Grant Solicitation - Launchpad Program

Solicitation No. 2025-MBI-10

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
75 North Drive
Westborough, MA 01581-3340
http://www.masstech.org

Procurement Team Leader:	**Caitlin Schubert**
Solicitation Issued:	**2/25/2025**
Respondent's Conference:	**3/12/2025**
Questions Due:	**3/14/2025**
Answers to Questions Posted:	**3/21/2025**
Concept Papers Due:	**4/25/2025**
Invitations to Submit Full Application:	**5/12/2025**
Full Applications Due:	**7/16/2025**

1. INTRODUCTION

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative ("Mass Tech Collaborative" or "MassTech"), on behalf of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute ("MBI") is issuing this Solicitation for the Launchpad Program (Solicitation No.2025-MBI-10) (the "Solicitation") to solicit responses from qualified entities ("Respondents"). MBI seeks to award grants to qualified Respondents to implement digital equity initiatives in one or more of the six Digital Equity initiative areas described in Section 2.2 of this Solicitation. The submissions of all Respondents shall be compared and evaluated pursuant to the evaluation criteria set forth in this Solicitation.

Mass Tech Collaborative will be the contracting entity on behalf of MBI for the purposes of this Solicitation, and (except where the specific context warrants otherwise), MBI and Mass Tech Collaborative are collectively referred to as Mass Tech Collaborative or MassTech. Mass Tech Collaborative will enter into a **Subaward Grant Agreement (Federally Funded)** with selected Respondents containing certain standard provisions (the "Agreement"), a sample agreement is located **HERE**. Funding agreements will contain certain standard provisions, including mandatory federal flow down provisions that may be updated by Mass Tech Collaborative, as needed.

1.2 Mass Tech Collaborative and MBI

Mass Tech Collaborative is an independent public instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts chartered by the Commonwealth to serve as a catalyst for growing its innovation economy. Mass Tech Collaborative brings together leaders from industry, academia, and government to advance technology-focused solutions that lead to economic growth, job creation, and public benefits in Massachusetts. For additional information about Mass Tech Collaborative and its programs and initiatives, please visit the website at www.masstech.org.

MBI is the central broadband office for the Commonwealth. The primary mission of MBI is to extend affordable, robust, high-speed Internet access to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public places across Massachusetts with a focus on the hard-to-serve areas of western and central Massachusetts. For more information about MBI and its programs and activities generally, please visit the web site at https://broadband.masstech.org.

2. ABOUT THIS SOLICITATION

2.1 Launchpad Program Overview

As part of the first allocation of the federal 2024 Digital Equity Act ("DEA") Capacity Grant Program administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration ("NTIA"), the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development ("EOED") has delegated MBI as the grantmaking entity for approximately $9.44 million of funding within the Launchpad Program. The Launchpad Program builds on the success of MBI's Digital Equity Partnerships Program and intends to address gaps in MBI's current set of digital equity-focused grant making activities.

To close these gaps, MBI will prioritize Launchpad Program funding to entities reaching residents in select geographies and impacting specific populations, as follows:

Priority Geographic Locations
- Barnstable, Bristol, and Worcester Counties, including but not limited to Gateway Municipalities (i.e., municipalities with a population between 35,000-250,000 with a median household income below the state's average and a rate of educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or above that is below the State's average) and state-designated rural communities as defined by the Massachusetts State Office of Rural Health

Priority Covered Populations[1]

- Incarcerated/formerly incarcerated individuals, residents with language barriers, and veterans

Proposed services to the Priority Geographic Locations and Priority Covered Populations listed above will be scored preferably (see Section 4 for more details); however, Respondents may submit a Concept Paper (as discussed further below) regardless of the geography or Covered Population they propose to serve.

MassTech seeks to fund successful Respondents across the state who will be responsible for implementing digital equity initiatives in six discrete Digital Equity initiative areas over a two-year performance period. Respondents who successfully pass the Concept Paper step of the Solicitation will be invited to submit a Full Application for grant funding not to exceed $1,000,000. While Respondents may request funding up to the maximum award amount, only the most compelling proposals will be considered for awards at the maximum amount.

2.2 Grant Requirements and Guidance

a. Eligible Respondents

Entities eligible to respond to this Solicitation are as follows:

- Nonprofit Organizations, including community-based organizations
- Municipalities
- Regional Planning Agencies
- Philanthropic Foundations
- State Agencies or Quasi-Governmental Entities
- Educational or Healthcare Providers
- Community Action Agencies

MassTech will allow partnerships with individual organizations and coalitions of multiple organizations to participate as long as there is a clearly defined lead applicant. The lead applicant must describe the roles and responsibilities of each partner or coalition member ("Sub-Applicants") participating.

