

**NWX-DOC-NTIA-OTIA**

**Moderator: Emy Tseng  
Sloan July 18, 2018  
1:00 pm CT**

**Coordinator:** Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are on listen-only mode for the duration of today's conference. This conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I will now turn the meeting over to Emy Tseng. Thank you and please begin.

**Emy Tseng:** Hello, thank you for joining us today for BroadbandUSA's monthly Webinar on broadband topics of interest to policymakers, practitioners and consumers. Today's Webinar focuses-on statewide strategies for rural digital inclusion.

I'm Emy Tseng, a Senior Program Specialist for BroadbandUSA and I will be moderating today's Webinar. I'm joined by my colleague Katherine Bates who's the Manager of State and Local Partnerships. Katherine will be moderating the Q&A portion of the Webinar. Next slide. Yes, before we begin I would like to review some logistics for today's Webinar.

Please use the question box on the right-hand side of the screen to submit questions or comments. Today's speakers will answer questions after completion of all the presentations. The presentation slides, a transcript and recording will be available on the BroadbandUSA Website within seven days on the events page and while you're at the Website, please check it out.

The BroadbandUSA Website provides information about our technical assistance program, guides product, publications and other tools that can assist you with planning, funding and implementing your broadband and digital inclusion project. Next slide.

Today's speakers will highlight the role of university extension programs, state governments and libraries to execute statewide strategies to promote broadband adoption, use and development of digital skills in rural communities. The speakers will also discuss the role of broadband adoption in education and rural economic and workforce development.

Our presenters today are Rachel Welborn who is the Associate Director of the Southern Rural Development Center which is housed at Mississippi State University and Monica Babine, a Senior Associate at the Program for Digital Initiatives at Washington State University and they'll be co-presenters.

Next we'll have Amy Huffman who's the Research and Policy Specialist for the North Carolina Department of Information Technology and last we'll have Susan McVey who's the Director of Oklahoma Department of Libraries. Next slide, please. Our first speakers are Rachel Welborn and Monica Babine.

Rachel is the Associate Director for the Southern Rural Development Center which serves 13 Southeastern states. Rachel has devoted over 15 years to helping communities by fostering civic engagement, facilitating regional planning initiatives and strengthening the capacity of communities to address poverty and other critical challenges.

Monica is a Senior Associate at Washington State University Extension where she leads the Program for Digital Initiatives which is a division of governmental studies and services.

Monica works with businesses, governments, economic and community development organizations on the promotion, policy and program development, research and technical assistance to increase broadband awareness access and use. Next slide, and please welcome Rachel and Monica.

Rachel Welborn: Good afternoon, everyone and I'm so glad to be a part of this room for a discussion about how we can bring digital inclusion particularly to rural areas which is a focus of the rural development centers so I'm going to start-off and tell you just a little bit about the network that which you may or may not be familiar with but really may serve you well as you're working in your state or local areas in expanding broadband access.

We're going to be looking at how cooperative extension services and reach in rural development centers who are working together on a national initiative. Next slide, please, so this slide just gives a very quick picture of the four regional rural development centers.

We work collectively across these regions as you can see highlighted and as already mentioned I am at Southern Rural Development Center but there are times where we have something of national importance where we're all working together rather than just in our own regions.

Within the regions the mission of the regional rural development centers is to work with our land grant university partners both with extension and research to think about ways we can work collaboratively on any issues around rural so

the issue of broadband access is very, very important so if you'll turn to the next slide, please, we'll get to this quick map.

And I realize that you can't really read this on your screen chances are but it gives you a sense that within every state there's at least one land grant university and if you're not familiar with that system, then if you put-in the NIFA land grant colleges and universities in the Google, you'll find this map and it lets you see where those are in your own state.

And then within those we have the cooperative extension service which is part of our partnership. That's the outreach arm and cooperative extension service is nationwide in almost every county in the United States linking those very important local issues to the university campuses and then also looking at research.

So as we think about the work of broadband access and thinking about how can outreach be brought together, the extension outreach part be brought together will all said the research and finding answers to those very difficult critical questions, I kind of think we work collaboratively on even a national scope to find the answers to local rural problems.

So I'm going to turn - as we turn - to the next slide, I'm going to hand over to Monica and let her tell a little bit about a framework that we've been using as we think through this initiative and then sharing some of the example from her own state so Monica?

