Agenda

1. BEAD Overview
2. The Challenge Process
   a. Overview
   b. Timeline
   c. Eligible Entities
   d. Participation Opportunities
3. Next Steps
4. Q&A

Please use the Q&A chat to ask any questions that may come up during the presentation
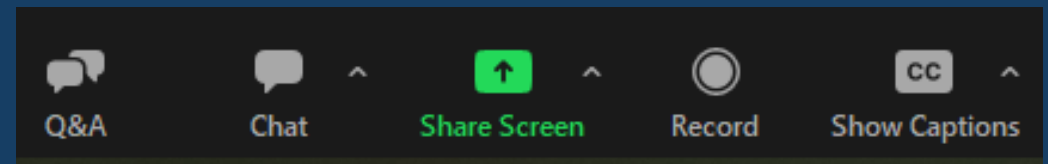
Established in 1982

MASSACHUSETTS TECHNOLOGY COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION: | We strengthen the competitiveness of the tech and innovation economy by driving strategic investments, partnerships, and insights that harness the talent of Massachusetts.

MBI
MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE

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

MassCyberCenter

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

MeHI
MASSACHUSETTS eHEALTH INSTITUTE

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

THE INNOVATION INSTITUTE

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

Cam
MASSACHUSETTS CENTER for ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

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

News: Statewide Digital Equity Plan Approved & $14M Capacity Grant Allocated

Massachusetts State Digital Equity Plan

Massachusetts Broadband Institute

Massachusetts Receives $14.1 Million in Federal Funding to Expand Digital Access

New "Internet for All" funding stream will address digital divide statewide through digital skills training, device access, and internet affordability

April 01, 2024

Source: Office of Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey

BOSTON - The Biden-Harris Administration and the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced that Massachusetts had been allocated $14.1 million from the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, an "Internet for All" initiative designed to give individuals and communities the tools, skills and opportunities they need for meaningful access to high-speed Internet service.

The new program will allow Massachusetts to implement the programs outlined in the state's Digital Equity Plan, which was formally approved by the NTIA on March 26.

"We thank the Biden-Harris administration for launching this important effort to help us close the digital divide once and for all," said Governor Maura Healey. "Massachusetts is proud to partner with the White House to address the core challenges around affordability, device access and digital training that far too often hold residents back from the jobs, health care resources and social connections they deserve. Our Internet for All program has already made key investments that are having a positive impact for Massachusetts communities, and we look forward to building on that progress with this new Capacity Grant Program award."

MEDIA CONTACT(S):

NEWS AND MEDIA > PRESS RELEASES

Massachusetts' Digital Equity Plan Accepted

MARCH 26, 2024

For Immediate Release
March 26, 2024

News Media Contact:
NTIA, Office of Public Affairs, press@ntia.gov

WASHINGTON – The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has accepted Massachusetts' Digital Equity plan.

The Digital Equity Act, part of the Internet for All initiative and a key piece of President Biden's Investing in America Agenda, provides $2.75 billion to establish three grant programs that promote digital equity and inclusion. The program aims to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy.

Using $1,003,760.00 from the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, Massachusetts created a plan aimed at addressing disparities in digital access, skills and affordability across the state.

All 50 States, D.C., and Puerto Rico have submitted their Digital Equity Plans to NTIA for acceptance. NTIA continues to accept plans on a rolling basis. In the coming months, NTIA will launch the $1.44 billion Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program.

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About the Massachusetts Broadband Institute

MBI's mission is to make affordable high-speed Internet available to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices, and other public places across the Commonwealth. MBI works closely with key stakeholders to bridge the digital divide in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Broadband & Digital Equity Funding

$75M - State ARPA Digital Equity Fund

$175M - US Treasury Capital Projects Fund

$15M - NTIA Digital Equity Planning & Capacity Grants

$147M - NTIA Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Grant (including $5M Planning Grant)

The BEAD Program

- The **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program**, provides $42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

- The state of Massachusetts has been awarded $147 million under the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

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Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD)

BEAD projects are designed to provide fiber connectivity directly to the end user (last mile), including unserved, underserved, and CAIs.

Broadband Deployment

01 — Unserved Locations
MBI awards funding in a manner that prioritizes Unserved Service Projects.

02 — Underserved Locations
Once MBI certifies that it will ensure coverage of all unserved locations, it may then prioritize Underserved Service Projects.

