March 29, 2021 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein,Tracey Beal, Darren Bell, Andrew Bevington, Melissa Boydston, Wes Brownfield, Kirk Busch, Gene Carl, Michael Cohen, Jerry Crow, Marcelino Flores, Terence Ford, Bill Gerski, Rick Gibson, Sheila Harrison-Williams, Ian Hathcock, Holly Henley, Karen Hewitt, Cindy Hogan, Shereka Jackson, John Kelly, Ryan Kelly, Glen Lineberry, Tarma Liranzo, Ilana Lowery, Derek Masseth, Clarence McAllister, Georgina Monsalvo, Mala Muralidharan, Mauricio Orozco, Cody Pedersen, Lea Marquez Peterson, Lawrie Prickett, Tracy Rexroat, Paul Ross, Jeff Sobotka, Tom Tardy, Joy Whiting, Karen Ziegler

Task Force Funding, Website, Participants List, After-Hours Networking Sessions, Devices Collaboration Subcommittee

Task Force Funding
Steve Peters again thanked Care1st Health Plan Arizona, Valley of the Sun United Way, the Satellite Broadcasting & Communications Association, and Kajeet for providing sponsorship funding for this task force.

Steve is continuing to seek further funding support for the task force's upcoming work, and welcomes any organizations interested in becoming sponsors.

Task Force Website
Steve has created an Updates and Events webpage on the task force website to inform task force participants about a variety of relevant programs and events. Steve includes a link to this webpage in his e-mails to the task force, and recommends task force participants look at this webpage regularly for important information.

Task Force Participants List
Steve reminded all task force participants to submit the Google form on the website with their contact information if they have not already done this.

To assist with assembling the task force participants list, Steve has modified the sign-on process at Monday Zoom task force meetings to require attendees to provide their name, organization, and contact information. This registration information will be included as an Appendix in the summary report of the task force meeting – see Appendix 2 for the registration information for this meeting.

Steve has put a link on the meeting webpage to his spreadsheet of participants in the task force including their contact information.

<u>Task Force After-Hours Networking Sessions</u>
Steve proposed organizing task force after-hours social networking sessions to enable informal discussion and collaboration. These after-hours networking sessions would be held around 5:00 pm for one hour.

Steve conducted a poll at this meeting requesting responses to two questions:
1) Are you interested in participating once a month? 65% responded affirmatively.
2) What day of the week would be best for you? Thursday was most preferred (59%).

<u>Task Force Devices Collaboration Subcommittee</u>
Tracey Beal reported that the Devices Collaboration subcommittee has assembled a list of all the task force participant organizations that are distributing devices (computers and hotspots) to schools/students/families and what has been accomplished by these organizations. The subcommittee is identifying the needs of public school districts and communities, and Nicole Umayam created a map to assist with reaching families in need. Tracey and Shereka Jackson will be sharing information on the subcommittee's work with Steve Peters.

Updates: State Broadband Director, AZ State Library, ADE, ACC

<u>State Broadband Director Update</u>

Jeff Sobotka, State Broadband Director at the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), reported on his recent activities.

The Governor's bill (HB 2808) for $10 million in funding for the ACA Rural Broadband Development Grants program has passed the House and is now with the Senate.

The second Arizona Broadband Workshop will be held on Wednesday April 7th from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (see link in the Appendix Chat). The ACA is partnering on these workshops with NTIA Broadband USA, USDA, and EDA to assist rural communities in being successful in applying for federal broadband grants.

Jeff is promoting the FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program to get as many low-income Arizona households connected as possible. Steve Peters noted that he has placed a lot of information on the EBB program on the task force Updates and Events webpage.

Jeff also noted that Janet Major will be taking over the leadership of the Telehealth Broadband Action Team (BAT).

<u>Arizona State Library Update</u>

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, reported on her recent activities.

Mala stated that the E-rate application deadline for the 2021-22 fiscal year was March 25th. This year Arizona made its highest funding request in the 23 years of the E-rate program, applying for $144 million in total ($83 million for schools/school districts, $59 million for school-library consortiums, and $2 million for libraries/library districts).

