BIDDERS' CONFERENCE 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 Bidders' Conference to inform project eligibility for funding and help put forth a successful grant application.

MBI
MASSACHUSETTS
BROADBAND INSTITUTE | at the MassTech Collaborative

Agenda

01 | Introduction

02 | Grant Program Overview

      02A | Round 2 Solicitation Updates

      02B | Eligible and Ineligible: Entities, Projects, Locations, Technologies, and Costs

      02C | Priority Projects: Qualified Census Tracts and Gateway Municipalities

      02D | Alternative Construction Types: Overbuild and Long Drops

      02E | Matching Funds and Waivers

      02F | Threshold and Scoring Criteria

03 | Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions

04 | Overview of Application and Online Application Demonstration

05 | Questions and Answers Session

01

Introduction

Bidders' Conference 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 **June 12, 2024 @ 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

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

Cam MASSACHUSETTS CENTER for ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE

MeHI MASSACHUSETTS eHEALTH INSTITUTE

MassCyberCenter

NEMC Northeast Microelectronics Coalition **HUB**

Administering ~$530M in state and federal funds over the next 2 fiscal years.

Established in 1982 by Legislative Statute

Capital Projects Fund

- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts ("the Commonwealth) has made $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 is funding 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 has administered Round One and has launched Round Two of the Gap Networks Grant Program. This process will end before MBI administers the subgrantree selection process under BEAD.

Timeline

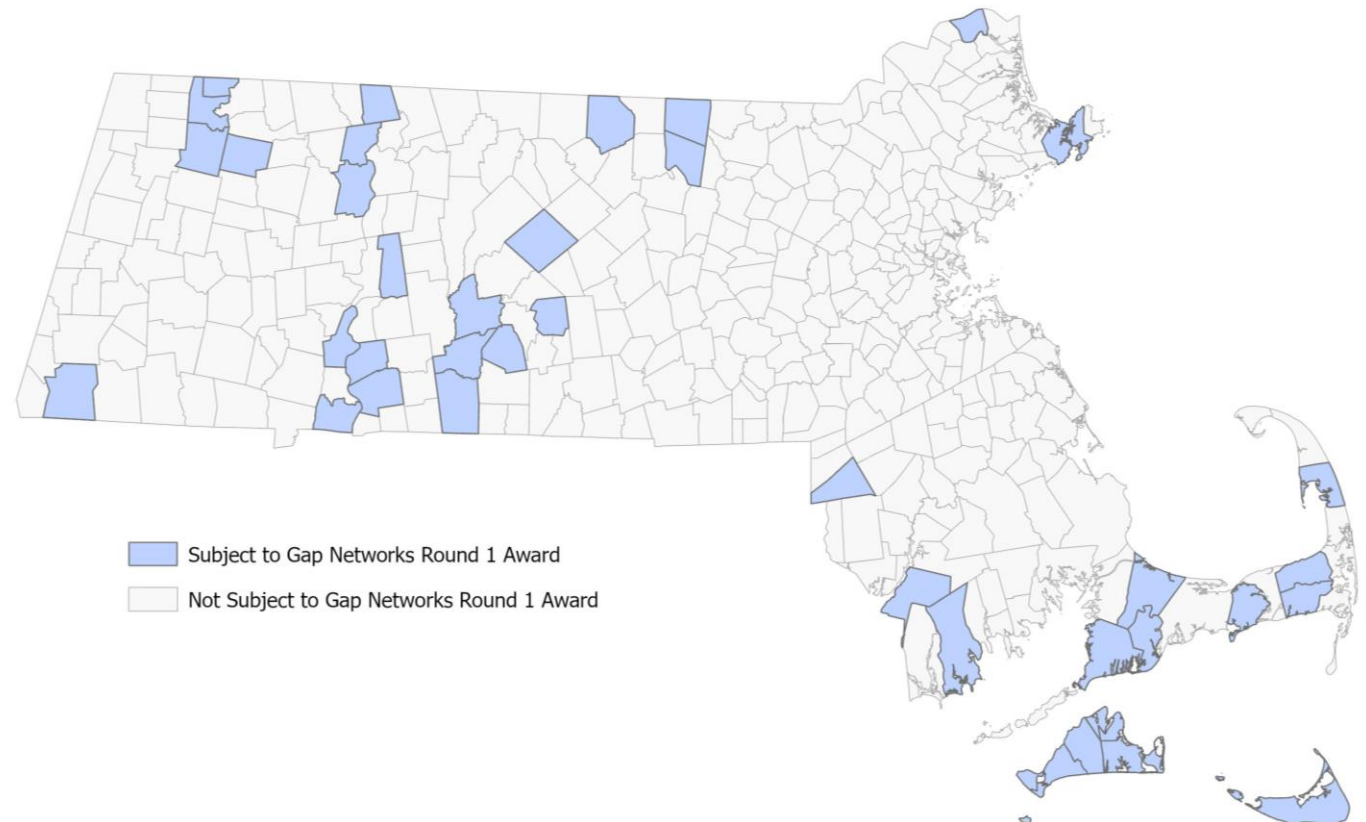| Milestone	Date
Program Launch – Release of Grant Solicitation	October 25, 2023
Online Grant Application Opens	November 16, 2023
Solicitation Round #1	
Solicitation Round Opens	October 25, 2023
Technical Assistance Webinar	November 17, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.
Questions Will Be Accepted and Answered on a Rolling 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	April 2024
Solicitation Round #2	
Solicitation Round Opens	May 23, 2024
Technical Assistance Webinar	June 7, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.
Questions Will Be Accepted and Answered on a Rolling Basis	Deadline to submit questions is June 12, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
Application Round Closes	Applications must be received by July 2, 2024
Grant Award Notifications	Fall 2024