Respondents to this Solicitation may submit responses to implement projects under one or more of the initiative areas described herein. Respondents should clearly indicate the initiative areas for which they wish to be considered for selection.

b. Eligible Activities

Selected Respondents (i.e., "grantees") will be responsible for implementing digital equity projects in one or more of the following six initiative areas. Note that these six initiative areas correspond with MBI's Digital Equity Partnerships Program and MBI's Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program, in an effort to resource digital equity work within a consistent framework.

- **WiFi Access Initiative:** Establish WiFi systems in affordable (public housing or otherwise subsidized by federal or state sources) multi-unit buildings or low-income neighborhoods that provide free, in unit, broadband internet use.

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[1] "Covered Populations" is defined by NTIA as those most impacted by the digital divide. This Solicitation prioritizes a subset of Covered Populations, specifically incarcerated/formerly incarcerated individuals, residents with language barriers, and veterans, which are referred to herein as "Priority Covered Populations." However, in order to be eligible, each submission in response to this Solicitation must serve one or more of the NTIA's defined Covered Populations. (See Attachment D for a full list of Covered Populations).

- **Public Space Internet Modernization Initiative:** Make improvements to inadequate broadband infrastructure and resources in public spaces.
- **Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship:** Provide cellular WiFi "hot spots" to individuals experiencing economic hardship, including individuals lacking stable housing, where they are unable to have a fixed broadband internet subscription, or individuals who were eligible for the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program ("ACP") prior to February 8, 2024.
- **Digital Literacy Initiative:** Establish and implement digital literacy training programs to ensure that target populations have the requisite skills to use devices, online resources, and digital tools.
- **Device Distribution and Refurbishment Initiative:** Secure new or used internet-connected devices that can be distributed to residents. For used devices, the organization will train individuals to refurbish devices, and the devices will be properly refurbished prior to distribution. The organization will be responsible for tracking, monitoring, and reporting on distributed devices.
- **Education, Outreach, and Adoption Support Initiative:** Provision of outreach, engagement, and/or coalition-building activities, as well as digital navigation services, designed to increase success of digital equity programming, including awareness and adoption of lower cost internet options, digital literacy programs, devices access, and WiFi or hotspot connectivity.

Grantees will implement their work within a two-year performance period. Grantees will also be obligated to report on specified metrics for each initiative area, along with a brief project narrative, on a quarterly basis. Grantees will also be obligated to participate in not less than 50% of monthly Statewide Digital Equity Coalition virtual meetings hosted by MBI during the period of performance of the grant.

c. Eligible Costs

The following project costs are eligible:

- 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

Additionally, the following costs are eligible for each Digital Equity initiative area.

WiFi Access:
- Network architecture development
- Internet service
- Network management
- Networking equipment, installation and configuration
- Software licenses
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities
- Administrative staff time

Public Space Internet Modernization:

- Internal space design/architecture
- Network architecture as needed
- Internet service
- Network management
- Networking equipment and configuration
- Software licenses
- Furniture (chairs, desks, lighting, etc.)
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities
- Administrative staff time

Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship:
- Hotspot devices
- Internet service costs associated with hotspot devices
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities
- Administrative staff time

Digital Literacy:
- Digital literacy training curriculum and/or service providers
- Professional development of digital literacy "trainers" for programs that model a "train the trainer" approach
- Physical space to conduct training activities
- Translation expenses
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities
- Participant support costs
- Administrative staff time

Device Distribution and Refurbishment:
- Equipment, materials and supplies required for laptop/device refurbishment
- New internet-connected devices, including Chromebooks, laptops and tablets
- Outreach and marketing of program to potential device donors
- Training curriculum and/or resources
- Program staff time
- Logistical expenses related to device distribution, tracking, monitoring, and reporting
- Participant support costs
- Administrative staff time

Education, Outreach, and Adoption:
- Stakeholder outreach and engagement
- Stakeholder surveys
- Data analysis and planning to inform targeted outreach
- Development of marketing and/or education and outreach materials, including translation and graphic design expenses (hard copy and online content)
- Professional development of digital navigators (e.g., implementation of NDIA's training curriculum for Digital Navigation)
- Physical space to conduct digital navigation activities
- Equipment and devices for digital navigators
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities
- Administrative staff time

d. Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to submit quarterly reports, inclusive of a narrative report and quantitative

metrics, as follows:

