

MBI

MASSACHUSETTS
BROADBAND INSTITUTE



at the MassTech
Collaborative

Launchpad Program

Bidders' Conference

March 12, 2025, at 1pm

Webinar Conference Guidelines

- This webinar is being recorded.
- This presentation provides participants with an overview of Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (“MassTech”), Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (“MBI”), and the Digital Equity Resource List.
- 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 **March 14, 2025 @ 5:00 PM** with the following subject line: “Questions – RFI No. 2025-MBI-10 .”
- Answers will be posted on MassTech’s website and COMMBUYS.
- If you have questions during this Bidders' Conference, please 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.

Agenda

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



01

Introduction

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

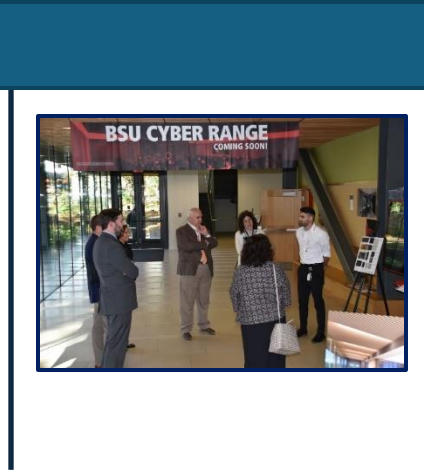
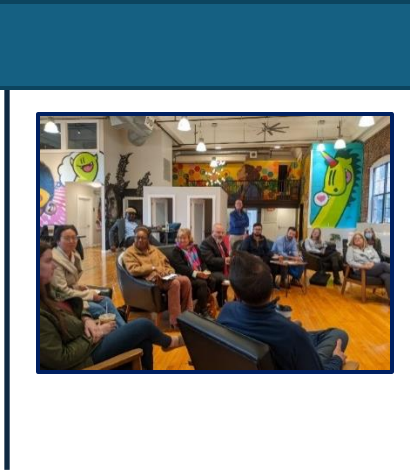
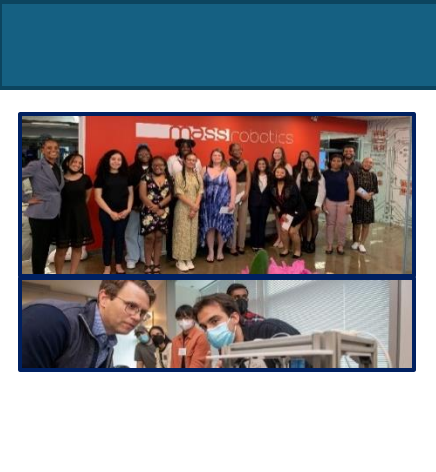
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MassCyberCenter

NEMC
Northeast Microelectronics Coalition
HUB



Established in 1982 by Legislative Statute

Digital Equity Resource List (RFI)

Goals:

- Identify service providers and vendors who provide services aimed at providing digital equity and inclusion services
- Increase visibility of service providers and vendors who can support and advance MBI's mission to close the digital divide

Focus areas for vendors: Wi-Fi Access, Public Space Modernization, Connectivity for Economic Hardship, Digital Literacy, & Device Distribution & Refurbishment

Qualifications:

- Experience working with at least one of the Digital Equity Act defined Covered Populations
- Offer a digital equity and inclusion service aligned with one or more of the focus areas and have been providing digital equity and inclusion services for at least 6-months within the United States
- Attest that you have capacity to serve communities in Massachusetts at the time of RFI response submission

Key Dates:

- **March 14th:** RFI Closes
- **March 28th:** RFI Results Posted



Timeline

Activity	Date
RFP Launched/Concept Papers Open	February 25, 2025
Bidders Conference	March 12, 2025
Questions Due	March 14, 2025
Responses Posted	March 21, 2025
Concept Paper Phase Closes	April 25, 2025
Invitations to Full Application Sent/Full Application Opens	May 12, 2025
Full Application Due	July 16, 2025
Award Notification	Anticipated September 2025
*All RFP schedule descriptions and dates are tentative and subject to change.	