Monica Babine: Thank you, Rachel, good morning, all, good afternoon to those of you on the East. This activity or broadband continuum is as Rachel said is a framework and it really provides various types of activity that often occurred to support

broadband planning and collaboration at the local, state and national level resulting in really the many benefits of broadband.

For each of these, I'll share some examples from my statewide work as well as that of local extension faculty and staff in Washington State. Of course not all university extension professionals focus on broadband but those who do are doing some amazing work.

This is especially true when we have local broadband action teams with diverse representation from education, economic development, library, local and state government and the private sector. Supporting local BATs as we affectionately call these teams provides a forum for community engagement and increases local broadband knowledge and the capacity to take action.

As one of my colleagues who I think's on this call Debra Hansen says, BAT members are our local broadband superheroes so as we look at the continuum from an awareness standpoint, PEW and other studies have found that sometimes there's really a lack of awareness about the relevance of broadband for individuals and business.

And to help increase this, we have presented at statewide conferences. We've held community forums where we've shared information and we've discussed broadband benefits and those are just some of the ways we increase awareness.

As many of our rural and tribal communities try to show them build a business case for broadband, it's often difficult due to the size, the distance and the terrain and to help increase broadband access and availability, Washington State University Extension has participated in programs like the NTIA Broadband Connectivity Assessment Tool beta test.

We've conducted household and business surveys about broadband access and use and we've helped needy with telecommunication providers to share the results from these activities, identifying the demand for broadband expansion.

On the adoption standpoint, we're talking about helping people in business and government access broadband and that can include promotions such as hosting a check expo where community members attend presentations and visit with broadband vendors to learn what's available for both the residents and businesses and we also have offered resident and business training classes to help increase that knowledge level and use.

From the policy perspective Extension in Washington State has worked on helping local governments explore dig once policies, participated on state and national broadband organizations or task force and been very in active in responding to NTIA, the FCC and USDA requests for comments related to broadband policies and programs.

At the state level last month our Stephens County Spokane Tribe broadband action team was one of just a handful of communities that have an opportunity to host our governor during his rural broadband tour.

Across the county Extension has some incredible researchers and of course on the local level we also include evaluation in our broadband work because we see that critical to show results and outcomes from those activities.

A great deal is happening related to broadband in Washington State and I just love talking about it but I think at this point I will pass it back on to my colleague Rachel and let her kind of wrap-up with some of what we're doing

currently at the national level with our Extension broadband team. Thank you.

Rachel Welborn: Thanks, Monica so using this framework we began to put together a national scheme that's looking to coordinate some of this work so that we can work more seamlessly and you know, as we're all trying to do, work smarter together so if you'll go to the next slide, I'll just share a little bit about some of the things that this team is focusing-on.

So we've got some teams here if you look at this so this national digital education extension team, we are looking at several different specific areas so one team and Monica is helping to lead that one is looking specifically at strengthening and establishing partnerships.

So how can we identify federal, state, local, on process, and all of those kind of people that are very interested in this work and help develop some linkages so that we're working together seamlessly and then we have a group looking very much at the digital literacy.

It's not just enough to have the infrastructure in place but people need to learn the skills and use them effectively to get the benefit so we have a group that's looking at that and how can we help increase that and it's often an area where we stop short so we want to make sure that a lot of attention is given to that.

And then we have another group that's looking at connecting communities, what are the processes and the skills and the assistance that groups may need just to go through that planning process? It can be kind of daunting without some assistance but we have groups that's helping to look at that.

And then we have as we've mentioned already the importance of research, how do we answer those hard questions as we go through this process together so we've had a group that's leading that and you can see that there's someone at least one person on each of those teams that's taken leadership of a larger team.

And then my role is just looking at national coordination, how do we help kind of keep all of our people together and have opportunities to share this with those people like you today so appreciate the time for that and with that I'll stop and thank you for taking the time to listen.

Emy Tseng: Thank you so much Rachel and Monica. As a reminder the speakers will have a chance to answer questions at the end of the presentation. Again use the question box on the right-hand side of your screen to submit questions and/or comments at any time so next slide.

Our next speaker is Amy Huffman. Amy is the Research and Policy Specialist for the Broadband Infrastructure Office, a division of the North Carolina Department of Information Technology.

In this role she spearheads research, policy and programmatic initiatives to implement the state's broadband plan and reach the office's vision that every North Carolinian should be able to access affordable high-speed Internet anywhere at any time. Okay, so take it away, Amy.