Wi-Fi Access:
- Description of Baseline Metrics: Grantees will note if service is new or existing at program outset. If new, baseline is zero for all the metrics listed below. If existing, grantees will provide a baseline from existing services, then will report on expansion of services due to funding.
- Methodology: Grantees will submit quarterly reports on program usage metrics. Grantees will be required to produce an annual survey of residents regarding the impact of the network. Metrics will be measured as follows:
    - o Number of unique network users – measured through backend management
    - o Length of session – measured through backend management
    - o Number of households adopting internet usage that were previously unable to – measured through survey
    - o Number of households able to save costs on internet because of WiFi system – measured through survey
    - o Number of residents citing improvements to education, economic, social, health opportunities because of WiFi systems – measured through survey
    - o Estimated number of individuals served per Covered Population

Public Space Internet Modernization:
- Description of Baseline: Grantees will note if modernization initiative is new or existing at program outset. If new, baseline is zero for all the metrics listed below. If existing, grantees will provide baseline from existing services, then will report on the expansion of services due to funding.
- Methodology: Grantees will submit quarterly reports to MassTech on program usage metrics. Grantees will be required to administer an annual survey of users regarding the impact of the modernization investments. Metrics measured as follows:
    - o Number of unique network users – measured through backend management
    - o Length of session – measured through backend management
    - o Number of users citing ability to access improved resources in education, economic, social, health opportunities because of WiFi systems – measured through annual survey
    - o Estimated number of individuals served per Covered Population

Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship:
- Description of Baseline: Grantees will note if initiative is new or existing at program outset. If new, baseline is zero for all the metrics listed below. If existing, grantees will provide baseline from existing services, then will report on the expansion of services due to funding.
- Methodology: Grantees will submit quarterly reports to MassTech on program usage metrics. Grantees will be required to administer an annual survey of residents regarding the impact of program. Metrics will be measured as follows:
    - o Number of devices provided to individuals/families without stable housing
    - o Number of devices provided to individuals/families who were eligible for ACP
    - o Number of users citing ability to access improved resources in education, economic, social, health opportunities because of connectivity devices
    - o Estimated number of individuals served per Covered Population

Digital Literacy:
- Description of Baseline: Grantees will note if initiative is new or existing at program outset. If new, baseline is zero for all the metrics listed below. If existing, grantees will provide baseline from existing services, then will report on expansion of services due to funding.
- Methodology: Grantees will submit quarterly reports to MassTech on program usage metrics. Grantees will be required to administer an annual survey of students/clients regarding the impact of the program. MBI will measure metrics provided by Grantees as follows:
    - o Number of residents able to use basic technology (Equivalent to an Introductory Digital Skills Program Graduate)
        - ▪ **Definition**: Individuals who have demonstrated proficiency in fundamental digital skills necessary for daily tasks, including device operation, internet navigation,

communication tools, office applications, and cybersecurity awareness.
- o **Measurement**: Completion of a structured digital literacy program, assessment of key competencies, and ability to independently complete basic digital tasks. Number of residents able to use intermediate technology (Equivalent to a Digital Navigator Program Graduate)
  - ▪ **Definition**: Individuals who can provide peer-to-peer support, assist with technology troubleshooting, and help others navigate digital services, such as accessing online government services or managing digital security.
- o **Measurement**: Participation in a digital navigator program or equivalent, demonstrated competency in digital troubleshooting and guidance, and ability to assist others in accessing technology resources. Number of residents able to use advanced technology (Equivalent to an IT and Networking Certification Graduate)
  - ▪ **Definition**: Individuals with foundational IT skills in networking, cybersecurity, and system troubleshooting, enabling them to pursue entry-level IT support or network administration roles.
  - ▪ **Measurement:** Completion of an IT training program, successful demonstration of core networking and troubleshooting skills, and competency in managing digital infrastructure.
- o Number of residents learning new digital skill(s) that meet a particular need (e.g. how to use a laptop to participate in a video telehealth visit)
  - ▪ **Definition**: Individuals acquiring specific digital skills necessary for a targeted purpose, such as using a laptop for telehealth visits, setting up online banking, or navigating workforce development platforms.
  - ▪ **Measurement**: Skill completion based on self-reported surveys, training participation records, or program evaluations.
- o Estimated number of individuals served per Covered Population

Device Distribution and Refurbishment:
- Description of Baseline: Grantees will note if initiative is new or existing at program outset. If new, baseline is zero for all the metrics listed below. If existing, grantees will provide baseline from existing services, then will report on the expansion of services due to funding.
- Methodology: Grantees will submit quarterly reports to MassTech on program usage metrics. Grantees will be required to administer an annual survey of residents regarding the impact of the program. Metrics will be measured as follows:
  - o Number of devices refurbished
  - o Number of devices distributed
  - o Estimated number of individuals served per Covered Population
  - o Additionally, Grantees will need to record a unique identification number for each device and track its status as it moves throughout the refurbishment and distribution process.