02

Program Overview

Background: MBI Digital Equity Partnerships Program

Purpose: Address digital equity gaps across Massachusetts, focusing on economically disadvantaged households as part of the Commonwealth's COVID recovery efforts

Funding Source: \$50M Broadband Innovation Fund (ARPA 1.0 legislation), utilizing Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds

History: Funds were designated to 9 Partners across the state to implement initiatives in 6 key initiative areas, working with organization in the community

Example: Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers expanded their Telehealth Navigation program to assist individuals requiring specialized digital skills training and devices

Learn more about what each partner is doing under each initiative area at:

<https://broadband.masstech.org/partnerships>

Digital Equity Act (DEA)

The Digital Equity Act (DEA), enacted as part of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, allocates \$2.75 billion to promote digital equity and inclusion across the United States. The DEA comprises three primary grant programs:

- 1. State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program**
- 2. Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program**
- 3. State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program**
 - Massachusetts Received \$14.1 Million in funding
 - \$9.44 million is allocated to the Launchpad Program



The Launchpad Program Overview

Goal: Address gaps in digital equity grantmaking in Massachusetts

Total Funding Available: \$9.44 million

Grant Awards: Up to \$1,000,000 per grantee

Priority Geographic Areas:

- Barnstable, Bristol, Worcester Counties

Priority Covered Populations:

- Incarcerated/formerly incarcerated individuals
- Residents with language barriers
- Veterans



LAUNCHPAD

Who Can Apply?

Eligible Applicants:

- Nonprofit Organizations
- Municipalities (city/town governments)
- Regional Planning Agencies
- Philanthropic Foundations
- State Agencies & Quasi-Governmental Entities
- Educational Providers (schools, colleges, universities)
- Healthcare Providers
- Community Action Agencies
- Other

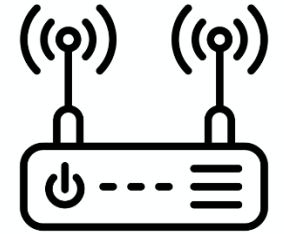
What We Fund for Digital Equity



Public Space Internet
Modernization

Digital Equity Initiative Areas

Refer to section 2.2b for further description



Device Distribution
and Refurbishment



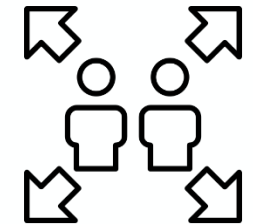
Wi-Fi Access



Digital Literacy



Connectivity for Economic
Hardship



Education, Outreach, &
Adoption
(inc. Digital Navigation &
Coalition-Building)

NTIA Covered Populations

The Digital Equity Act programs focus on empowering those most impacted by the digital divide, referred to as “Covered Populations.” The Covered Populations are:

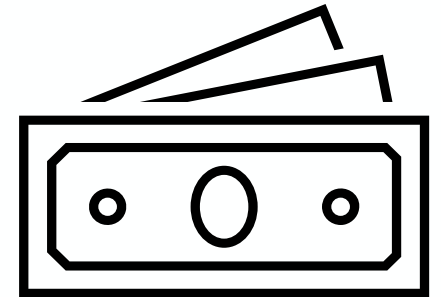
Aging Individuals (60 and older)	Residents of Rural Areas
Currently/Formerly Incarcerated Individuals	Individuals with a Language Barrier (English Learners or Low-Literacy)
Individuals with Disabilities	Veterans
Low Income Households (<150% of Federal Poverty Level)	Members of Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups

Eligible Costs

Staff time associated with project management and implementation, fiduciary management, ongoing compliance, and quarterly reporting.

Program development and planning activities, including:

- Stakeholder outreach and engagement
- Site visits and evaluation
- Research to assess appropriate program interventions
- Procurement of consultants to support technical assistance
- Data analysis
- Program marketing and development of materials
- Procurement assistance
- Professional development and capacity building
- Participation in national/state/regional communities of practice
- Conference attendance
- Technical training opportunities



Eligible Costs by Initiative

<u>Initiative</u>	<u>Eligible Costs</u>
Education, Outreach, & Adoption	Staff time, outreach materials, translation, training for Digital Navigators, marketing, surveys
Public Spaces Internet Modernization	Infrastructure upgrades, networking equipment, furniture (e.g., chairs, desks), software, installation
Connectivity for Economic Hardship	WiFi hotspot devices, internet service costs, administrative support, outreach & distribution
Digital Literacy	Training materials, curriculum development, instructor costs, participant support, professional development
Device Refurbishment & Distribution	New/refurbished devices, refurbishment equipment, logistics, marketing, tracking & reporting
Wi-Fi Access	Network design, internet service, hardware, software, installation, technical support

