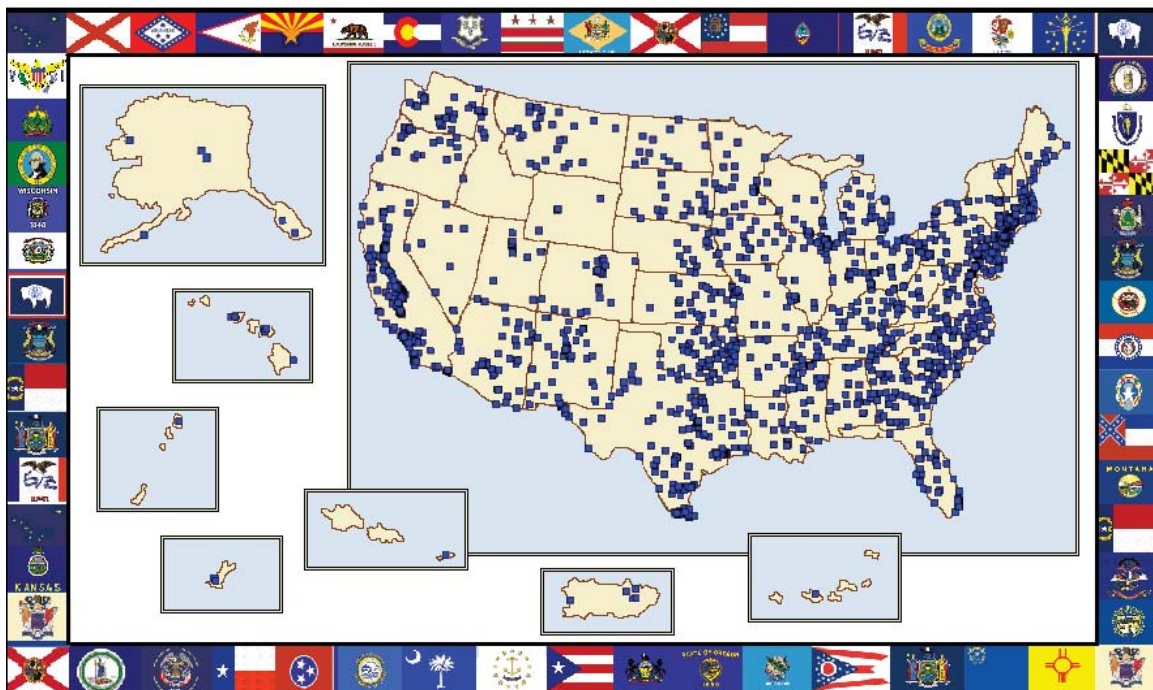




Focusing on Success

Examples of How the Universal Service Fund Is Helping Improve Connectivity across the Country



January 2008

Focusing on Success & USAC's Site Visit Outreach Initiative

USAC's Site Visit Outreach Initiative

As part of its expanded outreach initiative, the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) has contracted BearingPoint, Inc. to conduct site visits to Universal Service Fund beneficiaries.

These visits to schools, libraries, rural health care providers and eligible telecommunications carriers across the country serve a number of purposes, including:

- Soliciting suggestions on ways for USAC to improve its outreach and education efforts.
- Providing USAC with knowledge of how Universal Service Fund support is being used.
- Identifying "best practices" to publicize for use by other program participants.
- Educating beneficiaries on program rules and application procedures.
- Tracking and resolving outstanding or repetitive issues raised by beneficiaries.
- Verifying the receipt and function of invoiced products and services.
- Ensuring that program funds are being used in compliance with regulatory requirements.

USAC began this initiative in January 2005. To date, over 2,400 site visits have been conducted to eligible beneficiaries.

This report includes examples of how Universal Service Fund support is used by beneficiaries across the country. It is not a comprehensive report of all sites visited under the Site Visit Outreach Initiative. Included in this version are approximately 140 success stories of how the Universal Service Fund is helping to improve connectivity in the United States.

For more information on the Site Visit Outreach Initiative:

- Visit our website
www.usac.org/about/resource-room/site-visits
- Contact us
(202) 776-0200

This report is updated quarterly, as USAC continues to receive positive feedback from program participants and creative suggestions for improving the administration of the Universal Service Fund. Comprehensive listings of site visit recipients by state are available upon request. Please direct all requests to the Site Visit Outreach Initiative at USACSiteVisits@bearingpoint.com.

Feedback on the Universal Service Fund

- 92% of Schools and Libraries applicants stated that Universal Service Fund support is of "great" benefit to their organizations.
- 78% of High Cost carriers indicated that there are customers the company would be unable to serve without Universal Service Fund support.
- 42% of Health Care Providers indicated that Universal Service Fund support enabled them to upgrade their organization's telecommunications services.

Focusing on Success & USAC's Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Background

The goals of Universal Service, as mandated by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, are:

- To promote the availability of quality services at just, reasonable and affordable rates.
- To increase access to advanced telecommunications services throughout the nation.
- To advance the availability of such services to all consumers, including those in low income, rural, insular and high cost areas, at rates that are reasonable comparable to those charged in urban areas.

The Universal Service Fund was created by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1997 to meet these goals. In addition, the 1996 Act states that all providers of telecommunications services should contribute to federal Universal Service in some equitable and nondiscriminatory manner, there should be specific, predictable and sufficient Federal and State mechanisms to preserve and advance Universal Service; all schools, classrooms, health care providers and libraries should, generally, have access to advanced telecommunications services; and finally, that the Federal-State Joint Board and the FCC should determine those other principles that, consistent with the 1996 Act, are necessary to protect the public interest.

Focusing on Success

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Alabama



Alabama and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	37
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	3
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Alabama

Lafayette, AL – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed his district to upgrade its network infrastructure five years earlier than would otherwise have been possible. The representative noted that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the district would be unable to provide its students with connectivity to support their educational needs. In addition, the representative stated, “The new computers purchased throughout the school district would not exist in the absence of the [Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program] because that money would...have been spent on upgrading the network infrastructure.”

The district representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the district would be unable to meet state mandates to join the Alabama distance learning network or adhere to requirements associated with tracking student information. According to the district representative, the State of Alabama mandated that every high school in the state become a member of Alabama’s distance learning network by the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year. The representative indicated that the broadband connection purchased with Universal Service Funds qualified the district for grants supporting the purchase of distance learning equipment. In addition, the representative stated, “The Alabama Department of Education requires every school district in Alabama to use Software Technology, Inc., a web-based student information system,” to record grades, attendance, health information, lessons plans, and professional development information. The representative added that the State of Alabama is not assisting schools in implementing the student information system, and noted that the district relies upon the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to meet this state requirement.

Florence, AL – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helps her district “to keep pace with the evolution of technology.” The representative explained, “Due to budgetary constraints, it would be difficult to provide even the most basic services, such as telephony services and Internet access, without [the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program].” The representative noted that the State of Alabama has begun a state-wide distance learning initiative titled Access, and will require that all high schools provide students with the ability to participate in classes offered via Access. The representative added that all Alabama high schools will be required to implement Access by August of 2009, and that the State of Alabama is not providing districts with financial support to establish distance learning networks. The representative added that the district’s broadband connection, which was purchased with Universal Service Funds, allowed the district to meet the network infrastructure requirements associated with the state-mandated distance learning initiative.



Alaska



Alaska and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	7
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	6

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Alaska

Kodiak, AK – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) in Kodiak stated that Universal Service Fund support “revolutionized” his HCP’s telehealth services. The representative stated that the Internet access and telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds allowed the rural health care clinics associated with the HCP to increase their connection speed from a 33 Kbps dial-up connection to a 128 Kbps satellite connection. The representative added that the services purchased with Universal Service Funds also helped the clinics make effective use of telehealth carts purchased by the telemedicine network. The representative stated that the HCP and its associated clinics use store and forward technology to manage patients’ medical records, and added that specialty services, such as dermatology, are largely conducted via telehealth.

Dillingham, AK – Rural Health Care

A Health Care Provider (HCP) representative stated that in the absence of technology purchased with Universal Service Funds, his HCP’s medivac budget “would have to be quadrupled,” and added that the air ambulance emergency service costs “\$8,000.00 to \$10,000.00 every time it flies.” The representative added that the HCP would also be unable to provide teleradiology services and would have to send X-rays to radiologists via the US Postal Service. The representative stated that without the telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds, reading an X-ray would take days or weeks, rather than hours, and would impact the level of care the HCP provides to its patients. The representative added that the health care facilities would also have to increase the number of staff members to compensate for decreased access to “physicians and mid-level [medical professionals]” currently available through the HCP’s telemedicine program.

Kotzebue, AK – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Internet access in remote areas of Alaska is far more expensive than in most of the nation, and that without Universal Service Fund support, his district would be unable to afford to provide high-speed Internet access to its students and staff members. The schools in the district are located in small villages in extremely remote areas, and it is not feasible for each community to maintain a large library of recent publications. The network purchased with Universal Service Funds provides students, teachers, and community members with access to publications from around the world. In addition, many schools in the district are accessible only by airplane, which makes it cost-prohibitive to provide in-person training to staff members. The distance learning technology purchased with Universal Service Funds makes cost-effective teacher training possible.



Arizona



Arizona and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	91
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	7

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Arizona

Phoenix, AZ – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that since becoming employed by his district three years ago, he has witnessed a “turnaround of network infrastructure” as a result of Universal Service Fund support. The representative explained that several schools within the district would lack access to the Internet and the district’s network, and would be “forced to use typewriters” in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The representative noted that he applied for Universal Service Fund support for a major technology upgrade, which helped move the district “into the twenty-first century.” The representative added, “The school’s computer network was a car with no wheels. Now it is a car with wheels, and it is flying down the information superhighway.”

Ft. Defiance, AZ – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) in Ft. Defiance stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled her HCP to employ videoconferencing services within its health network. The representative stated that, in one instance, a patient at the HCP was able to receive consultation from physicians in Phoenix, AZ. The representative indicated that the videoconferencing services purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled the patient to receive medical attention without traveling to Phoenix, AZ, and allowed the patient’s family to be present at the HCP. The representative added that the HCP’s medical staff has also used the videoconferencing services for medical education and teleradiology.

Page, AZ – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped his district implement a robust data and voice network. The network infrastructure and Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allow teachers, staff members, and students to access educational resources previously unavailable in the rural area in which the district is located. The representative stated that prior to receiving Universal Service Fund support, the district’s schools were like “18th century schoolhouse[s].” The representative added that Universal Service Fund support allowed the district to install a district-wide telephony system and workstations with high-speed Internet access in each of its classrooms, greatly enhancing student achievement and safety. In addition, the district representative indicated that the equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds helped the district adhere to guidelines associated with the No Child Left Behind Act because the district has used technology to conduct periodic assessments and manage student information.



Arkansas



Arkansas and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	29
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Arkansas

Little Rock, AR – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving Little Rock stated, "There is no question that the [Lifeline and Link Up] discounts [available through the Universal Service Fund Low Income program] really help people maintain good old-fashioned copper lines in their house and help people stay in touch with the outside world." The representative stated that every customer who calls to initiate service is told about the Universal Service Fund Low Income program. In addition, customer service representatives are trained to make callers aware of the availability of Lifeline support. The representative stated that the company has also experienced increased success in enrolling customers in the Lifeline program since partnering with the Illinois Governor's Office to advertise the availability of the support through the National School Lunch Program enrollment process.

Forrest City, AR – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Internet access and network equipment purchased with Universal Service Funds enable his district's students to conduct online research. The representative noted that students had to go to the library to access the Internet prior to the receipt of Universal Service Fund support, but that access to the Internet is now available in all of the district's classrooms. The representative indicated that educational resources such as United Streaming, edHelper, and BrainPop would not be available to the district without the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds. The representative added that the district would also lack network equipment such as switches and servers, and that the network infrastructure would "suffer greatly." The district aligns its technology goals with State of Arkansas standards, and the district must meet these standards to receive Arkansas Department of Education approval on its goals.

