

## **April 20, 2020 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report**

### **Attendees**

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Michael Amick, Melissa Armas, Sherri Bakker, Kirk Busch, Jerry Crow, Mark Dallmeier, Dan Doehler, Terence Ford, Ian Hathcock, Steve Hill, Alan Kost, Brian Louderback, John Lucas, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Brian Monarrez, Mala Muralidharan, Cody Pedersen, Lea Marquez Peterson, Ricardo Platt, Tracy Rexroat, Lynda Santoro, Jeff Sobotka, Dan Stormont, Pam Tarrer, Graham Taylor, Cory TerEick, Nicole Umayam, Scott Ward, Nan Williams, Karen Ziegler

### **Purpose of Meeting**

Steve Peters explained the primary purpose of today's COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force meeting is to discuss how MSS Management Consulting Services and Insight will work with the task force to mobilize the subcommittees (Education, Libraries, Communities, Technologies, Funding/Resources) that will make actionable recommendations for state government policy makers.

Steve requested Mala Muralidharan and Jeff Sobotka to provide quick updates on their activities since the April 13<sup>th</sup> task force meeting. Mala stated there are no new updates from the Arizona State Library or on federal government activities. Jeff Sobotka stated he is working on the following activities: the library Wi-Fi access issues discussed at the last meeting in coordination with Mala, collaborating with the Arizona Telemedicine Program on a webinar to explain the USDA ReConnect telemedicine grants program, a map that shows free public Wi-Fi access points around the state, and the hotspots program discussed at the last task force meeting (200 hotspots have been distributed and 250 more hotspots are upcoming).

### **Steve Peters Presentation on Task Force Mission, Structure, Activities**

Steve delivered a presentation explaining the AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force mission, structure, activities, and issues to be addressed by each of the subcommittees. The presentation can be accessed on the AZBSN website at <https://www.arizonatele.org/minutes-apr-20-2020-covid-meeting.html>. Following is a summary of some key points from the presentation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented demand for digital access/inclusion from Arizona underserved rural, tribal, and low-income communities to support education, health care, economic, and overall community needs during the school/business closures and social distancing required in this crisis. Digital access includes not only broadband Internet access, but also required digital equipment (e.g. computers, routers, cameras), digital content resources, and skills to use the technology. The task force includes stakeholders from all

relevant sectors such as state/local government, rural communities, education and libraries, and telecommunications/technology companies. The task force will facilitate collaboration and information sharing among stakeholders, identify priorities, develop a statewide COVID-19 digital access strategy, and identify/advocate for funding and resources to enable implementation of COVID-19 digital access projects.

Steve overviewed various activities of this task force such as: regular overall task force meetings, subcommittees' collaboration to produce recommendations, communications to stakeholders via newsletters and webinars, resources and appropriate links placed on the COVID-19 task force website, and a state plan defining short-term plans and priorities that will identify challenges, barriers, and recommendations for each of the subcommittees' area of focus.

Steve reviewed the questions each subcommittee should address. For the Education, Libraries, and Communities Subcommittees relevant questions are:

- 1) What are the overall digital access needs and funding and technical support required?
- 2) What are the barriers?
- 3) What specific strategies, initiatives, resources, partnerships, technologies, or opportunities can we recommend to help address these needs?
- 4) What information or data do you need?

For the Technologies Subcommittee, relevant questions are:

- 1) What technologies should be considered to provide Internet access to schools, libraries, families and communities such as wireline, satellite, mesh networks, cellular microwave, Wi-Fi on buses, Wi-Fi available from the closed schools/libraries?
- 2) What kinds of devices are needed and should be considered such as computers and tablets, cell phones, hotspots, webcams, software, conferencing services?
- 3) What information or data do you need?

For the Funding/Resources Subcommittee, relevant questions are:

- 1) What funding and resource opportunities are there (federal/state/local government, foundations, technology donation campaigns, volunteer support, etc.)?
- 2) What information or data do you need?

Steve emphasized that the subcommittees must be pragmatic in their planning to produce recommendations in the short time frame required. Some of the recommendations may be based on anecdotal information when appropriate data is not available. Henry Goldberg remarked that we should have important information on education and libraries' needs from the surveys that have been undertaken as mentioned at previous task force meetings.

Jeff Sobotka asked what will be the end result from the subcommittees' recommendations such as a report or lobbying? Steve responded a report will be written summarizing the recommendations that will be delivered to state government policy makers, Jeff, Mala Muralidharan, and other key stakeholders. Steve said the task force will consider other options

as to how to best disseminate the recommendations. Jeff stated the Pew Charitable Trust publishes a highly-credible national broadband report, which could be a model for the task force report to use. Jeff added the task force has a rare opportunity to make recommendations on how the substantial federal government funding should be used. Mala commented she sees this task force as a way to collaborate and build bridges between silos in various areas, but does not view her role as lobbying on legislation.

## **MSS Presentation on Subcommittees Process**

Cory TerEick, MSS Advisor/Consultant, delivered a presentation on the way the subcommittees process will be managed. The presentation can be accessed on the AZBSN website at <https://www.arizonatele.org/minutes-apr-20-2020-covid-meeting.html>. Following is a summary of some key points from the presentation.

