

**June 22, 2020 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force
Teleconference Report**

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Tracey Beal, Amanda Bruno, Kirk Busch, Michael Cohen, Steve Crooks, Jerry Crow, Mark Dallmeier, Alexandra Dominguez, Derek Ferguson, Terence Ford, Ian Hathcock, Holly Henley, Steve Hill, John Kelly, Ilana Lowery, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Mala Muralidharan, Peter Newbegin, Cody Pedersen, Lawrie Prickett, Alan Pruitt, Tracy Rexroat, Lynda Santoro, Jeff Sobotka, Dan Stormont, Graham Taylor, Rohit Tripathi, Nicole Umayam, Karen Ziegler

Updates: State Broadband Director, AZ State Library and Federal Legislation, State 911 Program, ADE, ACC, GEERF

State Broadband Director Update

Jeff Sobotka, State Broadband Director, reviewed his recent activities. He is focused on federal grants related to different areas of state needs (Cellular One has applied for such a grant). He is interacting with Karen Ziegler on the State 911 Program RFP. Jeff is interested in learning more about opportunities related to the Federal Reserve Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) digital equity funding. He is involved with the strategic planning for the state budget for the next fiscal year beginning July 1st.

Jeff was on a call with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) related to digital literacy and affordable Internet service. Steve Peters remarked that NDIA started the discussion with the Federal Reserve to direct some CRA funding towards digital equity issues. Nicole Umayam commented that her position as Digital Inclusion Library Consultant at the Arizona State Library was established as a partnership with NDIA.

Arizona State Library and Federal Legislation Update

Holly Henley, State Librarian, stated the Arizona State Library continues to work on the implementation of the IMLS CARES Act funding received (discussed at previous task force meetings) and distributing items that were ordered to libraries.

Nicole Umayam, Digital Inclusion Library Consultant at the Arizona State Library, is working on the pilot of a "Library Tech Helpline Service", which is hiring library staff to provide phone-based basic tech help support, digital literacy training, and information regarding low-cost home Internet offers.

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, is working on Program Integrity Assurance for E-rate applications of state libraries. The USAC's E-rate program goal is to complete approval of applications before August. Mala also provided a federal legislation update. Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) released principles for a legislative framework to expand broadband access and close the digital divide. They intend this framework to serve as a foundation for legislative efforts related to the COVID-19 economic recovery and modernize the nation's telecommunications infrastructure. Their framework would ensure that students have access to broadband and necessary technologies to complete their homework remotely, authorize funding for accurate broadband mapping, establish programs for families experiencing economic hardship during the COVID-19 crisis, expand broadband access and promote digital equity in minority communities, streamline permitting processes for broadband infrastructure, invest in 911 telecommunications infrastructure, and ensure the FCC's telehealth program has necessary resources to enable health care facilities to treat patients remotely.

Mark Goldstein added Senator John Thune also introduced a federal bill to advance rural broadband services (see link in the Appendix "Chat").

State 911 Program Update

Karen Ziegler, Public Safety Program Manager at the Arizona Dept. of Administration, provided an update on the State 911 program. The State government is issuing an RFP in the first week of July for an Emergency Services IP Network (ESINet) backbone network for next-generation 911 service. This network will provide fiber connectivity and redundancy to all 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

ADE Update

Sophia Mayberry, Project Manager in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), stated the state Technology task force has started its meetings. The task force is focused on developing innovative solutions to address the digital divide in education, including solutions for the COVID-19 crisis and long-term solutions. It will also advocate to the federal government for effective digital divide solutions.

The ADE is adding to its guidance for safe reopening of schools (ADE's guidance document is on our task force website). If schools have to be closed again in the upcoming school year, the ADE is aiming at being better prepared to provide Internet access solutions for students that lack this.

Tracey Beal commented that the City of Phoenix is using its CARES Act funding to place antennas on libraries, recreation centers, and community centers to provide wireless Internet access for students who don't have Internet service at home.

