

Sign in Sheet
RPI Meeting - Date: 4/27/16

Name	County	Address	Email
Shirley Huff	Perry Co		
Mary Mathamakis	COPESD		
Hannah Swanson	NLEA		hannah@northwesternlakes.net
Katie Jensen	NLEA		katie@northwesternlakes.net
Cameron Brunt-Koch	North Central		ckoch@nemich.edu
Patty O'Donnell		MDOT North Region	odonnellp@micigan.gov
Rosale Myers	Rosamond		myersr@rosamondcounty.net
Doug Baum	City of Grayling		dbaum@cityofgrayling.org
Luan Mahank	Otago		luan.wabarak@kirland.edu
Natasia Allen	Troy/Albion		nallen@midwestsu.org
LORI FRIEND	Rose/Dg/Isco		lfriend@midwestsu.org
Erich Podjuszte	City of Grayling		zoning@cityofgrayling.org
David Kutzysz	MEDC		Kutzysz@Michigan.org
Lisa Wilson	Otago		lisa@tago.net
Lynne Murray	MEDC		murrayl1@midwestsu.org
Laura Budreau	NE MI		Budreau@networks.org
Dore DeLeon	N		dleon@newco.org
Niki Chaborkis	NE MI		chaborkis@networks.org
Mike Braunfield		Governor's office	brownfieldm2@nichigan.gov



Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

PO Box 457
Gaylord, MI 49734
989-705-3730

**Minutes
of
Region 3 Regional Prosperity Initiative Collaborative
April 27, 2016
University Center
Gaylord, MI**

Call to Order: Doug Baum called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Members Present: Mary Vratnina, Hannah Sanderson, Katie Jensen, Cameron Brunet-Koch, Patty O'Donnell, Rosalie Myers, Doug Baum, Luann Mabarak, Natasha Allen, Lori Friend, Erich Podjaske, David Kurtycz, Lisa McComb, Lydia Murray, Diane Rekowski, Laura Budreau, Dave Glenn, Niki Chamberlain, Mike Brownfield, Dave Nyberg, Donna LaCourt, Steve Milford, Rina Allen, Mandi Chasey, Tom Stephenson, Dan Leonard, Corey Utley, Andy Hayes and Lisa Bolen.

Staff: Denise Cline and Theresa Huff

Introductions: All attendees introduced themselves to group.

Roll Call: Done by sign-in sheet.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: L. Mabarak moved, supported by E. Podjaske to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2016 meeting. All ayes, motion carried.

Financial Report: D. Rekowski gave a brief update on financials. This is the first report for this budget. \$12,000 was spent this period. Digital Works was a large expenditure.

2016 RPI Project Update:

- A. Mini-grant Selection Committees/D. Glenn: The Mini-Grant proposals went out. Grants up to \$5,000 are available for Economic Development and up to \$10,000 for Marketing. May 27th is the deadline to submit the mini-grant applications. Will be developing a committee to screen the applications and make final selection. The first list will be put together in the next week or so. Would like to encourage more regional/collaborative applications versus individual applications. A request was made for volunteers to assist, R. Allen and L. Mabarak volunteered. June 24th is the final selection date.

- B. Winter Tourism Video/D. Cline: The Winter Tourism Video is funded by a CZM grant, including 6 counties and RPI. There are three parts, video, and a companion map guide and website work. She pulled up the video on YouTube, "Silence" Northeast Michigan Winter Promotional Film and the group was able to view it although it's still in draft form. It was well received by the group. It can be used during travel shows as well. The companion map will be in a similar format to the current birding map. D. Cline showed a "draft" of the map cover.
- C. Website Dashboard/D. Cline: Stats are at year end. Prosperity is on the collaborative website. Performance dash board includes such data as Economic and financial health, public safety and education and talent. The 2015 data has not been provided yet, but when it is, it'll be added to the website. D. Cline encourages everyone to take a few minutes to visit the website and preview all the information that is provides. The data provided on the website comes from various sources. Reminder: Prosperity numbers include all 11 counties.
- D. D. Rekowski provided and reviewed a handout for RPI Regional 3 "2015 Year-end Status of Strategies Related to RPI Goals". Stated overall it's been a good year.
- E. Talent update/N. Chamberlain and L. Budreau: There has been or will be 4 Career Fairs this year: Alpena, Cheboygan, Grayling and Gaylord. Career Expo's with high schools have been very successful. Talent Tours (been having them for 3 years): have been challenging this year due to low funds for bussing for the schools. May have a couple in Grayling, possibly more in the fall. They meet with high schools to discuss what industries they'd like to learn about. Then the tours are setup. There will be a Talent District Council meeting in May.
- F. Roundtable Discussion/D. Glenn: Discussed linkage between businesses and talent needs. What are the needs and focuses? The RPI plan was never thoroughly discussed and needs to be discussed more and get more input from the group. How do we do it? What can we pull together? What linkage? How do we connect? Need more small groups to get most ideas. What opportunities are out there? How do we train for those needs? How do we communicate and distribute the information? Schools? MI Works!? The group broke down into several small groups to brainstorm for 15 minutes to get a list of ideas.
1. Current Talent Needs: Computer literacy, robotics, engineering skills for various communication techniques, trade skills, people (bodies), skilled labor, soft skills, people that can pass a drug test, general education, bring in equipment to teach kids, encourage interest, equipment operators
 2. Needs for 5-15 years from now: Skilled Labor, health Care
 3. Who needs to be involved?: Schools, lack of life skills, engage parents and employers, EDC, higher education
 4. How to communicate needs from Businesses to schools/teachers?: Using technology to our benefit and stay connected, get on teacher in-service day Agendas, guidance counselors, bring in employers to share information, linkage (sustainable), use roll-up banners that can provide a lot of information and can be placed almost anywhere without taking up a lot of space.
 5. Other ideas: Bring in equipment such as calipers, fast track, alumni