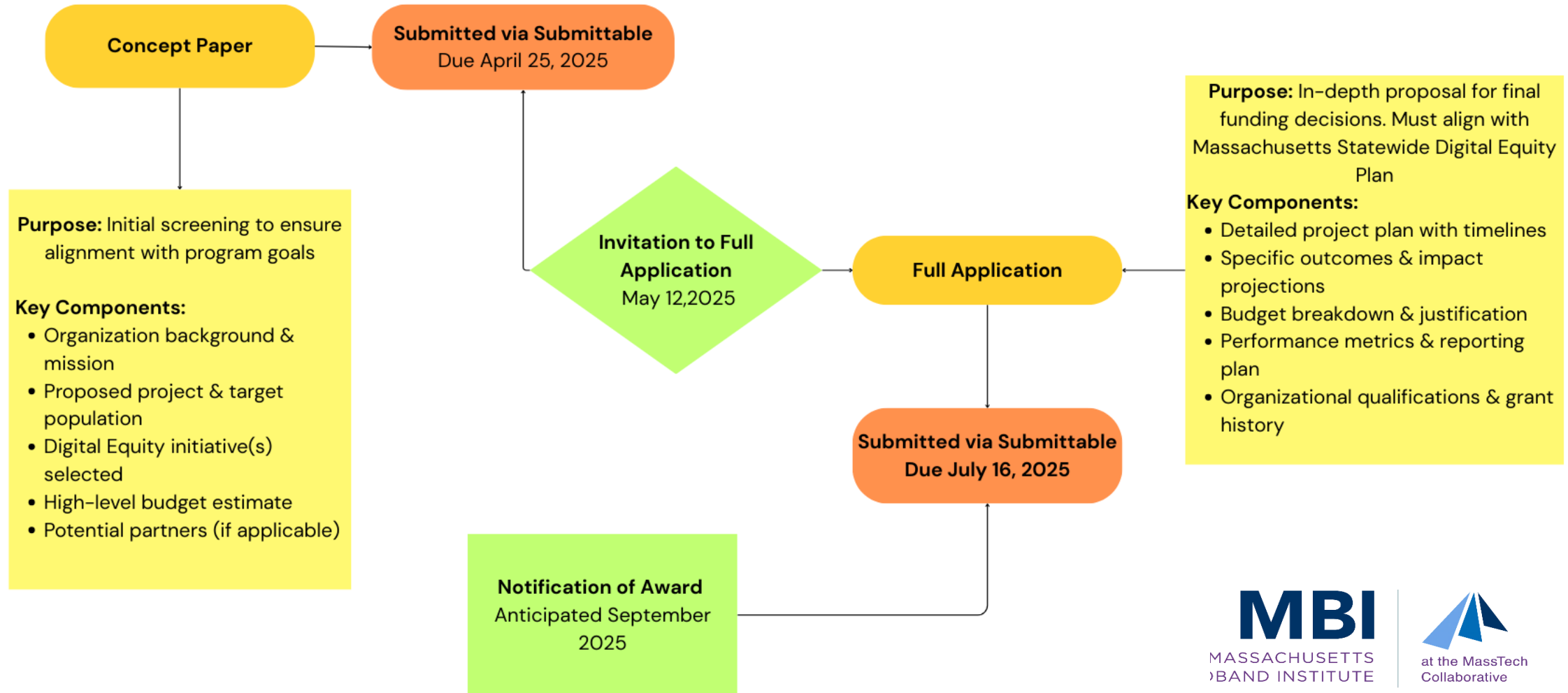
***Refer to section 2.2c for further description**



03

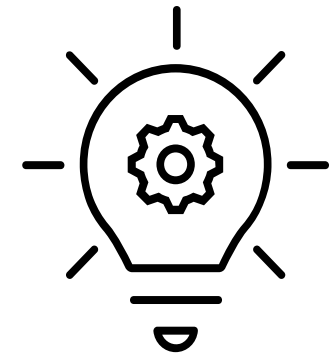
Application Process

Grant Process Overview



Concept Paper Evaluation Criteria

- Is the Respondent eligible for this funding opportunity?
- Did the Respondent submit all required components of the Concept Paper?
- Are the Respondent's proposed goals and approach aligned to at least one of the pre-defined Digital Equity initiative areas (refer to Section 2.2)?
- Is the Respondent's target population inclusive of at least one Covered Population?



