MBI
MASSACHUSETTS
BROADBAND INSTITUTE

at the MassTech
Collaborative

Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program

Technical Assistance Webinar

November 17, 2023 @ 2:00 PM

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

Webinar Objectives

1. To provide prospective Applicants with guidance to develop grant applications that satisfy Program and grant solicitation requirements.

2. Prospective Applicants should utilize this webinar to inform project eligibility for funding and help put forth a successful grant application.

Agenda

01 | Webinar Guidelines

02 | Grant Program Overview

> Eligible Applicants, Projects, Locations, Technologies and Costs
>
> Priority Projects – Qualified Census Tracts and Gateway Municipalities
>
> Matching Funds, Waivers and Maximum Grant Award
>
> Scoring Criteria

03 | Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions

04 | Overview of Application and Online Application Demonstration

05 | Questions and Answers Session

01

Webinar Guidelines

Webinar Guidelines

- This Bidders Conference is being recorded.

- This presentation provides participants with an overview of Massachusetts Technology Collaborative ("MassTech"), Massachusetts Broadband Initiative ("MBI"), and the Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program.

- All microphones are muted on entry; please stay muted throughout the presentation

- Please set your screen name as your full name and affiliated organization

- There will be time allocated after the presentation for Q&A with attendees

- Written Questions must be submitted electronically to proposals@masstech.org on or before **November 22, 2023 @ 5:00 PM** with the following subject line: "Questions – Solicitation No. 2024-MBI-01".

- Answers will be posted on MassTech's website and COMMBUYS.

- If you have questions type them in the Q&A Chat

- MBI will be the only ones who see your posted questions and MBI will read as many questions as time permits

- MBI reserves the right to mute or dismiss participants that behave in an inappropriate manner

Established in 1982

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.

MBI
MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE

Mission: To partner with municipalities and service providers to close the digital divide in targeted areas of the Commonwealth.

MassCyberCenter

Mission: To support the cybersecurity ecosystem, compete as the national cybersecurity leader, and strengthen the resiliency of the public and private sector.

MeHI
MASSACHUSETTS eHEALTH INSTITUTE

Mission: To lead as the single best destination for digital health innovation with focus on accelerating innovation; health data transparency and access; and improving healthcare outcomes and costs.

THE INNOVATION INSTITUTE

Mission: To create conditions for growth in the innovation economy.

CAM
MASSACHUSETTS CENTER for ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Mission: To foster the most complete, most connected, and fastest manufacturing ecosystem from innovation through production.

Capital Projects Fund

- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts ("the Commonwealth) will make $145 million in Capital Projects Funds ("CPF") available to the Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program ("Gap Networks Grant Program" or the "Program"), to address the critical digital needs of towns and cities, with a particular focus on communities with substantial low-income households and disadvantaged populations.

- The Program will fund the deployment of broadband infrastructure in areas that currently lack access to sufficient broadband internet service, defined as service offering download speeds of at least 100 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 20 Mbps.

- The federal requirements for the ARPA Capital Projects Fund are different than the federal requirements for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

- MBI will administer two rounds of funding under the Gap Networks Grant Program. This process will end before MBI administers the subgrantree selection process under BEAD.

Timeline

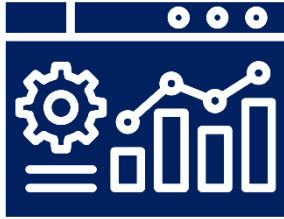| Milestone	Date
Program Launch – Release of Grant Solicitation	October 25, 2023
Online Grant Application Opens	November 16, 2023
Solicitation Round #1	
Solicitation Round Opens	October 25, 2023
Technical Assistance Webinar	November 17, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.
Questions Will Be Accepted and Answered on a Rolling Basis	Deadline to submit questions is November 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.
Application Round Closes	Applications must be received by December 11, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.
Grant Award Notifications	January – February 2024
Solicitation Round #2	
Solicitation Round Opens	March 6, 2024
Technical Assistance Webinar	March 18, 2024
Questions Will Be Accepted and Answered on a Rolling Basis	Deadline to submit questions is March 27, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
Application Round Closes	Applications must be received by April 17, 2024
Grant Award Notifications	May – June 2024