Committee Member Updates:

Bylaws Committee/L. Mabarak: Working on final draft.

MI Works!: Won the appeal. On the Job Training (OJT) will be communicated. Will be training existing workers to move up in the field.

T. Stevenson: Alcona, Iosco done. Adding Frontier and Charter. ATT owns several strands of fiber-Merit. All communities to meet regarding build out. Connect America funds are \$12 million per year for broadband. FCC announced life line telephone to a broadband at \$9.25 subsidy per month to households that have kids on lunch program and seniors. All providers can offer to their customers. Charter merged with Time Warner.

D. Leonard: Rural Development is being enhanced. Low to moderate income-focus on building downtowns, \$7 million in funding available. This is the first of many. Community Development is being more particular. You must have an up to date Capital Improvement Plan, Master Plan, etc. They are hosting training in June. Since the beginning of the last meeting, MSHDA and the MEDC Collaborative Community Development have been combined. Every project will be evaluated on a first come first served basis. In Northern Michigan, \$40,000 doesn't go as far. Funding is now based on financial need. All NEM Housing commissioners have been met with to review changes. They encourage one on one, face to face meeting.

Public Comment:

D. Nyberg/Governor's office, based out of Marquette. Many changes are occurring with staff. Provides more people who can assist us. Looking for people to sit on boards and committees to provide input and ideas.

C. Utley/Governor's office, based out of Lansing. Encourages everyone to contact Governor's office to attend meetings, events.

M. Brownfield: Stated Governor remains committed to RPI and Economic Development. Prediction on RPI: the Governor will remain on board. See values in committees to keep informed and collaborate with legislature to share benefits.

D. Glenn: shared Mrs. Glee's has been selected for Main Street award, was selected one of 12. Is based out of Hillman. Will receive award in May. Have 40 plus employees now and has grown a lot in the past 2 years?

D. Cline: YouTube has had 90,000 hits on the video.

D. Rekowski: CEDs have been sent out.

Next Meeting Date: May 25, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.



Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

PO Box 457
Gaylord, MI 49734
989-705-3730

Region 3 Regional Prosperity Initiative Collaborative

April 27, 2016
2:00 – 4:00 pm
University Center
Gaylord, MI

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Members Present
- III. Minutes of Previous Meeting
- IV. Financial Report
- V. 2016 RPI Project Update
 - A. Mini-grant Selection Committees
 - B. Winter Tourism Video
 - C. Website Dashboard
 - D. Talent Update
- VI. Roundtable Discussion: Establishing a sustainable linkage between Business Talent Needs with Educational Institutions & Workforce Development.
- VII. Committee Member Updates
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Next Meeting Date
- X. Adjournment

CDC/RPI Meeting

Wed, Apr 27, 2016 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/695130517>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States : +1 (408) 650-3123

Access Code: 695-130-517



Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

PO Box 457
Gaylord, MI 49734
989-705-3730

Minutes
of
Region 3 Regional Prosperity Initiative Collaborative
February 24, 2016
University Center
Gaylord, MI

Call to Order: Doug Baum called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Members Present: Doug Baum, Diane Rekowski, Erich Podjaske, Lisa Bolen, Marv Pichla, Paul Chellberg, Tim Jenks, Luann Mabarak, Tom Stephenson, Ray LeClair, Patty O'Donnell, Niki Chamberlain, Rina Allen, Lisa McComb, Donna LaCourt, Bruno Wojcik, Rosalie Myers, Marisue Moreau. **Staff:** Denise Cline and Theresa Huff

Minutes of Previous Meeting: T. Jenks moved, supported by E. Podjaske to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. All ayes, motion carried.

