changes below. Note that any substantive changes to the project plan must be approved by the Department of Commerce before implementation.**

An alternative Technical Assistance program element was planned with DCCED that will reallocate some of the current Technical Assistance funding and substitute the ARDORs with the AASB. The AASB has a long and successful presence in community engagement and digital learning in rural Alaska, and it is also represented on the Alaska Broadband Task Force. The new proposal would utilize Connect Alaska staff members in a similar supporting capacity to the original Technical Assistance proposal and directly enable the AASB to begin pilot technical assistance projects in remote native Alaskan villages that will develop local institutional capacity to exploit broadband for economic development, as originally intended by NTIA. The new proposal will also alter Connect Alaska's research plans by deviating from statewide surveys. Instead the program will begin conducting localized research in collaboration with the AASB in rural areas. An amended project plan reflecting this revision was submitted to NTIA for approval in Q4 2012.

**Application Usage and Development Attachment**

**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.**

Application Usage & Development Milestones Year 3, Quarter 4 per approved project plan:

**Milestone: Year 3, Quarter 4 Administration of the Application Development Fund**

This milestone was met. Program staff participated in numerous meetings to develop a scope of work for an application development e-government project. Connect Alaska also has submitted an amended project plan to NTIA, for approval, that revises the Alaska Broadband Task Force oversight of the Application Development Fund. This revision has been requested by DCCED and other stakeholders as it appears that the Alaska Broadband Task Force may disband before the application development project proposals have been submitted or initiated.

**Milestone: Year 3, Quarter 4 Monitor application development projects**

This milestone was met. DCCED is currently developing a scope of work to commence an application development project that will update several state of Alaska e-government Web 2.0 portals. Progress surrounding this milestone was discussed by the Alaska Broadband Task Force at its meetings and Connect Alaska is scheduled to initiate an e-government assessment via an online questionnaire in Q1 2013.

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

### **Outstanding Milestones:**

**Year 2, Quarter 4 Initiate the E-Government Assessment,  
Year 3, Quarter 1 Continuation of the E-Government Assessment,  
Year 3, Quarter 2 Continuation of E-Government Assessment, and  
Year 3, Quarter 3 Finalize the E-Government Assessment.**

These milestones were not met. Lack of participation by the ARDORs has hindered the collection of information on the status of e-government applications in Alaska. In Q4 2012, Connect Alaska continued planning with the Alaska Broadband Task Force members and DCCED to determine the best way of gathering information about consumer and business needs with regard to e-government applications. An amended project plan was submitted to NTIA in Q4 2012 for approval of a revised technical assistance process that would replace the ARDOR partnership with AASB. Approval of the project plan amendment would result in an additional outlet of information from rural Alaska regarding the state of e-government. Connect Alaska is scheduled to initiate and complete an online assessment of residential and business needs with regard to e-government applications in 2013.

Application Usage & Development Annual Milestones Year 3 per approved project plan:

**Annual Milestone: The Alaska Broadband Task Force will determine potential e-government applications that could be developed through the use of the application development fund. The fund will be administered by Connect Alaska staff with funding authorized by the Task Force to one or more entities that can address the needs. Administration will entail soliciting RFPs for specific e-government needs as directed and identified by Alaska Broadband Task Force, submitting RFPs to the Alaska Broadband Task Force, reviewing RFPs with the Task Force and identify entities to address specific e-government needs identified by the Alaska Broadband Task Force and awarding funding to the appropriate entity or entities as authorized by the Task Force.**

This milestone was met. Program staff participated in numerous meetings to develop a scope of work for an application development e-government project. An e-government assessment via an online questionnaire is scheduled to commence in Q1 2013. Connect Alaska has submitted an amended project plan to NTIA, for approval, that revises the Alaska Broadband Task Force oversight of the Application Development Fund. This revision has been requested by DCCED and other stakeholders as it appears the Alaska Broadband Task Force may disband before the application development project proposals have been submitted or initiated. Approval of this project plan amendment would result in partnership with AASB and will provide an additional outlet of information from rural Alaska regarding the state of e-government.

**Annual Milestone: Monitor and report the status of any application development projects being executed.**

This milestone was met. No application development projects are being executed at this time. DCCED is currently developing a scope of work to commence an application development project that will update several state of Alaska e-government Web 2.0 portals. Progress surrounding this milestone was discussed by the Alaska Broadband

Task Force at its meetings, and Connect Alaska is scheduled to initiate an e-government assessment via an online questionnaire in Q1 2013.

**Annual Milestone: Connect Alaska's Digital Literacy Program Coordinator, in conjunction with the Connect Alaska Program Manager, will utilize relationships established with the ARDORs to connect with local officials and community leaders to engage in a discussion about how e-government services could be improved. The discussions and any recommendations will be documented and submitted to the Alaska Broadband Task Force through written progress reports. A final written report of the complete E-Government Assessment will be presented to the Alaska Broadband Task Force.**

The milestone was not met. Lack of participation by the ARDORs has hindered the collection of information on the status of e-government applications in Alaska. In Q4 2012, Connect Alaska continued planning with Alaska Broadband Task Force members and DCCED to determine the best way of gathering information about consumer and business needs with regard to e-government applications. An amended project plan was submitted to NTIA in Q4 2012 for approval of a revised technical assistance process that would replace the ARDOR partnership with AASB. Approval of the project plan amendment would result in an additional outlet of information from rural Alaska regarding the state of e-government. Connect Alaska is scheduled to initiate and complete an online assessment of residential and business needs with regard to e-government applications in 2013.

Q4 2012 Challenges and Mitigation:

Connect Alaska discussed the challenges of outreach to remote Alaskans for the purpose of e-government data collection with the Broadband Task Force and research experts in the state in anticipation of attempting to collect data regarding the needs of remote Alaskans with regard to e-government applications. An e-government survey is being developed to elicit responses from rural Alaska. An online questionnaire will commence in 2013.

Application Use: Planned Major Activities for Next Quarter:

Initiate the E-Government Assessment.

Year 4, Quarter 1 Administration of the Application Development Fund.

Year 4, Quarter 1 Monitor application development projects.