02

Grant Program Guidelines

Eligibility

Eligible Entities

- **Private entities**
  - Which includes corporations, limited liability companies, general partnerships, limited partnerships, etc.
- **Local governmental entities**
  - Which includes municipalities or municipal light plants that offer broadband service
- **Native American Indian Tribes**
- **Non-profit organizations**
- **Co-operatives, electric co-operatives, and utilities**
- **Public Private Partnerships**
  - Which are long-term agreements between local government entities and private entities for the delivery and funding of broadband services
- **Other entities that develop and/or operate broadband networks**
  - Which are entities that can demonstrate the experience, capacity and financial resources and stability to satisfy the grant obligations
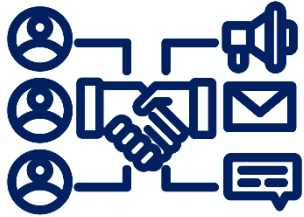
Eligibility

Eligible Technologies

- Must meet or exceed 100Mbps symmetrical speed requirement

- Preferred technologies are:

  - Fiber networks, and

  - Hybrid fiber-coaxial networks

- Fixed wireless technology will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Eligibility

Eligible Projects

- Last Mile

- Middle Mile – *Note: Applicants must demonstrate that Middle Mile is necessary to facilitate Last Mile connections (cannot exceed 25% of total project cost)*

Eligible Locations

- <u>Unserved Locations</u> are defined as locations without access to broadband internet speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.

- <u>Underserved Locations</u> are defined as locations without access to broadband internet speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload

- *Maps:*

  - In defining the project service area(s), Applicants are encouraged to review the public beta version of the Massachusetts Broadband Map (https://mapping.massbroadband.org/map/)and

  - the FCC's National Broadband Map (https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home).

Eligibility

Ineligible Locations

- Locations that are not broadband serviceable locations

- Served locations (access meets or exceed 100/20)

- Locations that have already received a binding funding commitment from federal or state sources such as:

  - Broadband infrastructure grant programs administered by EOED, including Last Mile Infrastructure Grant Program

  - Broadband infrastructure grant programs administered by MBI, including Flexible Grant, Broadband Extensions, and PPP Grant programs

  - Programs administered by NTIA, including Broadband Infrastructure, Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, and Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure programs

  - Programs administered by FCC, including RDOF and Enhanced-ACAM

  - Programs administered by USDA, including Reconnect, Community Connect, Telecommunications Loans, and Farm Bill programs

Overbuilds

- MBI will consider overbuilds only if:

  - The overbuild is incidental to accomplishing the overall objectives of the Program
  - *The overbuild is* the most cost-effective method of reaching the targeted Unserved and Underserved locations in the Project Service Area.
  - *The* Served and Unserved/Underserved locations within the PSA are clearly distinguished
  - Costs associated with an Overbuild are fully funded by the Applicant's Funding Match

Eligibility

Long Drops

- Applicants may request funding to cover the cost of a "non-standard" customer installation that requires the customer to contribute to the upfront, non-recurring cost of the installation.

- Applicant will cover standard installation portion of drop at its own cost

- Eligibility is limited to unserved and underserved locations in a Project Service Area

- Grant subsidy is capped at $10,000 per location

Qualified Census Tracts

A QCT is defined as an area where at least 50% of households have an income that is below 60% of the local Area Median Gross Income ("AMGI") or where the rate of poverty is 25% or higher.

Gateway Municipalities

A Gateway municipality is a municipality with a population greater than 35,000 and less than 250,000 with a median household income below the Commonwealth's average and a rate of educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or above that is below the commonwealth's average.

4.5.1 Eligible Costs

- Make ready
- Design and engineering
- Permitting and regulatory compliance
- Network equipment, fiber/cabling, facilities and materials
- Construction and installation
- Qualifying Long Drop, Non-Standard Customer Installation costs
- Qualifying Overbuild costs
- Facility leases > 1 year, including IRUs and capital leases
- Personnel costs
- Costs to comply with monitoring and reporting requirements

4.5.2 Ineligible Costs

- Acquisition of spectrum licenses
- Operating expenses
- Short-term operation leases
- Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments
- Fees associated with issuance of new debt
- Satisfaction of any settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, judicially confirmed debt restructuring plan, etc.
- Support or opposition of collective bargaining
- Program grant application preparation costs
- Expenses incurred prior to grant agreement execution

MATCHING FUNDS AND WAIVERS

Match Funding Contributions

- Mandatory minimum Funding Match of 20% of total project costs
- Funding Match up to the minimum of 20% must be the Applicant's own source and cash funded.
- In-kind contributions cannot be counted toward match requirement
- Funding Match amounts that exceed 20% will receive additional points during the evaluation and may be externally sourced.