RPI Financial Report: No report, just received grant.

D. Rekowski reviewed the mini-grant program for Training Scholarships. Originally the Training Scholarships specified the Digital Works Pilot for Cheboygan. There was a miscommunication and Digital Works was taken off the title and was then open to all training in region. Digital Works needs more funding to sustain it until the sustainability plan (working w/ State on existing training funds, fee per student and college integration) is put in place. Since the Center opened and graduated its first cohort in December, 6 people have jobs, 2nd cohort graduated and interviewing and 2 cohorts per week will be running in Feb/March due to demand. MEDC partially funded the start-up along with the Cheboygan Community Foundation. The Center will likely close on March 1, 2016 if funding isn't procured. Moved by L. McComb, seconded by R. LeClair to amend the mini-grant line item for Training to Digital Works. All ayes, motion carried.

Collaborative Structure:

Relationship to NEMCOG

D. Rekowski reviewed handout.

Mission & Vision Statement & Goals

D. Rekowski handed out a copy of the mission statement and reviewed it with the group. Needs to be updated in "focus" areas, Chamber, Aerospace, etc. It's outdated and parts are obsolete. D. Baum recommended a subcommittee comprised of D. Cline, R. Allen, N.

Chamberlain and E. Podjaske to review Statements and bring back recommendations to the Collaborative. They will plan to meeting in March and report back to the group in April.

Rules and By-Laws : Established subcommittee to report back to Collaborative: D. Rekowski, D. Baum and L. Mabarak.

2016 RPI Grant Update: D. Rekowski stated the contract was received and now ready to implement. Talent projects will be handled through the Talent District Career Council(TDCC) of the NE MI Consortium/MI Works! and updated by them at the Collaborative meetings.

Launching of Region 3's Collaborative Website: Denise Cline provided a presentation on the new Region 3 Collaborative website which consolidates the NE Consortium/MI Works! and NEMCOG's and RPI's into one site. The website can be found at "Discover Northeast Michigan.com once it is launched (Feb.26).

Committee Member Updates:

D. LaCourt: Announced the Special Crop grants. Grant application is open. Will keep Collaborative posted on Value Ag grants.

P. O'Donnell, MDOT: Public meeting on the State Long Range Plan being organized.

T. Stephenson, Connect MI: Kicking off Presque Isle Township/County Broadband Plan development. Next will be Alpena and Gaylord. Over 9 million in Connect America Funds (CAF) were acquired by providers within the NEMCOG Region for high-speed internet build-out.

VII. Public Comment: None

VIII. Next Meeting Date: March 23, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. just after EDC group meeting at noon.

IX. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.



Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

PO Box 457
Gaylord, MI 49734
989-705-3730

REVISED Minutes
of
Region 3 Regional Prosperity Initiative Collaborative
February 24, 2016
University Center
Gaylord, MI

Call to Order: Doug Baum called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Members Present: Doug Baum, Diane Rekowski, Erich Podjaske, Lisa Bolen, Marv Pichla, Paul Chellberg, Tim Jenks, Luann Mabarak, Tom Stephenson, Ray LeClair, Patty O'Donnell, Niki Chamberlain, Rina Allen, Lisa McComb, Donna LaCourt, Bruno Wojcik, Rosalie Myers, Marisue Moreau and Natasha Allen. **Staff:** Denise Cline and Theresa Huff

Minutes of Previous Meeting: T. Jenks moved, supported by E. Podjaske to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. All ayes, motion carried.

RPI Financial Report: No report, just received grant.

D. Rekowski reviewed the mini-grant program for Training Scholarships. Originally the Training Scholarships specified the Digital Works Pilot for Cheboygan. There was a miscommunication and Digital Works was taken off the title and was then open to all training in region. Digital Works needs more funding to sustain it until the sustainability plan (working w/ State on existing training funds, fee per student and college integration) is put in place. Since the Center opened and graduated its first cohort in December, 6 people have jobs, 2nd cohort graduated and interviewing and 2 cohorts per week will be running in Feb/March due to demand. MEDC partially funded the start-up along with the Cheboygan Community Foundation. The Center will likely close on March 1, 2016 if funding isn't procured. Moved by L. McComb, seconded by R. LeClair to amend the mini-grant line item for Training to Digital Works. All ayes, motion carried.

