

**To:** Department of Commerce  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

**From:** Region 18 Education Service Center

**Subject:** Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) Extension Request,  
Connect Southwest Texas (Award ID: NT10BIX5570138) for Award Period  
from 9/2/2010 to 8/31/2013

**Date:** July 11, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Region 18 Education Service Center requests a period of performance extension until September 30, 2013 to continue the successful implementation of our Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) award. This request includes this project's extension rationale and provides supporting documentation as attachments to the Award Action Request (AAR).

- 1) **Reason(s) for Extension Request:** Region 18 Education Service Center has experienced circumstances that have caused the need for an extension beyond the original project end date. The narrative below provides an explanation of how the project-specific circumstances resulted in the need for a period of performance extension; our proposed plan for addressing any outstanding issues; and the project benefits that will be delivered during the extension period.

**Region 18 ESC requests a 30 day extension to our project deadline to complete the final route of our project. The extension will change our project completion date from August 31, 2013 to September 30, 2013.**

**Our project is behind schedule due to several route change requests that required us to halt construction for four months in 2012. NTIA expressed concern that the route changes made to the Valentine route when the construction was moved to the north side of Highway 90 and 1' off the right of way at the request of the Texas DOT were not reviewed by the Texas SHPO prior to the changes being made. NTIA consulted with the Texas SHPO and a determination was made that the new route and construction are not in violation. The second route in question is the route to Fort Stockton. The route was changed due to an error in the original EA. The plan was to splice the cable at the intersection of Gonzalez Loop and Highway 385. No splice point exists here. The splice point was moved to the next closest splice point at Old Alpine Highway and Gonzalez Loop. All construction was completed in the existing ROW. Again NTIA consulted with the Texas SHPO and it was determined that the project could continue and the amendments to the routes were approved. The route change requests have been approved and construction began again in the first quarter of 2013.**

**The reason for the delay has been resolved and we are confident that the time extension will allow us to complete our final route. Construction for this route began in mid July and is forecast to take 60 days to complete construction.**

**This route is to install 12.30 miles of aerial fiber to the McDonald Observatory. This is an integral route to our project and will provide 10GbE of capacity to the Observatory. The McDonald Observatory is operated by the University of Texas in Austin, located over 441 miles**

away. Currently the data generated at the Observatory is copied to a portable hard drive and driven to Austin. With the updated 10 GbE capacity this data can be transmitted electronically. In addition, in 2010 the University of Texas was awarded and \$8 million NSF grant to use the Hobby-Eberly Telescope located at the McDonald Observatory to study Dark Energy. This will generate even more data that will need to be accessed quickly. The Observatory also provides educational video conferences to schools all over the country. The additional bandwidth will allow the observatory to start offering these sessions in full HD, which will enhance the educational experience.

2) **Supporting Documentation:** Region 18 Education Service Center submits the following documentation to assist NTIA with the review of this extension request. The attached materials have been updated according to revised project plans for an extended award period and reflect the narrative provided above.

- **SF-424 Revised Budget**
- **Revised Performance Projections** (justification of all revised project goals provided in above narrative – see table below)

**Revised Performance Projections**

Performance Indicator	Revised Project Goals
New Network Miles Deployed	<b>248</b>
New Network Miles Leased	<b>0</b>
Existing Network Miles Upgraded	<b>0</b>
Existing Network Miles Leased	<b>0</b>
CAIs Receiving New Access	0
CAIs Receiving Improved Access	<b>64</b>

- **Project Plan (with updated milestones)**

Region 18 Education Service Center understands that it must continue to comply with all statutory and programmatic requirements and that this is a no-cost period of performance extension request only (i.e., no additional BTOP funding will be provided under this extension request).

Sincerely,

Casey Ritchie  
 Director of Technology  
 Region 18 Education Service Center

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**Recipients are encouraged to work with their Federal Program Officer (FPO) prior to submitting the extension request. Upon submission of the extension request and supporting documentation as an AAR, the FPO will forward to the Grants Office. The Grants Office reviews the request and communicates the decision to the recipient.**