Hartman, AR – Schools and Libraries

A district administrator stated that Universal Service Fund support provided her district with technology that allows teachers to access more educational resources and helps parents gain insight into students' educational achievements. The administrator indicated that the district conducts web-based assessments, and noted that parents can view students' progress online. In addition, the administrator stated that the district uses the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds for professional development, noting that teachers have access to a variety of web-based resources to continue their education. A district representative added that the district would not be able to afford its Local Area Network (LAN) without Universal Service Fund support and in turn, would be unable to offer Internet access in its classrooms.



California



California and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	241
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	3
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in California

Santa Rosa, CA – Schools and Libraries

A consultant stated that Universal Service Fund support helped a school district he represents to increase its Internet connection speed from 56 Kbps to a T1 line. The consultant added that the State of California offers unlimited bandwidth at the county office, but prior to Universal Service Fund support, the district lacked the bandwidth required to reach the county office. A district representative stated that Internet access services purchased with Universal Service Funds enable the district to offer enhanced educational courses such as culinary arts, agriculture, and automotive mechanics to students. The representative stated, "Students use [the Internet access] to find recipes, control plasma cutters that cut wood, and [learn] auto repair; it is all computers now." The applicant stated that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled the district to create a student information system that meets state reporting requirements. The applicant added that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the district would "still be on dial-up and would not have Internet access in the classrooms."

Falls River Mills, CA – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that her HCP's high-speed Internet connection, which was purchased with Universal Service Funds, "allows [the hospital's patients] access to specialist care in a timely fashion." The representative explained, "For example, [a patient] could wait six weeks for an in-person visit with a dermatologist," but noted that the HCP's telemedicine program, which uses the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds, allows patients to "see a dermatologist within one to two weeks." The representative added, "For someone with skin cancer, time is of the essence. We have no bus system or mass transit [in the area], and most of our patients are elderly. To ask them to drive to [the nearest large hospital] would be an undue hardship."

EI Nido, CA – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that his district receives Universal Service Fund support for Internet access and internal connections. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support "brought [the district] into the 20th century." The representative explained, "We are [located in] a rural community, and [the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program] helps keep us in touch with the world." The representative stated that if the district did not receive Universal Service Fund support, its schools "would have less technology available." The representative stated, "We would not have a modern telephone system or a modern [Local Area Network (LAN)], which would mean far less efficient administration."



Colorado



Colorado and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	34
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Colorado

Colorado City, CO – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier serving Colorado City stated that his company used Universal Service Fund support to deploy fiber-to-the-premises, which requires a large initial investment but is cost effective over the life of the investment. The representative stated that the deployment of local loop requires most of the company's Universal Service Fund support because of the low population density and rocky terrain in its Study Area. In addition, the representative stated that one of the company's exchanges is served through an antiquated radio network that is nearing the end of its life cycle. The representative stated that the company plans to use Universal Service Fund support to upgrade the network serving this exchange, and noted that the company would be unable to serve the 170 access lines over 900 square miles that comprise the exchange in the absence of Universal Service Fund support.

Center, CO – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed her district to redirect funding toward the purchase of updated technology for students and teachers. A district official added that the district is in the process of implementing a pilot program at its high school, which consists of issuing laptops to students in the hope of eliminating all textbooks from the school. The official added that students will be able to conduct all research online and submit assignments via email as part of this initiative. The official explained that the equipment purchased with Universal Service Funds helped the district build a network infrastructure capable of sustaining the laptop initiative. In addition, the representative noted that as a parent, she noticed that her children are more willing to complete their assignments and more interested in studying as a result of computer use in the classroom.

Montrose, CO – Schools and Libraries

A district representative indicated that her district received Universal Service Fund support for fiber optic cabling that facilitates network connectivity and the deployment of Internet access to all of its classrooms. The representative stated that the district would be limited to the use of a T1 Internet connection in the absence of the Universal Service Fund. The representative indicated that the high-speed Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds provides teachers and students in the district with more efficient access to web-based educational resources and learning opportunities. The representative added that she believes that the improved access to online educational resources has contributed to students' increased interest in learning.



Connecticut



Connecticut and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	31
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Connecticut

Waterbury, CT – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped his district upgrade its technology, noting that the level of technology would not be comparable to that of wealthier school districts in the State of Connecticut if Universal Service Fund support was unavailable. The representative added that in the absence of the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program, the district would have several decentralized networks, rather than the Wide Area Network (WAN) that currently connects its schools. The representative added that teachers and staff members from the district’s thirty member schools use the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to participate in meetings via videoconferencing.

Bridgeport, CT – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support allowed his district to build a network infrastructure. The representative stated, “I have worked in school districts for over twenty years, and this is the poorest community I have worked in.” The representative added that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the district “wouldn’t have any network infrastructure. At best, we’d have dial-up Internet service.” The representative indicated that periodic online practice tests for exams related to the No Child Left Behind Act are currently administered at the high school level and that the district plans to expand online testing to all schools. The representative stated that the practice of conducting “tests between the tests” would not be offered in the absence of Universal Service Fund support.

A teacher from the school district indicated that the Harcourt Online Reading Program allows students to access supplemental reading materials that help them develop their reading and comprehension skills, and that the Internet helps her demonstrate concepts that would otherwise be difficult to teach. In addition, the representative indicated that the district was recognized as one of five finalists for a \$1 million prize that is awarded annually to the urban school district showing the top overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing gaps for poor and minority groups. The representative noted that without the network infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds, the district would not have been a finalist for the award.



Delaware



Delaware and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	4
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Delaware

Wilmington, DE – Schools and Libraries

A library official stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed his library to redirect funding previously spent on telecommunications services toward the purchase of new computers and additional library resources, including books, newspapers, and periodicals. In addition, the official noted that the redirected funding enabled the library to expand its hours of operation and compensate staff members who work additional hours. The library official stated that the basic telephony services purchased with Universal Service Funds provide patrons with access to library resources. The library official explained that patrons now have the ability to renew library resources over the telephone, as well as online. The official noted that patrons use the library's fax machine "at least eight times a day."

Bridgeville, DE – Schools and Libraries

A library representative stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled her library to redirect funding previously spent on telecommunications services toward the purchase of computers, books, and supplies, including ink cartridges. The library representative stated that she believes that the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program is "certainly a big benefit for a small library," as it has allowed the library to "acquire extra services for [its] patrons."



District of Columbia



The District of Columbia and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	12
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in the District of Columbia

Washington, DC – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a school in Washington, DC indicated that her school would not be able to afford the same level of connectivity in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The representative explained that Universal Service Fund support for Internet access and internal connections allows the school to access DC Stars, a web-based student information system that public schools in the District of Columbia use to manage student data. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support also helped the school qualify for grants from Starbucks and the Washington Post. The representative stated that the grant from the Washington Post was a “garden grant,” which the school received as a result of the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds. The representative stated that the students used the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to complete a web-based form and survey, and to electronically submit artwork as part of the application for the garden grant.

Washington, DC – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed his school “to develop a model of education that is more individualized to students’ needs.” The representative indicated that the school is actively working to “identify new programs and software” in order to reach the school’s “full potential,” and noted that the student population the school serves differs from that of traditional schools, which presents educational challenges. The representative noted that the non-traditional enrollment makes the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act challenging. The Internet connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds provides access to web-based resources which, along with the ability to make “data-driven decisions,” is helping the school work toward the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. The representative noted that a school goal related to the No Child Left Behind Act is to “meet safe harbor” by reducing “the percentage of non-proficient students by ten percent per year.” An administrator indicated that the school uses the network infrastructure and Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to meet the No Child Left Behind Act requirements, and that the school offers web-based remedial programs in math and reading.



Florida



Florida and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	47
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	2

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Florida

Pensacola, FL – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that the impact of Universal Service Fund support at his district is “huge” and that staff members “can’t do without it.” The representative added that if the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program “ever goes away, we [would] have huge problems in the United States for our public education system.” The representative stated that the district participates in a state-wide application for Internet access, and that the network “backbone” of the “entire Kindergarten through grade twelve system” in the State of Florida is “funded primarily by the [Universal Service Fund].” The representative stated that the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program is “ubiquitous in Florida,” and participation is an implicit part of many other grants. The representative indicated that the district found that it is most successful in obtaining grants when it can demonstrate “federal, state, community, and business involvement,” and that if these sources are used in a “coordinated way, [the application] appears more attractive.”

Santa Rosa Beach, FL – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that the receipt of Universal Service Fund support allows his HCP to redirect funding from its budget to “reinvest capital in other technologies and community programs.” The representative explained that the health network developed a “Stroke Telemedicine Initiative,” which enables stroke specialists in Pensacola to evaluate patients at the HCP and other health care facilities around the State of Florida. The representative indicated that the health network uses telemedicine technology to “immediately evaluate stroke patients and determine if they need to be transported to the Pensacola facility [for urgent treatment].” Additionally, the representative indicated that the health network has begun a “Digital X-ray Initiative,” which allows physicians in Pensacola to read the X-rays of patients from rural facilities in Florida that do not have radiologists on staff.

Ocala, FL – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support is the “foundation of how [his district’s] infrastructure was created.” The representative added that the district is a “technology-driven” district that continues to invest in technology for its students. The representative stated that the district would not be able to function at its current level in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The representative stated that the district “standardizes” the technology in all of its schools and would need to reduce the number of computers in each classroom in the absence of Universal Service Fund support.



Georgia



Georgia and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	67
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	3

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Georgia

Waycross, GA – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that Universal Service Fund support helped facilities within her health network provide staff training. The representative stated that the network covers an area approximately the size of New Hampshire and travel to training sessions is both time-intensive and expensive. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled the network to conduct training sessions via videoconferencing, and noted that the network conducted sixty staff development sessions between January 2007 and April 2007. In addition, the representative stated that Universal Service Fund support for telehealth services enabled the HCP to provide increased specialty services. The representative stated that many clinics lack the resources to employ full-time staff, and added that telehealth services enable those clinics to provide services via videoconferencing. The HCP has developed a nutrition education program within the Women, Infants, and Children clinic and provides breast-feeding mothers with access to lactation consultants. Telehealth services also allow the physician and nurse practitioner who oversee five HIV/AIDS clinics throughout the network to be more readily available to patients.

Milledgeville, GA – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier serving Milledgeville stated that her carrier's Study Area is a remote and rural area of Georgia with nearly double the national average of individuals with incomes below poverty level. The representative stated that the primary industry in the carrier's Study Area is kaolin mining. The chemicals used to process kaolin cause the carrier's loop plant to corrode and deteriorate. The carrier's representative stated that the company uses Universal Service Fund support to complete the frequent and extensive loop plant maintenance necessitated by the kaolin processing. The representative estimated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, customers would see a rate increase of more than 100 percent.

Waycross, GA – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) in Waycross stated that the receipt of Universal Service Fund support enabled her HCP to "provide additional [health care] services to clients without access to transportation." The representative indicated that some patients with mental or psychological issues might forego necessary treatment because they cannot afford transportation to the HCP's facilities. The representative added that Universal Service Fund support "also saves the State [of Georgia] money" because the HCP is able to reach and treat mental health patients "before they need to be institutionalized."



Guam



Guam and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	3
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Story in Guam

Hagatna, GU – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the schools in his district “would not be wired and there would be no interconnectivity between [them].” The representative added that each of the district’s thirty-seven schools and three Non-Instructional Facilities now have Internet access as a result of Universal Service Fund support. The representative noted that approximately ninety-five to one hundred percent of the district’s classrooms have Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds.

The representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support enabled the district to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act because it allowed the school system to adopt an instructional methodology that is helping to improve students’ reading scores. A teacher concurred, and stated that the school where she teaches is now better equipped to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act because educational resources are more readily available to students. The teacher stated, “I don’t know how I’d go back [to teaching without the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds], it’s such a wonderful resource, and a lot of our students don’t have [Internet access] at home, so this is the only place they can use it.” The representative noted that each school within the district has reporting requirements related to the No Child Left Behind Act and that, as a result of Universal Service Fund support, the schools are increasingly able to meet these requirements and to monitor student progress.