Amy Huffman: Thank you for the introduction, Emy. I'm excited to be here with all of you today to talk about the digital equity and inclusion efforts our office has been working-on for the past few years but first I'd like to give you a brief introduction to our office and an overview of North Carolina's broadband challenges and opportunities. Next slide.

The Broadband Infrastructure Office was established within the Office of the State CIO in 2014 as a statewide resources to enhance broadband access and adoption. Our office works to help bring every North Carolinian access to affordable high-speed Internet anywhere at any time. Next slide.

And we execute this vision through hands-on planning work with communities through our technical assistance program, also through the development of data-driven policies and the implementation of programs and tools. Next slide.

One example of one of our tools is this crowd-sourcing speed reporting tool which allows citizens and businesses to report whether they have Internet access and the speeds that they are receiving at their address. Next slide.

Another example is our community broadband playbook. This tool is an interactive online resource that guides communities through the steps they need to take to improve broadband services in their communities. Next slide.

Our state broadband plan is an example of our use of policy to accomplish our vision. This plan that we developed and released in 2016 is our office's guiding document and it's intended to inform policymakers and has over 80 recommendations aimed at improving broadband availability and adoption in our state. Next slide.

For the state of broadband in North Carolina, roughly 93.7% of our households have access to broadband. This is slightly above the U.S. average of 92.3%. Next slide. And this is a map of the current state of broadband coverage in North Carolina.

The different colors denote coverage by different technology types and the lightest colors on the map shows the areas of the state that are unserved at the current FCC speed threshold.

I'm not sure how familiar most of you are with North Carolina but I'll just point-out that most of those unserved areas are in the rural parts of the state. In fact 95% of our unserved households live in rural parts of our state. Next slide.

Our broadband adoption rates are about average when compared to national rates when any speed threshold is considered. However, once they're measured at the 25/3 speed threshold, only half of our citizens have adopted broadband. Next slide.

And this is what adoption rates look like county by county in North Carolina. As you can see, many of our counties have low adoption rates. Next slide, and as Monica and Rachel discussed, these are research shows that these are the common barriers to broadband adoption.

The cost of both the broadband service and the device, a lack of digital literacy skills and a lack of understanding how the Internet is relevant to a person's life and the lack of the access itself, access to the service itself contributes to the digital divide and inhibits citizens from adopting broadband in their home.

Because of this and since we've identified these, we've strategically aligned our digital equity and inclusion efforts to address each of these barriers and as you see here our state broadband plan had six overarching goals and four of them are focused-on digital equity and inclusion work and will only be

accomplished if we promote and engage in digital equity and inclusion. Next slide.

So for the past years we've increasingly focused our attention and efforts on issues causing digital inequities and in doing so we realized we needed to define what our role would be in digital equity and inclusion efforts so after some brainstorming, we determined that our role should be to lead, convene, connect, champion - next slide - aggregate, educate and strategize.

These two slides give more detail to our defined roles but in short we believe our role is to lead the state in digital equity and inclusion work and to support the many groups in a state already dedicated to closing the digital divide. Next slide.

We've also led the founding of a new statewide collaborative called the North Carolina Digital Equity and Inclusion Collaborative where we've gathered to learn from - learn best practices - from the organizations in North Carolina that are already working on these issues. Members of the collaborative include our state's device for refurbishers which are Kramden Institute and E2D or Eliminate the Digital Divide.

It also includes other state agencies like our state librarian's office, our office of rural health which is in our Office of Health and Human Services, our education department and also we have a few digital inclusion alliances at the city level in our state and those groups are involved and they're from Charlotte and Raleigh and Durham. Next slide.

This group together we've spent the past year forming this collaborative and we've worked through a strategic (playing) process to determine a collective vision a mission statement that you can see here. Next slide.

Our office also engages in addressing topical issues affecting digital equity. For example we focused a lot of attention and resources on measuring the homework gap so that we can design solutions to close it. If you've not heard of the homework gap, it occurs when schoolkids are assigned homework that required Internet access but they don't have access to it at home.

And in 2017 we launched a survey with our partner the Friday Institute at North Carolina State University to measure this homework gap. Our full report is coming-out soon but the initial survey results gave us some valuable information.

For example it showed that at least 10% of our respondents don't have access to Internet at home and those without access cited cost as the primary reason for not having access and they also were less comfortable helping their kids with their homework online or in doing their own work or other tasks online. Next slide.

