June 1, 2020 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Melissa Armas, Sherri Bakker, Tracey Beal, Kirk Busch, Michael Cohen, Steve Crooks, Jerry Crow, Mark Dallmeier, Terence Ford, Holly Henley, Steve Hill, Brittany Holmes. John Kelly, Ilana Lowery, Sophia Mayberry, Jennifer Mellor, Mala Muralidharan, Peter Newbegin, Mauricio Orozco, Lea Marquez Peterson, Cody Pedersen, Lawrie Prickett, Lynda Santoro, Jeff Sobotka, Dan Stormont, Graham Taylor, Nicole Umayam, Marisa Walker, Nan Williams, Karen Ziegler

Task Force Subcommittees Meetings

Steve Peters stated the Education and Libraries and the Funding and Resources subcommittees have been actively holding meetings. The Education and Libraries subcommittee meets on Thursdays at 9:30 am, and the Funding and Resources subcommittee meets on Fridays at 10:00 am. The Technology subcommittee will be meeting on Tuesdays at 9:30 am, with the kick-off meeting on June 2nd at 7:30 am.

Steve added that the "Planning" webpage on the task force website indicates when the subcommittee teams meet, the contact information for the subcommittee leaders/facilitators, and provides the Zoom links to participate in the team meetings.

Updates: State Broadband Director, Public Safety, ADE, ACC, Federal Legislation/E-rate/AZ State Library, Telehealth BAT

State Broadband Director Update

Jeff Sobotka, State Broadband Director, reviewed his recent activities. Another batch of hotspots have been shipped to the Navajo Nation under the partnership of the company ATNI with NTUA Wireless to provide free wireless data service there. Jeff continues to work with ADE as well as on the Telehealth Broadband Action Team (where Yuma County and Springerville have been particularly active). Jeff also continues to educate various stakeholders on the importance of broadband with emphasis on its importance during the COVID-19 crisis.

Jeff is focusing on how Arizona can be best-positioned to apply for federal grants/loans programs. The Economic Development Administration (in the US Dept. of Commerce) is offering grants that are of importance in developing permanent broadband infrastructure. Jeff explained that federal CARES Act funding includes funding for education and some funding to be allocated by the Governor, and a major infrastructure bill is being considered in Congress that could include $30 - $70 billion for broadband infrastructure (not clear which federal agency would manage this). Karen Ziegler commented that the CARES Act funding is intended to

reimburse expenses related to COVID-19, and Mark Goldstein provided a link in the Appendix Chat about this.

The Arizona legislature passed a "skinny budget", which does not include the Governor's proposed broadband funding. There will likely be a special session held later to address issues related to COVID-19.

Jeff thanked Mark Goldstein for assembling an extensive list of broadband consultants and grant writers that will be very valuable for communities and institutions to assist them in finding consultants for their COVID-19 digital access/broadband projects and funding needs.

John Kelly remarked that Arizona Commerce Authority's small business boot camp is very helpful in assisting small businesses respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

Public Safety Update

Karen Ziegler, Public Safety Program Manager at the Arizona Department of Administration, stated she is working with Arizona FirstNet public safety partners to negotiate better rates available under the NASPO amendment. CenturyLink has been awarded a five-year contract to provide the backbone network for the AZNET network serving the Arizona state government, and there is an opportunity to leverage this for the state 911 network (for which a contract will be awarded by Dec. 31st).

ADE Update

Sophia Mayberry, Project Manager in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), stated the ADE has released a document providing guidance on the opening of schools, which was based on input from public health officials and school district superintendents.   The Governor has ended the school closure order but could re-institute school closures later if he deems necessary to manage COVID-19 outbreaks. School districts will make their own independent decisions about when they will open their schools and how they will operate.

Steve Peters commented that the University of Arizona intends to use a hybrid of in-person and online learning in the fall. Ilana Lowery remarked that ASU will be offering in-person classes in the fall.

ACC Update

Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner at the Arizona Corporation Commission, noted she serves on the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Presidential Broadband Expansion Task Force. Her policy advisor (Daniel Schwiebert) is working with NARUC on a matrix of broadband best practices of different states, which includes looking at the transitioning of Universal Service Fund funding from high-cost POTS lines to broadband.

Federal Legislation/E-rate/Arizona State Library Updates

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, provided an update on federal legislative bills considering broadband infrastructure, Internet, end-user devices, or cybersecurity. This update is summarized here, and Mala's full document will be posted on the task force website.