INELIGIBLE MUNICIPALITIES

The following municipalities are subject to an award under Round 1 and are therefore not eligible for funding under Round 2:

- Agawam
- Amesbury
- Amherst
- Ashburnham
- Attleboro
- Barre
- Bernardston
- Brewster
- Chicopee
- Dartmouth
- Deerfield
- Fall River
- Falmouth
- Florida
- Gloucester
- Greenfield

- Harwich
- Hawley
- Holyoke
- Lunenburg
- Martha's Vineyard (Aquinnah, Chilmark, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Vineyard Haven, West Tisbury)
- Mashpee
- Monroe
- Monson
- Nantucket
- North Brookfield
- Palmer
- Sandwich
- Savoy
- Sheffield

- Springfield
- Townsend
- Ware

- Warren
- Wellfleet
- Yarmouth

Subject to Gap Networks Round 1 Award
Not Subject to Gap Networks Round 1 Award

02

Grant Program Overview

Section 2.3 - Updates to data sources that may be used by Applicants to reflect posting of BSL Eligibility List by MBI; handling of community anchor institutions; description of MBI's data reconciliation processes.

Section 3.1 - Procurement schedule for Round 2 of the Gap Networks Program.

Section 4.1.2 - Updates related to status of the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Section 4.4 - Update to applicability of Applicant's customer installation policy.

Section 4.4.1 - Updates to definition of Project Service Area; clarifications regarding broadband serviceable location eligibility; clarifications regarding municipal letter of support and applicability of funding cap for quarterly grant rounds.

Section 4.4.4 - Updated timeframe for applicable customer installation policy.

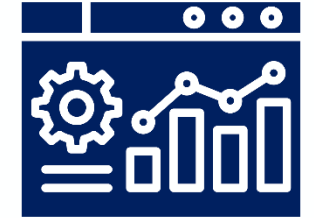**Section 6.2** - Updated to delete maximum grant award cap.

Section 8.1 - Clarification of threshold review process.

Section 8.2.2.2 (A) (2) – Letter of credit provisions from Amendment #2 to Round 1 Solicitation.

Section 10.2.1 - Clarifications regarding requirement of grantees to participate in MBI's mapping and data collection activities.
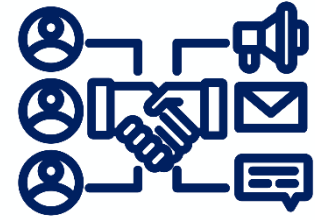
Section 10.2.6 - Clarified applicability of performance and payment bond requirements.

Attachments - ATTACHMENT 1, ANNEX A, ANNEX B, ANNEX C – Letter of credit templates from Amendment #2 to Round 1 Solicitation.