We also hosted a homework gap convening last year where we gathered 70-plus stakeholders and subject matter experts from a ton of different fields to discuss the survey's findings and to brainstorm policy and programmatic solutions and those solutions will be included in our forthcoming report. Next slide.

Another initiative we're working-on is a pilot program for launching in rural counties with our statewide variance office. It's funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and its goal is to equip libraries to be leaders in bridging the homework gap in their communities. Next slide.

We also have several other digital equity projects in the works. For example to address each barrier to broadband adoption that we discussed earlier, we're planning to host three designated days spread-out over the course of a year to highlight one barrier and setup pathways to support those who worked to overcome it.

The days planned are device day, digital literacy day and broadband adoption day. Next slide, and as we move forward we're increasingly focusing-on ways to expand digital equity and inclusion efforts into the rural areas of our state and one way we're doing that is by integrating digital equity initiatives into our longstanding technical assistance program.

This program works hands-on with communities to develop broadband plans, to create broadband task forces and we're working through ways how to integrate digital equity and inclusion initiatives into that standing work.

We're also focusing-on creating scalable, replicable models so that you can expand the current programs and policies beyond urban areas to our rural communities and we're also focusing- on supporting our partners like our device refurbishers so that they can scale and expand to rural areas. Next slide.

And with that I'll close. I'm happy to take questions when we get to that portion of the Webinar but thank you so much for your time and for tuning-in and I look forward to talking with you more.

Emy Tseng: Thank you so much Amy for all that information so our next speaker is Susan McVey. Susan is the Director of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, a department of the Oklahoma State government. The Oklahoma Department

of Libraries provides information management, assists local public libraries and coordinates library and information technology projects statewide.

Susan is also engaged at the national level with libraries and is the past president of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, an organization of state librarians. Next slide, if I can, thank you, Susan.

Susan McVey: Good afternoon. It's my pleasure to be with you today. Next slide, please, so I thought I would start and I would say that my focus in the discussion is going to be somewhat more concrete about specific projects or experiences that you may find or might be helpful in your own planning as you go forward.

The examples here on this slide are all ones that exist in my state. They are the realities that many of our local governments and libraries look at as they start trying to address digital inclusion in helping their residents be successful.

So I would just suggest that at the beginning of any program project an environmental scan could be very helpful in identifying what the resources and what the challenges are. I know that from what we've just heard North Carolina looks to be in pretty good shape at least overall perhaps better than my own state or yours.

But that isn't something you can assume because as we also learned the rural areas in that in North Carolina are also somewhat handicapped so it's a good idea to start with a sense of where you are but I think as you can see these obstacles, most of the rural areas in Oklahoma are limited in funding.

So having support from either a larger organization or multiple organizations to achieve outreach is an important aspect. Next slide, please, so I like this

quote for a variety of reasons. One, it recognizes the role that libraries have played and are playing in helping address digital inclusion.

It also is from someone outside the library field but I wanted to draw your attention to the footprint of how many public libraries there are in the U.S. and that almost half of them are in rural areas.

The resources that public libraries have that are available to the customers and the people we want to encourage to come active in the online environment are something that should be built on by any project that is going forward. There are some wonderful assets here. Next slide.

So what are the best steps to take on the statewide level? I would suggest contacting or reaching-out to state libraries. That is present in every single state. It is a group of professionals that are going to be well-familiar and related to the public libraries across their state.

Connecting to 7755 libraries could be daunting. Connecting to 50 state libraries might be a better way to start so I have included a link to how to find the state library in your state if you are not yet familiar with them. Some of them are part of a larger organization. Some of them are freestanding state agencies so that's the beginning. Know where to go.

So in my own state I wanted to give you an idea of the type of reach we have so in Oklahoma every county has at least one public library that is open to serving everyone that lives in their county. It has total of 217 library outlets and we do have high-standing broadband connections in each of those libraries.

In addition our agency does have grants that we receive from the Institute of Museum and Library Services that we can use to assist in some projects relating to technology.

We're also involved as you've heard in both of the prior presentations with planning and networking on a state level so if you are looking to get started, we may be able to give you some names and connections to build on. Next slide.

So here are some of the strategies that we have used that have been successful in a rural environment and one of those is the use of pilot sites. It's easy for us to identify some people who are particularly interested in technology who are excited about what it might allow them to do for the people in their area and they are willing to take a chance.