Hawaii



Hawaii and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	11
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Hawaii

Honolulu, HI – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company provides telephone service to customers who are widely dispersed in small pockets on Hawaiian Home Lands throughout the State of Hawaii. The representative stated that the company serves customers on five islands, each of which presents unique geographical, geological, and political challenges. For example, the Island of Maui requires the company to employ open trenching and has sandy terrain, making it difficult to stabilize loop plant in the ground. In contrast, the “Big Island” of Hawaii requires directional boring and the topography is characterized by hardened lava flows and hard “blue rock.” The blue rock has slowed the company’s boring to a pace of approximately sixteen feet per day.

In addition to these issues, the company must also work with the Burial Councils to respect the spiritual beliefs of native Hawaiians. Years ago, Hawaiians buried their ancestors in shallow graves near the ocean. The company must have archaeologists present and take special precautions when digging to ensure that ancestral remains are not disturbed. The representative stated that the company used a significant portion of its Universal Service Fund support to build out and maintain its network infrastructure to sufficiently serve Hawaiian Home Lands. The representative indicated that the company also plans to use Universal Service Fund support to serve new customers on Hawaiian Home Lands; the company anticipates acquiring 7,000 new customers over the next several years. The representative noted that without Universal Service Fund support, the company would have to raise its rates to a level that would be unaffordable for all of its existing customers.

Honolulu, HI – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a school in Honolulu stated that Universal Service Fund support helped his school meet educational requirements. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support has provided “more exposure to instrumental resources,” and that, currently, “everyone is doing something on computers.” The representative noted that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allows students to make use of online applications. In addition, teachers use the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to administer exams, design the school’s curriculum, and submit reports to the State of Hawaii. The representative noted that quarterly reports, financial plans, and student services reports are all submitted online, and that the teachers are receiving training on the creation of online report cards. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support has also been “instrumental” in the school’s safety program, which relies upon the school’s telephony system to provide immediate access to the administrative office. The representative stated that public schools in Hawaii “wouldn’t have a network like we have now” in the absence of Universal Service Fund support.



Idaho



Idaho and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	14
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Idaho

American Falls, ID – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed her district to install telephone handsets in all of its classrooms. The representative stated that the telephony services purchased with Universal Service Funds helped teachers improve communication with parents of district students. The representative stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the district would only have telephones and Internet access available in district offices. The representative stated that the decrease in availability would “severely limit” emergency communications, as well as access to web-based resources. The representative also noted that without Universal Service Fund support, the district would not be able to afford Internet access for the 250 computers available in the district. Universal Service Fund support also helped the district implement web-based assessments and utilize web-based programs that allow for tracking of student performance and compliance with state and federal requirements.

Cottonwood, ID – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) in Cottonwood stated that Universal Service Fund support provided her HCP with the opportunity to improve Internet access between its facilities. In addition, the HCP has been able to create programs supporting Internet-based teleradiology and an Electronic Medical Records (EMR) exchange. The representative stated, “The FCC does not get many thank you notes, but they should get one for [the Universal Service Fund Rural Health Care program].”

Desmet, ID – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped his school establish a reliable telecommunications infrastructure. In addition, the representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped the school maintain its equipment and cover the costs associated with its telephony services. The representative noted that the equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds provide the backbone for all of the school’s administrative and educational efforts. The representative stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the school “would be way, way behind in terms of technology.” The representative added that the equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds allow the school to provide students with access to network-based educational applications, which help the students meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and the State of Idaho’s testing requirements.



Illinois



Illinois and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	60
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	3
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	4

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Illinois

Mattoon, IL – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company currently provides advanced voice, data, and video services to over 250,000 residential and business customers. The representative noted that the company faces numerous challenges to providing service in its Illinois Study Area. Much of the Study Area is comprised of farmland; right of way issues that arise with local farmers often require the company to use less direct routes for its plan, which results in longer loops. The company also incurs significant costs associated with reimbursing these farmers for crops damaged during plant installation. The representative stated that the weather in central Illinois also presents challenges for the company. The Study Area averages 123 days of freezing weather and is impacted by numerous tornadoes in the spring and summer months. The representative noted that approximately twenty percent of the company's loop plant is aerial, leaving it susceptible to the elements. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allows the company to install new loop plant and maintain current quality of service levels, while serving remote customers the company would not otherwise be able to reach.

Mount Vernon, IL – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed his HCP to upgrade its telecommunications circuits to T1 data lines for the transfer of Electronic Medical Records (EMRs). The representative explained, "We couldn't provide the EMR system to our remote [health care] clinics without [the T1 data lines purchased with Universal Service Funds]." The representative added that the HCP uses its EMR system "every day, every hour, every minute" at its remote health care clinics.

Chicago, IL – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a school in Chicago stated that Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allows her school to provide its teachers and students with educational resources. The representative stated that teachers use the Internet to locate "formats and ideas" for their lesson plans. In addition, students use educational web-based resources, including FunBrain, to reinforce information presented during lessons. The representative stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, "it would be [cost] prohibitive to acquire [Internet access] in classrooms for teachers and students," and noted that Internet access would most likely be limited to the school's administrative office.



Indiana



Indiana and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	32
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	4
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Indiana

East Chicago, IN – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helps her district provide fast, reliable Internet access to its teachers and students. The representative stated that teachers are able to utilize more “web-based online instructional tools” than with the connectivity provided prior to the receipt of Universal Service Fund support. Additionally, the representative stated that teachers are able to use the Internet as a data gathering resource for classroom materials. The representative noted that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled the district to meet state education requirements both administratively and academically. The representative stated that administrators are now able to comply with the online reporting of grades, attendance, and student information, and added that students are able to participate in online state-mandated testing.

West Lafayette, IN – Schools and Libraries

A consultant stated that the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program helped an education center he represents to offer affordable wireless high-speed Internet access to its member school districts. The consultant indicated that the center’s member districts offer live video streaming and virtual classrooms to students using the high-speed Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds. The consultant noted that “[Universal Service Fund support] is money for kids!” The consultant stated that the education center would not be able to offer live video streaming or distance learning in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The consultant stated that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds provides the education center and teachers in its member school districts with the ability to obtain supplemental training resources. The consultant indicated that these resources help teachers meet the educational standards and requirements set by the Indiana Department of Education.

Richmond, IN – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a school in Richmond stated, “School budgets get smaller and smaller each year, and the more [the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program] supports connectivity, the more end user technology and resources can be provided to the classroom.” The representative stated, “By leveraging the benefits associated with [Universal Service Fund support], the [district] can provide quality end user technology in the classroom. If [Universal Service Fund support] was unavailable, the backbone of the network infrastructure would not be able to be maintained, and refreshing the workstations in the classroom would not occur as often as needed.”



Iowa



Iowa and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	30
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	9
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Iowa

Dubois, IA – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company serves a large geographic area, and noted that its three largest population centers are separated by as many as thirty-five miles. The representative stated that the ground in his company's Study Area is made up of a combination of sand, clay, and lava rock, which makes it difficult for the company to bury its loop plant. In addition, the representative stated that the company's loop plant is aging and needs to be replaced. The representative explained that some of the equipment currently in service is in excess of thirty years old. The representative stated that the company plans to use Universal Service Fund support to overcome some of the challenges to providing service and replace its aging infrastructure. The representative estimated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, residential rates in the carrier's Study Area would increase by approximately 100 percent.

Van Horne, IA – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company currently offers local, long distance, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), wireless, and cable services to its customers. The company currently serves approximately 550 access lines. The representative stated that the plant in the company's Study Area is currently 100 percent copper-fed, and that the company struggles to provide reliable broadband service to customers located in the remote portions of its Study Area. The representative stated that the company plans to use Universal Service Fund support to deploy fiber in its Study Area, in order to improve the quality of broadband service provided to remote customers, which will require upgrades to its switch and central office equipment. The representative noted that if Universal Service Fund support was not available, the company would likely be unable to provide any type of service to customers located in these remote areas.

Miles, IA – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company anticipates using future Universal Service Fund support to expand its effort to provide service to customers who live in areas with rough terrain. The representative noted that what appears to be a 100-foot drop to a customer's house can require up to a two-mile extension to navigate rocky terrain in the carrier's Study Area. In addition, the representative stated that when offering service and maintaining loop plant require trenching, "the cost usually doubles or even triples." The representative stated that customers would likely be charged rates approximately three and a half times the carrier's current rates in the absence of Universal Service Fund support.



Kansas



Kansas and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	37
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	5
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Kansas

Osborne, KS – Schools and Libraries

A school district administrator stated that his district's Interactive Television (ITV) service allows students to enroll in courses that its schools would not be able to offer in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The administrator noted that the ITV service would be cost prohibitive for the district if it was not supported by the Universal Service Fund. The administrator added that the district's teachers are able to continue their professional development by taking virtual learning classes that are offered through the ITV service. In addition, a consultant to the district indicated that the receipt of Universal Service Fund support allows the district to redirect funding to facilitate the upgrade of technology equipment. The administrator added that the equipment upgrades at the district allow students to "compete with a global society."

Meade, KS – Schools and Libraries

A consortium representative stated that Universal Service Fund support for telecommunications services allows member school districts to offer distance learning courses to their students. The representative indicated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the courses that are offered via distance learning would not be available. The representative explained that the member districts lack the financial resources required to keep pace with technological developments or hire teachers to teach all subjects. The representative noted that Universal Service Fund support helps these school districts provide their students with access to technology, and stated that in the absence of these resources, students "would suffer." A representative from one of the consortium's member school districts indicated that the distance learning classes that are offered as a result of Universal Service Fund support help students meet curriculum requirements established by the State of Kansas.

Columbus, KS – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds helped his district enhance its classroom activities. The representative stated that the district uses the Internet to support its credit recovery program. Students participate in this program during in-school suspension or when they enroll in classes after the beginning of the academic year, and make use of A+ Learning while obtaining credit in subjects such as Biology and Chemistry. The representative noted that the district also uses the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to submit grades and attendance information to state educational agencies electronically.



Kentucky



Kentucky and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	44
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	2

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Kentucky

Louisville, KY – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving Louisville stated that some recipients of Low Income Universal Service Fund support have stories that “would make you cry.” The representative noted that her company serves an elderly woman who lives by herself. This woman explained to a company employee that in order to continue to afford telephone service in the absence of Lifeline support, she would likely have to significantly reduce the amount of food that she purchases each month. The representative stated that the company advertises the availability of Universal Service Fund support in bill inserts, and added that customer service representatives make callers aware of the availability of support. The representative noted that there is a marked increase in the number of new Lifeline subscribers in the thirty day period following the mailing of informational bill inserts.

Madisonville, KY – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support played a significant financial role in her district’s ability to provide connectivity. The representative stated that her district recently received Universal Service Fund support for internal connections projects at five of its schools, and noted, “We don’t have the kind of funds to do [these technology] projects without [Universal Service Fund support].” The representative indicated that the district receives Universal Service Fund support for telecommunications services and fiber connectivity among district sites, which provides high-speed Internet access to the district. The representative stated that the district “would not have fiber” and “would have T1 line connections to schools” in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The applicant added that the district was also able to place a telephone “in every classroom,” which was “pretty major.”

Flemingsburg, KY – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a school district in Flemingsburg stated that fiber optic cabling purchased with Universal Service Funds helped her district increase its bandwidth and utilize online educational resources. The representative stated that the use of Headsprout, a web-based reading program, improved the reading skills of Kindergarteners in the district “a grade and a half above the [average] level.” The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support also enables the district to utilize additional educational resources, including United Streaming, PLATO, Novel Credit Recovery programs, and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. The representative added that prior to receiving Universal Service Fund support for fiber connections, the district’s Internet access would “time-out,” which discouraged teachers from using online educational resources.