Mala reported on the new E-rate Emergency Connectivity Fund program of $7.2 billion in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that provides funding for off-campus connectivity to student homes (see previous task force meeting reports on this). Funds for Learning did an analysis of this program concluding that the demand for the funding may exceed the needs because it only provides $117 per student or $23,000 per library branch (even though the funding does exceed the $2.3 billion allocated to E-rate last year). The FCC will have to determine priorities for allocating this funding. The FCC is seeking responses to 92 questions by April 5th to guide their rulemaking for this program – Mala urged task force participants to provide responses to the FCC questions (e.g. what is the maximum price for a computer whose purchase should be subsidized by the program?) posted on the fcc.gov website page for the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) is conducting a review of federal broadband programs at the request of Senator Roger Wicker (former Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee). In particular, they are exploring how useful NTIA's broadband coordination efforts are and to identify overlapping and duplicative programs so as not to overbuild. John Windhausen, CEO of the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB), will coordinate responses to the GAO. They will be considering the following issues: 1) the utility of NTIA's BroadbandUSA 2020 Guide of All Funding Programs and suggestions to improve this tool to maximize federal impact by avoiding duplicative efforts; 2) examples of duplication/overlap among federal broadband programs and the positive or negative effects; and 3) whether a federal strategy is needed to coordinate among federal agencies with broadband programs. If you have inputs contact John Windhausen (jwindhausen@shlb.org) or Jason Coates at the GAO (Ph: 202-512-4088).

ADE Update

Sophia Mayberry, Project Manager in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), reported on recent ADE activities.

Sophia organized an introductory meeting on March 18th to discuss establishing "Navigators" to assist low-income households in applying for the FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program (see previous task force meeting reports about the EBB program). Sophia noted she is seeking funding for this Navigators program, and will arrange a follow-up meeting to discuss this and next steps. Steve stated that he will be creating a webpage on the task force website for the FCC EBB and Lifeline programs on how task force participant organizations can become involved in outreach for these programs including links to the FCC website for information on these programs. Mala Muralidharan stated that the Arizona State Library Connect-Arizona portal will post a flyer on the EBB program that can be printed and distributed to low-income households. Karen Ziegler commented that these flyers could be distributed with water bills or water utilities could include a story about the EBB program in their newsletters distributed with the bills. Melissa Boydston of Valley of the Sun United Way and Cindy Hogan of United Way of Tucson & Southern Arizona indicated they will do outreach on these programs and will be participating in the Navigators meeting organized by Sophia. Karen added that the League of Arizona Cities and Towns could also assist with outreach. Mala recommended the next Navigators meeting should decide on responsibilities of different organizations. A comment was made about needing to know which Arizona service providers are participating in the EBB program, and Mala responded that the USAC website will allow searches by zipcode of service providers participating in the EBB and Lifeline programs (see link in the Appendix Chat). Steve concluded saying that he will work with Sophia to convene the next Navigators meeting, and anyone interested should contact him.

Sophia reported that ADE has issued a clarification of the Governor's Executive Order on requiring schools to offer in-person learning.

Sophia also noted that that the ADE Student Advisory Council is open for applications until April 2nd from students to be members of this council, which elevates the voices of students in Arizona on educational issues.

ACC Update

Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner and Chair of the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), reported on her recent activities.

Lea noted that the ACC regulates utilities, and has some jurisdiction over telecommunications service providers.

The ACC will be holding a meeting on April 13th to address reforming the Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) to support broadband in high-cost rural areas. The AUSF currently collects $1.2 million in annual revenues. Steve Peters noted that he will be scheduling a task force meeting to discuss ideas on good uses for the reformed AUSF which may lead to a task force submission to the docket if agreement could be reached among task force participants. Steve added that task force participants can also individually submit comments to the ACC docket on this topic (see March 1st task force meeting report for the docket number or e-mail your comment to Lea for inclusion in the docket).

"Senior 2 Senior Program" Presentation

Bill Gerski, Sr. VP of Business Development at Tri-Co Connections and Executive Director of Tri-Co's Senior 2 Senior Program, delivered a presentation on their Senior 2 Senior (S2S) program. Following are key points from the presentation, and the full presentation will be posted on the task force website.