The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB) has proposed the "E-rate to the Home" initiative calling for Congress to appropriate $5.25 billion so schools and libraries can provide home broadband, end-user devices, and cybersecurity to address the COVID-19 crisis. In some school districts, 20% - 80% of students do not have broadband Internet at home, creating a "learning gap" much bigger than the "homework gap" issue considered prior to the COVID-19 crisis. Funds for Learning (one of the country's largest E-rate consulting firms) estimated that to address this it will cost a total of $7.5 billion ($4.3 billion for broadband service at home for one year, $1.8 billion for end-user devices, and $1.5 billion for cybersecurity), and based on the E-rate program's nationwide average discount of 70%, the "E-rate to the Home" bill requests the appropriation of $5.25 billion. The bill would be technology-neutral and allows schools and libraries to extend their existing E-rate-funded networks to serve the surrounding community including for backhaul. The bill would set funding caps for applicants and allow schools and libraries to know how much funding is available for planning purposes, allows for payment of expenses retroactively to March 13th, and would streamline application and approval processes to enable online learning in the fall.

The Heroes Act, which has passed the House and is being debated in the Senate, covers a variety of areas including E-rate, rural and Native American health care, and lifeline emergency broadband benefits. Other bills such as the Markey and Meng bills are also being considered.

Arizona has applied for $95 million in E-rate funding for schools and libraries for this fiscal year, and USAC has approved $19 million of this so far.

Mala and Holly Henley, Director of the Arizona State Library, have been working on issues related to the safe reopening and sanitation of public spaces in libraries. At the recommendation of Mark Goldstein, they have met with Joan Koerber-Walker, President of AZBio, to discuss this. Mohave Educational Services Cooperative has set up master contracts with three companies for PPE. Mark Goldstein has assembled a list of pandemic recovery resources that is shown in the Appendix.

The Arizona State Library is continuing its pilot project with Cisco to establish Wi-Fi boosters to the parking lots of five libraries (discussed at previous task force meetings).

Holly briefly summarized the CARES Act IMLS funding the Arizona State Library has received (discussed at previous task force meetings). The first phase of awards, CARES Express grants, has provided packages of chromebooks, videoconferencing equipment, germ-buster kits, etc. to over 60 libraries. The second phase of CARES Expanded grants will provide $4000 grants to libraries for hotspots and digital literacy training.

Telehealth Broadband Action Team

Jeff Sobotka reported that the Telehealth BAT has been gathering needs for telemedicine, as well as matching opportunities for service providers based on the different types of grants available.

Steve Peters commented that the Technology Subcommittee will be discussing various technological solutions that will be relevant to telehealth. Jeff responded that satellite technology will be important for providing quick solutions for communities that lack broadband access.

Subcommittee Activities

Education and Libraries Subcommittee

Mala Muralidharan and Nan Williams, facilitators of the Education and Libraries Subcommittee, briefly summarized the May 21st and May 28th meetings of the subcommittee. The full subcommittee meeting reports are posted on the task force "planning" webpage.

At the May 21st meeting, Dennis Harper, CEO of Generation YES (GenYES), provided an overview of the GenYES program that trains students and provides them opportunities to be information technology leaders in their schools and communities. The GenYES students provide IT professional development and support for the teachers and other students in their schools, which is particularly critical during the COVID-19 crisis where teachers are stretched to perform online instruction. Sophia Mayberry also discussed the status of the ADE schools survey at this meeting, indicating the questions asked in the survey and that they received about 400 responses (1/3 of the total number requested).

At the May 28th meeting, it was decided the five main issues the subcommittee will address for recommendations are:
1) Extending Wi-Fi access at schools and libraries to parking lots
2) Home Internet access
3) Service Desk
4) Educator Support and Professional Development
5) Safety at schools and public libraries (PPE, sanitation)

Funding and Resources Subcommittee

Lea Marquez Peterson, facilitator of the Funding and Resources subcommittee, reiterated that the focus of this subcommittee is on short-term funding and resources for Wi-Fi access, hotspots, and devices, and the long-term federal/state funding sources will be handled by the Arizona Commerce Authority broadband team. The full reports of this subcommittee are posted on the task force "Planning" webpage.

The subcommittee has created a list of foundations and potential corporate sponsors/funders for grant applications. One significant potential funding source is the FDIC Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requiring banking institutions to provide equitable access for those living in low and moderate income communities to banking services as well as for community developments. The National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE) is encouraging banks to invest CRA funds into digital equity. Dennis Harper (CEO of GenYES) spoke about the potential for CRA funding for digital equity at the subcommittee's May 22nd meeting, and Steve Peters will be following up with NCDE, the Arizona Bankers Association, and others to consider an Arizona approach to applying for CRA funding.

Mark Goldstein has prepared a list of 37 entities in Arizona that provide broadband consulting or grant writing expertise to support communities and institutions that are looking for assistance in finding consultants for their COVID-19 digital access/broadband projects and funding needs. Mark posted the link to this list in the Appendix Chat. Mark will contact this week all entities on this list to see if any want to opt out, and then the final list will be posted on the task force "Resources" webpage. Mala Muralidharan commented that this list does not endorse any entity, and Mark added that the list is meant to be extensive but not comprehensive.