Collaborative Structure:

Relationship to NEMCOG

D. Rekowski reviewed handout.

Mission & Vision Statement & Goals

D. Rekowski handed out a copy of the mission statement and reviewed it with the group. Needs to be updated in "focus" areas, Chamber, Aerospace, etc. It's outdated and parts are obsolete. D. Baum recommended a subcommittee comprised of D. Cline, R. Allen, N.

Chamberlain and E. Podjaske to review Statements and bring back recommendations to the Collaborative. They will plan to meeting in March and report back to the group in April.

Rules and By-Laws : Established subcommittee to report back to Collaborative: D. Rekowski, D. Baum and L. Mabarak.

2016 RPI Grant Update: D. Rekowski stated the contract was received and now ready to implement. Talent projects will be handled through the Talent District Career Council(TDCC) of the NE MI Consortium/MI Works! and updated by them at the Collaborative meetings.

Launching of Region 3's Collaborative Website: Denise Cline provided a presentation on the new Region 3 Collaborative website which consolidates the NE Consortium/MI Works! and NEMCOG's and RPI's into one site. The website can be found at "Discover Northeast Michigan.com once it is launched (Feb.26).

Committee Member Updates:

D. LaCourt: Announced the Special Crop grants. Grant application is open. Will keep Collaborative posted on Value Ag grants.

P. O'Donnell, MDOT: Public meeting on the State Long Range Plan being organized.

T. Stephenson, Connect MI: Kicking off Presque Isle Township/County Broadband Plan development. Next will be Alpena and Gaylord. Over 9 million in Connect America Funds (CAF) were acquired by providers within the NEMCOG Region for high-speed internet build-out.

VII. Public Comment: None

VIII. Next Meeting Date: March 23, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. just after EDC group meeting at noon.

IX. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Theresa Huff

From: Natasha Allen
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2016 10:45 AM
To: thuff@nemcog.org
Subject: Re: RPI Meeting 4/27/16 & Minutes

I was in attendance at the last meeting via phone.

>>> Theresa Huff <thuff@nemcog.org> 4/15/2016 12:21 PM >>>

Good afternoon.

Attached, please find the Agenda for the next RPI meeting that will be held at the University Center in Gaylord on Wednesday 4/27/16 at 2:00 p.m. and the minutes of the previous meeting that was held on 2/24/16.

Theresa M. Huff

Theresa Huff, Administrative Assistant
Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)
80 Livingston Blvd., Suite U108
P.O. Box 457
Gaylord, MI 49734
(989)705-3730 Phone
(989)705-3729 Fax

RPI: Region 3

2015 Year-end Status of Strategies Related to RPI Goals



JOBS-TALENT

Goal 1: Increase number of people employed to 88,827 by 2019

Status: Year-end 2015: 75,116

Goal 2: 700 new business start-ups in 2015 and an additional 1,100 new business start-ups by 2019.

Status: Year-end 2015: 26

Goal 3: Decrease unemployment to 7.8% by 2019.

Status: Year-end 2015: 7.9

Goal 4: Increase per capita income to \$37,716 by 2019.

Status: Year-end 2015:

Goal 5: Decrease children living in poverty to 20% by 2019.

Status: Year-end 2015: Reduced by 1.5%

Related RPI Strategies helping to achieve goal:

- **Technology Training to Job Placement: Digital Works Pilot Site in Cheboygan**
Status: Leveraged MEDC funds with Foundation funds of \$55,000 + \$10,000 for start-up in October, with certifications and 6 newly employed by 12/31/15.
- **High-Speed Internet Access: Connect MI Broadband Plans and Monitoring Fiber Advancements**
Status: Broadband plans (aggregate demand) in development for Montmorency and Presque Isle Counties. Crawford, Otsego, Roscommon, Ogemaw counties, completed. Oscoda, Iosco initiated.

Completed Vertical Asset Inventory to assist ISP with build outs for service in rural areas. Will refine and put online in early 2016.
- **Create foundational support for New Start-ups & existing businesses: SCORE, Region 3 Website for Assistance/referral Center , Attraction strategy, Collaborative Development Council (CDC),**
Status: Score initiated in Region: Chapters started in Cheboygan, Gaylord/Grayling, Alpena. Roscommon/Ogemaw to complete in 2016. Lisa McComb to take lead in 2016.

Status: Collaborative Website: Created (Business Tab: where to go for help in Region). Launch in early 2016.

