Digital Equity Partnerships Respondents Conference

RFQ No. 2023-MBI-04

10/6/2022

Michael Baldino, Director of Mass Broadband Institute

Josh Eichen, Program Manager for Partnerships

Kelly Kleanthous, Counsel Legal

Welcome! Please review the following meeting guidelines:

Please put yourself on mute.

If you would like to ask a question at the end of the presentation please raise your hand.

Feel free to post questions in the chat during the presentation.

This presentation and a recording of the meeting will be posted on the MassTech solicitation webpage.

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Agenda

1. MassTech Collaborative / MassBroadband Overview
2. Introduction to the RFP
3. Project Overview and Goals
4. Digital Equity Partnerships Ecosystem
5. Digital Equity Partnerships Roles and Responsibilities
6. Concept Paper Application Details
7. Note on Federal Award Requirements
8. Procurement Schedule
9. Questions

About MassTech & MBI

MASSACHUSETTS TECHNOLOGY COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION: We strengthen the competitiveness of the tech and innovation economy by driving strategic investments, partnerships, and insights that harness the talent of Massachusetts.

THE INNOVATION INSTITUTE	MASSACHUSETTS CENTER for ADVANCED MANUFACTURING	MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE	MeHI MASSACHUSETTS eHEALTH INSTITUTE	MassCyberCenter
Mission:	**Mission**:	**Mission:**	**Mission:**	**Mission:**
Innovation Economy	*Advanced Manufacturing*	*Broadband*	*Digital Health and Caregiving*	*Cybersecurity*

***MBI's mission** is to make affordable high-speed Internet available to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices, and other public places across the Commonwealth. MBI works closely with key stakeholders to bridge the digital divide in Massachusetts.*

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Introduction to the RFP

Overview

- Broadband Innovation Fund established under State ARPA Authorization – Funds must be committed by 12/31/2024 and expended by 12/31/2026

- Administered by MBI through a contract with the Commonwealth

- Will initially support two programs

MBI has structured the Digital Equity Programs to Accomplish the Following Goals

- Build Capacity and Coordination Opportunities Among Stakeholders Critical to Closing the Digital Divide

- Enable Effective and Scaleable Implementation Programs, Facilitated by Expert Partners

- Set the Stage for Future More Advanced Digital Equity Initiatives Emerging from IIJA Planning Activities

Municipal Digital Equity Planning

Digital Equity Partnerships Program

Digital Equity Partnerships Program Overview (Section 2.3.1)

Overview

- MBI seeks 10 - 15 organizations to join the Digital Equity Partnership Program to support the deployment of six initiatives in one or more of the following areas:

- Once selected as partners, these entities will have fiduciary and technical responsibilities associated with executing the grant funding, as well as access to resources designed to build capacity and expertise in digital equity implementation activities.

Program Goals

- Eliminate documented barriers to digital access among populations experiencing disproportionate impact from the COVID Pandemic.

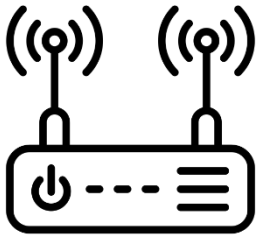
- The six program areas specifically correspond to one or multiple of the key elements of digital equity:
  - Access to the internet
  - Access to a device
  - Digital Literacy