Louisiana



Louisiana and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	22
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Louisiana

Benton, LA – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that prior to the creation of a Wide Area Network (WAN), which was supported by the Universal Service Fund, his district had poor Internet connectivity and “massive bottlenecks.” The representative stated that the district, with the aid of the WAN, is now able to accommodate the “Internet needs” of its students. The representative stated that students now have access to educational resources such as United Streaming, Accelerated Reader, Accelerated Math, and Read 180. The representative noted that the district would be “a few years behind its current technology” in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The representative stated that the district “would have had to dig a little deeper for funds or delay implementation for a few years” without Universal Service Fund support.

Metairie, LA – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving Metairie stated that Low Income Universal Service Fund support is very important to her company’s customers. The representative explained that Low Income Universal Service Fund support has played an important role in helping the customers afford telephone service in the post-Hurricane Katrina environment. The representative stated that the money that the customers save through Lifeline discounts allows them to purchase small luxuries, such as cable television, which help to improve the overall morale of a “devastated” city. The representative stated that the company’s public relations team identifies community leaders in low income neighborhoods, and then works with these leaders to disseminate information on the Lifeline program. This effort is undertaken in conjunction with advertising in more traditional media, such as billboards, bill inserts, and direct mailings.

Ville Platte, LA – Schools and Libraries

A school district official stated that her district received Universal Service Fund support for a district-wide cabling project that improved the network connectivity in its classrooms. The official stated that prior to the cabling project, each classroom relied upon one wireline drop, but that Universal Service Fund support allowed the district to install four wireline drops in each of its classrooms. The representative noted that the district could not have achieved its current level of network connectivity in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The official stated that the increased number of wireline drops is helping the district meet a goal set by the State of Louisiana to establish a one-to-five computer-to-student ratio. The district also relies upon its increased connectivity to support students’ use of web-based resources, such as United Streaming and Moodle.



Maine



Maine and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	23
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Maine

South Portland, ME – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving South Portland stated that Low Income Universal Service Fund support helps low income individuals afford more advanced services, such as DSL services. The representative stated that, as broadband becomes a more important part of everyday life, Lifeline support helps households, especially those with children, to close the digital divide. The representative’s company includes a bill insert describing the Lifeline program in each customer’s bill, posts information about the program on its website, and advertises the availability of Low Income Universal Service Fund support in three local newspapers. In addition, the company works with interested state social service agencies to identify individuals who are eligible for Lifeline support, ensuring that these agencies reach out to eligible individuals with information on the benefits and application process associated with receiving support.

Portland, ME – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that his school would not be able to afford its distance learning systems without Universal Service Fund support. In addition, the representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support allows the school to redirect funding formerly spent on telecommunications services toward the purchase of computers. The representative noted that fewer computers would be available to students and teachers in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The representative stated that the school is “heavily” involved with the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and utilizes the organization’s web-based assessments, which measure academic growth and improvement. The representative noted that the school uses the Internet connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds to access the NWEA’s assessments.

Hinckley, ME – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that his school would not have an advanced infrastructure for telecommunications services without Universal Service Fund support. The representative indicated that the school purchased copper wiring with Universal Service Funds for a campus-wide Private Branch Exchange (PBX) telephony system, and added that the school’s campus is a large facility that requires an advanced telecommunications system. Universal Service Fund support enabled the school to upgrade its telephony system years earlier than would have otherwise been possible. The representative also stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed the district to redirect funds to purchase educational resources that “help students’ language skills, editing skills, and thought processing skills, and provide a greater point of focus on the work they produce.”



Maryland



Maryland and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	12
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Maryland

Centreville, MD – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allows his district to redirect funding formerly spent on telecommunications services toward the purchase of additional educational resources. The representative stated that the amount of money the district received as a reimbursement associated with a recent funding year “accounted for approximately one third of the district’s technology budget.” The representative indicated that the district uses the reimbursements from the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program for technology-related purchases, and tries “to apply [them] to infrastructure improvements as much as possible.” The representative added that the district’s Technology Plan includes a goal of replacing twenty-five percent of classroom computers in all schools every five years, which was made possible as a result of its enhanced technology budget. The representative stated that the enhanced budget also allowed the district to increase its bandwidth, which he considers the biggest improvement the district has made as a result of Universal Service Fund support. The representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support is making a curricular impact and helps the district meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. The representative added that the funds help “right down to the classroom level.” The representative noted that the district purchased computers for classrooms serving special needs students with the redirected funds, and that these computers are capable of supporting educational applications and other software used by the district.

Baltimore, MD – Schools and Libraries

A representative from an educational organization in Maryland stated that his organization operates schools in Baltimore, Annapolis, and Chillum that serve students with behavior problems that prevent them from participating in mainstream educational settings. The representative stated that despite the severity of the emotional and mental disorders that the students are facing, the schools maintain a seventy percent graduation rate, which is twenty-three percentage points higher than the national average for similar schools. In addition, the representative stated that the schools “have a network infrastructure that is ten years ahead of what it would be without Universal Service Fund support.” The representative explained that Universal Service Fund support enabled the schools to redirect funding toward the purchase of technology that supports improved instruction, including SmartBoards. A teacher from one of the organization’s member schools stated that the technology available in the classrooms has helped students to become more engaged during lessons and reduced the time needed to correct behavior problems. The teacher added that students in her classes absorb educational material more effectively when it is presented in conjunction with the use of technology, rather than simply relying upon books. The teacher added that her students have recently shown improvement in online tests, and that this improvement may be associated with the use of technology made possible by the Universal Service Fund.



Massachusetts



Massachusetts and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	34
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Massachusetts

Lowell, MA – Schools and Libraries

A district administrator stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed his district to enhance its network infrastructure. The administrator stated that the district plans to upgrade nine of its internal networks over the course of the next two years. The administrator stated that the district “could not accomplish nine network upgrades with local dollars in this time frame.” The administrator added, “The [district] relies on [Universal Service Fund support] to keep the network infrastructure up and running.” The administrator explained that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education has had “several difficult budget years,” and indicated that as a result of budget cuts, school districts have “scrutinized” budgets, particularly for “any non-personnel items.” The administrator indicated that as a result of the budget cuts, the district would be unable to “fund technology at a high-functioning level and maintain its people” in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The applicant added that Universal Service Fund support has helped the district “to keep [its] teachers employed.”

Lawrence, MA – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a school district in Lawrence stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled his district to upgrade its telephony system, providing voicemail capabilities to all teachers and administrators. The representative added that prior to upgrading the telephony system, teachers and administrators relied on Post-It notes to document messages. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support also enabled the district to upgrade its network to a speed of 100 Mbps, and noted that fewer educational resources would be available to students in the absence of this network connectivity. The representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support for Internet access allows the district to provide web-based educational resources to its teachers and students, and noted that the district is also able to utilize PowerSchool, PLATO Learning, and United Streaming. The representative indicated that the district has noticed an increase in student participation when United Streaming, a digital video service, is used in the classroom. The district also uses the Internet connectivity supported by the Universal Service Fund to provide students with access to preparatory resources for the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments. The NWEA MAP assessments are state-aligned computerized adaptive evaluations that provide information about student achievement and growth. The NWEA’s resources allow students to participate in exams, and provide educators with results within twenty-four hours that enable them to direct classroom instruction toward student weaknesses. The representative added that the district is able to provide at least three Internet-ready computers per classroom as a result of its participation in the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program.



Michigan



Michigan and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	61
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	2

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Michigan

Newberry, MI – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) in Newberry stated that telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds are helping her HCP plan and execute the installation of a clinical practical management system. The representative explained that the system “will perform all functions, including payroll, human resources, Electronic Medical Records (EMRs), patient indexing, scheduling, and consumer eligibility.” The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support “provides a cost effective way” to finance the Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN) infrastructure necessary to support the activities performed by the clinical practical management system.

Inkster, MI – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that technology infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds helped schools in his district become “Schools of Choice” in the State of Michigan. The representative added that the district’s student enrollment has increased by fifty percent “in the last two years” from approximately 1,200 to 2,400 students. The representative explained, “one-third of the new student population [at the district] has transferred from Detroit city schools.” The applicant stated that he believes that its advanced technology directly contributed to the district’s recent growth. The representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the district “would have a lack of [network] infrastructure” and “couldn’t deliver services to [its] classrooms as efficiently.” The representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support enabled the district to establish “digital classrooms for online learning.” The district also launched a dual enrollment program, in which “students can graduate high school with an Associates degree.” The representative stated that 200 students are currently participating in the dual enrollment program.

Sault Ste Marie, MI – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that her HCP uses telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds to conduct daily committee and program meetings via videoconferencing. The representative stated that the videoconferencing services allow HCP employees to review medical charts together while located at different remote sites, and to participate in monthly training sessions. The representative indicated that HCP staff members must complete “required trainings” in areas such as “safety, cultural diversity, and [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)] compliance,” and that the telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds allow them to do so.



Minnesota



Minnesota and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	30
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	4
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	2

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Minnesota

Alexandria, MN – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company currently serves approximately 705,000 customers throughout fifteen states. The representative stated that the company's Washington Study Area is mountainous and most towns are located in valleys, limiting the effective range of cellular towers to two or three miles. Many of the cellular towers can only be reached by foot, all-terrain vehicle, or helicopter and often lack electrical service, requiring the company to install generators or use alternative energy sources. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support contributes to the company's ability to build new cellular towers in response to increased customer demand. In addition, the company plans to use Universal Service Fund support to add channels to existing towers, install microwave transmitters, and upgrade its switching facilities to meet its goal of providing landline-quality service to all of its wireless customers. The representative noted that the company would likely have to deactivate cellular towers in remote areas if Universal Service Fund support was no longer available.

La Sueur, MN – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) in La Sueur stated that her HCP receives Universal Service Fund support for a T1 circuit that is used specifically for teleradiology services. The representative stated that the HCP is located in a rural area approximately sixty miles from Minneapolis and cannot afford to hire its own radiologists. The representative stated that the teleradiology program allows doctors and nurses at the HCP to instantly transmit images from Computed Tomography (CT) scans, emergency X-rays, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans, ultrasounds, and electrocardiograms (EKGs) to a radiology office in Minneapolis, where the images can be quickly interpreted. The representative stated that the telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds allow the HCP to immediately diagnose emergency situations and help the hospital's staff to provide the proper treatment quickly.

Minneapolis, MN – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a library system described the impact of Universal Service Fund support on member libraries, noting that the State of Minnesota has received between \$19 and \$22 million in Universal Service Fund support for eligible libraries throughout the state. The representative stated that the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program is "part of the state infrastructure; it helps keep the lights on." The representative noted that state funding provided in the absence of Universal Service Fund support would not be adequate to finance her library system.



Mississippi



Mississippi and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	38
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Mississippi

Pascagoula, MS – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) indicated that Universal Service Fund support helped his HCP develop its Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system and “build redundancy into [its] plans because [the Mississippi Gulf Coast is] such a hurricane-prone area.” The representative explained that the HCP “developed two fiber loops [in its network] separate from each other for reliability and survivability during storms and hurricanes.” The representative stated, “During Hurricane Katrina, [the HCP] never lost [its] computer system. We’re probably the only hospital [system] on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that can say that.”

Tunica, MS – Schools and Libraries

A school district official stated that broadband connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled her district to offer foreign language courses via a distance learning network. The official added that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, students would not be able to participate in foreign language classes. The official stated that the broadband connection allows staff members to access the Mississippi Department of Education’s Office of Leadership and Professional Development, which is instrumental in the professional development of teachers in the district. The school district official stated that the State of Mississippi requires high school students to pass state-mandated exams to graduate. The official added that the Internet connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds enables students to access practice tests and provides teachers with resources to assess students’ scores, identify weaknesses, and create Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) when necessary.