Tri-Co Connections is a Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) broadband service provider that is a subsidiary of Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative that serves north central Pennsylvania. Tri-Co Connections is building 3250 miles of fiber to reach the rural electric cooperative's subscriber homes at a cost of $77 million. The density of the homes in this region is 5.8 homes per square mile, which is much lower than an urban area like Phoenix (which has 1216 homes per square mile). The FTTH service will deliver up to 1 Gbps symmetrical Internet service to each home. About 40% of the residents in the regions are seniors, and Tri-Co Connections realized that there was no point in deploying fiber to their homes if the seniors did not have the computers or digital literacy skills to use fiber broadband Internet service.

So Tri-Co Connections established its S2S program to assist seniors in learning how to use computers and the Internet. They utilize local senior high school students with experience in computers and technology to volunteer to provide the training. They use five senior centers for training and offer eight one-hour courses, with 20-25 seniors per class. Seniors receive hands-on instruction on basic computing skills (including saving files), conducting Google searches, setting up an e-mail account and sending/receiving e-mail, and using social networking. They also work with local banks to provide training on online banking.

There are various benefits to seniors from participating in the S2S program:

- Learn basic computer skills, digital literacy, and cybersecurity
- Stay connected with family/friends using Skype/Facetime and e-mail
- Utilize telemedicine
- Can access government tools for social security and medicare etc.
- Utilize online banking
- Work from home and shop from home
- Utilize online education
- Improve hand-eye coordination (e.g. using video games).

The S2S program is a great example of a public-private partnership. Various organizations partner with this program and serve on the steering committee: the Potter County Education Council, the Seneca Highlands Career Technical Center, local banks, local hospital, county commissioners, and local school districts.

The S2S program had a goal of training 80-100 students in the first year of its operation, and plans to duplicate the program in seven other counties. They are working on attracting major sponsors such as AARP and state grants. The objective is to invest in the fiber broadband project as well as the digital capabilities of seniors and the communities. The FCC awarded the S2S program its Digital Opportunity Equity Recognition (DOER) award. Rural Electric Co-ops originally were established to provide electricity to rural America, and Tri-Co Connections modernized goals are focused on effectively addressing the digital divide in rural communities.

Shereka Jackson asked if the seniors get to keep the computers they use in the training. Bill responded that the computers stay at the senior centers for future training, and there are about 15-20 computers at each center.

Steve Peters concluded that S2S is an awesome program for seniors. Bill Gerski's contact information is included in the registration information for this meeting in Appendix 2.

Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, April 5th at 7:30 am.

Steve Peters noted that he made the decision to extend the meetings by 15 minutes to 8:45 am if necessary, and he is working on a feature so that files placed in the Chat can be readily shared with everyone.

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

Appendix 1: Chat from Zoom

Karen Ziegler to Everyone (7:36 AM)
Welcome Sheila!

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (7:36 AM)
Welcome to the group

Karen Hewitt to Everyone (7:38 AM)
Welcome Darren! Love to learn more about your solutions. Karen kahewitt@vectorusa.com

Paul Ross to Everyone (7:38 AM)
Yes

Darren Bell to Everyone (7:39 AM)
Thank you Karen. I will follow up with you outside of the meeting

Wes Brownfield to Everyone (7:39 AM)
Friday does have its uses.

Ilana Lowery to Everyone (7:40 AM)
Agreed, Wes. Like for happy hour!

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:40 AM)
[file: Internet Society - Guide to Federal Broadband Opportunities in the US 02_21.pdf]
The Internet Society has just published a 52-page Guide to Federal Broadband Funding
Opportunities in the U.S. attached her and available at
https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2021/guide-to-broadband-funding-opportunities-
in-us/

Wes Brownfield to Everyone (7:44 AM)
So that means I have to remember by phone number every week.

Paul Ross to Everyone (7:44 AM)
You can autofill will depend on your browser settings.

