



Request for Proposals for State Digital Equity Act and BEAD Consulting Services

RFP No. 2023-MBI-05

**Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
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<http://www.masstech.org>**

Procurement Team Leader: Joshua Eichen

RFP Issued:	10/18/2022
Bidders' Conference:	10/31/2022
Questions Due:	11/3/2022
Answers to Questions Posted:	11/10/2022
Responses Due:	11/17/2022

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

1.1 Overview

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (“Mass Tech Collaborative” or “MassTech”), on behalf of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (“MBI”) is issuing this Request for Proposals **for Statewide Broadband Planning Services** (RFP No. 2023-MBI-05) (the “RFP”) to solicit responses from qualified consultants (“Respondents”) with experience in **broadband/digital equity planning, community/stakeholder engagement and outreach, project management, facilitation, workforce/economic development, and broadband infrastructure deployment**. Respondents will be competing against each other for selection to provide the services set forth herein (the “Services”). The submissions of all Respondents shall be compared and evaluated pursuant to the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP. A single Respondent that can provide all services outlined in this RFP either directly or with support from subcontractors is preferred but Respondents that can provide some but not all of the services outlined in this RFP may also be selected if the selection provides the best value for MassTech.

Mass Tech Collaborative will be the contracting entity on behalf of MBI for the purposes of this RFP, 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 **Services Agreement (Federally Funded)** with selected Respondents containing certain standard provisions (the “Agreement”), located under the section titled “Providing Professional Services to the MassTech Collaborative” [HERE](#).

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 our website at www.masstech.org.

MBI is the State 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 www.massbroadband.org.

2. SERVICES REQUIRED

2.1 Overview

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) is providing State Broadband Offices with substantial resources to make a generational investment in broadband infrastructure and digital equity projects. Two of the largest programs that will be funded through State Broadband Offices are the Digital Equity Act (“DEA”) and the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (“BEAD”). Both the DEA and the BEAD programs offer states the opportunity to conduct planning activities in advance of deploying funding. Massachusetts intends to produce both a Statewide Digital Equity Plan as outlined under the DEA Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) and a Five Year Action Plan as

outlined under the BEAD NOFO. These two planning activities will follow closely aligned timeframes and processes and should inform each other as they evolve and develop. The DEA Statewide Digital Equity Plan has a one year timeline for completion, inclusive of public comment period, and the BEAD Five Year Action Plan has a 270 day timeline for completion, inclusive of public comment.

MassTech has also launched two new digital equity programs that are being funded through a \$50 million authorization of ARPA Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (collectively referred to as the “ARPA Digital Equity Programs”):

- The Digital Equity Partnerships Program will designate qualified organizations as Partners to implement digital equity projects that meet the goals outlined in the Commonwealth’s ARPA COVID recovery legislation (codified as Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021). Partners will work with local and regional organizations to implement digital equity projects in six program areas.
- The Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program will enable municipalities to engage in planning activities and develop strategic documents related to digital equity and bridging the digital divide.

MassTech seeks qualified Respondents that can provide planning and technical assistance to MBI in the execution of the DEA and BEAD planning activities as well as support for related community outreach and engagement activities. Respondents may propose additional services that they believe are pertinent to the successful execution of BEAD and DEA planning activities.

2.2 Introduction to Scope of Services for DEA and BEAD Planning Activities

MassTech seeks a range of planning services and technical assistance to support the successful completion of the Statewide Digital Equity Plan, BEAD Five Year Action Plan and related Community Engagement Services that MBI will undertake to inform the development of both plans – outlined in detail in the following Category of Service Section. Consultants will be responsible for providing comprehensive project management for all planning activities for which they propose to provide services as described in the following sections.

Proposals may include one consultant or a team of consultants who can deliver services for one or more of the Categories of Service outlined in the following section. MBI expects that Respondents will be able to perform all duties associated within the Category or Categories of Service they apply for; however, MBI expects that consultants may need to sub-contract with specialized organizations for community engagement or other technology/technical components of the services. Respondents must indicate in the proposal if they are proposing to use subcontracted services for those additional resources.

Respondents should reference the statutory deliverables outlined in both the DEA and BEAD NOFOs as they craft responses. See **Appendix A, B, and C** for a summary of those deliverables and requirements, as defined by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”).

2.2.1 Category of Service 1: Statewide Digital Equity Plan Activities

I. Plan Development

Planning consultants will document all planning activities as well as the results of the community engagement activities and integrate into a cohesive written Statewide Digital Equity Plan that complies with all requirements in the DEA NOFO. The Statewide Digital Equity Plan will incorporate the specific elements described in Section 2.2.1 II, III and IV. This will include not only developing the written content, but also integrating any relevant photographs, maps, charts, or other visual collateral into a well formatted plan that can be

published in print and digital formats. Consultants should be prepared to translate elements of this plan into multiple languages.

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Draft and Final versions of the Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Plan and all associated content; and a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the planning process and key elements and findings.