Status: Attraction Strategy: Materials (hard copies, web), Training, Meeting w/MEDC Attraction staff. Presentation developed for meeting with MEDC VP of Attraction. Meeting held.

Training: L. McComb attended Site Selector training- held briefing for CDC. MEDC will host Attraction training in 2016. Materials initiated per county. To be completed in early 2016.
- **Maker spaces at existing companies.**
Status: No action. Funding was not requested.
- **Establish A Talent District Career Council (TDCC): Responsible for RPI Talent Strategies**
Status: Completed
**Related Goal: Increase third grade reading proficiency to 75% BY 2019.*
Status:
- **Collaborative Development Council (CDC)**
Status: Monthly meeting to coordinate and collaborate on improving services, knowledge base in region. Quarterly invites state departments to meeting for networking and information sharing.

- Business to Talent Connection:** Sustainable Communication Process to ensure those in education and training are constantly apprised of Business/Industry talent needs –existing and projected.

Status: Contractor: Initiated “what Do You Need”. Priority for 2016, TDCC and Collaborative.
- Transit: Providing affordable transportation to work and post-secondary school/ training centers.**

Status: Governor Transit Project took precedence over RPI. Completed inventory of providers. Assisted with meetings held by Consultant. Participated in Statewide teleconference meetings and review of materials.
- Talent Trainings: Lumber Grading Certification**

Status: Held two trainings in region. Certified:
- Clusters: Tourism-Agriculture-Wood-Aerospace**

Status: Tourism: Regional group established: Brand/logo drafted. Added assets to “Up North Trail” website and’ US-23 Heritage Route” website. Held Discover US-23 Weekend with the following results:

Agriculture: Completed Feasibility for a regional Food Hub and assessed Local Foods in Region 3.

Wood Products: Hired Consultant (MEDC grant) to work with M-33 Corridor partners to increase wood product development capacity. Website to be completed in early 2016 highlighting assets and companies along M-33.

Aerospace: J. Klarich on behalf of Region 3 participates on statewide Aerospace Collaborative.

COMMUNITY: TALENT ATTRACTION- BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/RETENTION

Goals 1-5:

Status: See above

Goal 7: Increase total population in Region 3 to 216,000 by 2019.

Status: Year-end 2015: 205,403

Goal 8: Increase the population between the ages 25-44 from 39,515 to 44,500 in Region 3 by 2019 by targeted retention and attraction.

Status: Year-end 2015: no new data

Related RPI Strategies helping to achieve goal:

- **Create foundational support for New Start-ups & existing businesses: SCORE, Region 3 Website for Assistance/referral Center , Attraction strategy, Collaborative Development Council (CDC).**

Status: Score initiated in Region: Chapters started in Cheboygan, Gaylord/Grayling, Alpena. Roscommon/Ogemaw to complete in 2016. Lisa McComb to take lead in 2016.

Status: Collaborative Website: Created (Business Tab: where to go for help in Region). Launch in early 2016.

Status: Attraction Strategy: Materials (hard copies, web), Training, Meeting w/MEDC Attraction staff.

Presentation developed for meeting with MEDC VP of Attraction. Meeting held.

Training: L. McComb attended Site Selector training- held briefing for CDC. MEDC will host Attraction training in 2016. Materials initiated per county. To be completed in early 2016.

- **Create foundational supportive system for “Letting the World Know NE MI Exists”:** Provide Optimization on Regional Websites: Up North Trails Website, US-23 Website, NE Agricultural Website.

Status: Completed optimization.

- **Regional Placemaking: Strengthening the Quality of Place throughout the region to entice and retain talent and business development.**

Status: Umbrella regional Brand was completed and placed on Websites, etc.

Status: \$100,000 was procured from MSHDA and local Housing Commissions/municipalities for Regional Target Market Analysis (TMA). A Target Market Analysis was completed for all 11 counties.

Status: Trail-Town Signage: Prototype Trail sign completed. Installation in 2016. USDA and DNR funded.

Status: *Placemaking networking & Training sessions: Training was held. Regional Placemaking for using TMA's to be held in early 2016.*

MSU Extension Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities

April Newsletter
2016

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities



Do you have a great program, resource
or creative approach to assist
entrepreneurs?

*State-wide Conference in Port Huron (Oct 5-6, 2016)
recruiting program presenters.*

We are seeking proposals that will inform and assist community leaders from around the state in recognizing creative ways to encourage and support entrepreneurs back home, even young ones! This year's conference is in Port Huron, October 5-6, and speakers will receive a complimentary room and registration (includes meals) to this unique conference. Proposals are due in April. [Click here to download information and simple submittal form.](#) For more information contact Kay Cummings (cummin13@anr.msu.edu) or Micah Loucks (loucksmi@anr.msu.edu)



State-wide CEC Conference planning
continues for Port Huron Oct 5-6!