Waivers

- Waivers of Funding Match requirement are only available for municipalities with outstanding debt obligations remaining from broadband infrastructure projects that will have broadband coverage gaps addressed by the proposed project.
- Debt must be incurred prior to submission of grant application

MAXIMUM GRANT AWARD

Maximum Grant Award

The maximum grant amount to be awarded to a grant Applicant in a quarterly funding round is $20 million regardless of the number of grant applications submitted or PSAs proposed by the grant Applicant.

EVALUATION CRITERIA SCORING

Evaluation Criteria		Maximum Scoring
8.2.1.1	Support of Target Populations and Equity	30 pts
	Communities served	5 pts
	Number of locations served, and level of speed provided by the project	9 pts
	Extent to which low-income populations will be served	5 pts
	Affordability of subscriber plan that provides minimum of 100/20 service offered by Applicant	6 pts
	Community support	5 pts
8.2.1.2	Applicant's Ability to Execute the Project	25 pts
	Financial capability	10 pts
	Organizational capacity and resources	8 pts
	Experience with implementing projects of similar size and complexity	7 pts

EVALUATION CRITERIA SCORING

Evaluation Criteria		Maximum Scoring
8.2.1.3	Project Feasibility and Reasonableness	25 pts
	Amount of matching funds leveraged / waiver (when applicable)	10 pts
	Reasonableness of proposed project schedule	5 pts
	Efficient use of existing infrastructure	3 pts
	Reasonableness of proposed project budget	7 pts
8.2.1.4	Technological Approach	20 pts
	Soundness of technical approach	5 pts
	Reliability of proposed network design and technologies	5 pts
	Upload and download speed tiers offered by Applicant	10 pts

EVALUATION CRITERIA SCORING

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Scoring
8.2.1.5 Optional Bonus Criteria	6 pts
#1 – Workforce and Labor Standards	2 pts
#2 – Community Empowerment	2 pts
#3 – Environmental Sustainability	2 pts

03

Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions

Grant Terms and Conditions

- The Funding Agreement will include terms and conditions including, but not limited to:

  - Description of the services

  - Roles and responsibilities

  - Grant payment schedule (payment on a reimbursement basis upon completion of milestones)

  - Eligible uses of funds

  - Period of performance

  - Accounting and reporting requirements

  - Compliance requirements

  - Remedies for noncompliance

  - Audit practices

  - Recording keeping

  - Internal controls, and

  - Other terms required by federal law

04

Overview of Application & Online Application Demonstration

Overview of Application

- Applications must be submitted along with all necessary attachments through the Gap Networks Program application site on MBI's website (https://masstech.org/broadband-infrastructure-gap-networks-grant-program)

- The online grant application went live on November 16, 2023

- Online grant application structure:

  - General information about the Applicant and a high level summary of the Application will be submitted through Airtable online form.

  - Information that is required for each proposed Project Service Area is submitted through three online fillable PDF forms and an Excel Spreadsheet that contains the PSA Addresses Data Template.

- The links to the PDF forms and Excel spreadsheet are embedded in the Airtable online application. Links to each of these documents are also posted on the Gap Networks program page on the MBI website

- The online Airtable application has the ability to save your progress as long as the same computer and browser is used for each session.

Overview of Application

- All responses, applications, data, materials, information, and documentation submitted in response to the Gap Networks Program shall become MBI's property and shall be subject to public disclosure.

- MassTech/MBI is public entity and is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law. Every document submitted to MassTech/MBI is a public record unless an exemption applies.

- If an Applicant wishes to have MassTech treat certain information or documentation as confidential, the Applicant must submit a written request to MassTech's General Counsel prior to submission to MassTech/MBI. The details for this process are in Section 7.2 of the grant solicitation.

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Questions and Answers Session