Digital Literacy

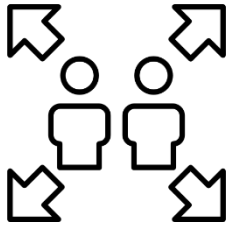
WiFi Access

Public Space Internet Modernization

Connectivity for Economic Hardship

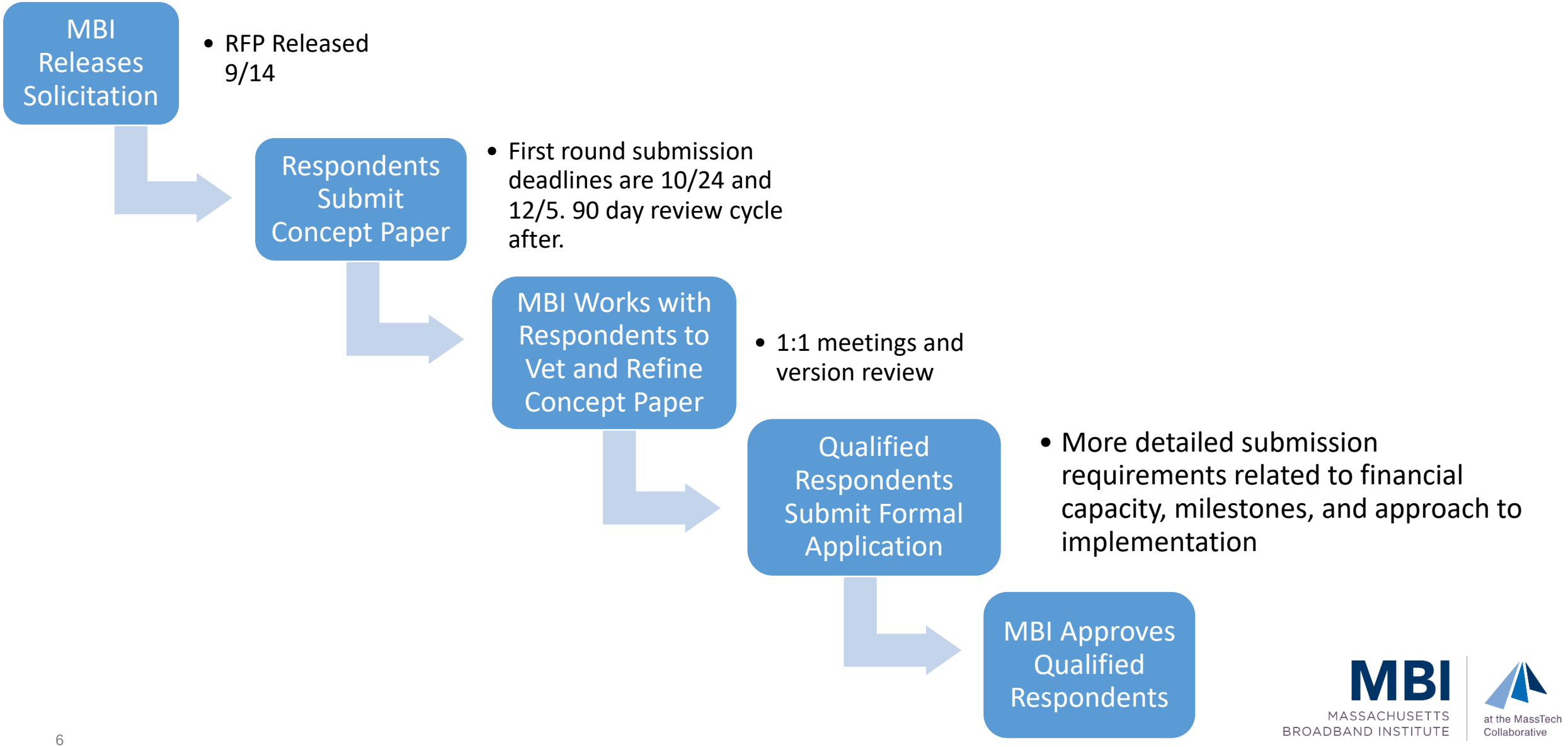


Device Distribution and Refurbishment



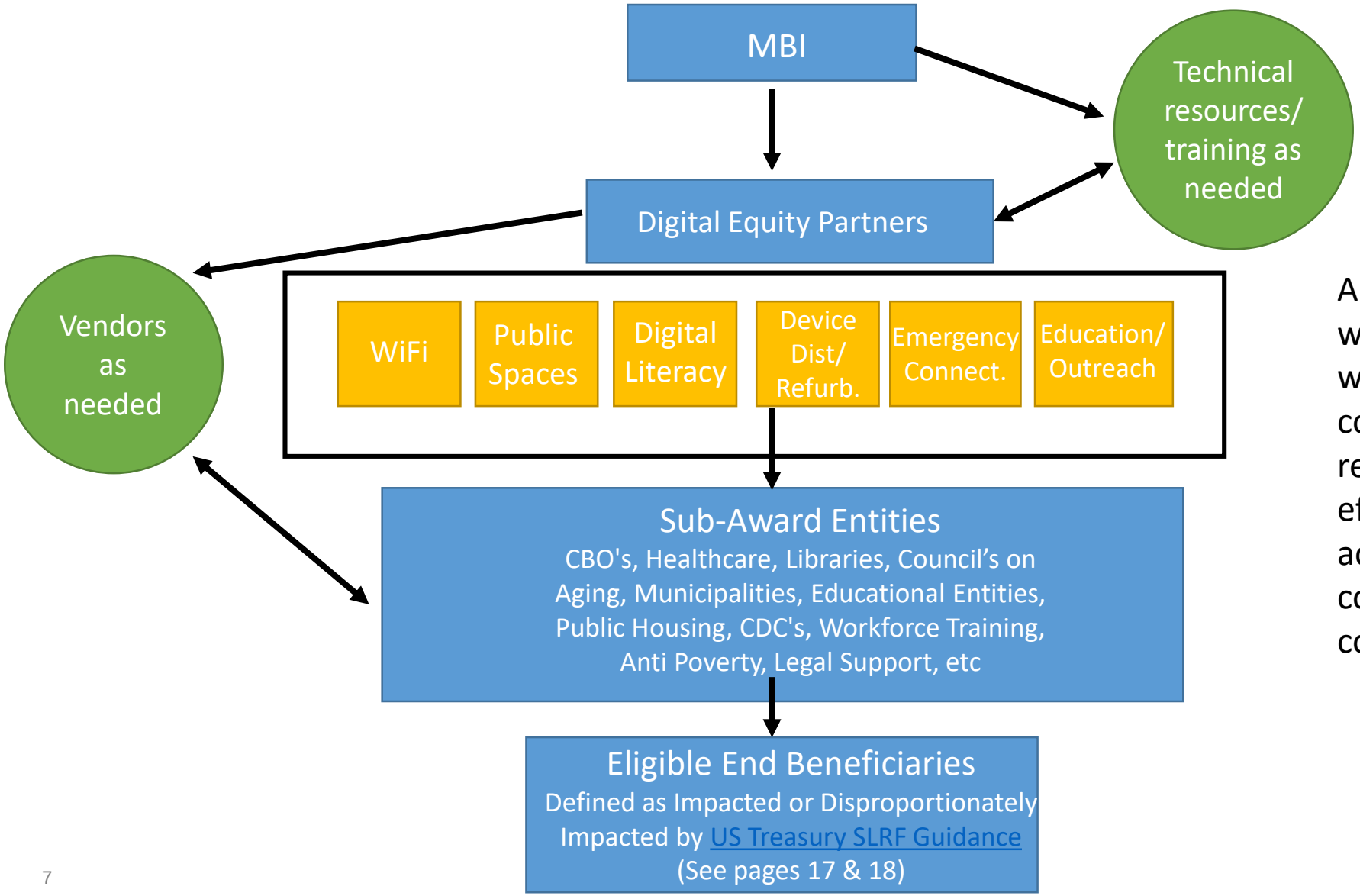
Education, Outreach, and Adoption

Digital Equity Partnerships Program Overview (Section 2.3.1)



MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Digital Equity Partnerships Ecosystem



Approved Digital Equity Partners will become part of a "cohort" where they will be encouraged to collaborate and share resources/best practices to build effective and replicable strategies across the state. MBI will coordinate and facilitate this cohort.

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Digital Equity Partnerships Eligibility (Section 1)

Organizations eligible to apply under this solicitation include, but are not limited to

- Regional Planning Agencies, Municipalities, or collaborations of municipal entities
- Philanthropic Foundations
- State agencies or quasi-governmental entities
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Educational or Healthcare Providers
- Other organizations with a clear geographic constituency or area of relevant technical expertise

Applicants can consist of an individual organization or a coalition of organizations, so long as there is a clearly defined lead applicant. The lead applicant will carry fiduciary responsibilities of distributing funding to coalition partners and sub-awardees.

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Digital Equity Partnerships Roles and Responsibilities (Section 3.4)

Entities participating in the Digital Equity Partnerships Program will be expected to engage in the following activities

Project Generation/Implementation	Project Reporting	Community of Practice
• Work with stakeholders to generate a pipeline of eligible projects* • Support procurement of materials or services • Fiduciary responsibilities related to deploying funding for project implementation	• Quarterly and annual reporting on project progress and impact* • Production of an annual report. • Document success stories to show the human impact of funded projects, in a form to be mutually agreed to by MassTech/MBI and selected organizations	• Participate in periodic check-ins with MassTech and other Partners as part of a learning community.*

*Ensure digital equity initiatives are targeted in areas that are consistent with guidance in Section 3.2 Compliance and Reporting of RFP

*Includes specific impact metrics as outlined in section 3.3 of RFP

*Other duties related to the successful deployment of funds awarded to Partners through this solicitation.