II. Digital Equity Existing Conditions Assessment

Building upon MBI's statewide broadband mapping effort already underway, MBI seeks to engage a consultant(s) that will document the necessary baseline conditions across the state and identify barriers to digital equity faced by Covered Populations¹.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Documenting and analyzing the necessary baseline conditions across the state and identify barriers to digital equity by Covered Populations in the Massachusetts
- Documenting and categorizing all digital equity and broadband projects (publicly funded or otherwise) across the state, including efforts conducted by municipalities, community anchor institutions ("CAIs"), school districts, or other entities.
- Performing an analysis of available federal, state, or local broadband availability and adoption data, including but not limited to Affordable Connectivity Program enrollment data, the NTIA Internet Use Survey, the NTIA Indicators of Broadband Need Map, the American Community Survey, and other sources.
- Producing maps, charts, infographics, and other visual collateral as needed.

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Reports and presentation materials summarizing the above activities.

III. Digital Equity/Broadband Visioning and Unified Objective Development

To drive forward an implementation strategy, MassTech and key stakeholders across the Commonwealth will need to establish a unified vision and set of measurable objectives for documenting and promoting the availability and affordability of broadband service, accessibility, and inclusivity of public resources and services, digital literacy, personal cybersecurity, and consumer devices and technical support among each Covered Population.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Synthesizing data and stakeholder input gathered in Activity II of this Category of Service section, Activity I in the Community Engagement Category of Service Section and the Stakeholder Working Group Category of Service, to inform a unified vision for digital equity in the Commonwealth and a set of measurable objectives for documenting and promoting:
 - The availability of, and affordability of access to, fixed and wireless broadband technology;
 - The online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services;
 - Digital literacy;

¹ "Covered populations" includes individuals who live in covered households (household income is at or below 150% of the poverty level); aging individuals; incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who (i) are English learners; and (ii) have low levels of literacy; individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area. (See Section 60302(8) of P.L. 117-58)

- Awareness of, and the use of, measures to secure the online privacy of, and cybersecurity with respect to, an individual; and
 - The availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices.
- Supporting research to integrate measurable objectives with macro issues related to economic development, workforce development, education, healthcare, and civic participation.

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Reporting documents and presentation materials summarizing the above activities.

IV. Implementation Strategy

MBI seeks to engage a consultant that will prepare an implementation strategy, as required by the Statewide Digital Equity Plan expanding on the vision and objectives identified under Activity III in this Service Category.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Developing a strategic plan for the implementation of digital equity and infrastructure initiatives that meet the needs of the Covered Populations across the state, and the organizational partners that serve those populations.
 - Strategic plan should be specific to local and regional contexts and should establish pipeline projects that can be accelerated to implementation.
- Developing a measurable strategy that is holistic and addresses the barriers to participation in the digital world. The strategy shall (i) establish measurable goals, objectives, and proposed core activities to address the needs of covered populations; (ii) set out measures ensuring the plan's sustainability and effectiveness across the Commonwealth's communities; and (iii) identify mechanisms to ensure that the plan is regularly evaluated and updated
- Identifying known or potential obstacles or barriers to the successful implementation of potential projects under BEAD and the Digital Equity Act.
- Identifying and addressing gaps in existing state, local, and private efforts to address the barriers to achieving digital equity that are faced by covered populations.
- Describing how the implementation strategy can be advanced and supported by engaging or partnering with: (i) state workforce agencies and state/local workforce boards and workforce organizations; (ii) labor organizations and community-based organizations; and (iii) institutions of higher learning, including but not limited to four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, education and training providers, and educational service agencies;
- Describing how existing or future funding streams intersect with the planned use of the State's Digital Equity Capacity grants and BEAD deployment funding, as well as the state's ARPA Digital Equity Programs and Capital Projects Fund programs.
- Outlining the expected timeline for implementing the plan.

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: A detailed and specific implementation strategy in a narrative format that includes a readily available workflow design as well as summary documents formatted for easy visual use by a range of stakeholders, as well as reporting documents and presentation materials summarizing the above activities. A detailed matrix or other visual illustrating the intersection and or alignment of various funding streams as well as reporting documents and presentation materials summarizing the above activities.

2.2.2 Category of Service 2: BEAD Five Year Action Plan Activities

I. Report Development

Planning consultants will document all planning activities as well as the results of the community engagement activities and integrate into a cohesive written Five Year Action Plan that complies with all of the requirements in the BEAD NOFO. The Five Year Action Plan will incorporate the specific elements described in Section 2.2.2 II through V. This will include not only developing the written content, but also integrating any relevant photographs, maps, charts, or other visual collateral into a well formatted plan that can be published in print and digital formats. Consultants should be prepared to translate elements of this plan into multiple languages.

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Draft and Final versions of the Massachusetts BEAD 5 Year Action Plan and all associated content; and a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the planning process and the key elements and findings.