Education, Outreach, and Adoption:
- Description of Baseline: Grantees will reference reported Lifeline adoption data via the USAC website and document baseline of digital navigator services.
- Methodology: Grantees will submit quarterly reports to MassTech on program usage metrics. Metrics will be measured as follows:
  - o Estimated number of individuals served per Covered Population
  - o Number of residents enrolled in Lifeline reported by grantee and tracked through USAC website (subject to the qualifier that there are limited wireline internet access options available to Massachusetts residents through Lifeline).
  - o Number of residents receiving digital navigation services; receipt of digital navigation services is defined as group or one-on-one interactions, delivered virtually or in-person, that accomplish the following:
    - ▪ Understanding a resident's digital access goals, assessing their current capacity, and supporting them through direct assistance or referral to other services.
    - ▪ Conducting warm hand-offs to other services as needed. These may be digital inclusion-related (e.g., digital skills training) or linked to other social determinants

of health (e.g., housing assistance, employment assistance).
- Providing a resident with current information on opportunities and services available to them within their community related to internet, devices, and/or digital skills.
  - o If Grantees are proposing Education, Outreach, and Adoption to fund coalition-building, they must also report on the number of participating organizations within their coalition.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Overview

Respondents are cautioned to read this Solicitation carefully and to conform to its requirements. Failure to comply with the requirements of this Solicitation may serve as grounds for rejection.

This Solicitation is inclusive of a two-step process:
Step 1: Submit Concept Paper by April 25, 2025.
Step 2: Respondents who meet all criteria based on MBI's review of their Concept Paper will be notified on May 15, 2025, of their invitation to submit a Full Application. Respondents must submit their Full Application by July 16, 2025.

3.2 Concept Paper Components

As a threshold requirement, Respondents are required to first submit a Concept Paper to ensure alignment with the Launchpad Program's goals and priorities.

Concept Papers must be submitted using the online form through Submittable. Please refer to the Launchpad Program Solicitation page for a Word document with the list of questions.

Concept Papers must include the following information:

- **Introduction:** Provide a brief description of why your organization is interested in this opportunity. How does digital equity impact your work or the individuals that you serve? Respondent should indicate if they are a designated Women's Business Enterprise, Minority Business Enterprise, and/or Small Business.
- **Goals & Potential for Impact:** What are your goals specific to this funding opportunity? Describe any collaborative partners that would be included in an application as Sub-Applicants, including their role in this proposal. Be sure to define the unmet needs in your geographic service area(s) and articulate if the Launchpad Program will benefit impacted Covered Populations, including estimated number of people impacted, if possible.
- **Proposed Approach:** Describe which Digital Equity initiative areas you will propose to adopt as part of your Application. What phases of work might be required to establish the needed staff capacity and execute proposed Digital Equity initiative areas, and in what timeframe? Please describe any needed resources or technical assistance that your organization or Sub-Applicants might require to be successful in these initiative areas.
- **Measuring Success:** How will you measure success of your proposed project(s)? What, if any, additional metrics or outcomes will you track above and beyond the requirements of this grant?
- **Support Needed & Costs:** Provide a high-level total budget for the funds your organization and Sub- Applicants will require to operationalize each of the initiative areas your organization proposes to cover described in the above section. This should include identifying the key project personnel participating in this work and their roles and responsibilities. For the Concept Paper, submission of the Budget Template is optional.

In addition, Respondents must also submit with their Concept Papers:
- Application Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
- W-9

- Unique Entity Identifier ("UEI")

Respondents can obtain their existing UEI or register their organization to obtain one at SAM.gov. Please note that it typically takes 7–10 business days to receive a UEI after registration.

3.3   Concept Paper Review

MBI will review each Concept Paper and will invite Respondents whose Concept Papers meet the criteria listed below to submit a Full Application that builds upon their Concept Paper:

- Is the Respondent eligible for this funding opportunity?
- Did the Respondent submit all required components of the Concept Paper?
- Did the Respondent answer 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?

Note that MBI will not be providing individualized feedback for each submitted Concept Paper. However, Concept Paper submissions will inform additional technical assistance to be available to all Respondents.

3.4   Full Application

Respondents that MBI invites to submit a full Application must submit the following via the online form emailed to them through Submittable. Please refer to the Launchpad Program Solicitation page for a Word document with the list of questions.

