

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Performance Progress Report

2. Award Or Grant Number
01-50-M09013

4. Report Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
10-07-2010

1. Recipient Name
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)

6. Designated Entity On Behalf Of:
N/A

3. Street Address
P.O. Box 5690, 401 Adams Avenue,

8. Final Report? Yes No
9. Report Frequency
 Quarterly
 Semi Annual
 Annual
 Final

5. City, State, Zip Code
Montgomery, AL 36104-5690

7. Project / Grant Period
Start Date: (MM/DD/YYYY)
11-01-2009

7a. End Date: (MM/DD/YYYY)
10-30-2014

8. Reporting Period End Date:
(MM/DD/YYYY)
09-30-2010

9a. If Other, please describe:
N/A

10. Broadband Mapping

10a. Provider Table

Number of Providers Identified	Number of Providers Contacted	Number of Agreements Reached for Data Sharing	Number of Partial Data Sets Received	Number of Complete Data Sets	Number of Data Sets Verified
75	75	29	42	0	0

10b. Are you submitting the required PROVIDER DATA by using the Excel spreadsheet provided by the SBDD grants office? Yes No

10c. Have you encountered challenges with any providers that indicate they may refuse to participate in this project? Yes No

10d. If so, describe the discussions to date with each of these providers and the current status

The Project Mapping Team has not encountered any Alabama providers that have flatly refused to participate in the program. More often, we simply do not receive a response to our repeated data. Therefore, for every provider listed as "no" in the "partial data set received" column in the attached spreadsheet, their "status for round 2 could be considered "non-responsive. The team will continue to contact these providers in all future data collection rounds.

We would very much appreciate it if NTIA could offer further guidance on how to categorize providers for the purposes of this report. For instance, it is unclear if this report should refer to their participation in the second round of data collection only (due October 8, 2010), or should indicate whether they have participated at any time during the program to date.

The numbers reported above represent the SECOND ROUND of data collection only. At least 14 providers responded in Round 1 but failed to send an update in Round 2. For now, we are not counting them as a "Partial" response even though we will be including their Round 1 data in the Round 2 submission to NTIA. We have also estimated coverage for an additional 8 providers. We are, therefore, submitting data to NTIA for a total of 64 providers in Round 2 despite the fact that 42 submitted new data over the summer.

10e. If you are collecting data through other means (e.g. data extraction, extrapolation, etc), please describe your progress to date and the relevant activities to be undertaken in the future

LinkAMERICA continues to augment provider data with estimations of coverage and speed when necessary. Third party data sources and engineering analysis based on reported Middle Mile infrastructure are the primary means of estimation.

10f. Please describe the verification activities you plan to implement

The LinkAMERICA team uses common procedures in each of the four LinkAMERICA states. Data verification consists primarily of these separate processes:

- 1) PDF check maps and other "check data": This information is generated from provider submissions. Maps and other summarized forms of data are shown to the providers after their initial data has been normalized and formatted per NOFA standards. Providers have the opportunity to visually check the representation and make corrections if necessary. Ongoing with each data Round.
- 2) Processes are run within the data itself to flag potential errors. In particular, we look for areas where coverage is outside of a known Exchange Area Boundary or where a single census block is shown as covered without any adjacent covered blocks. We investigate the anomalies with providers when possible and correct the data based on their feedback. This process is ongoing with each data Round.
- 3) Drive testing using multi-frequency wireless analysis tools has been performed in specific areas of Alabama. Testing is ongoing.
- 4) Consumer Feedback/Verification: In the future, we plan to implement a consumer feedback mechanism that also provides an indication of data accuracy as reported by other users. The feature is being designed and a delivery date has not been set.

10g. Have you initiated verification activities? Yes No

10h. If yes, please describe the status of your activities

All of the above activities are repeated with every incoming Round of data. In the first section above we show that "0" datasets have been "verified". We do this because we are not certain of the definition of "verified". Data can never be 100% verified without a trip to each physical location in a state--and, of course, that verification process would have to be repeated constantly since networks expand and information that was verified in one cycle may be incorrect the next. Instead, we perform as many error checking measures as possible on the provider data to ensure we display the data as they have reported it to us and that as many potential errors as possible have been corrected. As mentioned above, we will also be implementing the consumer feedback mechanism in the months to come. We are concerned, however, that the use of census blocks to show coverage may ultimately limit the effectiveness of a consumer feedback system; in addition, the census block availability is a hindrance to the planning process--since the shaded blocks tend to imply that coverage is available everywhere within the block, when that may not be the case.

10i. If verification activities have not been initiated please provide a projected time line for beginning and completing such activities

Consumer feedback: Consumers currently use a feedback form to report inaccuracies in the coverage displayed on the map--but there is currently no method for sharing that feedback with other consumers. We are designing a system to do this--to be launched in 2011.

Staffing

10j. How many jobs have been created or retained as a result of this project?