II. Strategic Assessment of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Assets and Needs

Prior to the deployment of IIJA funds, MassTech needs to establish a strategic assessment of the Commonwealth's current assets and potential future needs. This will serve as an essential introductory task for the Respondent to understand the progress made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding broadband expansion and needed steps to successfully deploy BEAD funding. This Activity II should be conducted in coordination with Activity II in the Statewide Digital Equity Plan Category of Service.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluating MBI's current activities, existing statewide plan, staffing plan, and experience deploying broadband deployment grants.
- Identifying existing efforts funded by the federal government, including the Universal Service Fund, to deploy broadband and close the digital divide in Massachusetts.
- Conducting background research of strategies established by other states, including how they differ from the current broadband strategic plan for Massachusetts.
- Developing a broadband priority framework for Massachusetts, considering the available funding for broadband deployment and other broadband-related activities, data collection and local planning, and the sources of upcoming funding opportunities available through the IIJA and ARPA.
- Providing analysis and strategic recommendations for MBI to use in adapting and scaling its organizational operations to the needed level to operationalize IIJA funding resources – including an evaluation of existing assets that can be leveraged in its broadband strategy.
- Describing technical assistance and additional capacity needed for successful implementation of the BEAD Program – to be amended upon completion of subsequent planning activities.
- Inventorying existing broadband adoption, affordability, equity, access, and deployment activities occurring within Massachusetts and identifying and providing details regarding any relevant partners, such as community-based organizations and Community Anchor Institutions (“CAIs”) that may inform broadband deployment and adoption planning.
- Incorporating available federal, state, or local broadband availability and adoption data, including but not limited to Affordable Connectivity Program enrollment data. Other

federal broadband data sources include the NTIA Internet Use Survey,² the NTIA Indicators of Broadband Need Map,³ and the American Community Survey.⁴

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Written documentation and accompanying graphic material, along with an accompanying slide deck summarizing the pertinent information.

III. BEAD Implementation Opportunities and Obstacles

As outlined in the minimum requirements for the BEAD Five Year Strategic Plan (Appendix A), MBI will need to develop a framework for implementing BEAD funding. This framework will serve as the foundation from which to build and execute future grant programs in eligible areas. This Activity III should be executed in coordination with Activity IV in the Statewide Digital Equity Plan Service Category.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include but are not limited to:

- Identifying known or potential obstacles or barriers to the successful implementation of the BEAD Program and MBI's corresponding plans to address them.
- Identifying local and regional broadband service needs and gaps within Massachusetts boundaries, including unserved or underserved locations and CAIs without gigabit service, and/or any plans to make these determinations where service availability is unclear. This task shall incorporate data from the broadband availability maps under development by MBI that will be released in November 2022.
- Providing a comprehensive, high-level plan for providing reliable, affordable, high-speed internet service through the Commonwealth, including:
 - The estimated timeline and cost for universal service,
 - The planned utilization of federal, Eligible Entity, and local funding sources, including the ARPA Capital Projects Fund,
 - Prioritization of areas for federal support,
 - Any consideration afforded to the use of public-private partnerships or cooperatives in addressing the needs of the Eligible Entity's residents,
 - Strategies to address affordability issues, including but not limited to strategies to increase enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program by eligible households

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Reporting documents and presentation materials summarizing the above activities.

IV. BEAD Digital Equity Analysis

The BEAD Five Year Action Plan requires states to consider the vision and goals for non-capital efforts to address digital equity. This Activity IV should be executed in coordination with all activities outlined in the Statewide Digital Equity Plan Service Category.

The selected Respondent's tasks include but are not limited to:

- Identifying digital equity and inclusion needs, goals, and implementation strategies, including ways in which MBI plans to utilize BEAD funding, Digital Equity Act funding and/or other funding streams in concert to remedy inequities and barriers to inclusion.

² See NTIA Data Central, <https://www.ntia.gov/data>

³ See Indicators of Broadband Need Map, <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/indicatorsmap>

⁴ See American Community Survey (ACS), <https://www.census.gov/acs>.

- Creating a vision for digital equity,
- Conducting a needs assessment for underrepresented communities and an asset inventory of ongoing digital equity activities, and detail holistic strategies around affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation.
- Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Reporting documents and presentation materials summarizing the above activities. Integration as needed with the Statewide Digital Equity Plan.

V. Workforce Development Assessment

The investment in broadband infrastructure and digital equity programming presents an opportunity to consider the broader workforce and economic development opportunities that could be advanced in coordination with the deployment of funding. The selected Respondent will support MassTech to understand and capitalize on those opportunities, and assist in connecting with the relevant public/private stakeholders to ensure maximum impact.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Performing a market analysis of labor needs among sectors anticipated to experience labor demand induced by federal/state funding for broadband initiatives.
- Recommending strategies to ensure an available and highly skilled workforce to minimize project disruptions, including any plans to ensure strong labor standards and protections.
- Identifying the appropriate geography to assess the universe of contractors or vendors who could foreseeably conduct broadband construction and installation work in Massachusetts.
- Supporting MBI in the coordination of workforce activities with state broadband offices in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, as needed.
- Coordinating partnership activities with industry leaders in the broadband sectors, including fiber installation contractors, fixed wireless contractors, managed network service providers, internet service providers, and other industries to be determined.
- Providing strategies to ensure an available and highly skilled workforce (including by subgrantees, contractors, and subcontractors) to minimize project disruptions, including any plans to ensure strong labor standards and protections, such as those listed in the BEAD NOFO; and plans to attract, retain, or transition the skilled workforce needed to achieve the plan's goals, including describing the involvement and partnerships of subgrantees, contractors, and sub-contractors with existing in-house skills training programs, unions and worker organizations; community colleges and public school districts; supportive services providers; Registered Apprenticeship programs and other labor-management training programs, or other quality workforce training providers.