So if we will find four or five of those to work with and provide additional staff resources and grants, spend time with them and work through a project, we may very well identify how we can be more successful because we either change part of the roll-out, we listened to what they say but we also then have some pretty powerful ambassadors who are going to go-out and speak to their peers about just how the project worked in their location, what it allows them to do and how happy they are and their customers are with these new services.

Another example I will mention that's been done in our state, not from our agency but from our land grant university Oklahoma State University was a hotspot lending program that started with four small communities and was so successful that they were each the same following that roll-out and the researcher who was leading that effort Brian Whitaker was able to go onto another four sites and expand the program.

So he has then stories to tell at these new sites about what the experiences in those original sites had been so I think in these different ways you can see that sometimes it's better not to try to launch a statewide but to do it gradually and roll it out and frankly we've had greater success our self because we couldn't afford to do it all at once so we've done it in stages but it turned-out to be a good experience.

And it's also helpful if we can tell the participants that they're helping us test the concept. We're not testing them, we're testing a concept and we need feedback to improve experience for others which helps them feel comfortable sharing lessons learned which may not always good news and we need to hear it. Next slide, please.

So in the previous presentations you've heard relevance mentioned and the studies seem to find that about 20% of the population in the U.S. are not aware of any need for them to go on. They're concerned about safety, whether it's financial dangers they're worried about, they're concerned about being vulnerable and they're not sure why they should go to that effort.

It's difficult, it's challenging, it's going to cost money so trying to find something that will help them want to make that effort is key so I'll give you a couple of examples.

One of the ones that is very powerful with older individuals can often be connecting to family. If you know that your grandchildren only communicate by text or only want to interact with you that way, it's a lot more motivating to learn how to do Facebook.

It may be something that you're going to be willing to try to learn this new skill because you want to learn to play music and you can do that if you go

online and learn how to do electronic music which is the key that one of our library systems in state Pioneer Library System used it in an alternative school in their district.

And not only did the two students who expressed this interest graduate which was not an outcome that was predicted by their teachers, they've now gone-on to college and so sometimes it's just finding the key for that individual of that group and you're going to have to go where your audience is.

If they're not a current user, don't expect them to come to you. You're going to have to reach-out and persuade them and so I just want to say that it's often when you're doing a statewide planning effort, you're going to need to discover where there are partners that are going to be able to provide equipment and connectivity for participants.

In the Connect Home initiative that happened in Oklahoma in 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture was a good source. In addition I believe some other companies came-in later to help with that but in the beginning we were difficult - we were having difficulty - identifying how we were going to do that. Next slide, please.

And here's some other examples of programs that are occurring in rural libraries so the job coaching programs and virtual job fairs in our 2010 BTOP project we placed 30 video conferencing units in our rural libraries.

And a number of the individuals from our Oklahoma Department of Commerce were able to reach-out to clients who couldn't afford necessarily to travel to a nearby town for their work on how to move-on to a different type of career or progress in their current career but by staying in their local community they were able to receive that through the video conferencing.

And some things do just happen in person and libraries have meeting rooms that can be good sources for you. I'm sure many of you are aware that GED programs now, the testing is online. Much of the instruction is as well.

Coding classes for adults and students are often being held in libraries, rural libraries including and robotics and STEM programs are also something that will help build workforce in the coming years and I look forward to answering any of your questions going forward. Thank you.

Emy Tseng: Great, thank you to Susan, Rachel and Amy for sharing your expertise and insights. Now I'll open-up the Webinar for questions from our participants and I'll turn over this section to Katherine Bates though I may interject some questions of my own so ...

Katherine Bates: Thank you, Amy. Hopefully everybody can hear me because you guys can't say you can. There's a few questions about the contact information for people on the Webinar and we can send that out to all the participants if the presenters are okay with that but there's quite a few people who are saying hopefully contact information including phone number and e-mail will be provided.

So I don't think the speakers will have a problem doing that so I will make sure that that is done after this is over and before it's posted on our Website so we've got I'm going to start with Rachel and Monica because they were the first speakers so there's some questions.

And one is there's a couple of them so I'm just kind of grouping it, how do practitioners connect with their extension folks working on digital inclusion in

their state and does each state have someone in extension in their state working on digital inclusion generally so Rachel?

((Crosstalk))

Katherine Bates: Are you there, Rachel?

Rachel Welborn: Yes, I am, can you hear me? Can you hear me?

Katherine Bates: Yes, if you can speak-up a little bit that would be great.