- **Covered Population Needs and Anticipated Impact:** Please share a qualitative and quantitative description of Covered Populations' needs served by this grant and indicate what zip codes your proposal encompasses. How will activities in each of the Respondent's selected digital equity initiative areas meet local needs and create positive impact for residents? Describe specific outputs or outcomes anticipated, including the expected number of residents/ individuals to benefit from this grant. Respondents should describe how they arrived at these numbers, including key assumptions.
- **Statement of Qualifications:** Include two (2) examples of relevant work with stated Covered Populations. Examples should demonstrate ability to meet stated needs given the Respondent's history with Covered Population(s).
- **Detailed Project Plan:** What are your project goals for this grant performance period? How do these goals align with the Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Plan? Describe your project plan for a two (2)-year performance period, beginning with securing resources and ending with final grant reporting. This should include key activities, milestones, deliverables, and a timeline. The project plan should also describe specific activities and milestones taken in the first 90-days to ensure an expedited project start. If Respondent's application includes Sub-Applicant(s), please describe each Sub-Applicant's role as part of this grant with a clear relation of their role to the project plan provided in earlier sections of this application.
- **Project Monitoring & Reporting:** Please describe how the project management and fiscal management functions will coordinate as part of the Launchpad Program. For instance, please note if there will be a meeting cadence established to ensure that both parties are aligned. How will you monitor project progress and track required metrics?
- **Relevant Experience with Federal/State Grants:** Please provide up to three (3) examples of your organization's work with federal and/or state grants. For each, provide the funder, total grant amount, a summary of activities completed, and qualitative and quantitative outcomes.
- **Detailed Budget & Narrative:** Please submit the required budget template, as well as a 500 word or less (1-page single spaced or less) narrative describing the total budget. In your

narrative, articulate what percentage of the budget will be allocated to administrative costs vs. project delivery.

- **Compliance Requirements:**
  - *Cybersecurity:* Per NTIA requirements, Respondents must provide a description of their cybersecurity framework, which is subject to MBI review. Please describe the cybersecurity framework of your organization and how the planning, design, and project oversight phases of your project and activities will be consistent with current best practices for cybersecurity such as the NIST Cybersecurity Framework and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Cybersecurity Performance Goals (CPGs).
  - *Human Subjects Research:* In addition, Respondents must acknowledge that no research involving human subjects is permitted under this grant unless expressly authorized by a specific grant condition or otherwise approved in writing by MassTech/ MBI. 45 C.F.R. 46, defines a human subject as a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research: (1) Obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or (2) Obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens. Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.
  - *Environmental & Historic Preservation:* Per NTIA requirements, does your project involve the installation of broadband infrastructure, such as fixed equipment on a building? If so, please confirm that your project will meet compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) requirements.

In addition to the above, Respondents must submit with their Full Applications:

- Authorized Full Application Signature and Acceptance Form (Attachment B).

  By executing the Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form and submitting a response to this Solicitation, Respondents certify that they (1) are in compliance with the terms, conditions and specifications contained in this Solicitation, (2) acknowledge and understand the procedures for handling materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative as set forth in the paragraph below, (3) agree to be bound by those procedures, and (4) agree that the Mass Tech Collaborative shall not be liable under any circumstances for the disclosure of any materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative pursuant to this Solicitation or upon the Respondent's selection.

  Any and all responses, Applications, data, materials, information and documentation submitted to Mass Tech Collaborative in response to this Solicitation shall become Mass Tech Collaborative's property and shall be subject to public disclosure. As a public entity, the Mass Tech Collaborative is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (set forth at Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66). There are very limited and narrow exceptions to disclosure under the Public Records Law. If a Respondent wishes to have the Mass Tech Collaborative treat certain information or documentation as confidential, the Respondent must submit a written request to the Mass Tech Collaborative's General Counsel's office no later than 5:00 p.m. fourteen (14) business days prior to the required date of Application submission set forth in Section 3.5 below. The request must precisely identify the information and/or documentation that is the subject of the request and provide a detailed explanation supporting the application of the statutory exemption(s) from the public records cited by the Respondent. The General Counsel will issue a written determination within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written request. If the General Counsel approves the request, the Respondent shall clearly label the relevant information and/or documentation as "CONFIDENTIAL" in the Application. Any statements in an Application reserving any confidentiality or privacy rights that is inconsistent with these requirements and procedures will be disregarded.

- Certification that the Concept Paper and Full Application does not serve the same scope and/or period of performance already serviced by another federal grant or MassTech/MBI grant program (e.g., Digital Equity Partnerships Program, Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program, Broadband Recovery Funds Program).

- Budget Template (see Attachment C).

For information about Full Application evaluation, please refer to Section 4.