ACC Update

Steve Peters noted Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner at the Arizona Corporation Commission, is not present at today's task force meeting. In her absence, Steve stated Lea serves on the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Presidential Broadband Expansion Task Force that is discussing transitioning of the Universal Service Fund (USF) funding to support broadband. Mark Goldstein commented that the USF raises about \$800,000 per year to support POTS telephony service in high-cost areas, and that Lea and her policy advisor Dan Schwiebert will be leading any USF policy transition proposals in Arizona.

GEERF

Steve Peters stated the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF) application has been released. Jeff Sobotka explained this is a flexible CARES Act grant fund that can complement the needs of schools and libraries.

Subcommittee Activities

Education and Libraries Subcommittee

Mala Muralidharan, facilitator of the Education and Libraries Subcommittee, summarized some areas discussed at the June 18th meeting of the subcommittee.

The subcommittee is working towards making its recommendations for the task force's preliminary recommendations document to be written in July. The subcommittee is aiming to base its recommendations on relevant data sources such as those from state public Wi-Fi maps, ADE, the Pew Research Center, and Benton Foundation research.

The subcommittee is considering technical support models such as the Insight Service Desk model proposed for schools and the Library Tech Helpline Service. It will examine the expansion of the Wi-Fi boosters to school and library parking lots based on the pilot program with five libraries (discussed at previous task force meetings), but the cost of providing this capability may vary depending on local factors. The subcommittee is putting together a list of PPE sources for safe reopening of schools and libraries.

Steve Peters provided the following summary of the issues to be addressed and draft recommendations for the Education and Libraries Subcommittee:

Issues to be addressed

1. Data Requirements and resources
2. Current assets and resources
3. Connectivity: Free or affordable high-speed Internet for schools and libraries, and to the home for students, parents, library patrons, community
4. Technology options and alternatives
5. Tech Support Strategy-Local and Statewide – to provide tech support to schools, libraries, and all citizens in the state, including students, parents, seniors, library patrons, community - – Identify and coordinate existing resources and strategies
6. Access to Devices: Ensure all schools and libraries, students, parents, library patrons, community have access to devices
7. Professional development and training for Educators: K-12, Community Colleges and Universities on remote/hybrid instruction, and for libraries on virtual programming (best practices for effective remote instruction and virtual class management)
8. Safe Operations of Schools and Libraries in COVID-19 environment
9. Digital Resources and Digital Literacy
10. Affordable and equitable devices and connectivity

Recommendations

1. Explore short and long-term potential of extending the Sun Corridor Network from three state universities to all community colleges, schools, libraries, and possibly telehealth, to

provide high-capacity statewide education and research network with national access to Internet2. In addition to connectivity may be hub for Tech Support, Labster Consortium and more

2. Expand AZ StRUT throughout the state
3. Identify, coordinate and develop unified strategy for all organizations including school districts, libraries, universities, community colleges, nonprofit organizations currently or planning to provide local and statewide tech support to schools, libraries, and all citizens in the state, including students, parents, seniors, library patrons, and community. May include Arizona State Libraries Tech Support Initiative, school districts, community colleges, universities, Gen YES program, Insight Help Desk, ADOE and nonprofit organizations. (FYI GenYes trains students and provides them opportunities to be information technology leaders in their schools and communities)
4. Identify, coordinate and develop unified strategy for all organizations including school districts, libraries, universities, community colleges, nonprofits currently or planning to provide professional development and training for Educators on remote/hybrid instruction
5. Utilize input from Technology Team on multiple technology solutions to provide free or affordable high-speed Internet for schools and libraries, and to the home for students, parents, library patrons, community
6. Directory of consultants for grant writing
7. Identification of government, and public and private funding sources
8. K-12 student teacher services desk support
9. Explore statewide Labster Consortium
10. Support creation of community Broadband Action Teams that may include schools, libraries, community organizations, local government, etc
11. STEM - Engage students in developing solutions

Alan Pruitt commented that rural communities should explore Mesh Networks solutions by combining commercial RFPs together with students taking on the STEM problem-solving challenge of implementing these networks for their communities. He stated this could be implemented without the reliance on Internet service providers. Steve Peters stated the Technology Subcommittee will consider mesh networks solutions and Gen YES trained students could potentially work on such solutions. Steve Hill added the Technology Subcommittee will consider mesh networks, which he said can be built fairly easily. Mark Goldstein noted that Melissa Armas of the Arizona Blockchain Initiative has been working on mesh networks projects in Phoenix (discussed at previous task force meetings) and students have been working on configuring the routers for these implementations.