Deliverables to include, but be not limited to: Reporting documents and presentation materials summarizing the above activities.

2.2.3 Category of Service 3: Community Engagement Activities

Statewide Community Digital Needs Assessment

To understand the specific digital equity needs of the Covered Populations across the state, MBI needs support for a robust and comprehensive community outreach and engagement strategy. Activities could include targeted surveys, community workshops/events, learning experiences, seminars, and other related tactics. This Activity will inform elements of both the Statewide Digital Equity Plan and the BEAD 5 Year Action Plan.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Developing a comprehensive inventory of digital equity partners, including a gap analysis of organizations or constituent groups not currently engaged in digital equity activities.
- Designing and executing a robust and comprehensive community outreach and engagement strategy, including provisioning time and resources for activities in multiple languages, in person and online, and within various community cultural contexts. This strategy should demonstrate collaboration with local, regional, and Tribal (as applicable) entities (governmental and non-governmental) and reflective of the local coordination requirements outlined herein, including outreach to underrepresented communities and unions and worker organizations.
 - Activities in this strategy may include targeted surveys, community workshops/events, learning experiences, seminars, and other to-be-determined tactics.
- Designing and developing a wide range of media collateral that can be used in outreach and communications related to broadband planning, deployment, mapping, equity, and adoption.

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Comprehensive documentation of all engagement activities, including photo/video, data collected, transcripts, outreach materials, detailed summaries of stakeholder engagement sessions (including list of attendees, key points raised by stakeholders, etc.), Reporting documents and presentation materials summarizing the above activities. Integration of materials into final deliverables for both Statewide Digital Equity Plan and BEAD Five Year Action Plan.

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement Framework

Beyond the development of planning documents, MBI seeks to develop a framework for supporting ongoing stakeholder engagement for digital equity activities. This framework should outline the roles of key organizations, convening opportunities, needed capacity building, and systems that enable a clear and succinct feedback loop between MBI and relevant community stakeholders.

Deliverables to include, but not limited to: Systems for ongoing engagement with community stakeholders to support ongoing engagement in digital equity activities across the state.

2.2.4 Category of Service 4: Broadband and Digital Equity Working Group

The Selected Respondent will assist MBI with the planning and implementation of meetings of a Broadband and Digital Equity Working Group consisting of individuals and entities that represent the broad and diverse perspectives of the Covered Populations across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These stakeholders will be responsible for connecting the statewide planning process back to the constituent groups they represent, providing guidance and input on the vision of the plan, and validating the Statewide Digital Equity Plan's implementation strategy, timeline, and metrics.

The selected Respondent's tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting MBI in the administrative logistics and coordination of meetings;
- Developing meeting agendas and content, including presentations and the drafting of detailed meeting summaries;
- Identifying appropriate opportunities for Working Group members to participate in key planning activities and events; and

- Incorporating advisory group members' input in to development of vision statements, goals, objectives, and other foundational elements of the plans.

Deliverables to include, but not be limited to: Documentation of advisory group content and integration of meeting input, guidance, and process into final plan deliverable.

3 APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Application and Submission Instructions

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

- All Applications **must** be submitted electronically to proposals@masstech.org (please include the Solicitation number in the subject heading).
- Required Submissions- All Applications must include the items listed below:
 - Application Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
 - Application, which shall include:
 - A description of the firm responding to the RFP (including descriptions of proposed subcontractors, if any) and the firm's and subcontractor(s)' qualifications to perform the Services, including:
 - Reference to completed previous work relevant to the activities and tasks described within each Category of Service that is included in the Respondent's Application. Please provide specific examples and links to any published materials along with references to project clients.
 - Respondent's staff qualifications relevant to the activities and tasks listed within each Category of Service that is included in the Respondent's Application. Please enumerate their qualifications using the following list as a guide:
 - Community Engagement and Stakeholder Outreach
 - Graphic Design, Communications, and Collateral Development
 - Meeting Facilitation and Conflict Resolution
 - Grant Program Development and Operations
 - Data Analysis and Mapping
 - Workforce Development
 - Economic Development
 - Organizational Strategic Planning
 - Project Management
 - Fiber broadband network deployment and broadband infrastructure.
 - Broadband service quality evaluations
 - Translation/Interpretation capacity in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese, and other major languages spoken by residents in the Commonwealth.
 - A list of the Categories of Service in Sections 2.2.1 – 2.2.4 the Respondent proposes to provide services to MassTech. Respondents may apply to provide services for one or more of the Categories of Service.