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
- **Tribal governments**
- **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

Eligible Projects

- **Last Mile** – is broadband infrastructure that serves as the final leg connecting the internet service provider's network to the end-user customer's on-premises telecommunications equipment.

- **Middle Mile** – is high-capacity broadband infrastructure that connects disparate communities to the internet backbone, is not intended to connect directly to large numbers of end-user locations and enables interconnecting disparate internet service provider infrastructure to last mile broadband services of at least 100 megabits per second download and 100 megabits per second upload and is scalable to higher speeds.

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

Project Service Areas (PSAs)

- A Project Service Area ("PSA") refers to a specific geographical region encompassing a single municipality where the Applicant proposes to provide broadband services. PSAs also referred to as ("Projects") can include BSLs on both public and private lands. Applicants must commit to serving all Unserved and Underserved BSLs in each PSA.

- Applicants are only allowed to include one municipality in each PSA or Project.

- There is no limit to the number of PSAs that each grant application can include. Each proposed PSA will be evaluated separately and, if awarded, each PSA will have their own scope of work.

- The grant applications must include a letter of support from the governing body of each municipality corresponding to the PSA that will be served by the proposed project. The municipal letter of support may be satisfied by a letter supporting the Applicant's project signed by the chief executive or administrative officer of the municipality, including a Town Manager, Town Administrator, City Manager or Mayor. Failure to include a letter of support from the governing body in the application will disqualify the PSA from consideration.

Eligible Locations

- Underserved Locations are BSLs without access to broadband internet speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.

- Underserved Locations are BSLs 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 FCC's National Broadband Map (https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home).

Broadband Serviceable Locations: BSLs are premises that include one or more residence or business where fixed broadband internet access service is or could be installed.

BSL Eligibility List: A list of all BSLs that are presumptively eligible for funding in Round 2 are available for download from the solicitation page: (https://masstech.org/broadband-infrastructure-gap-networks-grant-program).

Projects must include all eligible BSLs from the BSL Eligibility List for the proposed municipalities.

BSL Reconciliation: Award recipients will have the opportunity work collaboratively with MBI to modify the final Project BSL list prior to contract execution. Modifications may include the following:

- Adding eligible BSLs to the Project that are missing from the BSL Eligibility List,

- Adding community anchor institutions that were not on the BSL Eligibility List

- Removing BSLs from Project that do not meet program guidelines

Ineligible Locations

- Locations that are not broadband serviceable locations (with the exception of community anchor institutions)

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

- Locations that have already subject to 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

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

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

Qualified Census Tracts

A Qualified Census Tract (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.

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

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. These are costs other than standard connection fees charged to all customers.

- 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

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

Threshold Criteria
1. Did the Applicant complete section 3 of the Application – General Information?
2. Did the Applicant (i) complete and submit Section 4 of the Application – Project Service Area Overview; and (ii) upload all required attachments, including required supporting documentation?
3. Did the Applicant (i) complete and submit Section 5.1 of the Application – Support of Target Populations and Equity; and (ii) upload all required attachments, including required supporting documentation?
4. Did the Applicant (i) complete Section 5.2 of the Application – Applicant's Ability to Execute the Project; (ii) upload all required attachments, including required supporting documentation?
5. Did the Applicant (i) complete and upload Section 5.3 of the Application – Project Feasibility and Reasonableness; and (ii) upload all required attachments, including required supporting documentation?
6. Did the Applicant (i) complete Section 5.4 of the Application – Technological Approach; and (ii) upload all required attachments, including all required supporting documentation?

! **Please refer to the grant solicitation for the full list of required attachments.**

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		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	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

Confidentiality

- 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.

04

Overview of Application & Online Application Demonstration

Overview of Application

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

- The online grant application for Round 2 went live on May 23, 2024

- Online grant application structure:

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

  o Information that is required for each proposed Project Service Area is submitted through three fillable PDF forms and up to twelve spreadsheet templates.

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

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

Application Demonstration

Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program
Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the updated versions of Solicitation No. 2024-MBI-01 thoroughly before starting the online application process. The Solicitation guides Applicants through the requirements for application submission and articulates the key factors considered in application evaluation.

Contents

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Questions and Answers Session

Please reach out to broadband@masstech.org with any additional questions