03 — Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs)
NTIA Strongly urges that MBI serves eligible Community Anchor Institutions next
- Ensure deployment of gigabit connections to community anchor institutions such as libraries and community centers that lack such connectivity.
- Eligible Community Anchor: entity (e.g., school, library, hospital) that facilitates greater use of high-speed Internet service by vulnerable populations and have download speed <1 Gbps.

Non-Deployment Uses

04 — Access, Adoption, and Equity
MBI can apply any remaining funding to pursue eligible access-, adoption-, and equity-related uses, as well as any other uses approved by the Assistant Secretary that support the Program's goals.

BEAD funds prioritize projects that demonstrate they will be able to ensure service to all unserved and underserved locations.

MA by the Numbers

Summary - State of Massachusetts	Sum of total_count
Served	1,939,689
Underserved	4,140
Unserved	10,842
Grand Total	**1,954,671**

Please note, the data from the current FCC National Broadband Map shows internet availability as of June 30, 2023, and will be updated in May 2024 to reflect availability as of December 31, 2023, which is the version that will be used in the Challenge Process administered by MBI. The FCC National Broadband Map does not directly reflect the quality of internet service provided by providers. Counts represented in the data are for Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs), not units, and may not correlate with residential counts used by municipalities. MBI is aware that the map may not reflect the most accurate, up-to-date funding commitments from existing federal, state, or local sources; the locations with enforceable commitments will not be eligible for BEAD funding. Additionally, the Commonwealth has awarded Last Mile grants with state funds to expand broadband connectivity in unserved towns. These grants are achieving coverage levels of 96-100% served. The coverage in these Last Mile towns may not always be accurately reflected in the FCC National Broadband Map. The source of the FCC National Broadband Map data is submitted by Internet Service Providers.

**Last updated 01/23/24**

BDC As Of June 30th 2023

10,842	4,140
Unserved	Underserved

DOWNLOAD DATA

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99% of locations in Massachusetts have service available. According to the FCC's broadband maps **~15,000 locations remain underserved** and **underserved** and these locations are in every part of the state and impact every region.
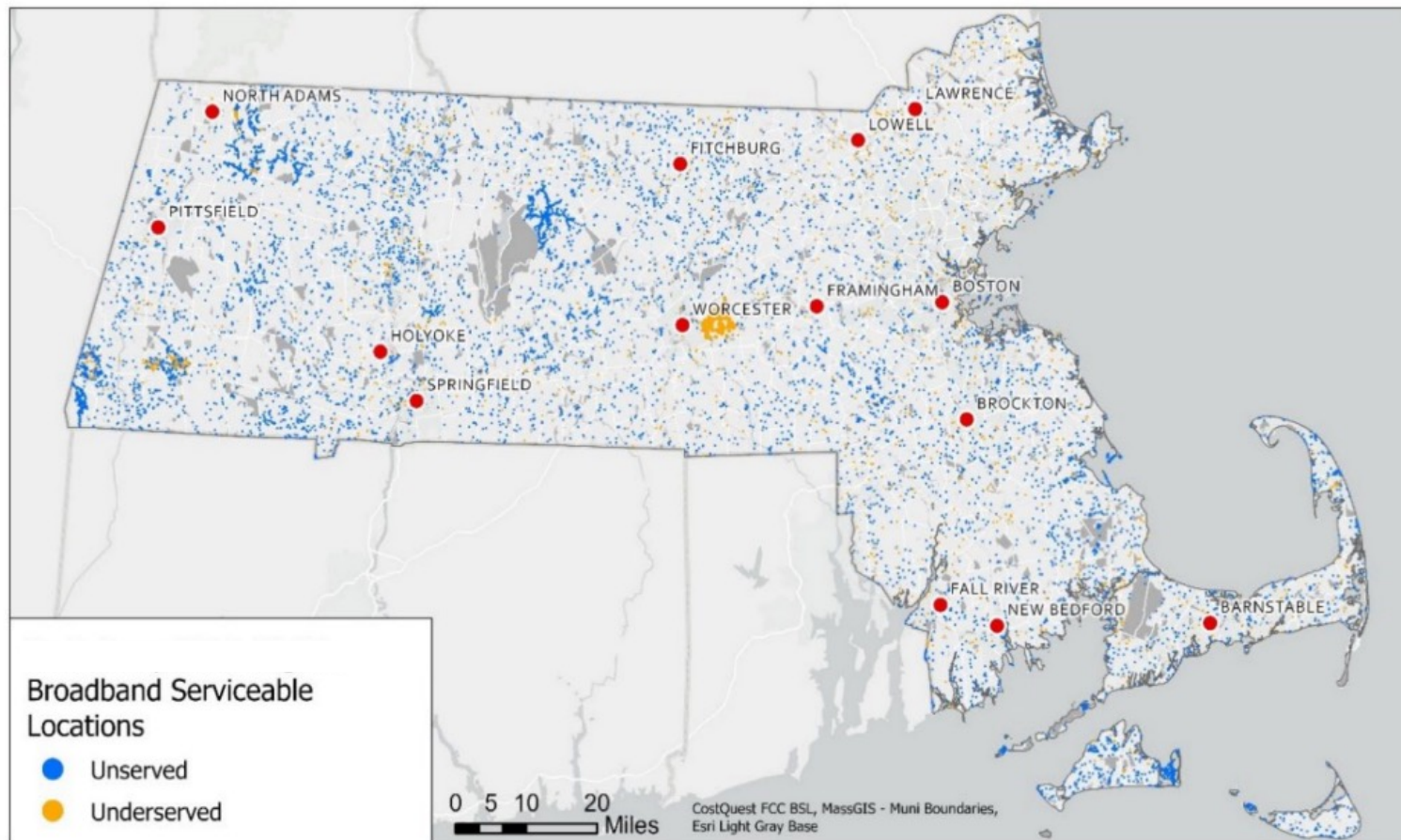
Definitions
- **Served:** Internet service is available by reliable broadband technologies at 100/20 Mbps speeds or faster
- **Underserved:** Internet service is available by reliable broadband technologies at speeds of at least 25/3 Mbps but less than 100/20 Mbps
- **Unserved:** Internet service is not available by reliable broadband technologies even at speeds of 25/3 Mbps.