- The proposed approach to executing the activities and tasks listed in each Category of Service the Respondent is applying for and the proposed approach to maximizing integration of DEA and BEAD planning processes. The approach should include a high level project plan and timeline that is in alignment with the DEA and BEAD planning requirements.
 - The total not-to-exceed costs for completing the work and providing the deliverables for the activities and tasks included in each Category of Service in the Respondent's Application. Cost proposals must be submitted in the Budget Template (Attachment C) which includes an excel tab for each Category of Service. These costs should be based on projected hours, proposed hourly rates, as well as any other appropriate and reasonable direct costs. As a general policy, the Mass Tech Collaborative does not pay mark-ups on reimbursable or out-of-pocket expenses. For travel costs, the Mass Tech Collaborative pays the IRS rate per mile. In addition to the proposed not to exceed budget for each Service Category, Respondents should also provide information regarding the percentage of total costs allocated across each main subtask within a Service Category as provided in the applicable Service Category tab.
 - Three references for work previously performed by the Respondent that is substantially similar to the Categories of Services included in the Respondent's Application. References should include a contact person, address, and phone number.
- It should be noted in the Application if the firm and/or any subcontractors is a minority business enterprise, women's business enterprise or a labor surplus area firm (based on the Fiscal Year 2023 list of areas published by the United States Department of Labor).
 - Authorized Application Signature and Acceptance Form (Attachment B). **By executing the Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form and submitting a response to this RFP, Respondents certify that they (1) are in compliance with the terms, conditions and specifications contained in this RFP, (2) acknowledge and understand the procedures for handling materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative as set forth in subsection d. 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 RFP or upon the Respondent's selection.**
 - Exceptions to the **Services Agreement (Federally Funded)** located under the section "Providing Professional Services to the MassTech Collaborative" HERE, if any.
- c. Applications **must be submitted to-**
- proposals@masstech.org (please include the RFP number in the subject heading).
- d. Any and all responses, Applications, data, materials, information and documentation submitted to Mass Tech Collaborative in response to this RFP 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 4.2 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 and **shall only include the confidential material in the hard copy of the Application**. Any statements in an Application reserving any confidentiality or privacy rights that is inconsistent with these requirements and procedures will be disregarded.

3.2 Application Timeframe

The application process 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.

Task	Date:
RFP Released	10/18/22
Bidders’ Conference	10/31/22 @ 10 AM EST
Questions Due	11/3/2022 @ 5 PM EST
Question and Answer File Posted	11/10/2022 @ 5 PM EST
Applications Due	11/17/2022 @ 5 PM EST
Notification of Award	12/2/2022

3.3 Questions

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by electronic mail to proposals@masstech.org with the following Subject Line: “Questions – RFP No. 2023-MBI-05”. All questions must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on 11/3/2022. Responses to all questions received will be posted on or before 5:00 p.m. EST on 11/10/2022 to Mass Tech Collaborative and Comm-Buys website(s).

3.4 Bidders’ Teleconference/Webinar

A bidders’ teleconference will be held on 10/31/2022 at 10AM EST. All potential Respondents interested in participating in the bidders’ teleconference must register with Mass Tech Collaborative by 5:00 p.m. on 10/29/2022 in order to obtain the conference call information. Please register via [this online registration form](#). Mass Tech Collaborative will transmit the conference call information to all registered bidders 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. 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.

4 EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

4.1 Process

The Mass Tech Collaborative shall evaluate each Application that is properly submitted. As part of

the selection process, Mass Tech Collaborative may invite finalists to answer questions regarding their Application in person or in writing. In its sole discretion, Mass Tech Collaborative may also choose to enter into a negotiation period with one or more finalist Respondent(s) and then ask the Respondent(s) to submit a best and final offer.

4.2 Criteria

Selection of a Respondent to provide the services sought herein may be based on criteria that include but are not limited to:

- Ability to perform services required in more than one of the Service Categories.
- Record of performance for similar services as determined through references.
- Demonstrated knowledge and expertise of broadband and digital equity issues nationally and in Massachusetts, and their connection to issue areas including but not limited to workforce development, economic development, healthcare, education, and civic engagement.
- Demonstrated knowledge and expertise of the IJJA broadband funding streams and the associated requirements for the development of plans and the deployment of funds.
- Demonstrated ability to execute highly complex, fast moving, and dynamic planning activities in close coordination with multiple stakeholder groups.
- Adequate staff capacity and expertise necessary to ensure a streamlined and effective planning process within the federally required timelines
- Competitiveness and reasonableness of fee structure
- Demonstrated approach and commitment to an equitable and authentic community engagement process
- Unique or innovative approaches to statewide planning activities that will allow for uniformity of analysis, but nuanced activities reflective of the diverse geographies and communities within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Documented ability to produce concise, accurate, and engaging materials, including, but not limited to written reports and materials, web content, presentations, and other collateral relevant to large scale planning activities.
- Proven project management expertise in coordinating large scale planning efforts, including management of sub consultants.
- Status as minority business enterprise, women's business enterprise or a labor surplus area firm.