Tracey Beal to Everyone (7:44 AM)
Maybe we can eventually decrease fields to just be name email, phone?

John Kelly to Everyone (7:45 AM)
Mine autofilled everything

Tracey Beal to Everyone (7:49 AM)
Building a marketing plan to get the word out would be great!

Wes Brownfield to Everyone (7:51 AM)
I'll be happy to post those links on ARSA and The Final Mile Project's websites.

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (7:52 AM)
Agree with Tracey on Marketing/Distribution strategy

Tracey Beal to Everyone (7:52 AM)
That would be great, Wes.

Melissa Boydston to Everyone (7:54 AM)

I'd like to see 211 connected with this information - will look to see how can have that conversation.

Ilana Lowery to Everyone (7:55 AM)
What about in cell and wifi provider bills?

Wes Brownfield to Everyone (7:56 AM)
At first this will be a supply side effort until we can generate demand.

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:56 AM)
I am here!

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (7:56 AM)
We suggested sharing this information through AZ Food Banks as well

Shereka Jackson to Everyone (7:56 AM)
I work for the City of Phoenix and can find out about our water bill

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:56 AM)
I was out Friday and struggled finding the new link. Sorry.

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (7:58 AM)
APS and SRP offer free printing for nonprofits

Jeffrey Sobotka to Everyone (8:00 AM)
https://www.azcommerce.com/broadband/arizona-broadband-workshops/

Jeffrey Sobotka to Everyone (8:00 AM)
https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (8:05 AM)
How about a Texting campaign? Example: Text "Free WIFI" to number "1234" for more information and resources, can be linked to a website(s) previously mentioned

Tracey Beal to Everyone (8:06 AM)
Good idea, Mauricio!

Cindy Hogan to Everyone (8:06 AM)
I would like to participate in marketing plan!

Tracey Beal to Everyone (8:07 AM)
Great, Cindy!

Lawrie Prickett to Everyone (8:07 AM)
what would help most in determining if there is redundancy in funding is to insist on a consistent naming structure of the applicants across all funding, like is used in Fassa, and other government platforms.

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (8:16 AM)
Arizona has over 150+ senior centers https://www.arizonaseniors.net/senior-centers/

Shereka Jackson to Everyone (8:20 AM)
Do the senior keep the computer at the end of the eight weeks?

Tracey Beal to Everyone (8:21 AM)
Love this program!

Tracy Rexroat to Everyone (8:22 AM)
can you put the contact info in the chat

Tracey Beal to Everyone (8:23 AM)
Another great way to collaborate to get devices to seniors in need

Joy Whiting to Everyone (8:26 AM)
Thank you!!!

Paul Ross to Everyone (8:26 AM)
Cheers Everyone have a great week.

Tracy Rexroat to Everyone (8:26 AM)
Thank you

marcelinoflores to Everyone (8:29 AM)
Marcelino.flores@pima.gov

From Mala Muralidharan to Everyone : USAC.org   Lifeline

Appendix 2: Registration Information for Attendees at Today's Task Force Meeting

First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	Email	Phone	Mobile
Tracey	Beal	School Connect	CEO	tracey@schoolconnectaz.org	6026706513	
Darren	Bell	Kajeet Inc	Solutions Engineer	dbell@kajeet.com		
Andrew	Bevington	PCSO	Director, Business & Education Patnerships	andrew.bevington@pima.gov	15207248213	15207248213
Melissa	Boydston	VSUW	Vice President Community Development	mboydston@vsuw.org		
Wes	Brownfield	Arizona Rural Schools Association	Executive Director	arsaschools@gmail.com	9288307182	928.830.7182
kirk	busch	BigData Southwest, Inc.	ceo	kirk.busch@bigdatasw.org	4803344997	
Gene	Carl	Cox Business	Sales Manager Public Sector	gene.carl@cox.com	16026904175	
Michael	Cohen	Independent	Research	mikey1145@yahoo.com	520-390-6647	520-390-6647