BEAD Challenge Process

BEAD CHALLENGE PROCESS DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

1
Publication of Eligible Locations

- The Eligible Entity publishes the set of locations eligible for BEAD funding which includes the full universe of locations potentially eligible for BEAD funding minus those removed in the modifications to location classifications process.

- This set also includes locations considered served.

2
Challenge

- The Eligible Entity defines the level of evidence needed for a challenge.

- A permissible challenger submits a challenge to the EE's online portal ("challenge portal") and the location becomes challenged.

- These challenges must be visible to the relevant ISP

3
Rebuttal

- A rebuttal of a challenger makes the location or locations disputed.

- A challenge that is not rebutted within the rebuttal period is sustained.

- A provider may agree with the challenge, making the location(s) sustained.

4
Final Determination

- The Eligible Entity either sustains the disputed locations, or rejects the dispute.

Who Can Submit a Challenge?

NTIA Designated Eligible Entities

Under the federal policy for the BEAD program, only the following entities are permitted to submit formal challenges during the BEAD Challenge process:

- Unit of Local Government

- Unit of Tribal Government

- Non-Profit Organizations

- Internet Service Providers

Resident Challenges

Residents in Massachusetts may be eligible to submit challenges through an eligible entity. Eligible entities will be responsible for reviewing evidence and submitting on behalf of the resident.

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Challenge Process Definitions

Term	Definition
Broadband Serviceable Locations ("BSLs")	Premises that include one or more residents, businesses, or community anchor institutions where fixed broadband internet access service is or could be installed.
Unserved Location	BSL without access to reliable broadband internet speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload with a latency of less than or equal to 100 milliseconds.
Underserved Location	BSL without access to reliable broadband internet speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload with a latency of less than or equal to 100 milliseconds.
Served Location	BSL with access to broadband internet speeds greater than or equal to 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