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

The order of these factors does not generally denote relative importance. The goal of this RFP is to select and enter into an Agreement with the Respondent(s) that will provide the best value for the Services to achieve MassTech 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".

5.1 General Information

1. 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.
2. This RFP, 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 RFP, or pay any costs incurred in responding to this RFP. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withdraw the RFP, to engage in preliminary discussions with prospective Respondents, to accept or reject any or all Applications received, to request supplemental or clarifying information, to negotiate with any or all qualified Respondents, and to request modifications to Applications in accordance with negotiations, all to the same extent as if this were a Request for Information.
3. On matters related solely to this RFP 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 RFP. Respondents may contact the Procurement Team Leader for this RFP in the event this RFP is incomplete.
4. 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.
5. Respondent's 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 Application and/or terminate of any resulting Agreement.
6. Costs that are not specifically identified in the Respondent's response and/or not specifically accepted by Mass Tech Collaborative as part of the Agreement will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFP.
7. Mass Tech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this RFP. The selected Respondent will take all appropriate steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. The selected Respondent 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 Respondent.
8. Submitted responses must be valid in all respects for a minimum period of sixty (60) days after the deadline for submission.
9. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to amend the Agreement at any time prior to execution. Respondents should review the Agreement as they are required to specify any exceptions to the Agreement and to make any suggested counterproposal in their Application. A failure to specify exceptions and/or counterproposals will be deemed an acceptance of the Agreement's general terms and conditions, and no subsequent negotiation of such provisions shall be permitted.

10. The MassTech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this RFP. The selected Respondent will take all appropriate steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. The selected Respondent 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 Respondent.
11. The MassTech Collaborative embraces a workplace where the values of diversity and inclusion support varying perspectives and backgrounds to produce a richer environment. MassTech expects Respondents as well as all our consultants, contractors and vendors, to demonstrate a similar commitment and, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.321(a), take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. If Respondent will be subcontracting under this RFP, affirmative steps must include at least the following six steps: 1. Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists; 2. Assuring that small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources; 3. Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises; 4. Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises; 5. Using the services and assistance, as appropriate, of such organizations as the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce; and 6. Requiring all subcontractors to take the same affirmative steps as listed in numbers 1 through 5.
12. Respondent shall not discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, religion, physical or mental handicap, or sexual orientation. Respondents 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.
13. Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352) – Respondent's that are awarded an amount exceeding \$100,000 must file the required certification. Each tier certifies to the tier above 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 tier must also disclose any lobbying with non-Federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award. Such disclosures are forwarded from tier to tier up to the non-Federal award.
14. Debarment and Suspension- (Executive Orders 12549 and 12689) – Respondents understand that a contract award may not be made to parties listed on the government-wide exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM).
15. Respondent's 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).

16. As appropriate and to the extent consistent with law, Respondents should, to the greatest extent practicable, provide a preference for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States. The requirements of this section must be included in all contracts and sub awards awarded hereunder.
17. Respondent understands and agrees that the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (“EOHED”) staff and authorized representatives may evaluate any subcontractors with whom MBI and/or Mass Tech Collaborative executes a contract or other form of legal agreement in order to complete the activities funded under this RFP/Solicitation, through ongoing monitoring. As deemed appropriate by EOHED, EOHED’s staff and authorized representatives may also conduct further reviews and site-visits during the contract term, which may include fiscal reviews. EOHED 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.
18. The awarded Respondent shall maintain and utilize systems and procedures to prevent, detect, and correct fraud, waste, and abuse in activities funded under this RFQ.
19. Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.303, the awarded Respondent shall establish effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets funded under this RFQ and assure that they are used solely for authorized purposes.
20. The awarded Respondent shall 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.
21. The Awarded Respondent shall use its 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.

5.2 Posting of Modifications/Addenda to RFP

This RFP has been distributed electronically using the Mass Tech Collaborative and COMMBUYS websites. If the Mass Tech Collaborative determines that it is necessary to revise any part of this RFP, 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, MBI and COMMBUYS websites for any addenda or modifications to the RFP. The Mass Tech Collaborative accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Respondents who submit a response based on an out-of-date RFP.

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.)		Respondents DUNS No.	
Status of Respondent and/or subcontractor(s) as a minority business enterprise, women's business enterprise or a labor surplus area firm.			

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 RFP requirements. The Respondent acknowledges that all of the terms and conditions of the RFP are mandatory, and that Respondent's response is compliant with such requirements.