Funding and Resources Subcommittee

Steve Peters reported on the June 19th meeting of the Funding and Resources Subcommittee in the absence of Lea Marquez Peterson, the facilitator of this subcommittee.

Steve prepared the following summary of draft recommendations for the Funding and Resources Subcommittee that was discussed at the subcommittee meeting:

The COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force is developing a strategy to support Arizona communities, education institutions, telemedicine and nonprofit organizations in identifying and providing access to funding and resources to address their digital access requirements. While we know that there is federal and state money becoming available, we also want to find additional sources of funds and resources such as foundations, donation campaigns, volunteer

support, refurbished equipment, donations and support from Internet providers and technology companies, etc.

Here are a number of things we found:

- While there will be millions of federal dollars coming available to address these issues, most of the grant programs require very complex applications as well as management and reporting requirements. Many schools, libraries and telemedicine programs and communities do not have the personnel and expertise to prepare and manage these applications. As a result, Arizona misses out on millions of dollars in federal funding. To address this issue, we have adopted the following:
 - The Task Force is developing a directory of individuals and organizations that provide consulting services. Most are fee for service. The directory will be available to schools, libraries, communities.
 - Secure state or other funding to enable schools and libraries to contract with consultants
 - The State should provide funding for additional staff to support the Arizona Commerce Authority, the Arizona State Library and the Arizona Department of Education, and the Arizona Telemedicine Program to also assist Arizona communities, education institutions, telemedicine and nonprofit organizations in grant application development
 - The State should provide funding to the ACA, the Grants Office or State Library for a private sector/foundations research assistant to set-up, research and maintain a technology funding portal/web site to provide easy access to funding and resources other than government funding such as foundations, corporate donations, etc including support for access to eCIVIS
 - Explore development of State Broadband Office
 - Collaborate with Jeff and ACA to provide easy access to state and local government funding opportunities
 - Provide school district/community access to the eCIVIS Database
 - Collaborate with the Office of Economic Opportunities
 - AZCares
- Launch a major foundations/corporate fundraising/donations campaign
- Increase state education and libraries technology funding for connectivity, devices, tech support, applications, and faculty preparation
- Develop an ongoing Communications Strategy/Campaign to inform the public about funding and resource opportunities
- Explore use of Arizona Universal Service funding for broadband – Arizona Corporation Commission
- Identify and provide easy access to funding and resources other than government funding such as foundations, donation campaigns, volunteer support, refurbished equipment donations, and corporate funding and donations
- Support Governor's Request for \$10 million for ACA Rural Broadband Development Grants and \$50 Million State Highway Fiber Infrastructure
- Distribute Tech Soup access for 501(c)(3) organizations Info
- Collaborate with AzSTRUT to expand device refurbishment and donations program to all schools/communities/libraries in Arizona. Set-up guides, processes and procedures
- Support Libraries PPE and COVID recovery Donation Funding drive in collaboration with Arizona State Library to support public libraries in the state

- AZBSN Funding
- Arizona should aggressively pursue Digital Equity/Digital Divide funding opportunities through the Federal Reserve Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). The federal 1977 Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), CRA requires all banking institutions that receive Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Insurance (FDIC) to provide equitable access for those living in “low and moderate income” (LMI) communities to banking services as well as investments for community development (i.e., enhancing economic opportunity) in LMI communities. Banks must meet their CRA obligations through a mix of volunteerism, grantmaking and investments., In 2016 the Federal Reserve, in collaboration with the National **Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE)**, issued guidance encouraging the nation’s banks to invest CRA resources in digital equity. **NCDE has launched a “One Percent for Digital Equity” campaign, advocating that banks and their community partners nationwide strive to reach a target of one percent of CRA funding to close the digital divide, as this would unleash fully \$1 billion annually.** The challenge now is to educate banks about how to work with local communities, education organizations, to provide digital equity funding, and how educational organizations can apply for support. CRA funding may support services such as broadband and broadband infrastructure, hardware, tech support, librarian assistance, numeracy (or “math literacy’), financial literacy education, “digital age skills” development (such as coding), and educational content.