Rachel Welborn: Okay, I just realized my mic had kind of gotten shifted, sorry.

Katherine Bates: Okay.

Rachel Welborn: Yes, so I'll start and then Monica can join-in if I'm missing some other key points but so the land grant universities are very different in the kinds of things they address. They are looking at things in their own state so they may not all be looking at broadband issues so that's the reality.

One of the things that you can do is look at the national team that we've put together that contact information will go-out and you know, reach-out to us if you'd like. We do have a database of some of the people that are working in the state and so we'll be glad to help connect that way as we know who those people are.

Or I would also just suggest possibly reaching-out to your if you've got a community development unit within your extension service or even go into your local county office and seeing if they can help you identify those.

There's a lot of different ways to go at it. Universities are organized slightly differently but we're happy to help make those (loops), you know, post those (loops) as best we can here too.

That's part of why this national team was formed so that we can begin to find all of those great things that are going-on in the different states and help people to link to them. Monica, what would you add to that?

Monica Babine: Rachel, I think you really covered it well. You know, you can come to our national team or you can check at the local level and see if there's activity.

Katherine Bates: Okay, that's great so in the e-mail in the context that we send-out, if you have any questions maybe your HR Monica can hook you up with someone if they know someone or we can also potentially include the Website, a Website address.

And then next is from our colleague over in Treasury who asked is there anyone in cooperation extension who's working-on leveraging private sources of finance for rural broadband development so that would be for Rachel and/or Monica also.

Rachel Welborn: Monica, do you want to talk a little bit about the work that the partnership is doing there or do you want me to add something?

Monica Babine: Well, I'm happy to talk about that. So on our partnership team - well, first of all I'll say I'm not aware of anyone specifically doing that. However, we're involved right now in doing some surveying both of our own colleagues through extension across the country and those that we have identified that are working on broadband from other agencies both at the state and the national level.

And so we've been reaching-out and looking to find-out who's working on those kinds of things so we may be able to find-out through that outreach and through the partnerships activity but I'm not currently aware of someone doing that but that's definitely one that you could send to us and we could take to our team.

Katherine Bates: Okay, great. That's a good question, we'd like to know that too at NTIA.

Amy this question is the question for you really deal a lot with funding so besides the library grant, do you offer any other grants for broadband deployment, a question specifically on deployment but I'd broaden it a little bit and say does North Carolina offer any other grants for broadband in the state?

Amy Huffman: Sure, so thanks for the question. Just to clarify, the library grant is a grant we received from IMLS so we're not funding libraries through that. We are funding a program.

Katherine Bates: Okay.

Amy Huffman: And in terms of broadband deployment, actually we this legislative session we received \$10 million to develop a broadband deployment program in our state budget so that's currently being setup and we can if anybody wants to contact me after, I can talk more about that but that will be strictly funding for broadband deployment and there's a lot of the legislation was very specific so there's a lot of criteria around it.

In terms of broadband adoption or additional equity and inclusion, we currently do not have any state funding dedicated to that and that's one of the

reasons we've tried to get really creative in the way that we are addressing it and one of the reasons we applied for that IMLS grant.

Katherine Bates: Okay, and I have a specific question about your IMLS grant. Does that \$250,000 support the entire program and is it the goal to make that program replicable across the country, is that what it's for ...

Amy Huffman: Yes, yes, so the IMLS grant will support the funding will pay for, we will hire a digital inclusion librarian and we will pilot a program that we designed up to four counties or a library system in North Carolina and basically it will fund giving-out 90 hotspots to those libraries that they can check-out and then we're going to partner with the local school system to identify students in need of access at home.

And then those students will receive the hotspots and then they will also receive free digital literacy training at the libraries and it's a two-year program. One of our deliverables is a toolkit that will be published nationwide so that we hope that we will work through the kinks so that other libraries across the nation can replicate it.

Katherine Bates: Okay, that's great, and then someone had a question also Amy on your crowd-sourced Internet speed tool and I know there's other states that do this too on their Website but they wanted to know was that built in-house, off the shelf and how is that going?

Amy Huffman: It's going well. I don't have, I'm sorry, I should have had the number of responses we have but it's that we get a good number of responses. It's still - yes, it was built in-house on top of the 477 data from the FCC so that the bottom layer is the 477 data, Form 477 data and then the rest of the map was built in-house by our GIS team.