The Respondent understands that, if selected by the Mass Tech Collaborative, the Respondent and the 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 **Services Agreement (Federally Funded)** located under "Providing Professional Services to the MassTech Collaborative" [HERE](#); 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 RFP, 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

SEE EXCEL SPREADSHEET

Appendix A: BEAD Five-Year Action Plan Form and Content⁵

b. Five-Year Action Plan Form and Content

Preparing a Five-Year Action Plan gives Eligible Entities the opportunity to identify their communities' broadband access, affordability, equity and adoption needs and to adopt strategies, goals and initial measures for meeting those needs using BEAD and other funds. At a minimum, an Eligible Entity's Five-Year Action Plan must:

1. Provide details of the existing broadband program or office within the Eligible Entity, including any activities that the program or office currently conducts, any previous entity-wide plans or goals for availability of broadband, and any prior experience awarding broadband deployment grants.
2. Identify the funding that the Eligible Entity currently has available for broadband deployment and other broadband-related activities, including data collection and local planning, and the sources of that funding, including whether the funds are from the Eligible Entity or from the federal government.
3. Identify existing efforts funded by the federal government, including the Universal Service Fund, or an Eligible Entity to deploy broadband and close the digital divide.
4. Identify the current full-time and part-time employees of the Eligible Entity who will assist in implementing and administering the BEAD Program and the duties assigned to those employees, as well as any existing contracted support, and any planned expansion of employees or contractors.
5. Identify known or potential obstacles or barriers to the successful implementation of the BEAD Program and the Eligible Entity's corresponding plans to address them.
6. Include an asset inventory that catalogues broadband adoption, affordability, equity, access, and deployment activities occurring within the Eligible Entity and identifies and provides details regarding any relevant partners, such as community-based organizations and CAIs that may inform broadband deployment and adoption planning.
7. Include a description of the Eligible Entity's external engagement process, demonstrating collaboration with local, regional, and Tribal (as applicable) entities (governmental and non-governmental) and reflective of the local coordination requirements outlined herein, including outreach to underrepresented communities and unions and worker organizations. The engagement required must be undertaken both during the development of the Five-Year Action Plan itself and following submission of the plan, reflecting ongoing collaboration throughout the BEAD Program.
8. Incorporate available federal, Eligible Entity, or local broadband availability and adoption data, including but not limited to Affordable Connectivity Program enrollment data. Other federal broadband federal data sources include the NTIA Internet Use Survey,⁶ the NTIA Indicators of Broadband Need Map,⁷ and the American Community Survey.⁸

⁵ This attachment is an excerpt from the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, Notice of Funding Opportunity. See pages 26 – 28, available at: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program>.

⁶ BEAD NOFO footnote #29: See NTIA Data Central, <https://www.ntia.gov/data>

⁷ BEAD NOFO footnote #30: See Indicators of Broadband Need Map, <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/indicatorsmap>

⁸ BEAD NOFO footnote # 31: See American Community Survey (ACS), <https://www.census.gov/acs>.

9. Identify local and regional broadband service needs and gaps within the Eligible Entity's boundaries, including unserved or underserved locations and CAls without gigabit service, and/or any plans to make these determinations where service availability is unclear.

10. Provide a comprehensive, high-level plan for providing reliable, affordable, high-speed internet service throughout the Eligible Entity, including:

- a. The estimated timeline and cost for universal service,
- b. The planned utilization of federal, Eligible Entity, and local funding sources,
- c. Prioritization of areas for federal support,
- d. Any consideration afforded to the use of public-private partnerships or cooperatives in addressing the needs of the Eligible Entity's residents,
- e. Strategies to address affordability issues, including but not limited to strategies to increase enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program by eligible households; and
- f. Strategies to ensure an available and highly skilled workforce (including by subgrantees, contractors, and subcontractors) to minimize project disruptions, including any plans to ensure strong labor standards and protections, such as those listed in Section IV.C.1.e; and plans to attract, retain, or transition the skilled workforce needed to achieve the plan's goals, including describing the involvement and partnerships of sub-grantees, contractors, and sub-contractors with existing in-house skills training programs, unions and worker organizations; community colleges and public school districts; supportive services providers; Registered Apprenticeship programs and other labor-management training programs, or other quality workforce training providers.

11. Identify digital equity and inclusion needs, goals, and implementation strategies, including ways in which the Eligible Entity plans to utilize BEAD funding, Digital Equity Act funding and/or other funding streams in concert to remedy inequities and barriers to inclusion. Accordingly, the Five-Year Action Plan should set forth a vision for digital equity, include the results of a needs assessment for underrepresented communities and an asset inventory of ongoing digital equity activities, and detail holistic strategies around affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation. This requirement may be satisfied by the completion of a State Digital Equity Plan under the Digital Equity Act.⁹

12. Detail alignment of the Five-Year Action Plan with other existing and planned economic development, telehealth, workforce development, related connectivity efforts, and other Eligible Entity priorities.

13. Describe technical assistance and additional capacity needed for successful implementation of the BEAD Program.

⁹ BEAD NOFO footnote # 32: Please refer to the Digital Equity Act State Planning Grant Program NOFO for the requirements and deadlines applicable to that program.