Houlka, MS – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that the State of Mississippi would not have a reliable, well-developed network infrastructure in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The official stated that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds helps her district support a program called “Follow the Leader,” which provides the district with access to My Skills Tutor, a web-based application that delivers individualized student instruction. The official noted that students also use the program to take Advanced Placement courses that are not offered by the district. The representative added that the district used Universal Service Fund support for other projects including cabling facilities and opening a new high school. The official noted that the district “would not be where we are” in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, and that, “for a small district, most people are very surprised to see what we have.”



Missouri



Missouri and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	50
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	4
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Missouri

Seneca, MO – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company is located in southwestern Missouri, in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains. The company incurs between \$3 and \$4 million annually in costs related to outside plant equipment because the rough terrain within its Study Area contains large deposits of lead and zinc that require boring and rock sawing. In addition, because of the high elevation of southwestern Missouri, the company experiences lightning damage to its plant equipment. The representative stated that the company will continue to use Universal Service Fund support to install and maintain new loop plant, install improved switching capabilities, and upgrade its remotes. The representative noted that without Universal Service Fund support, the company would be forced to raise its local service rates to an amount that some existing customers could not afford.

Charleston, MO – Schools and Libraries

A school district administrator stated that without Universal Service Fund support, his “little district” would be “out of luck.” The administrator indicated that the district has wireless connectivity and a cabling infrastructure as a result of Universal Service Fund support, and stated that there is “no way to do it effectively without [Universal Service Fund support].” The administrator stated that the district was able to meet its goal of “moving technology to the classrooms” with the wiring and network infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds. The administrator stated that the district has approximately 1,130 students and 800 Internet connections in 100 classrooms. The administrator indicated that when the district is reviewed for accreditation purposes by the State of Missouri, “its technology program gets outstanding ratings, [which] wouldn’t be possible without [the] connectivity and infrastructure [supported by the Universal Service Fund].”

Breckenridge, MO – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company currently offers local and long distance telephone service, as well as Internet and cable television to customers in its Study Area. The representative stated that the company is currently using Universal Service Fund support to build and deploy fiber optic cable fed through digital loop carrier cabinets throughout its Study Area. The representative noted that this process is made more difficult by the fact that many communities in the company’s Study Area are built on rock bluffs where it is arduous to trench through rocks and costly to install and maintain cabling plant. The representative stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the company would most likely be unable to continue as a business.



Montana



Montana and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	29
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	5
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Montana

Lame Deer, MT – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that his district centralized its network, effectively delivered a network-based curriculum, and provided record management applications to its schools following the receipt of Universal Service Fund support. The representative noted that Universal Service Fund support also allowed the district to pursue more individualized instruction through the use of web-based and network-based educational software. The representative stated that the district is able to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act because of the network-based assessments made available by the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds.

Whitewater, MT – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that his district would not be able to afford “any” of its current services in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The representative stated, “For a small school district like [ours], the [Universal Service Fund] is very helpful.” The representative explained that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds helped the district qualify for a grant to support the purchase of SmartBoards. The representative also stated that the requirements of the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program lay the foundation for schools and libraries to apply for additional grants. The representative explained that the program requirement that entities create Technology Plans helps schools to plan purchases and avoid “spontaneous or last minute” decisions.

Heart Butte, MT – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative indicated that his district is located in a very rural part of Montana, and that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds provides a “virtual lifeline” from the district to the rest of the world. The representative stated that the district uses the bandwidth purchased with Universal Service Funds to conduct videoconferences with other school districts, as well as with elected officials in Montana. The Internet also supports the use of online educational resources, professional development, and online testing. A teacher indicated that Universal Service Fund support enabled his students to participate in cultural exchanges with school districts in the State of New York and in Washington, DC via videoconference. The teacher noted that Universal Service Fund support allowed him to share his ideas and information regarding the tribe’s Indian cultural heritage with other educators via email.



Nebraska



Nebraska and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	24
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	5
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	2

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Nebraska

Gibbon, NE – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company operates twenty exchanges that serve approximately 8,000 access lines in a 3,500 square mile Study Area. The representative stated that the company's Study Area is sparsely populated, with many customers living in remote areas served by loops as long as 127,000 feet. The representative also stated that it is common for the company's Study Area to lose power during ice storms. The representative stated that, in order to keep Digital Loop Carriers (DLCs) functional during the power outages, technicians travel to remote DLCs and deliver emergency generators to locations where battery back-ups have been exhausted. In January of 2007, many remote areas were without power for two to three weeks and, during that time, DLC generators required over 2,000 gallons of fuel. The representative noted that there are significant expenses associated with maintaining a service fleet that gets poor gas mileage and incurs significant wear and tear from driving between 15,000 and 20,000 miles per year. The representative stated that the company uses the majority of its Universal Service Fund support to maintain its loop plant and provide new loop plant to remote portions of its Study Area.

Hemingford, NE – Schools and Libraries

A district administrator stated that his district relies upon a distance learning system purchased with Universal Service Funds. The administrator stated that it is difficult to hire teachers, especially those certified in foreign languages, mathematics, science, and music in the remote area of western Nebraska where the district is located. The distance learning system purchased with Universal Service Funds allows the twenty school districts that participate in the Western Nebraska Distance Learning Consortium to offer classes that would otherwise be unavailable.

Omaha, NE – Schools and Libraries

A consortium official stated that Universal Service Fund support helped her consortium redirect funds to purchase additional technology-related equipment and services. The official stated that the consortium purchased computers and SmartBoards with funding redirected in this manner. The official stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the consortium would rely upon dial-up Internet access instead of the Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) connections currently in place. The official added that the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program "provides students with the technological visual aids that are so necessary in the classroom these days." The official indicated that the equipment purchased with the Universal Service Funds helps the consortium meet state and federal requirements, including the No Child Left Behind Act.



Nevada



Nevada and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	10
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Nevada

Fallon, NV – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that the main highway in his company's Study Area, US Highway 50, is known as the "loneliest highway in the US," due to its low traffic volume. The representative stated that even though traffic volume is low, the people who use the highway expect to have access to reliable telephone service along the entire length of the road. In addition, the representative noted that many of the carrier's cellular towers are located in remote areas where the local power company is unable to provide electricity. As a result, the carrier must find alternative methods to power its cellular towers, which can be challenging. The representative stated that the carrier would be unable to maintain cellular towers in the most remote portions of its Study Area in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, and noted that the company would have to raise its rates by approximately twenty percent to offset the loss of this funding source.

Yerington, NV – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds have "revolutionized" her school's operations. The representative stated, "If you ever want to see how [technology] can change a kid's life, this is the place to [visit]. We couldn't do all this without [Universal Service Fund support]." The representative indicated that the school is a residential campus for adjudicated and special needs students, and that many of the students are originally from outside the State of Nevada. The representative stated that the Internet access, network connectivity, and telephony services purchased with Universal Service Funds help the school offer students an up-to-date curriculum and improved educational services. The representative added that as a result of the improved connectivity, the school has increased communication with parents, parole officers, and therapists.

The representative indicated that the school has a robust network infrastructure and high-speed Internet access and that, prior to receiving Universal Service Fund support, the school lacked network connectivity. The representative stated that the school uses the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds to support videoconferencing, which enables students to remain at the school while meeting legal and therapeutic obligations. The representative noted that this arrangement allows the students to spend more time in the classroom than was previously possible. The representative stated that test scores at the school have improved, and that students' aptitude and interest in the education process have increased as a result of the equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds. The representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the school would be at least four to five years behind its current technology implementation, and added that she believes that fewer students would graduate from the program in the absence of the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds.



New Hampshire



New Hampshire and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	7
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in New Hampshire

Tilton, NH – Schools and Libraries

A school administrator stated that prior to his school's participation in the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program, "no network infrastructure existed." The administrator added that Universal Service Fund support "helped create a fiber backboned network infrastructure." The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support for telephony system upgrades facilitated improved communication throughout the school. The telephony system allows teachers, administrators, parents, and clinical staff to communicate and create a successful educational environment for the students at the school, many of whom face emotional and behavioral challenges.

The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support for telecommunications services and internal connections also allowed the school to redirect funds toward the purchase of additional end user equipment and software. The representative added that the school purchased SmartBoards with funding redirected in this manner. The representative noted, "The SmartBoards help accelerate the learning process for autistic children by up to a year because of the interactive components associated with the technology." The representative stated that assistive technology programs also help students with disabilities because computers and other technology can hold a student's attention longer than a lecture. The representative stated, "[The school] would be up the creek without a paddle without [Universal Service Fund support]," and added that Universal Service Fund support helped the school meet and exceed state curriculum standards.

Suncook, NH – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, his school would lack the network infrastructure required to connect computers and provide Internet access in its classrooms. The representative explained that in the State of New Hampshire, Internet access is provided free of charge to schools, libraries, and hospitals by local service providers. The representative stated that the infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled the school to take advantage of this service to provide its students with information that might not otherwise be available. Access to the Internet is especially important because the school serves a student population that has been court-ordered to attend the school. Since the students are not able to leave campus, they highly value the up-to-date information and news available via the Internet. The representative added that the school develops an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each of its students, and noted that the network infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds enables teachers to easily access each student's IEP.



New Jersey



New Jersey and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	67
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in New Jersey

Bel Mead, NJ – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated, “The technology purchased with [Universal Service Funds] helps the emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children that attend [our] school to engage in educational methods other than the traditional educational means.” The representative added that technology purchased with Universal Service Funds serves as a motivational tool for students with behavior problems.

The representative stated that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds helps “facilitate the flow of communications.” The representative stated, “Many of the residential students come from all over the State of New Jersey, and it is difficult for parents to visit the school.” The representative noted that Universal Service Fund support enabled the school to communicate with parents through its web page and email. The technology purchased with Universal Service Funds also allowed the school to begin integrating web-based educational resources into the curriculum. The representative stated that the school is working with the New Jersey Virtual School to provide its students with online foreign language classes. The representative added, “Presently, each school district that sends a student to the school also sends a representative that is responsible for creating an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for the student.” The representative stated that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds will allow the school to create web-based IEPs without outside assistance.

Perth Amboy, NJ – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed her district to establish a network infrastructure by purchasing Wireless Access Points (WAPs), switches, and cabling. The representative noted that a pilot program at the middle school offers students Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) handheld devices to transcribe notes in class and email the Microsoft Word documents directly to their teacher’s PDA. The representative added that this “paperless process” enabled the district to save money, and added that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds allowed the district to offer this alternative note-taking process. The representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support also helped the district meet educational requirements associated with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. The representative indicated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the district would not have telephony services or wireless Internet access in its classrooms. The representative added that the Internet access at the district would be limited to computer labs and telephony services would only be available in the administrative offices. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support provides a “tremendous benefit in the education process, and [the district] would not have gotten this far if [it] had to fund 100 percent [of its technology].”



New Mexico



New Mexico and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	66
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in New Mexico

San Felipe Pueblo, NM – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated, "The ability to get technology to [our] school has been largely dependent on [Universal Service Fund support]." The representative explained that services and equipment purchased with Universal Service Funds have allowed her school to provide a critical technology infrastructure to its students. The representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the school "would not be as far along" with regard to technology implementation. The representative stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the school would not have been able to install or maintain its network infrastructure and equipment. In addition, the school would likely not have Internet access available throughout the school without Universal Service Fund support.

The representative stated that the services and equipment purchased with Universal Service Funds allow the school to meet the State of New Mexico's technology requirements. The representative explained that the State of New Mexico requires that the district report data maintained in the Native America Student Information System (NASIS), and noted that the management of NASIS data and the submission of data to the State of New Mexico would not be possible in the absence of the technology infrastructure and Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds.