SBDD funding has resulted in 3 FTEs at the Prime Recipient level and 1.34 total FTEs at the Subrecipient level--for a total of 4.34 FTEs.

10k. Is the project currently fully staffed? Yes No

10l. If no, please explain how any lack of staffing may impact the project's time line and when the project will be fully staffed

Staffing was finalized in 13 2010 with the hiring of three additional Regional Coordinators. These three individuals work directly for ADECA, the program's Prime Recipient.

10m. When fully staffed, how many full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs do you expect to create or retain as a result of this project?

Total of 4.34 FTEs; ADECA 3 FTEs and 1.34 LinkAMERICA FTEs.

10n. Staffing Table

Job Title	FTE %	Date of Hire
CEO--Supervisor Role	15	11/01/2009
Project Director	25	11/01/2009
Project Manager	25	11/01/2009
GIS Director	25	11/01/2009
Internal System Support/Architecture	15	11/01/2009
Provider Relations Manager	25	11/01/2009
Regional Coordinator	100	09/07/2010
Regional Coordinator	100	09/07/2010
Regional Coordinator	100	08/30/2010

Sub Contracts

10o. Subcontracts Table

Name of Subcontractor	Purpose of Subcontract	RFP Issued (Y/N)	Contract Executed (Y/N)	Start Date	End Date	Federal Funds	In-Kind Funds
CostQuest Associates/ LinkAMERICA Alliance	Project Management/ GIS Programming and Planning Services	N	Y	11/09/2009	10/31/2011	\$1,499,424	\$475,567

Funding

10p. How much Federal funding has been expended as of the end of the last quarter? \$251 10q. How much Remains? \$1,896,702

10r. How much matching funds have been expended as of the end of last quarter? \$0 10s. How much Remains? \$0

10t. Budget Worksheet

Mapping Budget Element	Federal Funds Granted	Proposed In-Kind	Total Budget	Federal Funds Expended	Matching Funds Expended	Total Funds Expended
Personal Salaries	\$903,096	\$228,405	\$1,131,501	\$251	\$0	\$251
Personnel Fringe Benefits	\$519,572	\$85,318	\$519,572	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$88,715	\$0	\$88,715	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$64,700	\$0	\$64,700	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials / Supplies	\$19,044	\$0	\$19,044	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontracts Total	\$3,259,748	\$347,302	\$3,607,050	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #5	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$73,422	\$73,422	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs	\$4,854,875	\$1,209,475	\$4,769,557	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Indirect Costs	\$104,585	\$10,008	\$114,593	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Costs	\$4,874,142	\$1,219,483	\$6,093,625	\$0	\$0	\$0
% Of Total	0	0	0	4	0	4

Hardware / Software

10u. Has the project team purchased the software / hardware described in the application? Yes No

10v. If yes, please list

N/A

10w. Please note any software / hardware that has yet to be purchased and explain why it has not been purchased

Laptop computers for the Regional coordinators have been ordered, but have yet to be received or invoiced. Delay was due to end of the 2010 fiscal year and renewed contract with the state supplier. Anticipate receipt by mid 4th qtr.

10x. Has the project team purchased or used any data sets? Yes No

10y. If yes, please list

American Roamer, Media Prints, and ExchangeInfo

10z. Are there any additional project milestones or information that has not been included? Yes No

10aa. If yes, please list

N/A

10bb. Please describe any challenge or obstacle that you have encountered and detail the mitigation strategies the project team is employing
As described above, the largest challenge is the receipt of incomplete or inaccurate datasets from providers. Inaccuracies are identified as best possible using the verification techniques described. Incomplete datasets are handled on a case-by-case basis.

In the second round of data collection, we generated a customized instruction sheet for each provider who had a gap in their Round 1 data. These sheets specifically identified the type of information that was missing and explained how such information should be reported in Round 2. This was a very time-consuming process but given the diverse nature of the providers' submissions it was necessary to treat each submission on a case-by-case basis.

The use of street segments also continues to be a challenging issue. Most smaller providers do not have the ability to identify street segments in large census blocks as required in the NOFA. As a result, we typically ask for a map of their service territory and use GIS overlays to identify street segments that fall within those boundaries. The nature of street segments themselves means this is not always a perfect fit. And, again, this is a very time-consuming task.

Also, based on guidance from NTIA during one of the recent conference calls, we attempted to collect Maximum Advertised Speed at the Census Block level. We were hopeful that providers would be more willing to report "Adveris3ed" speeds at that level of granularity, but we were generally disappointed with the results. Several large providers flatly refused to give this information, citing the fact that it is "not listed in the NOFA". Others remained confused about the definition of "Advertised" and seemed to be providing a single maximum speed that is literally advertised in the newspaper or on TV for the entire market area--instead of offering a CB by CB analysis of what maximum speeds are possible.