Appendix B: Digital Equity Act – Statewide Digital Equity Plan Requirements¹⁰

b. State Digital Equity Plan Requirements

Digital equity is fundamentally concerned with promoting full participation in the digital economy and society by all. Achievement of digital equity requires strategic investments in human and community capacity. Each State Digital Equity Plan prepared using State Digital Equity Planning Grant funding should include a clear description of the State’s vision for digital equity in the context of its overarching strategy and goals.

i. Statutory Requirements

The statutory requirements for the contents of State Digital Equity Plans are set forth in Section 60304(c)(1) of the Infrastructure Act, and are listed below:

1. Identification of barriers to digital equity faced by Covered Populations in the State.
2. Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting, among each Covered Population located in that State—
 - a. The availability of, and affordability of access to, fixed and wireless broadband technology;
 - b. The online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services;
 - c. Digital literacy;
 - d. Awareness of, and the use of, measures to secure the online privacy of, and cybersecurity with respect to, an individual; and
 - e. The availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices.
3. An assessment of how the measurable objectives identified in item 2 of this Section IV.C.1.b.i will impact and interact with the State’s—
 - a. Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes;
 - b. Educational outcomes;
 - c. Health outcomes;
 - d. Civic and social engagement; and
 - e. Delivery of other essential services.
4. In order to achieve the measurable objectives identified in item 2 of this Section IV.C.1.b.i, a description of how the State plans to collaborate with key stakeholders in the State, which may include¹¹—
 - a. Community anchor institutions;

¹⁰ This attachment is an excerpt from the Digital Equity Act Planning Grant Program, Notice of Funding Opportunity. See pages 20 – 22, available at: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/grant-programs/digital-equity-programs>

¹¹ DEA NOFO footnote #13: States must utilize a variety of communications media (e.g., online, print, radio) and provide information in languages other than English when warranted based on the demographics of the stakeholder communities. NTIA also encourages States to collaborate with other groups not named in the statute, including members of Covered Populations who have direct lived experience with being disconnected, state agencies, labor unions and other organizations that represent workers, digital inclusion coalitions located in the State, chambers of commerce and industry associations, public housing resident associations, healthcare systems and networks, homeless continuum of care providers, multi-family housing developers and owners, faith-based institutions, business owners, state and local foundations and funders, early childhood and early intervention coordinators, re-entry organizations, and internet service providers.

- b. County and municipal governments;
 - c. Local educational agencies;
 - d. Where applicable, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or Native Hawaiian organizations;
 - e. Nonprofit organizations;
 - f. Organizations that represent—
 - i. Individuals with disabilities, including organizations that represent children with disabilities;
 - ii. Aging Individuals;
 - iii. Individuals with language barriers, including—
 - 1. Individuals who are English learners; and
 - 2. Individuals who have low levels of literacy;
 - iv. Veterans; and
 - v. Individuals in that State who are incarcerated in facilities other than Federal correctional facilities;
 - g. Civil rights organizations;
 - h. Entities that carry out workforce development programs;
 - i. Agencies of the State that are responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities in the State;
 - k. Public housing authorities in the State; and
 - l. A partnership between any of the entities described in clauses (a) through (k).
5. A list of organizations with which the Administering Entity for the State collaborated in developing the Plan.

ii. Additional Requirements

In addition to the above requirements, the State Digital Equity Plan developed with planning grant funds shall, at a minimum, include the following:

1. A stated vision for digital equity;
2. A digital equity needs assessment, including a comprehensive assessment of the baseline from which the State is working and the State’s identification of the barriers to digital equity faced generally and by each of the covered populations in the State;
3. An asset inventory, including current resources, programs, and strategies that promote digital equity for each of the covered populations, whether publicly or privately funded, as well as existing digital equity plans and programs already in place among municipal, regional, and Tribal governments;
4. To the extent not addressed in connection with item 4 of Section IV.C.1.b.i, a coordination and outreach strategy, including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement with representatives of each category of covered populations within the State and with the full range of stakeholders within the State;
5. A description of how municipal, regional, and/or Tribal digital equity plans will be incorporated into the State Digital Equity Plan;
6. An implementation strategy that is holistic and addresses the barriers to participation in the digital world, including affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation. The strategy should (a) establish measurable goals, objectives, and proposed core activities to address the needs of covered populations, (b) set out measures ensuring the

- plan's sustainability and effectiveness across State communities, and (c) adopt mechanisms to ensure that the plan is regularly evaluated and updated;
7. An explanation of how the implementation strategy addresses gaps in existing state, local, and private efforts to address the barriers identified pursuant to Section IV.C.1.b.i, item 1, of this NOFO;
 8. A description of how the State intends to accomplish the implementation strategy described above by engaging or partnering with:
 - a. Workforce agencies such as state workforce agencies and state/local workforce boards and workforce organizations;
 - b. labor organizations and community-based organizations; and
 - c. Institutions of higher learning, including but not limited to four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, education and training providers, and educational service agencies;
 9. A timeline for implementation of the plan; and
 10. A description of how the State will coordinate its use of State Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding and its use of any funds it receives in connection with the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, other federal or private digital equity funding.