Katherine Bates: Okay, that's great and there are other states out there that have a speed test tool on their Website. I know West Virginia, New Hampshire, I know of a couple of other states too that have that so Susan, I have a question for you.

On your programs you talked extensively about it. Can those programs do you have like what Amy mentioned from what their ultimate goal is a toolkit, do you have examples of programs - your successful programs - that you could share and/or are the programs, could they be replicable in other states, working with their state library?

Susan McVey: I do not have any existing list. That is something that certainly we might be able to pull together. Most of them were based on different grants that we received either from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation or that we had some NTIA funding and so in terms of being replicable, the program might be but I'm not sure the funding would be.

Katherine Bates: I'd say both of those funding sources are no longer.

Susan McVey: Right.

Katherine Bates: So then there was a question and this is for anybody, are any governments supporting broadband access programs via tax millage or do you know of anyone who's supporting and Emy Tseng this might be a good question for you, how are local governments supporting broadband access programs financially?

Emy Tseng: I can address that part so a number of local governments have either used franchise phase, actually is also some of the states, I mean, local telecoms, municipal telecoms contracts and some proportion is dedicated to some sort of

community benefit, I mean, commune benefit in the general sense as well as actually general funds.

So that's how a number of local governments have been supporting these sorts of activities but there are fewer examples of states. There is California but that have been supporting this at a statewide level so ...

Susan McVey: This is Susan McVey and I would add to what Emy has said that there does exist a funding mechanism that is open to schools and libraries, the universal service fund that is an ongoing mostly covered somewhere between 50 to 90% depending on the location and poverty level for costs of circuits and some limited equipment.

It's also called e-rate and the State of Oklahoma has a state e-rate program which in our case supplements the federal program and pays for pretty much the entire cost of the circuit. Now the libraries often have additional things that they're purchasing such as the computers that are used by the public, the peripherals such as printers and all sorts of things like that but I think that's something that for some groups may be relevant.

Monica Babine: And this is Monica, may I also add to that in Washington State we also just this past year passed a matched fund and built into the budget for e-rate to help offset those costs. In addition I don't know if any of our colleagues from our state broadband group from Tennessee are on but Tennessee has an income tax program that helps fund broadband as I understand.

And Representative Derek Kilmer from Washington State is introducing a broadband program that also ties back to a tax credit and if folks would like more information about that, please let me know.

Susan McVey: Thank you for reminding us about Tennessee, they're doing great work.

Katherine Bates: Yes, they are and by the end of the summer NTIA should have information on state level broadband programs on our Website so look for that. We'll send-out an announcement on that too but the ones who have matching e-rate programs because there are states like Arizona, New Mexico that do have the matching e-rate funding at the state level.

Susan, can you speak a little about the hotspot lending program that you have and actually Amy you mentioned that too with your IMLS grant so ...

Susan McVey: I am sorry to say that it is not our program. It is the initiative of Brian Whitaker at Oklahoma State University which is a land grant university here in Oklahoma and I know that he did a payment grant. I was at a meeting where he was I guess the 23rd and 4th of June and he did not identify the source of the grant.

So if Brian is on, he might want to add something in the chat but I would say I'm sure if you reach-out to him, he would be glad to respond. I do know there are a number of other libraries that are providing those hotspot lending programs but it was not one of ours.

Katherine Bates: Okay.

Amy Huffman: Actually a great source of information on this is there is a report about the experience of Kansas state library and then also Maine and I think this report was done by Sharon Stoerger and I think Brian was a partner on that so we can try to include that link as well with the information that we send-out.

Katherine Bates: Okay, great and Brian what is online and said he got funding from AARP for the hotspot lending program so that's a resource that people could look to also and maybe contact Brian for how he went about doing that but AARP funded that one, Susan, as I wasn't aware of that either.

Susan McVey: Uh huh.

Katherine Bates: So he is online so that's great. Okay, so we do have some extension folks who say or some people in state saying their university extension is not focusing-on broadband so who can help them set something up like what Rachel what are you and Monica doing or would you be willing to do some outreach to states who are not state land grant universities who are not focusing-on broadband?

Rachel Welborn: So this is Rachel. We are working right now on like rebuilding a Website. We had one for a while but there's so many changes that we've made this past year is we've just began to think about aligning differently and so hopefully the Website is going to be up and live very soon and one of the things and Monica alluded to this a minute ago, we are doing the survey right now nationally with the land grant system to see who is doing the work and what resources they have.