Technology Subcommittee

There was no meeting of the Technology Subcommittee last week.

Steve Hill, co-facilitator of the Technology Subcommittee, reported the next meeting of the Technology Subcommittee on June 23rd will feature a presentation by Viasat, a satellite broadband Internet service provider.

Communities Subcommittee

Alan Pruitt, co-facilitator of the Communities Subcommittee, stated the Communities Subcommittee’s facilitators (Alan and John Lucas), Steve Peters, and Jeff Sobotka will be meeting this Wednesday June 24th with Joselyn Cousins, Senior District Manager of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, who is the CRA policy-point person for Arizona. The Economic Development Administration (EDA), who will have a new representative located in Arizona, is very interested in this discussion and will offer suggestions from the federal perspective. The EDA (from its former Seattle office dealing with Arizona) has projects in Arizona with NAU and the Arizona Rural Development Council. Steve Peters remarked he may ask Joselyn Cousins to present to the whole task force as well after this initial discussion explores possibilities for CRA digital equity funding in Arizona. .

Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, June 29th at 7:30 am. Overall task force meetings will continue through July as needed to finalize the task force’s preliminary recommendations document.

This week, the Technology subcommittee will meet on Tuesday June 23 at 9:30 am, the Education and Libraries subcommittee will meet on Thursday June 25 at 9:30 am, and the Funding and Resources subcommittee will meet on Friday June 26 at 10:00 am. Steve Peters encourages attendance at these subcommittees’ meetings to prepare their recommendations.

Insight will present “Getting Arizona Businesses Back to Work Safely” on June 24 at 11:00 am.

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

Appendix: Chat from Zoom

From Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone: (7:37 AM)

May be rejoining Zoom might help

From Me to Everyone: (7:37 AM)

Tried that — did not work.

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:38 AM)

U.S. Senator John Thune Introduces Bill to Advance Rural Broadband Services -
<https://www.thune.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=1D209884-1F6F-49E9-8B54-4F715F326642>

From Me to Everyone: (7:40 AM)

OK — now I can hear you.

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:44 AM)

[file: /Users/oris/Downloads/AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force - Arizona
Broadband Consultants V01M.docx]

Here's an update to our Arizona Broadband Consultants List, now at V01M with 2 additional grant writers and a few additional resources. Will post to the AZBSN Resources page soon.

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:47 AM)

U.S. Senate has just confirmed SethuramanPanchanathan's (Panch) appointment to head the National Science Foundation - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/indian-american-to-head-us-science-body/article31884375.ece>

From John Kelly to Everyone: (7:50 AM)

Mala, can you post a bill number? (numbers)?

From Rohit T to Everyone: (7:53 AM)

What tech are these antennas using? Microwave or Wifi?

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (7:55 AM)

I would love to know specifics about this as well!

From John Kelly to Everyone: (8:01 AM)

Apologies I have to jump on another call this am. be well!

From Steve Crooks to Everyone: (8:15 AM)

good idea Alan

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:16 AM)

Tracey Beal has been talking about mesh networks throughout our communities.

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (8:17 AM)

Thanks, Ilana! I do think this is a true option that can meet immediate need in neighborhoods around schools.

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (8:27 AM)

I must jump on another call. Great to be with you!

From Mark Dallmeier to Everyone: (8:29 AM)

Thank you all for the update and the ongoing support

From Alan Pruitt to Everyone: (8:30 AM)

We just need to spark the STEM community with a “problem” seeking a mesh network solution. Let the ideas bubble up - a la how Odyssey of the Mind competition.

From Rohit T to Everyone: (8:31 AM)

is that call open to folks here?

From Derek Masseth to Everyone: (8:33 AM)

That center is NAU

From Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone: (8:34 AM)

the initial call this Wednesday is a 'getting to know them' call... I think there may be a later invitation for Joselyn to present here for us.

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (8:34 AM)

Attendance at intro CRA call is being kept to a minimum to start the conversation. More widely attended opps will follow.

From Rohit T to Everyone: (8:34 AM)

THanks