***Refer to section 3.3 for further description**

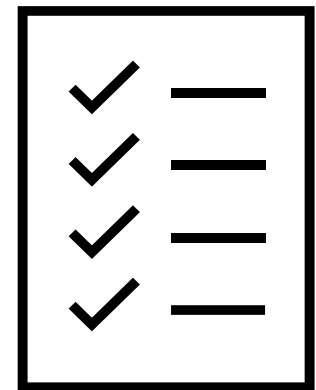
Full Application Evaluation Criteria

Main Criteria:

- **Community Impact (Max 20 pts)** – Who will benefit & how?
- **Project Execution (Max 25 pts)** – Realistic plan & ability to implement in 90 days
- **Financial Management (Max 10 pts)** – Clear budget & responsible oversight
- **Reporting Capacity (Max 10 pts)** – Ability to track & measure success
- **Experience with Grants (Mac 5 pts)** – Past work with federal/state grants
- **Alignment with Goals (Max 20 pts)** – Realistic, achievable, and scalable impact

Bonus Points:

- **Serving Priority Geographic Areas (Max 10 pts)**
- **Serving Priority Populations (Max 10 pts)**



***Refer to section 3.4 for further description**

Reporting & Compliance

<u>Initiative</u>	<u>Key Reporting Metrics</u>	
Education, Outreach, & Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital navigation services • Coalition-building progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifeline enrollment • Outreach impact
Public Spaces Internet Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network users • Session lengths • Improved access to education & services 	
Connectivity for Economic Hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotspots distributed • Support for unhoused individuals • Improved opportunities 	
Digital Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training completion • Basic-Advanced skill levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT certifications • Impact surveys
Device Refurbishment & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices distributed • Refurbishment tracking • Households served 	
Wi-Fi Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households adopting internet • Unique users • Social & economic impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost savings • Session lengths

***Refer to section 2.2d for further description**

Technical Assistance

MBI will provide technical assistance in the upcoming weeks in the following areas:

- Concept Paper
- Full Application for invited applicants
- Cybersecurity framework

More information around this in the coming weeks

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04

Submitting an Application

How to Submit an Application

1. Go to the Application Portal

- Visit the [Launchpad Program Submittable page](#)

2. Sign In or Create an Account

- **New users:** Click "**Sign Up**" and create a free Submittable account.
- **Returning users:** Log in with your existing credentials.

3. Complete the Application Form

- Fill out all required fields, upload supporting documents, and review entries carefully.

4. Save & Review Your Work

- Use the "**Save Draft**" feature if you need more time before submission.

5. Submit Your Application

- Click "**Submit**" when ready. You'll receive a **confirmation email** upon successful submission.

6. Track Your Application

- Log into Submittable anytime to check your status or respond to requests for additional information.

Need More Help? Watch the step-by-step guide here: [Submittable Help Center](#)

Next Steps for Applicants



Questions are due by 5:00 PM EST on March 14, 2025.



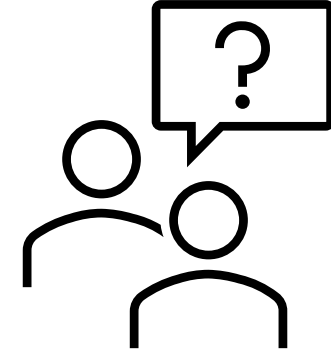
Prepare & Submit Concept Paper by April 25, 2025



If invited, complete Full Application by July 16, 2025

Additional Information & Resources

- **Website:** [Launchpad Program Page](#)
- **Solicitation Page:** [Launchpad Solicitation](#)
- **Questions Submission:** [Q&A Form](#)
- **Concept Paper Portal:** [Submittable Link](#)
- **Submittable Instructions:** [Submittable Help Center](#)
- **Team Lead:** Caitlin Schubert - schubert@masstech.org



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05

Questions

A background network diagram consisting of numerous blue nodes connected by thin lines, creating a complex web-like structure. The nodes are of varying sizes and are distributed across the entire frame. A dark blue horizontal bar is positioned in the upper middle section of the image.

06

Appendix

Summary of Key Digital Equity Initiatives

Digital Literacy Training:

- Offers customized training programs to help residents develop essential digital skills.
- Training formats include in-person workshops, online courses, and one-on-one instruction.

Education, Outreach, and Adoption:

- Connects residents to free or discounted broadband, devices, and digital skills training.
- Coalition building to help expand access and education around the importance of digital equity.
- Digital Navigators provide personalized guidance to help individuals access and use digital resources.

Connectivity for Economic Hardship:

- Provides Wi-Fi hotspots for individuals experiencing economic hardship or housing instability.

Public Spaces Internet Modernization:

- Upgrades broadband infrastructure and digital resources in spaces like libraries, community centers, schools, and workforce training locations.
- Expands public access to reliable internet in high-traffic community spaces.

Device Refurbishment & Distribution:

- Supplies new or refurbished internet-connected devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones) to organizations and residents.

Wi-Fi Access for Affordable Housing & Low-Income Neighborhoods:

- Designs and implements technology solutions to provide in-unit internet access for residents in affordable housing and underserved areas.
- Expands home broadband availability for those who need it most.