Albuquerque, NM – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a school in Albuquerque stated that equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds allowed her school to significantly upgrade its Internet access and network infrastructure. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped the school install "mini computer labs" in each of its classrooms, as well as a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony system. The representative stated that this technology significantly enhances the educational experience for students and provides greater overall safety at the school. The representative indicated that the equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled the school to comply with directives set by the State of New Mexico, including online coursework graduation requirements. A school administrator stated that the school would be "limping" without Universal Service Fund support, and added that the school had a "Band-Aid approach" to solving telecommunications needs prior to Universal Service Fund support. In addition, the representative noted that prior to the receipt of Universal Service Fund support, the school's network was an unreliable communication system that failed whenever it rained. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed the school to install a high-speed network infrastructure and "to not worry every time it rains." A consultant to the school stated that as a result of the equipment and services purchased with Universal Service Funds, "all of [the school's] communications have gone from Stone Age to Star Trek."



New York



New York and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	144
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in New York

New York, NY – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped his school build a “complete” computer network. The representative stated that the improved network increased efficiency, explaining that when staff members save documents and files, they can now access them from multiple computers. In addition, a school official stated that the school increased the number of computers available at the school as a result of Universal Service Fund support. The official noted that she has seen her students’ test scores improve steadily over the course of the six years that she has been employed by the school. The official stated that she believes that this increase in test scores reflects the influence that the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program has had on the school.

Watertown, NY – Schools and Libraries

A consortium representative stated that Universal Service Fund support made “technology advances” possible for her consortium’s member school districts. The representative indicated that distance learning services supported by technology purchased with Universal Service Funds “hook up to all parts of the country for educational purposes.” The representative stated that students are able to participate in college level courses through a local community college using the distance learning technology. The distance learning network also resulted in the availability of more course offerings and virtual field trips. A consortium official stated that districts are required to offer “advancement courses,” and noted that there is an increased focus on Science and Language Arts at the elementary school level. The official stated that districts that participate in the consortium are able to meet these requirements because of the distance learning network supported by the Universal Service Fund. The official also noted that elementary school classes in neighboring school districts created a distance learning pen pal program that enhances students’ writing skills and “allows excitement and enthusiasm” for learning.

Mt. Kisco, NY – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Private Branch Exchange (PBX) devices purchased with Universal Service Funds “make for an easy flow of education.” The representative stated that the principal can now monitor classrooms, address entire grades over a loudspeaker, and “be in [his] office and in the classroom at the same time.” The representative added that “the kids and the school are obviously gaining” from the PBX technology purchased with Universal Service Funds.



North Carolina



North Carolina and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	65
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in North Carolina

Washington, NC – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that his district is located in a small town where it is very difficult to attract “quality educators.” The representative stated that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds is a “factor that draws teachers to our schools.” The representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the district would have inferior internal connections and less bandwidth. The representative also stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the district would have Internet access available only in computer labs, as opposed to making the Internet available in every classroom. A consultant to the district stated that the internal connections purchased with Universal Service Funds helped the district meet the State of North Carolina’s education technology guidelines. The representative added that he believes that integrating the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds into the curriculum elevated assessment scores by engaging students and helping them learn.

Rockingham, NC – Schools and Libraries

A representative from a library system stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled her library to provide its patrons with access to online resources, such as NC LIVE. The representative stated that NC LIVE offers library patrons online access to electronic resources, including complete articles from over 16,000 newspapers, journals, magazines, and encyclopedias. The representative stated that patrons can also access subscription-based websites, such as genealogy and ancestry websites. The representative added that the library system offers technology training sessions, several of which include an online component that requires the use of the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds.

Mocksville, NC – Schools and Libraries

A consultant stated that a district he represents uses Universal Service Fund support as a “fulcrum to get other technology into the district.” The consultant explained that Universal Service Fund support is “used as leverage to get individual donors to match grant funding.” A district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support also helped the district establish a robust network infrastructure. The representative stated that the district placed SmartBoards in every classroom, and added that the district is also able to conduct videoconferences with classes in other countries. The representative stated that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds “engages students to be more interested in learning, [which] would not be possible without a strong infrastructure.”



North Dakota



North Dakota and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	17
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	3
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in North Dakota

Minot, ND – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company serves a Study Area that frequently experiences winter temperatures of approximately negative twenty degrees Fahrenheit, which makes maintenance of cellular communication towers problematic. The representative stated that the company uses Universal Service Fund support to fund the maintenance of existing towers. In addition, the representative stated that the company plans to use Universal Service Fund support to construct between five and eight wireless communications towers in each of the next five years. The company also plans to use Universal Service Fund support to continue to update its switching software to comply with E911 and other government mandates. An officer from the company stated that if Universal Service Fund support was not available, the company would be forced to limit its service to highways and the main population center in its Study Area.

Wahpeton, ND – Schools and Libraries

A consortium representative stated that the State of North Dakota has the “largest migration of people in the entire United States,” and referred to this phenomenon as “brain drain.” The representative indicated that the state has experienced a decline in the number of students, as well as an increase in the distance between schools and a decreased number of available teachers. The representative stated that his consortium’s Interactive Television (ITV) service, which relies upon technology purchased with Universal Service Funds, helps the organization retain students and teachers and maintain consistent curricula. The representative added that the State of North Dakota requires that districts offer foreign language courses as part of the curriculum, and that the consortium is able to meet this requirement by offering Spanish courses via the ITV service.

Bismarck, ND – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that the terrain in his company’s Study Area includes rocky, rolling hills that make it difficult to locate and erect towers. The representative noted that the cost of each tower can total between \$650 thousand and \$1 million, depending upon the location. The representative explained that this total cost frequently includes charges associated with building new roads to reach the cell sites. The representative stated that the carrier uses the majority of its Universal Service Fund support to offset the costs associated with building and maintaining its cellular towers. In addition, the representative noted that the carrier would be unable to serve customers in rural areas in the absence of Universal Service Fund support.



Northern Mariana Islands



Northern Mariana Islands and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	1
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Story in the Northern Mariana Islands

Saipan, MP – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that the Universal Service Fund provided public schools on the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)'s three islands, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, with high-speed Internet access as well as reliable and inexpensive inter-island telephony services. The representative stated that distance learning is a critical component of the schools' curricula. A lack of trained faculty means that many courses required for graduation, such as literature, algebra, and oceanography are not available in the outlying islands of Tinian and Rota. The representative stated that students in Tinian and Rota can now enroll in the required courses, which are offered at all three high schools on Saipan, over a T1 line purchased with Universal Service Funds.

Prior to receiving Universal Service Fund support, students from the islands of Tinian and Rota were required to live on the island of Saipan to attend high school. Now those students can remain on their home islands and attend the high school courses using the distance learning technology. The representative stated that the schools also use distance learning capabilities purchased with Universal Service Funds to interface with schools in Guam, American Samoa, and Hawaii. The representative noted that the islands are poor and most inhabitants are recipients of welfare. The Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program provides these disadvantaged students with the same opportunities as their peers on the mainland United States. Students throughout CNMI benefit from the resources made available through Internet access and distance learning technology purchased with Universal Service Funds. The representative stated, "Other government agencies are jealous of the schools because we have the best and fastest network throughout the islands."



Ohio



Ohio and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	71
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	3
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Ohio

Cincinnati, OH – Low Income

A customer of a carrier serving Cincinnati provided the following testimonial regarding his receipt of Low Income Universal Service Fund support:

“My girlfriend and I both had medical problems that required us to miss work last year. When the medical bills started piling up, my home phone services were disconnected. I tried using a cell phone, but it wouldn’t always work from my home. I was missing calls from my doctor about appointments and medication. With my bad heart, I need service that is available at a moment’s notice. Lifeline is a big help in getting us on the right track. My girlfriend is back at work, and with Lifeline we can afford a home telephone again. It is a big relief now to know that I can reach someone right away if there is a problem!”

Cleveland, OH – Schools and Libraries

A school administrator stated that Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allows students at her school to work independently and improve their academic performance based on individualized learning plans. The administrator explained that students now have access to educational tools including Fast ForWord, which is a software application for students in Kindergarten through grade twelve that develops the cognitive skills necessary for learning and reading success. The administrator added that students use Fast ForWord and other software applications to improve their reading and phonics skills. The administrator stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the school’s Internet connectivity “would be a lot slower; it would probably be a dial-up connection,” and added that the school “would not have as many computers, which would restrict students’ time to use the Internet.”

Cincinnati, OH – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support had a two-fold impact upon the school, in that it kept tuition affordable while facilitating the formation of strong relationships with other schools in the greater Cincinnati area. The representative indicated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the school would be forced to increase its tuition in order to provide telecommunications services and Internet access to its students. The representative added that the Internet connectivity facilitates differentiated instruction that is “efficient, convenient, and of high quality,” noting that the caliber of services currently provided by the school is “far beyond what [we] would otherwise be able to provide.”



Oklahoma



Oklahoma and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	88
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	5
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	4
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Oklahoma

Warner, OK – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving Warner stated that residents of two retirement homes in the area expressed “how grateful they are” for the Lifeline program. The representative explained that these customers indicated that Lifeline discounts help them put some “extra money” in their pockets to purchase essential goods and services. The representative stated that her company advertises the availability of Lifeline and Link Up discounts through an annual bill insert. In addition, the representative noted that all customer service representatives are trained to make callers aware of the availability of Lifeline and Link Up support.

Oklahoma City, OK – Low Income

A representative from a carrier stated that his company provides service to customers who are unlikely to obtain service from a traditional carrier, due to economic difficulties or poor credit histories. The representative stated that because many of these customers have low income levels, the availability of Lifeline discounts is of great assistance to them in their effort to obtain telephone service. The representative stated that the company advertises the availability of Lifeline and Link Up support by displaying posters in retail outlets such as “Rent to Own” stores, as well as placing advertisements in the local newspaper and free publications. In addition, every caller is told about the availability of Low Income Universal Service Fund support upon contacting the carrier.

Oklahoma City, OK – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that cellular telephony services purchased with Universal Service Funds facilitate communication between his school’s teachers and administrators. The representative stated that the school does not have telephones in its classrooms, and that the cellular telephony services are the primary mode of communication among teachers, administrators, and parents. The representative added, “The key to education is parental involvement; the use of the cellular telephones helps teachers in this process.” Teachers from the school are required to conduct home visits to ensure that parents are involved in the education process. The school representative stated that the cellular telephony services purchased with Universal Service Funds help teachers set up appointments for home visits and stay in contact with parents and administrators. The representative stated that since the school opened in 2001, its students have been recognized by the Oklahoma City School Board as having achieved the highest state-wide test scores in grades six through twelve. The representative stated that he attributes this achievement to the strong communication among the school’s students, parents, and teachers.



Oregon



Oregon and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	31
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Oregon

Pendleton, OR – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that frame relay telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled her HCP to meet the system requirements needed to utilize the Indian Health Service’s online patient database software. The representative noted that the database helped the HCP improve patient care by allowing the facility to access timely, organized, and accurate patient records. In addition, the HCP used the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to manage an online pharmacy and billing center. The representative stated, “The [HCP] would have much fewer capabilities and would not be able to run the facility efficiently [without Universal Service Fund support].” The representative added that the HCP plans to use future Universal Service Fund support to upgrade its telecommunications services, in order to conduct teleradiology and Electronic Medical Record (EMR) exchanges.

Portland, OR – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allows her school’s students to use web-based and network-based resources. The representative described the school as a treatment program serving a population of adjudicated adolescents from the State of Oregon with issues related to drugs and alcohol. The representative stated that the Internet access and network connectivity, available as a result of Universal Service Fund support, permit the school’s staff and case managers to research comprehensive discharge plans for students as they return to their homes across the State of Oregon. The representative stated that the staff members’ access to online resources greatly improves students’ chances of returning to high-functioning lives following incarceration and treatment by allowing the staff to create a comprehensive support structure.