3.5   Solicitation Timeframe

The Solicitation will proceed according to the following schedule. The target dates are subject to change. Therefore, Respondents are encouraged to check Mass Tech Collaborative's website frequently for updates to the schedule.

More information regarding additional technical assistance will be posted to the Launchpad Program website on a routine basis.

Task	Date:
Solicitation Released	2/25/2025
Bidders' Conference	3/12/2025 @ 1 PM EST
Questions Due	3/14/2025 @ 5 PM EST
Question and Answer File Posted	3/21/2025 @ 5 PM EST
Concept Papers Due	4/25/2025 @ 11:59 PM EST
Invitations to Submit Full Applications	5/12/2025 @ 5 PM EST
Full Applications Due	7/16/2025 @ 11:59 PM EST
Notification of Award	Anticipated September 2025

3.6   Questions

Questions regarding this Solicitation must be submitted through the form linked here. All questions must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on 3/14/2025. Responses to all questions received will be posted on or before 5:00 p.m. on 3/21/2025 to Mass Tech Collaborative and Comm-Buys website(s).

3.7   Bidders' Teleconference/Webinar

A bidders' teleconference will be held on 3/12/2025 at 1:00 PM EST. All potential Respondents interested in participating in the bidders' teleconference must register via Zoom to obtain the conference call information. If you encounter any difficulty with registration, please contact the Launchpad Program Manager, Caitlin Schubert at schubert@masstech.org. Mass Tech Collaborative will post summary responses to procedural questions and issues addressed at the bidders' teleconference on the Mass Tech Collaborative's and the Comm-Buys websites as part of the 3/21/2025 date for posting the Question and Answer File.

4   EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

4.1   Process

The Mass Tech Collaborative shall evaluate each Full Application that is properly submitted. As part of the selection process, Mass Tech Collaborative may also invite Respondents to answer questions

regarding their Full Applications in person or in writing.

4.2   Criteria

MassTech will prioritize Respondents that can:
- Effectively reach residents in Priority Geographic Locations (as defined in Section 2.1).
- Effectively reach residents representing Priority Covered Populations (as defined in Section 2.1).

Respondents may receive up to **20 bonus points** for the above, as follows:
- **(Up to 10 points)** One or more Priority Geographic Locations is served. Priority Geographic Locations include Gateway Municipalities, rural communities, as well as three (3) Massachusetts counties: Barnstable, Bristol, and Worcester.
- **(Up to 10 points)** One or more Priority Covered Populations is served (i.e., incarcerated/formerly incarcerated, residents with language barriers, and veterans).

MassTech will evaluate applications for Launchpad on the following basis with scoring weight indicated in **(bold, indicating maximum points possible)** for each criterion:

- **(10 points)** Understanding of Covered Populations' needs and demonstrated ability to meet those needs given the organization's history with Covered Population(s).
- **(20 points)** Potential for community impact, including clear description of how their proposed activities will meet local needs and estimated number of individuals impacted by grant activities.
- **(25 points)** Project management capability, determined via completeness of project goals, proposed approach, and demonstrated ability to mobilize projects within first 90-days.
- **(10 points)** Fiscal coordination and support, as described in the Application, particularly the Project Management and Budget and Budget Narrative sections.
- **(10 points)** Demonstrated ability to comply with MassTech's reporting requirements, including quarterly narrative and metrics reporting.
- **(5 points)** Experience with federal and/or state grants.
- **(20 points)** Alignment between and reasonableness of stated project goals, proposed approach, budget, and capacity of the organization to implement their project on-time and within budget.
- **(5 points)** If partners are mentioned in the application, understanding and appropriateness of partners' roles, capacity of partners to perform described roles, and evidence of partner support for the project.

See Attachment E for detailed scoring rubric.

Lack of debarment status by either the state or federal government is mandatory.

The goal of this Solicitation is to select and enter into a funding agreement with the Respondent that will provide the best value for the Digital Equity initiative areas to achieve Mass Tech Collaborative's goals. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to consider such other relevant factors as it deems appropriate in order to obtain the "best value".

5.0 CONTRACTING AND PAYMENTS

5.1   Payment Methodology

MBI will disburse funds to Grantees on a quarterly reimbursement schedule based on the period of performance start date.

5.2   Important Note on Timing of Availability of Funds

Given the Launchpad Program's dependence on the guidance set forth in the NTIA Notice of Funding Opportunity, No. NTIA-SDECGP-2024, dated March 29, 2024, (the "NOFO") for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, there is a requirement for states to obtain approval of all identified sub-recipients, per resubmission of the Specific Projects Form, within nine (9) months of the award date. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' award date is January 1, 2025. Therefore, MBI must identify all sub-recipients (i.e., grantees) of the Launchpad Program no later than September 30, 2025, which are then subject to NTIA approval before MassTech may enter into funding agreements with the grantees.