Digital Equity Partnerships Roles and Responsibilities (Section 3.4)

MBI will support entities engaging in the Digital Equity Partnerships Program in the following ways:

Project Generation/Implementation	Project Reporting	Community of Practice
• Partners will receive ongoing technical support from MBI staff related to technology/digital equity content, procurement and other areas relevant to the success of the Digital Equity Program.	• MassTech will support Partners with compliance, reporting, and procurements to ensure alignment with state and federal guidelines, including the creation and distribution of quarterly and annual reporting forms and surveys • MassTech will provide other resources, which may include grant approval decision trees, timelines, or approval templates to ensure Partners have clear direction regarding the appropriate and expected process	• MBI will connect Partners to national/local technical assistance programs, and will participate in a cohort-style community of practice to share lessons learned and best practices

*Partners will be responsible for ensuring their own compliance and the compliance of their sub-awardee(s) consistent with the sub-award service agreement which outlines federal provisions.

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Digital Equity Partnerships Eligible Expenses

All entities participating in the Digital Equity Partnerships Program will be enabled to expend funds across the following categories:

- Outreach and engagement
- Data analysis
- Program marketing and development of materials
- Procurement assistance
- Technical assistance related to project development
- Research to assess appropriate program interventions
- Professional development and capacity building
- Travel expenses
- Site visits and project evaluation

Additional, program area specific, eligible expenses are also allowed under the Digital Equity Partnerships funding and are referenced in Appendix A of this presentation.

Concept Paper (Section 4.1A)

Potential applicants are required to first submit a Concept Paper not to exceed five pages (inclusive of appendices) prior to developing a full Application. Applicants may subsequently be invited to submit a full Application that builds upon the concept paper.

Introduction

- Brief description of respondent organization and interest
- Description of any sub-applicants and proposed roles
- Definition of proposed service area
- Description of how the program areas will support an equitable and resilient recovery to the pandemic

Proposed Approach

- Which program areas does the respondent intend to apply for?
- Why is the respondent and sub applicants well qualified to execute proposed program areas?
- How will the respondent and sub-applicants execute proposed program areas?

Support Needed & Costs

- High level budget that describes:
  - Estimated # of projects respondent intends to complete for each program area
  - Allocation for program administration
  - Allocations for direct program support
  - Basis for Costs Assumptions (ie. Number of projects x cost per project or $30 per hour for 500 hours)
  - Total Partnership Budget Request and duration of project
- Outline of key project personnel, titles, and responsibilities.

Staffing Needs

- MassTech expects that all Partnerships will have at least 1 full time staff, or equivalent, dedicated to supporting the Digital Equity Partnership program area.
- That staff person can be an existing staff or a team member to be hired as a result of the grant.

Applicants should assume a two year period of performance. If invited to submit a complete application, respondents will be asked to submit additional proposal details, including a detailed budget for each proposed program area

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Evaluation Criteria (Section 5.2)

MassTech will prioritize applicants that:

- **Demonstrate knowledge, capacity, facilities, and organizational structure to perform the type of services sought in the solicitation related to digital access/equity or broadband planning and implementation**
- **Indicate an ability to serve a large geographic area**
- **Have an ability to implement multiple program areas**
- **Can provide needed technical assistance, procurement, and planning resources to sub-awardees**
- **Demonstrate strong connections to service delivery organizations that work directly with target populations**

Full evaluation criteria is outlined on pages 15 and 16 of the solicitation.

MBI
MASSACHUSETTS
BROADBAND INSTITUTE
at the MassTech
Collaborative

Awards under this Solicitation have been determined to be subawards; therefore, selected Respondents shall be deemed subrecipients in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.331.

What does it mean to be a Subrecipient under a federal award?

Requirements include:

Completion of an Initial Subrecipient Risk Assessment (experience with federal grants, capable financial systems, established policies and internal controls, established indirect cost rates..)