A school official stated that cabling purchased with Universal Service Funds is used to integrate all computers into a single network, which permits access to shared services. The official indicated that the school is able to maintain a much higher level of communication due to the centralized Internet access, email, and telephone connectivity that is available as a result of Universal Service Fund support. The representative stated that the connectivity at the school allows staff members to perform educational assessments during the “intake” process and helps staff members develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) tailored to students’ needs. The representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support also facilitates students’ receipt of General Education Development (GED) diplomas or high school credits, which will allow these students to re-enter mainstream schools at an age-appropriate level or earn a diploma while enrolled at the school.



Pennsylvania



Pennsylvania and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	86
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Pennsylvania

Burkehall, PA – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that network infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds provided the foundation necessary for his school to create a computer lab. The representative stated that the computer lab allows the school to teach its students about Microsoft Office programs and to prepare presentations for faculty “in-service” days. In addition, the representative stated that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled the school to offer educational resources such as Study Island, a reading and math program that helps students prepare for state-mandated tests. The Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds also allows the school to use NetOp software, an instructional tool that transfers work from students’ computers to a teacher’s computer and can share examples to multiple computers in the classroom, helping students follow along with lesson plans.

Punxsutawney, PA – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that his district’s Internet access, which was purchased with Universal Service Funds, allows teachers and students to utilize web-based resources including GradeBook and SuccessMaker. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support was also integral to the district meeting its goal of providing Internet access to each of its classrooms. The district uses the Internet access in its classrooms to provide middle school and high school students with the opportunity to participate in distance learning classes. The representative noted that upgrading from a dial-up connection would have been “difficult to nearly impossible” in the absence of Universal Service Fund support.

Chester Township, PA – Schools and Libraries

A school official stated that it is “unbelievable what [we have been] able to accomplish” as a result of Universal Service Fund support, and added that the “overall [technology] exposure to children and families is astronomical.” The official indicated that his school received Universal Service Fund support for telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and basic maintenance services. The official stated that “things are happening today that weren’t possible” prior to the receipt of Universal Service Fund support. The official indicated that the recent purchase of internal connections with Universal Service Funds enabled the school to “wire the building” and build a network. A school representative added that the technology available at the school makes students “not feel like [they are in] a poverty-stricken area,” and “allows them to have the same experiences” as students who attend schools in wealthier areas.



Puerto Rico



Puerto Rico and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	14
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Puerto Rico

San Juan, PR – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving San Juan stated that Lifeline support is of the greatest benefit to the senior citizens in Puerto Rico. The representative stated, “Most of these citizens would not have a telephone if not for the Universal Service Fund [Low Income] program.” The company’s customer service representatives frequently participate in face-to-face activities with prospective Lifeline subscribers. The representative explained that activities such as fairs, municipal events, and visits to community centers provide opportunities for company representatives to meet with prospective Lifeline recipients and explain the benefits of the program. The representative noted that the company also advertises the availability of Low Income Universal Service Fund support in local newspapers and by posting flyers in social service agencies throughout Puerto Rico.

Guaynabo, PR – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that prior to receiving Universal Service Fund support, Internet access at her school was limited to its library. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped the school provide Internet access to all of its middle and high school classrooms, as well as two computer labs. The representative stated that the Internet access is helping the school meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act by ensuring that all students have access to instructional resources and supporting individualized instruction. A teacher from the school stated that the staff can now tailor instruction to the needs of individual students, including those with learning disabilities, and noted that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds allows students to work at their own pace without peer pressure.

Carolina, PR – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allows the school to offer students dynamic, attractive classes featuring current information. The representative stated that prior to receiving Universal Service Fund support, the school had Internet access available only on one computer in its library. The school currently has a computer lab, a library with five student workstations, and a computer with a television monitor for projection in each classroom. The representative stated that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allows the school to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, in that it is widely used in the school’s classrooms to provide students with opportunities that keep them from “falling behind.”



Rhode Island



Rhode Island and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	5
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Rhode Island

Wood River Junction, RI – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that students in his district use the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to participate in an annual “Reading Across the Curriculum” videoconference with eighteen high schools located throughout the State of Rhode Island. The representative explained that each year, a high school selects a book and hosts a question and answer session with the book’s author during the videoconference. The representative added that the district would not be able to participate in Reading Across the Curriculum in the absence of Universal Service Fund support for Internet connectivity. The representative added that the district also uses the Internet connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds to access PowerSchool and Plato learning applications.

Cranston, RI – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allows his school to provide more opportunities for its severely disabled students to express themselves than were previously available. The representative stated that although the equipment and network access are relatively new, teachers are already beginning to see results. The representative stated that teachers and other staff members use the Internet access to research special needs disorders, as well as techniques for accommodating individual students’ needs. Universal Service Fund support allowed the school to purchase important hardware specifically tailored to the severely disabled. The representative explained that this technology includes touch screens, IntelliPad keyboards, and motion devices for immobile students. The representative stated that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds has given teachers increased access to tools that help to stimulate and motivate the students.



South Carolina



South Carolina and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	42
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in South Carolina

Allendale, SC – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that a fast, reliable network infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds helped his district win Rural Utility Services and 21st Century grants. The Rural Utility Services grant aids in the purchase of equipment and subscriptions to support distance learning. The 21st Century grant provides students with supplemental instruction, including after-school assistance with math skills, reading skills, and homework assignments. The representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the district would not be able to afford the same level of technology that it currently has, and added, “The district would have to decide either to reduce the number of teachers to afford Internet access or to eliminate Internet access and keep the same level of teachers.” Currently, the school is able to provide Internet access to all of its classrooms, libraries, and computer labs. Teachers in the district are now incorporating more information, resources, and technology into the curriculum, all of which help students meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Columbia, SC – Schools and Libraries

A consortium representative stated that Internet access and network connectivity supported by the Universal Service Fund allow member districts to “use state-developed technology and reporting tools for...federal funding programs.” The representative added that the State of South Carolina’s telecommunications network “couldn’t survive” without Universal Service Fund support. The representative explained, “The money that schools would have used to utilize state reporting software and technology is now used to buy computers for the classrooms. There’s been a shift of local money to fund educational projects.” The technology purchased with Universal Service Funds also helped school districts in the State of South Carolina meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act by providing students with access to technology that might not otherwise be available, due to the financial limitations in many districts.

Walterboro, SC – Schools and Libraries

A library representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allows her library to “offer high-speed Internet access to [patrons of] the entire county when they walk [our] doors.” The library representative added that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds “tremendously upgraded the library’s ability to provide services [to its patrons].” A librarian noted that the Internet connectivity also “allows the library to do real time reference searches for patrons.”



South Dakota



South Dakota and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	27
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in South Dakota

Aberdeen, SD – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds enables his HCP to conduct distance learning classes between two of its campuses. The representative stated that the distance learning technology allows the campuses to share instructional resources and prevents students from traveling long distances to attend classes. The representative noted that without Universal Service Fund support, the HCP would “have to apply for several other grants in order to fund its [Internet access services].” Additionally, the representative stated that if the HCP could not obtain Universal Service Fund support for its Internet access services, the cost burden would shift to students in the form of increased tuition.

Pine Ridge, SD – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving Pine Ridge stated that his company’s Study Area is a good example of the benefits of the Universal Service Fund High Cost and Low Income programs. The representative explained that the company erected temporary cellular towers during President Clinton’s visit to a local reservation. After the visit, many residents of the reservation expressed a need for wireless communication services. The company responded to this market demand and used Universal Service Fund support to erect cellular towers to serve the reservation. According to the representative, Universal Service Fund support allows the company to provide affordable service to an area that has been cost prohibitive for traditional wireless connectivity. The representative added that cellular telephone service is the only means of communication for many residents of the reservation, and helps these residents seek out employment opportunities. The representative noted that the company has had success in distributing letters to tribal chiefs to make their tribes aware of the availability of Lifeline and Link Up support.

Flandreau, SD – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped his school update its telecommunications infrastructure. The representative stated that the school also received Universal Service Fund support for Internet access and network infrastructure, which helped provide students and staff members with a greater range of services. The representative noted that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the school would be “well behind” its current level of technology. The school currently uses the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds to provide its students with access to network-based assessments and to report student data to state and federal agencies.



Tennessee



Tennessee and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	36
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Tennessee

Brownsville, TN – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that technology purchased with Universal Service Funds enabled her district’s teachers to utilize online educational resources in their classrooms. The representative stated that online resources such as United Streaming, Study Island, SuccessMaker, ThinkLink, and Nettekter could not be accessed without the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds. The representative stated that SuccessMaker is an online tool that helps students meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals required by the No Child Left Behind Act. The representative added that ThinkLink, an online educational resource, is used to prepare students for the TerraNova, the Tennessee end-of-grade test. The representative stated that ThinkLink allows teachers to test students to quickly, identify students’ weaknesses, and direct instruction toward those weaknesses. The representative noted that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds also allows the district to offer online professional development opportunities.

Pikeville, TN – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving Pikeville stated that Low Income Universal Service Fund support is of particular benefit to her company’s elderly customers. The representative explained that, although a \$10.00 discount may seem trivial to many, it makes a tremendous difference in the lives of the elderly customers who have monthly incomes between \$300.00 and \$400.00. The representative noted that the company advertises the availability of Lifeline and Link Up support in its telephone directory and posts fliers explaining the programs in each of its retail offices. Customer service representatives are also trained to make callers aware of the availability of Lifeline support.

Huntsville, TN – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that his district recently became one of 235 school systems to be selected as a recipient of the Computer World Honors Program, and that he attributes this distinction in part to the receipt of Universal Service Fund support. The representative indicated that the district received this award for its distance learning program, and added that Universal Service Fund support facilitates the rural district’s efforts to provide distance learning opportunities to students in its schools. The representative stated that the district used Universal Service Fund support to enhance its technology budget and noted, “Most small school districts do not have a \$200,000.00 technology budget.” The representative added, “A lot of what we have is because of [Universal Service Fund support].”



Texas



Texas and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	199
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	3
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	2

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Texas

Llano, TX – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that the receipt of Universal Service Fund support enabled his HCP to provide “reliable Internet access to outlying rural clinics, which [we] would not otherwise be able to provide.” In addition, the representative stated that the reliable Internet connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds provides access to data within the HCP’s information system. The representative noted that Universal Service Fund support also allowed the HCP to develop and implement a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS). The representative stated that the PACS allows the HCP to capture and store teleradiology images online, and added that physicians can access both recent and archived teleradiology images associated with a given patient. The representative stated that the HCP would still provide services to its outlying rural clinics in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, but that budgets from all departments would be decreased to offset the costs of these services.

Matagorda, TX – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that her district is a single-campus district located in rural Texas, which is “isolated.” The representative stated, “There is only one road in and out. We have [students] here that have never even been to a [shopping] mall. So, the [district’s] Internet [access, which was purchased with Universal Service Funds,] enriches everything we have to offer. It prepares our students for a world that will be very dependent on technology.” The district’s enrollment increased by twenty-three percent in the last year and is expected to continue to grow as local industries expand. The applicant stated that due to expensive vacation properties, the district is designated a “Robin Hood” school under the Texas Education Code. The applicant stated that this designation requires the district to surrender sixty percent of its tax revenue to the Texas Education Agency for redistribution to poorer districts. The applicant added that, because of this situation, the district would not be able to handle the influx of new students without the support of the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program and other educational grant programs.

Houston, TX – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) in Houston stated that her HCP received Universal Service Fund support as part of USAC’s Hurricane Katrina relief initiative. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled the HCP to offset the costs associated with establishing additional telecommunications connections required to serve the influx of patients resulting from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.



Utah



Utah and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	14
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	2

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Utah

St. George, UT – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that his HCP purchased a T1 circuit with Universal Service Funds. The representative stated that the T1 circuit allows the health care facility to deliver telemedicine services to its branch offices in five rural counties throughout southwest Utah. The representative stated that, prior to receiving Universal Service Fund support, the HCP had to send a psychiatrist to the remote health care facilities, which usually involved a four-hour drive and allowed the psychiatrist to visit each site no more than once every six weeks. The representative stated that this allowed the psychiatrist to meet with “maybe ten clients” on each visit. The representative noted that due to the new telemedicine program, patients in remote areas are currently “able to [electronically] schedule [videoconference] appointments any day of the week.” The representative stated that this approach to health care provision significantly improved access to services and efficiency, and noted that it is the “most significant” impact of the receipt of Universal Service Fund support.