Consider forming a "team" and attending as a group.

Unique venues, fun networking events and plenty of program ideas,

tools and resources you can take back to your community have become the trademark of the annual state - wide Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) conference.

Now is the time to reserve the dates and get others in your community to do the same. Individuals can certainly attend, however we have learned that for maximum impact a "team" from your community is a great approach. Supporting entrepreneurs in your community is a "team sport" and every community has organizations that bring resources and expertise to the effort. [Check out this this handy CEC Power Point Presentation to share with others and get them excited to participate.](#)



"Connecting Entrepreneurial Community Boot Camp" program June 7-8, 2016 in Sault Ste Marie.

Conference details and registration information coming soon

Patterned after our successful state-wide conferences, this session will be a noon-noon style event with keynote speakers, breakout sessions and interesting networking opportunities. Mark your calendars now!

Program content will focus on the basics of creating an entrepreneurial support team in your community. Why do it... Who should be part of it... What tools and resources are available... and How this will help your community assist entrepreneurs. The first day of the conference will be in downtown Sault Ste Marie and the second day on the campus of Lake Superior State University.

Look for conference information and registration details soon.



Up-coming Webinars

Learn cool stuff from the comfort of your own computer!

"Entrepreneurs and Tourism in the Shared Economy"
(April 21, 4pm)

Join in a one-hour informational session on how the "sharing economy" is spawning entrepreneurs and reshaping travel & tourism. Come prepared to learn about several new concepts, share successful examples, discuss challenges and/or solutions, and network.

This one hour session will include PowerPoint slides and plenty of time for Q & A and discussion. The presenter/facilitator is Andy Northrop, MSU Extension Tourism Educator and a member of the State-wide MSU Extension CEC Team.

This program will be web-based. A good internet connection is required and participants must be able to view the facilitator's slides to grasp the concepts shared and participate. In order to do so you will need to participate via a computer. Microphone is required, but a webcam is not.

Participants will receive a link to the program after they register. Space is limited to 20 participants. To register for this FREE webinar on April 21, 4pm, go to: <http://events.anr.msu.edu/Tourism/>

"Local E-Teams - Best Practices Discussion" (May 24, 3pm)

Join this free, one hour "best practices discussion forum" intended for those communities that have a local entrepreneur support team. An important part of the "Connecting" aspect of the MSU Extension "Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities" program, this is an opportunity for participants to share ideas, successes, challenges etc. This is a discussion, so please come prepared to share ideas that your community team has implemented.

This will be a web-base "video chat" limited to 10 participants. You must have a good internet connection and a web-cam to participate (no phone call in options). We ask that multiple people from the same CEC team, simply participate from the same web-cam location.

The discussion will be facilitated by Andy Hayes, MSU Extension Economic Development Educator and Team Leader for the MSU Extension CEC Program.

If more than 10 wish to participate we will schedule additional sessions. Participants will receive a link to the program after they register. Space is limited to 10 participants. To register for this FREE "web discussion" session to be held May 24, 3pm, go to: <http://events.anr.msu.edu/LocalETeamDiscussion/>

Placemaking for Tourism (April 27 & 28, 1:30pm-3pm)

How to Attract New Visitors and Talent to your Region

Michigan communities face a number of challenges as they recover from the Great Recession. Many communities are challenged with restoring population and

attracting new talent. Yet Michigan attracts hundreds of millions of visitors to the state each year as tourists. Perhaps getting people to Michigan is not so difficult, but getting them to stay is the crux of the matter.

Register by April 25 at <http://events.anr.msu.edu/PlacemakingTourism>

Regular Registration: \$35; Master Citizen Planners; \$30

Questions? Contact Brad Neumann (neuman36@msu.edu) or Andy Northrop (northro5@msu.edu)



Never Underestimate the Importance of Entrepreneurs

We all either own a company
Or...
Work for someone who owns a company
Or...
Work for someone who taxes someone who owns a company
Or...
Work for someone who asks for charity from someone who owns a
company

Entrepreneurs- the Backbone of our Economy



For more information or to send questions/comments:
MSU Extension CEC Planning Team:

Andy Hayes-General Chr.
Kathy Jamieson
Mark Thomas
Frank Gublo
Andy Northrop
Kay Cummings
Micah Loucks

andy@northernlakes.net
jamies13@anr.msu.edu
mthomas@anr.msu.edu
gublofra@anr.msu.edu
northro5@anr.msu.edu
cummin13@anr.msu.edu
loucksmi@anr.msu.edu





FCC Lifeline Program Will Subsidize Broadband for Low-Income Households

March 31, 2016

Low-income consumers will soon be able to apply a \$9.25 per month discount to a qualifying home or mobile broadband subscription, through a broadband adoption program that could reach over 14 million American households without a broadband connection today.