- MassTech will use this assessment evaluate risk of non-compliance,
- Award and Performance Monitoring requirements will be established in accordance with that risk

Complying with Terms and Conditions of the Subaward Agreement

- Subawards will have federal flow down provisions that subrecipient will be required to follow, including but not limited to:
  - ✓ Ensuring that all activities performed under this agreement comply with federal guidelines (ARPA,2 CFR § 200.331,..)
  - ✓ Ensuring expenditures are on *allowable costs* and for *eligible activities* as set forth in the Subaward Agreement and federal guidelines
  - ✓ Subject to the single audit requirements per 2 CFT 200, subpart F

Cooperation with MassTech on Subrecipient Award & Performance Monitoring Requirements and Periodic Reviews

- MassTech will review financial & programmatic reports (invoices, outcome reports, etc..)
- MassTech will verify compliance single audit requirement per 2 CFR 200, subpart F and review the results of such audit
- MassTech will engage Subrecipient through periodic reviews on the project status, expenditures, audits, compliance, and project outcomes

Partner Must Follow Subrecipient Monitoring Requirements

- To the extent Partners enters into contracts with a third party to implement a part of the projects, Partner will be required to perform similar determination of the subrecipient/contractor relationship in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.331.
- If relationship is determined to be a subaward, Partner will be required to apply the above requirements to subcontractor/subawards that are deemed a subrecipient relationship by you under this agreement

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE | at the MassTech Collaborative

Procurement Schedule

Task	Date
Issue Date	**9/14/2022**
Respondents' Conference	10/6/2022
Question Deadline	**5PM 10/7/2022**
Answers Posted	10/14/2022
Initial Applications Due	**10/24/2022**
Subsequent Application Review Dates	12/5/2022, 3/13/23, 6/12/23, 9/11/23

MBI
SSACHUSETTS
ND INSTITUTE
at the MassTech Collaborative

Submission Requirements General

- Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (on behalf of Massachusetts Broadband Institute) issued this Solicitation for **Digital Equity Partnerships**, and will be the contracting entity. Selected Partners will be considered sub-recipients to MassTech

- MassTech seeks to designate approximately 10 to 15 Partners across the state who will be responsible for implementing digital equity initiatives in six discrete program areas. These Partners will become a sub-recipient to MassTech with the responsibility to administer a portion of the State's Broadband Innovation Fund

- Respondents may submit responses to execute one or more of the program areas described, and should clearly indicate those for which they wish to be considered.

- All communications from prospective Respondents regarding this RFP should be directed by email to proposals@masstech.org.

- **Failure to comply with submission instructions may serve as grounds for rejection of a proposal.**

Questions!

proposals@masstech.org

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

Appendix A: Eligible Expense Categories / Program Area

Public_Space_Internet_Modernization
Outreach and engagement
Data analysis
Program marketing and development of materials
Procurement assistance
Technical assistance

Research to assess appropriate program interventions
Professional development and capacity building
Travel expenses
Site visits and evaluation
Internal space design/architecture

Network architecture as needed
Internet service
Network management
Networking equipment and configuration
Software licenses
Furniture (chairs, desks, lighting, etc)

WiFi_Access
Outreach and engagement
Data analysis
Program marketing and development of materials
Procurement assistance
Technical assistance

Research to assess appropriate program interventions
Professional development and capacity building
Travel expenses
Site visits and evaluation
Network architecture development

Internet service
Network management
Networking equipment, installation and configuration
Software licenses
Coordination with local service providers

Connectivity_Economic_Hardship
Outreach and engagement
Data analysis
Program marketing and development of materials
Procurement assistance
Technical assistance
Research to assess appropriate program interventions
Professional development and capacity building
Travel expenses
Site visits and evaluation
Hotspot devices
Internet service costs associated with hotspot devices

Digital_Literacy
Outreach and engagement
Data analysis
Program marketing and development of materials
Procurement assistance
Technical assistance

Research to assess appropriate program interventions
Professional development and capacity building
Travel expenses
Site visits and evaluation
Translation expenses
Professional development of digital literacy "trainers" for programs that model a "train the trainer" approach
Physical space to conduct training activities

Digital literacy training curriculum and/or service providers

Device_Distribution_Refurbishment
Outreach and engagement
Data analysis
Program marketing and development of materials
Procurement assistance
Technical assistance

Research to assess appropriate program interventions
Professional development and capacity building
Travel expenses
Site visits and evaluation
Training curriculum and or resources

Childcare expenses
Equipment, materials and supplies required for laptop/device refurbishment

New internet-connected devices, including Chromebooks, laptops and tablets
Logistical expenses related to laptop distribution
Space for use

Education_Outreach_Adoption
Outreach and engagement
Data analysis
Program marketing and development of materials
Procurement assistance
Technical assistance
Research to assess appropriate program interventions
Professional development and capacity building
Travel expenses
Site visits and evaluation
Translation expenses

Stakeholder surveys