The representative stated that, in 2006, the HCP calculated “whether telemedicine was more cost effective” than sending psychiatrists to its remote health care facilities. The representative noted, “[Telemedicine] does not cost more. We are saving money by having the [telemedicine] system in place and we’re providing a better quality of care.” The representative stated that the HCP’s patients “really benefit” from the telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds.” The representative added, “Without [Universal Service Fund support], the services would be difficult to provide.”

Salt Lake City, UT – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that if his district had never received Universal Service Fund support, its technology would be “about three years behind.” The representative noted that the district currently has a Gigabit network backbone that allows students and teachers to use online curricular programs and educational streaming videos. The representative added that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the district would rely upon a T1 connection to the Internet and would not be able to make use of the web-based resources that are currently a part of the curriculum. The fast, reliable network infrastructure purchased with Universal Service Funds also allowed the district to meet the technology requirements associated with the receipt of an eMints Grant, which supported the creation of a student-to-computer ratio of two-to-one. In addition, the representative noted that the State of Utah will require all school districts to conduct state-mandated exams online by 2008. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed the district to begin offering online assessments “years ahead” of the state-wide deadline.



Vermont



Vermont and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	7
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Vermont

Chester, VT – Schools and Libraries

A consultant stated, “In the early years of the [Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries] program, when Internet access was expensive, [Universal Service Fund support] was instrumental in providing a head start in technology.” The consultant stated that, in prior years, Internet access cost a school she represents approximately \$12,000.00 annually, which would not have been affordable in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The consultant noted that the cost of Internet access for the school has now decreased to approximately \$1,200.00 per year, and that the money saved on telecommunications services and Internet access due to Universal Service Fund support enables the school to purchase other important educational services. The consultant indicated that the district established a web-based student information system, which parents use to easily access students’ grades and attendance records, and noted that this system has increased parental involvement in the education process.

The consultant also indicated that the district uses the broadband connection purchased with Universal Service Funds to access United Streaming, a digital video-on-demand service that provides supplemental educational resources. The Internet is also used to access resources that prepare students for the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), which is the result of collaboration between New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont to build a set of assessments related to the No Child Left Behind Act for students in grades three through eight. The consultant indicated that the district utilizes the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)’s web-based resource, which allows students to take practice exams, to prepare students for the NECAP.

Putney, VT – Schools and Libraries

A school representative indicated that Universal Service Fund support for telecommunications services and Internet access is helping his school meet a variety of other technology goals that might not otherwise be attainable. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support “largely helps a small technology budget be increased,” and noted that the reimbursements are redirected to support other technology-related purchases. The representative indicated that the school uses funds from its technology budget to make “infrastructure purchases,” such as computers, to “get services in kids’ hands.”



Virginia



Virginia and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	42
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Virginia

Lovingsston, VA – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated, “Well over half of the students in [our] county do not have Internet access at home, and the other half have either satellite or dial-up [Internet access].” The representative explained that “an overwhelming majority” of his district’s students have access to the Internet only while using the Internet connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds in the district. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allows the district to be competitive with more affluent school districts that have larger technology budgets, and noted, “Without Universal Service Fund support, the technology in our county would be equivalent to a third world country.” The applicant stated that the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds allows students to participate in a dual-enrollment program with the Governor’s School, as well as community college courses, via the Virginia Virtual School.

Waynesboro, VA – Low Income

A representative from a carrier serving Waynesboro stated that Low Income Universal Service Fund support is especially important to one customer served by her company. The representative explained that the company has a quadriplegic customer in its Study Area who uses his cellular telephone for voice-activated calling. According to the carrier’s representative, the customer indicated that because of his physical condition, telephone service is very important to him, and that he would be unable to afford telephone service without Lifeline support.

Collinsville, VA – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed her district to provide Internet access to its students. The representative stated that students use the Internet connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds to access resources and information that might not otherwise be available, including practice assessments that help them prepare for state-mandated exams. Students in the district also use the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds to participate in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and college-level courses at the Patrick Henry Community College. The representative noted that the Universal Service Fund also “forces service providers to become more aware of the needs of schools in rural areas,” and indicated that service providers who participate in the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program become “more concerned with student achievement.” The representative stated that the district’s infrastructure is “far ahead” of the districts located in surrounding counties and that this level of infrastructure would not be in place without Universal Service Fund support.



Washington



Washington and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	38
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	3
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Washington

Eatonville, WA – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company serves the foothills on the western side of Mt. Rainier. The representative stated that the terrain in his company's Study Area is rocky, and noted that trenching crews encounter rocks "the size of office desks" when digging trenches for loop plant. In addition to the challenges associated with the rocky terrain, the carrier also faces issues related to one county's growth management plan, which stipulates that housing density cannot exceed one house per five acre plot. The representative stated that the housing density limits mean that there is "no economic way to serve the community without Universal Service [Fund support]." The representative stated that the company uses Universal Service Fund support across its operations, most recently to deploy new fiber connections and bury cable throughout its Study Area.

Vancouver, WA – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that his district has "realized almost \$2.5 million" in savings on telecommunications services, Internet access, and internal connections over the "nine-plus years" it has participated in the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled the district to wire newly built campuses and install a gigabit-speed Wide Area Network (WAN) that links the district's thirty-eight campuses. The representative stated that the district's gigabit-speed WAN, which is leased with Universal Service Fund support, allows the district to maintain and transmit electronic student data from a central location. The representative explained that this allows the district to more efficiently meet the data submission requirements of the State of Washington.

White Swan, WA – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled his district to "have a network." The representative explained, "There is no way we could afford T1 lines, Cisco switches, or fiber connections between our buildings without [Universal Service Fund support]. The money we have saved has allowed us to put more desktop computers in our classrooms for our students." The representative indicated that the district's Internet access and network infrastructure, both of which were purchased with Universal Service Funds, allow teachers to conduct online assessments and support web-based student instruction. The representative stated that three schools in the district are located in small agricultural communities with very few local resources, and noted that the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program has "been a tremendous benefit for us."



West Virginia



West Virginia and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	14
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	1
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	0

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in West Virginia

Hamlin, WV – Schools and Libraries

A district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped his district provide its students with broadband Internet access, and noted that teachers are now able to incorporate additional information, resources, and technology into the curriculum. The representative indicated that many teachers are now experimenting with online resources, including United Streaming, a digital video-on-demand service that provides resources via a large digital video clip library. The representative added that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds also enables teachers to utilize Thinkfinity, a resource intended to increase students' reading skills; as well as SAS inSchool, a credit recovery program that provides teachers with the opportunity to participate in web-based professional development. In addition, the district representative stated that the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds allows the district to offer Spanish language classes via a distance learning network. The representative noted that distance learning capabilities are particularly important to the district because it has experienced a shortage of qualified foreign language teachers. The representative added that distance learning capabilities allow the district's students to meet the West Virginia Department of Education's standards for foreign language competency. The district representative also noted that the web-based resources made available by the Internet access purchased with Universal Service Funds are critical to teachers' efforts to prepare students for state-mandated exams. The technology purchased with Universal Service Funds also helped the district qualify for a \$187,000.00 EdTech grant that supported the provision of educational software, end user equipment, and professional development.

Charleston, WV – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support helped her district provide Internet access to all of its classrooms. The representative stated that teachers in the district are now incorporating more resources and technology into the curriculum than prior to the receipt of Universal Service Fund support. The broadband connectivity purchased with Universal Service Funds also allows the district to offer courses that it would not otherwise be able to provide. The representative stated that the eight high schools in the district are able to offer more classes with fewer teachers because of the resource sharing made possible by the district's distance learning network. The representative stated that the district would not be able to afford a distance learning network, videoconferencing services, or Internet access robust enough to administer online state-mandated assessments in the absence of Universal Service Fund support. The district representative also stated that the telephony services purchased with Universal Service Funds increased communication among staff members.



Wisconsin



Wisconsin and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative

Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	20
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	4
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	4

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Wisconsin

Grantsburg, WI – High Cost

A representative from a High Cost carrier stated that his company provides service to over 3,000 subscribers in northwestern Wisconsin and recently made a significant investment in its network to continue to meet customers' evolving service requirements. The representative stated that approximately forty percent of the company's customers reside in remote portions of the 520 square mile Study Area where customer density is sometimes less than one customer per square mile. In order to provide high-speed Internet access to these remote customers, the company made significant investment in its loop plant infrastructure and installed several Digital Loop Carriers (DLCs) to improve the quality of service. In addition to supporting these upgrades, Universal Service Fund support also helped the company provide service to customers located in protected areas and maintain its loop plant, which is susceptible to lightning damage and destruction by gophers. The representative noted that the company would be unable to serve its remote customers if Universal Service Fund support was not available.

Friendship, WI – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that Universal Service Fund support "helped the bottom line" at his HCP. The representative stated that telecommunications services purchased with Universal Service Funds provide the HCP with videoconferencing capabilities for nurses' continuing education. The representative noted that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the HCP "would have to find extra money somewhere [to provide telecommunications services]...something would get cut."

Rosendale, WI – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that his school was able to increase the bandwidth of its Internet access with the assistance of Universal Service Fund support. The representative indicated that the improved Internet access allows teachers within the district to find alternative means of delivering the curriculum. The representative stated that Universal Service Fund support "allows for instructional diversity, and the [Internet access] allows teachers to offer students the same material a variety of ways." In addition, the representative stated that the Internet access allows the school's administration to contact students' parents via email. The representative stated that the district has also redirected funding to purchase additional end user equipment, such as digital projectors, due to the receipt of Universal Service Fund support.



Wyoming



Wyoming and the Site Visit Outreach Initiative	
Number of Schools/Libraries Visited:	7
Number of High Cost Carriers Visited:	2
Number of Low Income Carriers Visited:	0
Number of Rural Health Care Providers Visited:	1

Universal Service Fund Success Stories in Wyoming

Sheridan, WY – Rural Health Care

A representative from a Health Care Provider (HCP) stated that due to the rural location of his HCP, it is difficult to retain physicians. The representative stated that videoconferencing capabilities made possible by Universal Service Fund support help local physicians consult with physicians across the country to learn about the latest medical developments. The representative added, “[The HCP] would not have telehealth and telemedicine services without [Universal Service Fund support].”

Sheridan, WY – Schools and Libraries

A school representative stated that Universal Service Fund support allowed his district to begin installing a videoconferencing and distance learning system. The representative stated that the district is also upgrading its Internet connection from a slow, unreliable wireless connection to a fiber connection. The representative stated that “from a technology standpoint, this is the best thing to happen to [the district] to date. It would have never happened without [Universal Service Fund support].” The representative stated that the district “does not have the budget to compete with public schools for teachers, so we have to work with the bare minimum number of teachers on staff. We have six educational [buildings on campus]. The [videoconferencing equipment] will allow teachers to stay in one location and teach students at all of our sites.” The representative stated that the upgraded infrastructure also allowed the district to join the Wyoming Educational Network, which provides distance learning services to public schools throughout Wyoming.

Ethete, WY – Schools and Libraries

A school district representative stated that Universal Service Fund support enabled his district to install a high-speed data infrastructure, which helped with the deployment of a district-wide online curriculum. The district representative stated that the online curriculum allows teachers to tailor their lessons to the individual needs of each of their students. The representative added that the district also uses the technology purchased with Universal Service Funds to administer online assessments, which helps the district meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act more effectively. The representative stated that in the absence of Universal Service Fund support, the district would not have been able to provide its students with high-speed Internet access or install its current high-speed network infrastructure. The representative stated that without Universal Service Fund support, the district would have to “lay off” two teachers in order to purchase the necessary infrastructure.