Jerry	Crow	Digital Forensics and Cloud Security	Cytersecurity Professional	jerry.crow@computer.org	4804515954	
marcelino	flores	pima county	special staff	marcelino.flores@pima.gov	5202728919	5202728919
Terence	Ford	Insight	Solutions Engineer	terence.ford@insight.com	4808899525	6025701540
Oris	Friesen	ATIC	Secretary	oris@cox.net	6026891084	6026891084
Bill	Gerski	Tri-Co Connections	Sr VP Business Development	catrush@tricoconnections.com	5706622175	5704478861
Rick	Gibson	Sustainability Partners	Senior Investor Partner	rgibson@s.partners	5206616797	5206616797
Henry	Goldberg	Arizona Telecommunications & Information Council	Vice Chair	hgold52@aol.com	480-609-9279	480-433-3536
Mark	Goldstein	International Research Center	President	markg@researchedge.com	602-470-0389	
Sheila	Harrison-Williams	Arizona School Boards Association	Executive Director	swilliams@azsba.org	602/254-1100	602/577-5011
Ian	Hathcock	SBI. dba Cellular One	Director of Sales	ihathcock@cellularoneaz.com	19282057713	19282057713
Holly	Henley	Arizona State Library	State Librarian	holly.henley@cox.net		
Karen	Hewitt	VectorUSA	SLED Account Manager	kahewitt@vectorusa.com	602-283-7446	480-720-3106
Cindy	Hogan	unitedwaytucson	Digital Equity Project Manager	chogan@unitedwaytucson.org		
Shereka	Jackson	Future Stars	ceo	futurestarsaz@hotmail.com	6232210902	6232210902
John	Kelly	Triadvocates LLC	Principal	john@triadvocates.com	16026390852	6026390852
Ryan	Kelly	Pima Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO	Field Director	rkelly@azaflcio.org	5202560995	
Glen	Lineberry	Arizona Student Opportunity Collaborative	Director	glen.lineberry@azsoc.org	4803293677	
Tarma	Liranzo	Engineered Tower Solutions	Program Manager	tarma.liranzo@ets-pllc.com		
Ilana	Lowery	Common Sense Media	Arizona Director	ilowery@commonsense.org	6233410177	6233410177
Lea	Marquez Peterson	Arizona Corporation Commission	Chairwoman	lmarquezpeterson@azcc.gov	5203313763	
Derek	Masseth	Sun Corridor Network	Executive Director	dmasseth@suncorridor.org		
Sophia	Mayberry	ADE	Project Manager	sophia.mayberry@azed.gov		
Clarence	McAllister	Fortis Engineers	President	cmcallister@fortisengineers.us		4802219002
Georgina	Monsalvo	Stand For Children	Organizing Director	gmonsalvo@stand.org	5202758278	5202758278
Mala	Muralidharan	AZ State Library	Administrator	mala@azlibrary.gov	480-221-5120	
Mauricio	Orozco	Care1st Health Plan	Community Engagement Manager	morozco@care1staz.com	4802823631	
Cody	Pedersen	Smith Bagley Inc. dba Cellular One	ICT Senior Business Consultant	cpedersen@cellularoneaz.com	19282053395	928-205-3395
Lawrie	Prickett	SmithBagley, Inc. DBA Cellular One of North East Arizona	Stare & Federal Program Specialist	Lprickett@cellularoneaz.com	9285370375x2413	9282051604
Tracy	Rexroat	AZ Dept of Education CTE	Program Specialist	tracy.rexroat@azed.gov	16023640322	6026498439
Paul	Ross	Phoenix College	AVP CIO	paul.ross@phoenixcollege.edu	6022857855	
Jeffrey	Sobotka	Arizona Commerce Authority	State Broadband Director	jeffs@azcommerce.com	6024320004	6024320004

Tom	Tardy	GingerSec	Owner	Tom@gingersec.com		
Joy	Whiting	Apache County School Superintendent	Apache County School Superintendent	joy.joywhiting@gmail.com	9283377539	
Karen	Ziegler	Karen Ziegler Consulting Services	owner	karen.ziegler@karenzieglerconsulting.com	6027992816	
Galaxy A51		Gazel	Coordinate	stevepeters4@gmail.com		520-321-1309