Other Discussion

Lea Marquez Peterson mentioned she received legislative alerts, such as the Rural Opportunity Fund, that she will relay to the task force.

Terence Ford, Regional Services Account Executive – Enterprise Services Solution Sales at Insight, commented Insight is developing with partners a "Detection and Prevention Platform" that provides a number of security solutions for customers.

Peter Newbegin, Cradle to Career Impact and Improvement Director of the United Way of Southern Arizona, stated they are working with school district superintendents to provide extra resources needed to support students during the summer.

Jeff Sobotka remarked affordability of Internet access is a major issue that goes beyond service provider discounted Internet services for low-income households.

Steve Peters stated he will put out a survey to the task force to get feedback from participants on the top three things they would like the task force to accomplish. He wants the task force subcommittees to focus more on making recommendations.

Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, June 8th at 7:30 am, and subsequent overall task force meetings will be held on Monday mornings each week in June.

This week, the Technology subcommittee will meet on Tuesday June 2 at 7:30 am, the Education and Libraries subcommittee will meet on Thursday June 4 at 9:30 am, and the Funding & Resources subcommittee will meet on Friday June 5 at 10:00 am.

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

Appendix: Chat from Zoom and Mark Goldstein COVID-19 Resources

Chat from Zoom

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:31 AM)
  AZCares Fund will provide $600M in coronavirus relief and recovery dollars for local Arizona governments and nonprofits. The Arizona Express Pay Program will provide expedited reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for coronavirus-related expenses, including purchases of testing supplies, PPE and more. See Governor Ducey's 5/27/20 announcement at: https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2020/05/governor-ducey-announces-nearly-600-million-local-coronavirus-relief-funds. See https://arizonatogether.org/Grants for grant specifics and applications.

From Mark Dallmeier to Everyone: (7:37 AM)

Thanks Mark!

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:43 AM)

[file: /Users/oris/Downloads/AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force - Arizona Broadband Consultants V01H.docx]
  Here's the latest. Going out to confirm desire to be included and details.

From Marisa Paula Walker to Everyone: (7:56 AM)
  Sophia I understood ADE was surveying the school districts on broadband needs, capabilities. Any updates?

From Marisa Paula Walker to Everyone: (8:04 AM)
  SHLB hosted a webinar on various bills and discussion on the Hill last week. If you are interested you can find the content here: https://www.shlb.org/webinars

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (8:04 AM)
  For those interested in data and mapping, Esri just published this great interactive dataset, which includes the FCC Form 477 broadband available data: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b4bcb36c1e7e4ce69160e8487a2bd6f0

From Karen Ziegler to Everyone: (8:14 AM)
  Mark - I emailed MCP again this morning and will provide a name today

From Mark Dallmeier to Everyone: (8:14 AM)
  Sorry team...need to jump to another meeting!

From Steve Crooks to Everyone: (8:24 AM)
  fyi. Road map to opening Schools https://files.constantcontact.com/cbebfe4e101/c74d6758-a584-4aeb-af41-72e111346f9f.pdf

Mark Goldstein List of Pandemic Recovery Resources

Arizona Broadband Grant, Pandemic Response & Recovery Resources:

Arizona Together (#ReturnStronger) - https://arizonatogether.org/

> **Arizona Together Grant Resources & Information (AZCares Fund, Arizona Express Pay Program) - https://arizonatogether.org/Grants**

AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force - https://www.arizonatele.org/covid19-about.html

> **AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Resources - https://www.arizonatele.org/covid-resources.html**

**Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) Broadband Resources -
https://www.azcommerce.com/broadband/**

ACA COVID-19 Business Resources - https://www.azcommerce.com/covid-19/

**Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) Interactive Map of Publicly
Available Wi-Fi Hotspots -**
https://azland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=20dd52ea241e42f0932ac1a27580f3e0

**Arizona Department of Education (ADE) COVID-19 Guidance to Schools &
Families - https://www.azed.gov/communications/2020/03/10/guidance-to-
schools-on-covid-19/**

**Arizona Telemedicine Program (ATP) Service Directory -
https://telemedicine.arizona.edu/servicedirectory**

**Southwest Telehealth Resource Center (TRC) Telemedicine COVID-19
Resources - https://southwesttrc.org/resources/covid19**

**Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) Arizona Public Safety Broadband
Network (FirstNet) - https://azfirstnet.az.gov/**

**Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) Infectious Diseases Information -
https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-
disease-epidemiology/**

**Arizona Grantmakers Forum's COVID-19 Response Page -
http://arizonagrantmakersforum.org/resources/covid-19-response/**