

Arkansas e-Link exists as Arkansas' answer to comprehensive community broadband improvements in hospitals, clinics, community colleges and a number of other participating community facilities throughout the state.

About the Project

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) was awarded \$102 million by the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) within the Department of Commerce to support a statewide \$128-million broadband infrastructure that will serve community institutions across Arkansas. As recipient of this award, the UAMS Center for Distance Health will expand, integrate, and enhance the capabilities of two major existing community-serving networks: the *Arkansas Telehealth Network* as overseen by Arkansas Telehealth Oversight and Management (ATOM), and the *Arkansas Research and Education Optical Network (ARE-ON)*. The Arkansas e-Link initiative will touch every county in Arkansas through its extensive partnership of healthcare, higher education, public safety, and research organizations that are united in their needs for improved bandwidth and broadband-enabled equipment to better serve their communities.

With 470+ statewide locations served, Arkansas e-Link will utilize increased bandwidth and new equipment to offer the platform for new and enhanced community services. As a product of this grant-funded initiative, the state's publicly supported community college students will be able to enroll in distance education courses in collaboration with the state's four-year universities, use fiber-grade Internet connections at computers on public college or university campuses, take or teach online courses and join in research or studies with other students and teachers across the state. The state's medical patients, medical providers and researchers will have increased accessibility to real-time clinical consultations with remote specialists, electronic medical record exchange, virtual research collaboration and distance education. From community colleges to first responders, Arkansas e-Link unifies a diverse group of community institutions to significantly improve the state's broadband-enabled services.

State-of-the-Project

In this, UAMS' second year of the three-year grant period, the project continues its coordination & deployment strategy phase:

- Program Managers disseminated site readiness assessments to IT contacts at each CAI in order to complete the final step in the deployment planning process, resulting in installation of 261 IAV units and 161 Public Access PCs.
- Static images were placed on 290 public access PCs prior to deployment to CAI that identifies the PCs as being a part of the BTOP funded Arkansas e-Link project. This desktop image also provides useful web links to assist citizens who may not be familiar with internet navigation.
- Procurement of eICU sole source video items/furniture was completed and delivered to CAI.
- Procurement and delivery of 68 telemedicine wireless devices to the HomeCare Association was accomplished enabling them to distribute this equipment to 13 home health agencies within the state serving Arkansas' home-bound population.
- Bids were awarded for leased facilities, hub connectivity appliances and managed services; and public safety Mobile Virtual Physician equipment impacting 305 CAI. Contracts for these awards are expected to be finalized next quarter.
- The bid was awarded and procurement finalized for clinical assessment tools/peripherals; subsequently, an order was placed for over 500 peripherals for attachment to clinical interactive video carts that will allow clinicians at CAI the ability to view and/or capture images that will aid in timely, accurate diagnoses.
- Program managers completed 389 visits to CAI sites, meeting executive level administrators, Information Technology (IT) and education staff at hospitals, community health centers, mental health clinics and libraries to retrieve signed Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs). To date, 98% of the MOAs have been processed. In addition to retrieval of MOAs, Program Managers conducted a baseline assessment of the CAI's knowledge, use, needs, perception/acceptance and vision of Telehealth that will be useful as the Arkansas e-Link team develops sustainability strategies.
- A dynamic re-design of the project web site was launched that introduces the "Arkansas e-Link" brand. This new web site (www.arkansaselink.com) is expected to improve stakeholder navigation and allow greater capabilities for the Arkansas e-Link team to quickly disseminate the BTOP project progress.

ARE-ON, the program's sub-recipient, reports these project accomplishments:

- IRUs: Contracted final route (Jonesboro to Pocahontas) bringing the total fiber miles contracted for to 690 miles; fiber engineering is completed for 13 of 17 routes; Construction is 99% complete for two routes; 66% complete for three routes and 33% complete for two routes.
- Construction: Lateral fiber-complete for Little Rock West project; complete for Pine Bluff and Morrilton projects except for final splicing; construction of conduit in progress in Little Rock (Center), Hope, Forrest City and Malvern.
- Huts: Hut installed in Morrilton; hut dirt work completed for West Memphis, Forrest City, Harrison, Mountain Home, Melbourne, Newport, Malvern, Hope, Pine Bluff and Fayetteville; hut manufacturing initiated for Pine Bluff, Hope, Harrison, Malvern and Forrest City.

Key partner organizations:

Arkansas Association of Public Universities
Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges
Arkansas Center for Health Improvement
Arkansas Children's Hospital
Arkansas Department of Health
Arkansas Department of Human Services
Arkansas Department of Information Systems
Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care
Arkansas State Highway Commission
Arkansas Telehealth Oversight & Management (ATOM)
Arkansas Hospital Association
Arkansas Research and Education Optical Network (ARE-ON)
Arkansas State Library
Baptist Health
Community Health Centers of Arkansas
Connect Arkansas
Delta Regional Authority
HomeCare Association of Arkansas
Mental Health Council of Arkansas
Methodist Family Health
Metropolitan Emergency Medical System
Pathfinder, Inc.
St. Vincent Health System
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

By August 2013, all 470+ sites will function on an "integrated network" fusing the Arkansas Telehealth Network as overseen by ATOM and the ARE-ON, benefiting from the following BTOP deliverables:

- Substantial bandwidth upgrades
- Significant network expansion
- Interactive video equipment additions
- Public computers for internet access

Fully available after grant funding ends, these deliverables will provide the tools needed to enable participation in activities that once were available only in certain areas of Arkansas.



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For more information, to view map of participating community anchor institutions, and/or request promotional materials such as a Microsoft PowerPoint slideshow, please visit our web site: www.arkansaselink.com

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is intended as general information only and does not carry the force of legal opinion. The UAMS Center for Distance Health is providing this information as a public service. This information and related materials are presented to give the public access to information about the grant award known as the BTOP project. You should be aware that while we try to keep the information timely and accurate, there will often be a delay between official publications of the materials and the modification of these pages. Therefore, we make no express or implied guarantees. We will make every effort to keep this information current and to correct errors brought to our attention.