10cc. Please provide any other information that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses your Broadband Mapping Project
While not yet applicable in Alabama (since we have not released the first version of our online maps using the SBDD data in Alabama) the LinkAMERICA Alliance is receiving feedback in other states regarding the depiction of coverage in large blocks. Specifically, several RLECs have objected to the combination of fully-shaded representations of coverage in small blocks and street segments in large blocks.

First, they argue that the street segments do not show the reach of their service. We currently buffer to 100m on each side of the segments but many RLECs state that they will offer service much farther from the edge of these streets. The precise distance they will go is dependent upon many factors, however, so there is no common buffer distance that works for all providers in all locations. In their eyes, unless we shade their entire coverage areas (not just the streets) we are telling consumers that access is not available, when that may not be the case.

In a related argument, they also object to the use of fully-shaded areas (via shapefiles) to depict wireless coverage. Because the wireless carriers are not shown by street segment, it often appears that their coverage extends into areas not covered by the wireline providers (away from covered street segments). The wireline providers consider this unfair, since they would at least like the option of deciding whether they can extend service to those customers or not. To mitigate this issue, we have changed the messaging in the bubble that shows the list of providers for an area. We are implementing this change in November. However, NTIA may wish to monitor this issue as the national map is designed.

11. Broadband Planning

11a. Please describe progress made against all goals, objectives, and milestones detailed in the approved Project Plan. Be sure to include a description of each major activity / milestone that you plan to complete and your current status

The project team has completed staffing the regional coordinators positions. Once on board, the coordinators began intense distribution of the Broadband Awareness and adoption videos through local libraries, chamber of commerce, local governments, and other engaged stakeholder organizations. The Regional Coordinators have begun delivery of the regional planning introductory meetings, and have begun developing the regional Broadband Action Teams that will provide guidance to the development of the planning documents. In addition, program staff has developed a newsletter "Up to Speed" to enhance the awareness of the broadband project.

11b. Please describe any challenge or obstacle that you have encountered and detail the mitigation strategies the project team is employing
From a planning perspective the obstacles encountered are directly related to the development of this infrastructure and the policy issues associated with it. The change in the level of data displayed at the census block level will not provide for comprehensive coverage for everyone. Comments we have received via our online feedback, many times, includes individuals stating that their neighbors right down the street have broadband but their house can't get it. Uncertainty at the local level or either a lack of knowledge that this technology is lacking in some areas is a constant issue, many people that have broadband assume that everyone has access; and those without it do not see the need. Through continued partnership development with the identified populations at the local area will impact the assumptions that have been made. However, with the mapping at the census block level issue, the project team is advocating to our elected leaders, both at the State and Federal level to change this decision.

11c. Does the Project Team anticipate any changes to the project plan for Broadband Planning? Yes No

11d. If yes, please describe these anticipated changes. Please note that NTIA will need to approve changes to the Project Plan before they can be implemented

N/A

Funding

11e. How much Federal funding has been expended as of the end of the last quarter? \$0

11f. How much Remains? \$0

11g. How much matching funds have been expended as of the end of last quarter? \$0

11h. How much Remains? \$0

11i. Planning Worksheet

Planning Budget Element	Federal Funds Granted	Proposed In-Kind	Total Budget	Federal Funds Expended	Matching Funds Expended	Total Funds Expended
Personal Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personnel Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials / Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontracts Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #5	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
% Of Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Additional Planning Information

11j. Are there any additional project milestones or information that has not been included?

No

11k. Please describe any challenge or obstacle that you have encountered and detail the mitigation strategies the Project Team is employing

The mapping at the Census level will be an obstacle from a Planning perspective, only NTIA and DOC can correct this decision.

11l. Please provide any other information that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses your Broadband Mapping Project

The State of Alabama would like to stress the need for provider relations to be fostered not only at the federal level but also in consideration with the tasks assigned to the states. Establishing a provider list has been extremely difficult because we are still unsure how NTIA wants us to handle parent/subsidiary relationships. i.e. Do we roll up all of of Otelco's Alabama subsidiaries and report Otelco as one "provider" - or do we report each subsidiary separately???? We don't really know the answer. This is complicated by the fact that some providers report data to us through a single contact that their HQ - while others have each of their subsidiaries report directly. For now I am listing all of the companies who used distinct "Provider Names" in the data, even if I know that some of those companies are actually owned by the same parent company. But, if a company used the same "Provider Name" and listed separate DBAs for each subsidiary in their data, then I am considering them to be just one provider.

Also, just to reiterate, the mapping at the Census Block level will erodes the planning process and will leave many unserved.

12. Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete for performance of activities for the purpose set forth in the award documents.

12a. Typed or Printed Name and Title of Authorized Certifying Official

Jessica Dent

12c. Telephone
(area code, number, and extension)

12d. Email Address

jessica.dent@adeca.alabama.gov

12b. Signature of Authorized Certifying Official

Submitted Electronically

12e. Date Report Submitted
(Month, Day, Year)

10-29-2010

Performance Progress Report
OMB Approval Number: 0660-0034
Expiration Date: 08/31/2010