The implication for Launchpad Program grantees is that Mass Tech/ MBI's ability to execute funding agreements is fully dependent on NTIA's approval and the timeline in which it approves MBI's resubmitted Specific Projects Form.

6.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

6.1 General Information

a) If an Application fails to meet any material terms, conditions, requirements or procedures, it may be deemed unresponsive and disqualified. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to waive omissions or irregularities that it determines to be not material.

b) This Solicitation, as may be amended from time to time by Mass Tech Collaborative, does not commit Mass Tech Collaborative to select any firm(s), award any contracts for services pursuant to this Solicitation, or pay any costs incurred in responding to this Solicitation. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withdraw the Solicitation, to engage in preliminary discussions with prospective Respondents, to accept or reject any or all Concept Papers or Full Applications received, to request supplemental or clarifying information, to negotiate with any or all qualified Respondents, and to request modifications to Concept Papers or Full Applications in accordance with negotiations.

c) On matters related solely to this Solicitation that arise prior to an award decision by the Mass Tech Collaborative, Respondents shall limit communications with the Mass Tech Collaborative to the Procurement Team Leader and such other individuals as the Mass Tech Collaborative may designate from time to time. No other Mass Tech Collaborative employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any questions or inquiries concerning this Solicitation. Respondents may contact the Procurement Team Leader for this Solicitation in the event this Solicitation is incomplete.

d) The Mass Tech Collaborative may provide reasonable accommodations, including the provision of materials in an alternative format, for Respondents with disabilities or other hardships. Respondents requiring accommodations shall submit requests in writing, with supporting documentation justifying the accommodations, to the Procurement Team Leader. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to grant or reject any request for accommodations.

e) Respondent's Concept Paper and/or Full Application shall be treated by the Mass Tech Collaborative as an accurate statement of Respondent's capabilities and experience. Should any statement asserted by Respondent prove to be inaccurate or inconsistent with the foregoing, such inaccuracy or inconsistency shall constitute sufficient cause for Mass Tech Collaborative in its sole discretion to reject the Concept Paper and/or Full Application and/or terminate of any resulting funding agreement.

f) Costs that are not specifically identified in the Respondent's response and/or not specifically accepted by Mass Tech Collaborative as part of the funding agreement will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this Solicitation.

g) Submitted responses must be valid in all respects through December 31, 2025.

h) The MassTech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this Solicitation. MassTech expects Applicants to take all necessary steps to comply with 2 C.F.R. § 200.321(a) and if the Applicant will be subcontracting under this Program take the steps outlined in § 200.321(b). The selected Applicant is responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Subcontractors are required to meet the same requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as the selected Applicant.

i) Applicants shall comply with all applicable Federal and State statutes, rules and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment including but not limited to: the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 et seq.), M.G.L. c. 151B, M.G.L. c. 272 §§ 92A, 98, and 98A, M.G.L. c. 111 § 199A, 42 U.S.C. 9918 (c) and 45 C.F.R. 80.

j) Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352) – Applicants that are awarded an amount exceeding $100,000 must certify that it will not and has not used Federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Each Applicant must also disclose any lobbying with non-Federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award.

k) Debarment and Suspension- (Executive Orders 12549 and 12689) – Applicants understand that a contract award may not be made to parties listed on the government-wide exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM).

l) Applicants must be able to comply with all applicable standards, orders or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401-7671q) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251-1387). Violations must be reported to the Federal awarding agency and the Regional Office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

m) Pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.322, as appropriate and to the extent consistent with law, grantees should, to the greatest extent practicable under the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, provide a preference for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States (including, but not limited to, iron, aluminum, steel, cement, and other manufactured products). The requirements of this Section must be included in all subawards, including all contracts and purchase orders for work or products pursuant to this program.

n) Applicant understands and agrees that the Executive Office of Economic Development ("EOED") staff and authorized representatives may evaluate any subcontractors with whom Mass Tech Collaborative executes a contract or other form of legal agreement in order to complete the activities funded under this Program, through ongoing monitoring. As deemed appropriate by EOED, EOED's staff and authorized representatives may also conduct further reviews and site-visits during the contract term, which may include fiscal reviews. EOED staff shall use interviews, inspection of files, site visits and direct observation to identify program areas of concern so that contractors can improve their productivity, efficiency, quality, and management capacity.

o) Grantees shall maintain and utilize systems and procedures to prevent, detect, and correct fraud, waste, and abuse in activities funded under this Program.

p) Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.303, grantees shall establish effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets funded under this Program and assure that they are used solely for authorized purposes.

q) Grantees must maintain an accounting system and supporting fiscal records adequate to audit and otherwise verify that assistance payments and administrative costs meet Federal and State requirements.

r) Grantees shall use best efforts to ensure that it will not knowingly use contract funds to purchase,

or enter into contracts to purchase, any equipment, services, or systems that use prohibited telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of a system subject to 2 CFR § 200.216.

s) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 are incorporated herein by reference. Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce (DOC) adopted the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this Program. Awards issued pursuant to this Program may be subject to specific award conditions as authorized by 2 C.F.R. § 200.208.

t) Grant funds must be used only for allowable uses of funds, which can be found in Section II.C.3.a. of the NOFO. Grantees must be aware that there may be information regarding allowability in other sections of the NOFO and grantees shall follow all NOFO requirements.

u) Recipients and subrecipients must ensure that the planning, design, and project oversight phases of the programs and activities funded through the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program are consistent with current industry best practices for cybersecurity, such as the NIST Cybersecurity Framework and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Cybersecurity Performance Goals (CPGs). These performance goals provide a baseline set of cybersecurity practices that are broadly applicable, with known risk reduction value. NTIA reserves the right to review a recipient's cybersecurity framework and recipients must review the cybersecurity framework of its subrecipients.

v) Section F.05 of the DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions states that each award is subject to the whistleblower protections afforded by 41 U.S.C. § 4712 (Enhancement of contractor protection from reprisal for disclosure of certain information).

6.2   Posting of Modifications/Addenda to Solicitation

This Solicitation has been distributed electronically using the Mass Tech Collaborative and Commbuys websites. If Mass Tech Collaborative determines that it is necessary to revise any part of this Solicitation, or if additional data is necessary to clarify any of its provisions, an addendum will be posted to the websites. It is the responsibility of each potential Respondent to check the Mass Tech Collaborative, the Innovation Institute and Commbuys websites for any addenda or modifications to the Solicitation. The Mass Tech Collaborative accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Respondents who submit a response based on an out-of-date Solicitation.

Attachment A
Application Cover Sheet

Name of Respondent			
Mailing Address	City/Town	State	Zip Code
Telephone	Fax	Web Address	
Primary Contact for Clarification		Primary Contact E-mail Address	
Authorized Signatory		Authorized Signatory E-mail Address	
Legal Status/Jurisdiction (e.g., a Massachusetts Corporation, LLC, LLP, etc.)		Respondent's UEI No.	
W9 must be attached			

Attachment B
Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the Respondent listed below. The Respondent has read and understands the Solicitation requirements. The Respondent acknowledges that all of the terms and conditions of the Solicitation are mandatory. By executing this Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form, Respondent certifies that they (1) are in compliance with the terms, conditions and specifications contained in this Solicitation, (2) acknowledges and understands the procedures for handling materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative as set forth above, (3) agrees to be bound by those procedures, and (4) agrees that the Mass Tech Collaborative shall not be liable under any circumstances for the disclosure of any materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative pursuant to this Solicitation or upon the Respondent's selection.

The Respondent understands that, if selected by the Mass Tech Collaborative, the Respondent and Mass Tech Collaborative will execute an Agreement specifying the mutual requirements of participation. The undersigned has either (*please check one)*:

☐ specified exceptions and counter-proposals to the terms and conditions of the sample **Subaward Grant Agreement** (Federally Funded); or

☐ agrees to the terms and conditions set forth therein;

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that the failure to submit exceptions and counter-proposals with this response shall be deemed a waiver, and the Agreement shall not be subject to further negotiation.

Respondent agrees that the entire bid response will remain valid for sixty (60) days from receipt by the Mass Tech Collaborative.

I certify that Respondent is in compliance with all corporate filing requirements and State tax laws.

I further certify that the statements made in this response to the Solicitation, including all attachments and exhibits, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Respondent: _____
(Printed Name of Respondent)

By: _____
(Signature of Authorized Representative)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Attachment C
Budget Template

REFER TO EXCEL SPREADSHEET

Attachment D

NTIA Covered Population List

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

1. Individuals who live in Covered Households (defined as households with income from the most recently completed year of not more than 150% of the poverty level);
2. Aging individuals;
3. Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility;*
4. Veterans;*
5. Individuals with disabilities;
6. Individuals with a language barrier, including English learners and those with low levels of literacy;*
7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and
8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

*MBI designated Priority Covered Populations

Attachment E

Full Application Scoring Rubric

REFER TO SEPARATE DOCUMENT