Today, in a 3-2 vote, the [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC) voted to expand its Lifeline universal service program, which currently subsidizes voice telephone service for low-income households, to allow those households to use the program to lower the cost of broadband service.

The expansion to broadband will make the Lifeline program the largest federal broadband adoption program in history. The FCC established an annual budget for the Lifeline program at \$2.25 billion per year. Negotiations over the budget consumed the five Commissioners yesterday and today, until an effort to reach a unanimous decision on the program budget fell through this morning.

The [Lifeline program](#) was created in 1985, and since that time has only directly subsidized the provision of voice telephone service for eligible low-income households. Today, over 10% of American households (12.9 million) participate in the program for discounted dialtone or mobile voice service.

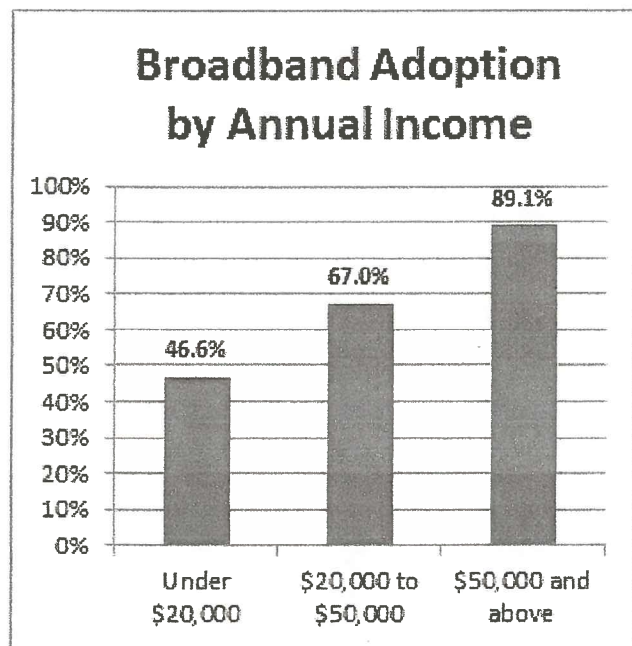
The full text of the FCC's decision has not been released. This Policy Brief summarizes the key points of the [FCC News Release](#) and oral statements by the Commissioners at the meeting.

The Low-Income Broadband Adoption Gap

According to the U.S. Census, 24.9% U.S. households do not subscribe to broadband service. In many cities and communities in the country, broadband adoption is far below that average. For example, San Juan, Puerto Rico, has a home broadband adoption rate of only 45%, and fewer than half of the households in Detroit (49%) subscribe.

The majority of households making less than \$20,000 per year do not subscribe to broadband service, compared to 89% of households that make more than \$50,000. Connected Nation research has shown that cost is the largest reason that low-income households do not purchase broadband service.

By comparison, there is virtually no "voice service adoption gap," with voice telephone service at near universal adoption (97.6%). Because of the federal Lifeline and parallel state funds, voice adoption is high even in economically challenged areas like Puerto Rico, with a 94.3% adoption rate. Even among households that make less than \$10,000 per year, over 90% have voice service.



Lifeline Broadband Could Reach 10% of the U.S. Population

The FCC estimates 14.2 million households, containing 34.4 million people, qualify for Lifeline and do not have a home or mobile broadband subscription today. This represents 10% of the population of the United States, and includes:

- 3.9 million households with children under 18,
- 6.4 million low-income seniors, and
- 1.3 million low-income veterans.

Altogether, the Lifeline broadband program could reach nearly a majority of Americans that do not adopt broadband today. Connected Nation and FCC staff research has shown that among price-conscious, non-adopting adults, a \$9.25/month discount could increase broadband adoption by 11.5%.

Expanding Lifeline to Broadband: The Details

The FCC action today would, for the first time, allow eligible low-income consumers to apply a \$9.25 per month Lifeline discount to qualifying broadband plans. In doing so, the FCC took actions to (1) streamline and centralize the process of determining which households are eligible, (2) define the type of services to which the discount could be applied, (3) encourage service providers to offer qualifying plans, and (4) set a program budget.