Corey prepared a survey of task force members asking them to volunteer to serve on one or more of the five subcommittees (Education, Libraries, Communities, Technologies, and Funding/Resources) and nominate a champion for each subcommittee. He received 22 responses and displayed a slide (see the presentation) showing the volunteers for each subcommittee and champions that volunteered or were nominated. There was some additional discussion of additional volunteers/champions at the meeting.

The survey also asked for feedback on concerns about the process. One concern was about “Going Too Fast vs. Going Too Slow”: if we go too fast we may lose people’s inputs, however if we go too slow we may be too late for our recommendations to have an impact on decisions. A second concern was “Strategic vs. Tactical”: is there enough consensus about goals of the task force so far, and subcommittees need to make tactical recommendations soon. A third concern was “What tools are we going to use”: Microsoft Teams is considered an excellent collaboration platform but some not familiar with it may struggle with using it – Terence Ford of Insight will provide a webinar on Teams and keep it as simple as possible so people can use it quickly for this task force. A final concern was “What will be the time commitment/level of effort?”: without understanding the specific goals, how can a person determine the time commitment required – Cory responded subcommittee members can be as involved as they want to be, and Steve responded the subcommittees will need to arrive at recommendations as quickly/efficiently as possible.

Cory reviewed the roadmap of the process presented at the April 13<sup>th</sup> task force meeting: there will be 4 stages: 1) Mobilize Subcommittees (we have begun this stage); 2) Develop Plans; 3) Collect & Consolidate Data; and 4) Deliver Recommendations. The champions will drive the process for each of the subcommittees. At this meeting, Mala Muralidharan volunteered to be the champion of the Libraries subcommittee, and John Lucas volunteered to be the champion of the Communities subcommittee (there are other volunteers to be champions of this subcommittee). There is not as yet a volunteer to be the champion of the Funding/Resources subcommittee.

Steve stated he will put out a newsletter this week or early next week reaching out to get more people to join the subcommittees. He wanted to wait to do this until the subcommittees were established. Henry Goldberg asked if the subcommittees would begin collaborating before further subcommittee members were added, and Cory responded that the subcommittees will be mobilized now and new members will join in parallel.

Cory stated the subcommittees’ kick-off meetings will be held as soon as they can be organized with the champions. The initial subcommittee tasks should be:

- Agree on the subcommittee goals
- Identify key dates, milestones, decision points
- Perform a high-level gap analysis
- Set priorities
- Organize into work streams.

Cory noted that Steve will send out a link (included in the presentation) for members of subcommittees to provide inputs on their subcommittees goals/objectives by Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm.

Terence Ford added the process will be managed to minimize the workload of subcommittee members, including using a simple consistent form for status reporting.

Steve requests people to be patient as we figure out how this overall process will work. Task force members with questions should contact Steve, Cory, or Terence for assistance along the way as needed.

## **Next Steps**

As noted above, Cory TerEick will meet with the champions of the subcommittees and organize subcommittee kick-off meetings. Members of each subcommittee should submit their inputs on subcommittee goals/objectives by Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup> (Steve will send out link to respond).

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be on Monday April 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am, and overall task force meetings will continue to be held on Monday mornings for the next few weeks at least. Steve noted the meetings will probably be transitioned from the Zoom to the Microsoft Teams platform.

Henry Goldberg and Oris Friesen will write up a summary report of today's task force meeting.

## **Appendix: Chat from Zoom**

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (07:35 AM)  
FYI there's a lot of people in the other Zoom room

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (07:50 AM)  
See the map here:

<https://azland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=20dd52ea241e42f0932ac1a27580f3e0>

From Brian Louderback to Everyone: (07:50 AM)  
great idea thanks for sharing

From Melissa Armas to Everyone: (07:52 AM)  
Thanks, Nicole!!

From Jeff Sobotka to Everyone: (07:52 AM)

Thank you Nicole. Please email any new free WiFi access sites to rjohnson@azland.gov

From Jeff Sobotka to Everyone: (08:07 AM)

Here is a link to the Pew findings that we were briefed on in DC. I found it to be very helpful.  
<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2020/02/how-states-are-expanding-broadband-access>

From Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone: (08:08 AM)

Nicole has been working with them over the past year or more

From Nan Williams to Everyone: (08:08 AM)

Thanks, Jeff! I will also use this for my ISTE Broadband committee

From Melissa Armas to Everyone: (08:08 AM)

LOVE AZ StRUT!!!!

From Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone: (08:11 AM)

I am working to create a partnership between Az Strut and Pima Community College. Pima CC is very interested. I'll update everyone as we have progress.

From Nan Williams to Everyone: (08:21 AM)

That's awesome, Lea!

From Melissa Armas to Everyone: (08:29 AM)

My nonprofit (AZBI) reached out to PUHSD and City Council on 3/25 to do emergency installation on seven high schools, just to expand their indoor WiFi out to the immediate neighborhood, we're donating labor and we're only requesting funding for hardware. We haven't heard back yet.

<https://www.azblockchain.org/covid19-response>

From Lynda Santoro to Everyone: (08:31 AM)

apologize I have to drop