And so that points to those things are going to be posted onto this central Website and now that's something that we'll be able to share publicly in the coming months and so I would just, you know, if people want to reach-out to me or Monica, then we'll be glad to let you know if that Website becomes lives and we'll be able to share that.

And I'm also just glad to say that Brian Whitaker's a part of our team and it's nice to see him on there and just as I scroll, I see a few other of our team

members on but we're hoping that this national team can help build capacity across the land grant system so that there is more emphasis to this and but again that's always subject to the needs of that local site and what that university sees as its mission.

Katherine Bates: Okay, that's great and if you can well I will find out anyway that you guys have that Website available but we will also include that in our newsletter and so being a part of this Webinar we put Webinar participants on our stakeholder list to receive information on future Webinars and the NTIA BroadbandUSA newsletter so make sure you read that carefully because we like to highlight the work that extension is doing.

So I've got a general question that is one that we get a lot. Would the presenters please speak to the roles of the local service providers and would they know of any concerns by those providers in providing broadband service or bidding for contracts to provide broadband service, talking about the competitiveness and what the role is? I believe they're trying to ask - I'm reading it again - but actually why don't we ask this.

What is the role of the local service providers in helping provide broadband access? I know for example that Comcast has their Internet Essentials but does anybody work with their providers at the state and local level to ensure that there's the access component?

Susan McVey: Well, this is Susan McVey, and we have our public utilities regulated by the corporation commission and as I mentioned there is a state e-rate program. There are hearings periodically as they consider rules and rule changes that I attend and try to provide impact of how these proposed rules might change or might affect schools and libraries.

I would say that in the example of the Connect Home project with the Choctaw Nation, when that happened in 2015 the partnership launch invited a number of telecommunications providers along with Best Buy, some of the different groups working with training such as libraries and our educational and television and some other groups.

And at that point in the planning, those providers were sharing where they had fiber or where they relevant to the places in the Connect Home project where they might be able to provide linkages but that's the only experience I've had.

Amy Huffman: This is Amy Huffman. Our office works really closely with the service providers. All of them from the incumbents to the cable company, the local there's a couple of local cable companies.

There's we have several telephone coops in the state, we work with them and we work with the WISPs across the state. Simply put, they are an invaluable partner because they provide the actual service to the consumers.

Part of our technical assistance program and process is to work with the local community to figure-out the aggregate demand and figure-out where unserved households are and then to present that data to providers to see if they're able to cover those areas.

And I've also seen providers support digital equity and inclusion efforts in our state so they have supported Charlotte Connect Home initiative in a couple of different ways. Several of our schools across the state participate in this Sprint 1 Million program which is the program funded by Sprint where high school students receive Wi-Fi hotspots that they can take home.

And another example is AT&T has funded some of the work of one of our device refurbishers called Kramden Institute so they're an invaluable partner in our state.

Monica Babine: And this is Monica from in Washington State and the work that we've done with our broadband action team, we too have engaged the telecom providers and it ranges depending on the community's needs and comfort level with conversations and work with the providers.

We have some broadband action teams that, you know, work together and then as Amy said present projects when they're ready to meet with them. We have others that from the very beginning have them at the table because they want them to be a part of the conversation.

We like to say that we are vendor-neutral, technology-neutral and politically-neutral. We just want to work together to get broadband and we want to engage whoever it is that can help make that happen.

Katherine Bates: Okay, I've still got a lot of questions Emy but we are at time so I'm going to turn it back over to you. This was a great Webinar so we still have questions coming-in but we will try to answer those, we will try to put those answers we'll try to hook the speakers up with those people who've asked.

Emy Tseng: And we can put together a list of the questions and then depending on the time that the speakers have, maybe we can ask them, address them directly but so we're at the top of the hour and as we conclude today, I want to remind you that BroadbandUSA's practical conversation Webinars are scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month at 2:00 Eastern Time.

But note that NTIA will not hold the Webinar in August so please join us again on Wednesday, September 19th, actually in next slide, you'll see the title for our Webinar, Innovative Broadband Technologies Providing Economical Alternatives for Rural Broadband Access.

And again as a reminder the BroadbandUSA Website provides information about our technical assistance programs, guides to products, publications as well as the Webinar presentations that you can peruse other Webinars for information that might be relevant and hopefully these tools will assist you with the planning, funding and implementation of your broadband projects so thank you so much and have a great day and thank you again to the speakers.

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