Household Income Eligibility. To receive the Lifeline discount today, a household must prove that it either participates in a set of federal or state income-based public assistance programs or that its annual household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty line. Currently, the household must provide supporting documentation to its local telephone or mobile voice service provider annually.

Out of concern that the current process is costly and offers opportunities for abuse, the FCC will streamline and centralize this income verification process. It will contract with an independent third-party firm to operate as a National Eligibility Verifier, which will manage applications and enrollments by households, similar to how many public assistance programs like Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families operate. That National Eligibility Verifier will work with federal public assistance programs that have electronic validation (like Veterans Pension, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to streamline the income verification process and notify providers of customer eligibility.

The FCC did not alter the underlying income threshold for the program (at or below 135% of the federal poverty level). Allowing individuals to demonstrate eligibility directly to the national verifier is particularly important in Puerto Rico, where, despite endemic poverty, federal public assistance programs like nutrition assistance and Medicaid have significantly lower income qualification thresholds than in the mainland.

Service Qualification. The FCC established a set of minimum service standards for the broadband and voice service to which Lifeline households can use the discount.

The following broadband services offered by participating providers will be eligible:

- 10 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload with a 150 GB per month data allowance for a fixed broadband service, such as cable, fiber, DSL, or fixed wireless.
- Mobile broadband service with a 500 MB per month 3G data allowance (increasing to 2 GB per month by December 2018).
- Mobile voice service plans that include at least 500 minutes/month, increasing to 1000 minutes/month in 2018.
- By 2021, Lifeline mobile voice plans will need to include mobile data service to remain eligible; support for mobile voice-only plans will start to decrease in 2019.

Equipment offered as part of a Lifeline broadband package must have Wi-Fi functionality with tethering. This would allow subscriber to use their Lifeline service as a “hot spot” for school-provided devices and other services.

The \$9.25/month discount can only be used once per month, so enrolled low-income households will need to choose which service best suits their connectivity needs. A provider does not have to offer all of these services to have its service packages qualify for the discount. For instance, a provider could focus on selling Wi-Fi enabled 3G or 4G “hot spots” to eligible low-income households, and those consumers could apply their \$9.25/month Lifeline discount to that purchase.

These minimum service standards have been among the most controversial aspects of the FCC’s action. FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler and Commissioner Mignon Clyburn had originally proposed to include unlimited voice minutes in Lifeline service packages beginning this December and would have quickly required mobile voice providers to bundle data packages with that voice service. Mobile providers argued that they would have been unable to offer Lifeline services to customers for the \$9.25/month subsidy level. The final compromise resulted in a more gradual transition of mobile Lifeline services to fully include broadband by 2021.

National Process for Broadband Provider Participation. The FCC also took steps today to make it easier for broadband service providers to participate in the program. The original, voice-centric Lifeline program generally relied upon state-licensed telephone companies, designated as “eligible telecommunications carriers” (ETCs), to offer Lifeline voice service. For providers offering Lifeline voice packages, that state-based ETC process will remain in place. However, for broadband service providers, the FCC created a process of certifying Lifeline Broadband Providers on a national basis.

The FCC created this new process in order to encourage as many broadband providers as possible to develop Lifeline service plans targeted at the low-income community. Entities like nonprofits and community organizations will be able to use this process to offer broadband service packages to the low-income communities they serve, hopefully enabling a wide range of low-cost broadband choices.

Many state public utility commissions and governors have strongly opposed the FCC’s creation of this national process, rather than rely on the current state-based ETC process.

Annual Budget. The FCC set an annual budget mechanism for the Lifeline program of \$2.25 billion, indexed to inflation. This budgeted amount is more than 30% higher than 2014 program outlays of \$1.63 billion. In dissents, Commissioners Pai and Michael O’Reilly sharply criticized negotiations among the five Commissioners over this budget, arguing that it should operate as a hard cap on program expenditures. Negotiations over the budget consumed the Commissioners overnight before the vote.

Next Steps: Implementation and Outreach

The FCC vote today will spark a flurry of activity over the next several months. The FCC will need to establish the National Eligibility Verification system, establish the national broadband certification process, and create a Digital Inclusion Plan for the program. The FCC will develop the Digital Inclusion Plan in collaboration with nonprofits and community organizations, to determine strategies that will help maximize the impact of the broadband Lifeline program.

For more information about these issues, as well as other broadband policy issues, please contact Connected Nation at policy@connectednation.org.

[Subscribe via RSS](#) to Connected Nation’s Policy Briefs.

