

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE BROADBAND ADOPTION

General Information

1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration	2. Award Identification Number 25-43-B10010	3. DUNS Number 956072490
4. Recipient Organization University of Massachusetts Lowell 600 Suffolk Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01854		
5. Current Reporting Period End Date (MM/DD/YYYY) 12-31-2010	6. Is this the last Annual Report of the Award Period? <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No </p>	
7. Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete for performance of activities for the purposes set forth in the award documents.		
7a. Typed or Printed Name and Title of Certifying Official Carol McDonough	7c. Telephone (area code, number and extension) 978-934-2784	
	7d. Email Address Carol_McDonough@uml.edu	
7b. Signature of Certifying Official Submitted Electronically	7e. Date Report Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY): 02-22-2011	

PROJECT INDICATORS				
<p>1. Does your Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) project foster a particular broadband technology or technologies? If so, please describe this technology (or technologies) (600 words or less). Our SBA project uses land-line coaxial and fiber-optic cable from both area providers (Comcast and Verizon) as well as WiFi technology. Our main technology is our training component. We have hired and trained talented college students to go into our partner and community sites to deliver tailored programs to youth (internet safety, how to use the internet for research and to socialize appropriately), un- and under-employed (basic web skills, resume writing, clerical skills, media technology) and seniors (email, skype, social networks, research). Training modules are adapted for the audience and constantly fine tuned.</p>				
<p>2a. Please list all of the broadband equipment and/or supplies you have purchased during the most recent calendar year using BTOP grant funds or other (matching) funds, including any customer premises equipment or end-user devices. If additional space is needed, please attach a list of equipment and/or supplies. Please also describe how the equipment and supplies have been deployed (100 words or less).</p>				
Manufacturer	Item	Unit Cost per Item	Number of Units	Narrative description of how the equipment and supplies were deployed
0	0	0	0	0
Totals		0	0	
Add Equipment			Remove Equipment	
<p>2b. To the extent you distribute equipment/supplies to beneficiaries of your project, please describe the equipment/supplies you distribute, the quantities distributed, and the specific populations to whom the equipment/supplies are distributed (600 words or less).</p> <p>No equipment defined as \$5,000 or more has been purchased under this grant.</p>				
<p>3. For SBA access and training provided with BTOP grant funds, please provide the information below. Unless otherwise indicated in the instructions, figures should be reported <u>cumulatively</u> from award inception to the end of the most recent calendar year. For each type of training (other than open access), please count only the participants who <u>completed</u> the course.</p>				
Types of Access or Training	Number of People Targeted	Number of People Participating	Total Training Hours Offered	
Open Lab Access	970	1,749	1,749	
Multimedia	500	383	383	
Office Skills	500	256	512	
ESL	0	0	0	
GED	0	0	0	
College Preparatory Training	0	0	0	
Basic Internet and Computer Use	870	270	411	
Certified Training Programs	0	0	0	
Other (please specify): Outreach activities, awareness activities	362,620	70,287	0	
Total	365,460	72,945	3,055	
<p>4. Please describe key economic and social successes of your project during the past year, and why you believe the project is successful thus far (600 words or less).</p> <p>Socially, our project has seen many successes. Working together with local agencies and organizations with whom we have partnered, we have succeeded in reducing the digital divide among vulnerable youth and seniors. The youth in our programs now have access to, and knowledge about, the social networking sites and other internet opportunities that their more affluent peers routinely access. Seniors are able to keep in touch socially with their families and friends by using our training and our broadband access. We are also seeing the people we train taking ownership of their trainings, by asking for more in-depth lessons or guidance on complex applications. From an economic standpoint, we are facilitating the job readiness of a large group of people, who are now confident and prepared to step into the job market and seek employment. By increasing WiFi access to the downtown area, we are both increasing the number of individuals using the internet, and are also creating an environment where patrons wish to spend more time in the downtown businesses and shops.</p>				

5. Please estimate the level of broadband adoption in the community(ies) and/or area(s) your project serves, explain your methodology for estimating the level of broadband adoption, and explain changes in the broadband adoption level, if any, since the project began.

5a. Adoption Level (%):	Narrative description of level, methodology, and change from the level at project inception (600 words or less).
49	<p>Our program is targeted toward increasing broadband adoption. In Year 1, our focus has been on providing computer access and training, as well as outreach and awareness. In Year 2, we begin to reap the adoption benefits of our work in year 1. Working with Lowell Telecommunications (LTC), we have installed two wireless routers in popular local business (with more planned for early in Y2Q1). We can gather numbers from LTC about usage directly attributable to the efforts of our project. Due to this increase in use, other local businesses are looking to be a part of increasing WiFi in the downtown area, and also downtown building owners. One local building owner has contacted LTC to set up a router on their roof, which would allow not just individuals in the building to use the internet, but those within the immediate area. Among our most recent group of trainees, almost 50% of those without broadband access stated that they were very likely to sign up for broadband in the near future. We would estimate, using Pew Research Center broadband adoption statistics, that broadband adoption in greater Lowell is less than 50%.</p> <p>We are also conducting awareness and outreach activities at local libraries and community centers and offering to assist potential new subscribers in navigating the array of possible broadband plans. We also are offering subscription assistance to participants in our training programs and hope to be able to participate in Comcast's \$9.95/month internet program for poor youth, since we service youth in this demographic at the Lowell Boys and Girls Club, UTEC and Community Teamwork Inc.</p>

6. Please describe the two most common barriers to broadband adoption that you have experienced this year in connection with your project. What steps did you take to address them (600 words or less)?

First, for many individuals purchasing broadband internet may be out of their budget. To help alleviate the individual cost, we have held meetings with Verizon to discuss the possibility of a promotional discount that would be linked to BTOP here in greater Lowell. Secondly, Lowell is a culturally and ethnically diverse city, and citizens tend to be of a lower socioeconomic status. Access to information regarding broadband may be limited for a variety of reasons. We have been meeting with local libraries and other agencies to schedule informational sessions where our group of trainers, hopefully along with internet service providers, would be able to explain broadband, their options in terms of providers, and answer any questions people might have. This way, information regarding broadband would be given in public settings, using less-technical language, and residents of Lowell would be able to ask questions of someone face-to-face.

7. To the extent that you have made any subcontracts or sub grants, please provide the number of subcontracts or sub grants that have been made to socially and economically disadvantaged small business (SDB) concerns as defined by section 8(a) of the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. 647, as modified by NTIA's adoption of an alternative small business size standard for use in BTOP. Please also provide the names of these SDB entities. (150 words or less)

We have one subcontract, with the United Teen Equality Center (UTEC) located in downtown Lowell. UTEC is a youth-led, non-profit agency that seeks to empower the youth of Lowell and create a positive, safe environment for which they are able to grow and develop. We have purchased most of our computer equipment from a small business, NKC Systems, located in Dracut, Massachusetts.

8. Please describe any best practices / lessons learned that can be shared with other similar BTOP projects (900 words or less).

One suggestion for other similar BTOP trainings (which our particular program has done well) would be to invest the time in the creation and maintenance of lesson plans. Taking the time to tailor lessons for the particular population with which the program is working with ensures that individuals being trained continue with their training, and would then be more likely to sign up for broadband internet in their personal residences. Outreach in the local community is tremendously important, particularly when talking about broadband adoption. Working with LTC, a well-known organization, has given credibility to our requests for access in increasing WiFi in the downtown, and has also resulted in businesses reaching out to us to participate. LTC has a reputation for being knowledgeable and reliable, and so our work in turn is seen as reliable, and not just as a project that will come in and leave the community with nothing when it is finished.