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Challenge Process Modifications Adopted by MBI
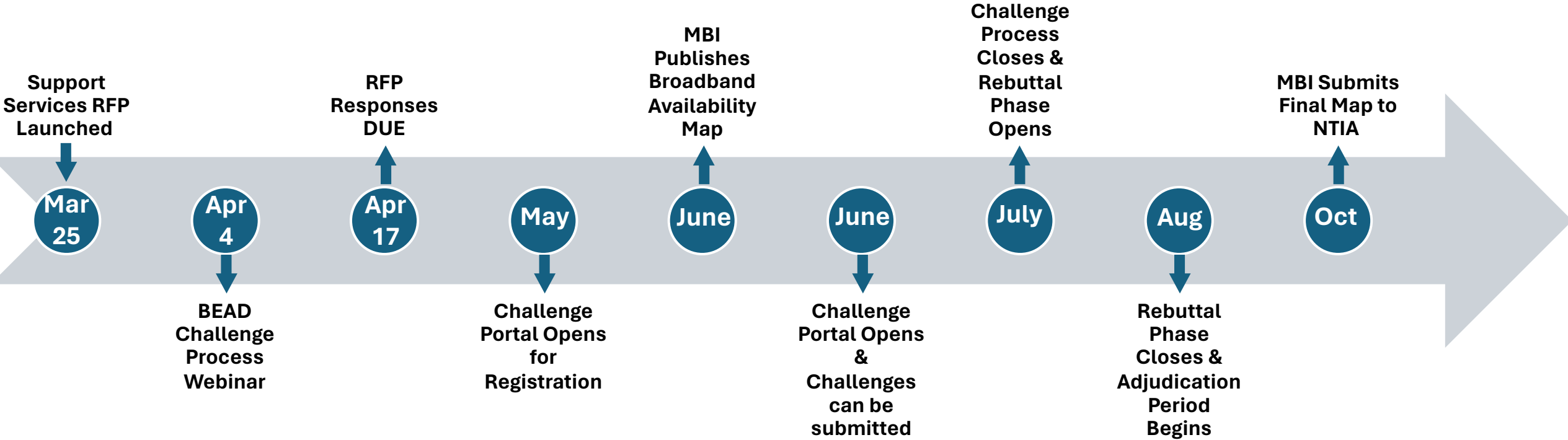
MDU Challenge

- Requires challenges by at least 3 units or 10% of the unit count listed within the same broadband serviceable location.

Area Challenge

- 6 or more locations using a particular technology and a single provider within a census block group are challenged.

Speed Tests Will Be Accepted

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Challenge Process Timeline

Support
Services RFP
Launched

Mar 25

Apr 4

BEAD
Challenge
Process
Webinar

RFP
Responses
DUE

Apr 17

May

Challenge
Portal Opens
for
Registration

MBI
Publishes
Broadband
Availability
Map

June

June

Challenge
Portal Opens
&
Challenges
can be
submitted

Challenge
Process
Closes &
Rebuttal
Phase
Opens

July

Aug

Rebuttal
Phase
Closes &
Adjudication
Period
Begins

MBI Submits
Final Map to
NTIA

Oct

All dates subject to NTIA approval of BEAD Volume I

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Why is the BEAD Challenge Process Important?

The BEAD Challenge Process is vital because it determines the **locations and community anchor institutions** within each jurisdiction that are **eligible for BEAD funding.**

Key step toward achieving BEAD goals

Before the BEAD program can meet the goal of providing accessible and affordable broadband, all unserved locations, underserved locations, and eligible Community Anchor Institutions must be identified.

Helps ensure accurate results

An evidence-based, fair, transparent, and expeditious BEAD Challenge Process, as outlined in the NOFO and Challenge Process Policy Notice, helps ensure accurate results, an efficient process, and a precise allocation of resources.

Gathers information needed before running the subgrantee selection

The subgrantee selection process cannot be run without first having an accurate and comprehensive list of eligible locations and CAIs.

MBI to Engage Technical Support Assistance

Request for Proposals for BEAD Challenge Process Support Services

Solicitation No. 2024-MBI-04

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, on behalf of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) is issuing this Request for Proposals for BEAD Challenge Process Support Services (RFP No.2024-MBI-04) to solicit responses from qualified organizations interested in receiving funding to provide services to support MBI's implementation of the Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Challenge Process for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MBI will prioritize the selection of one or more qualified Respondents that have the capacity and resources to maximize their geographic coverage within the state in furtherance of MBI's objective to have outreach, engagement and technical support services available to support residents and Eligible Entities in every region of the state.

MBI is seeking Support Services to assist in the execution of the BEAD Challenge Process. This will include support during all phases of BEAD Challenge Process, such as:

1. Pre-Challenge outreach and engagement;

2. Technical assistance during the thirty-day challenge period; and

3. Monitoring and evaluation of challenge submissions during the Challenge Process.

The ideal applicant will have knowledge of Massachusetts and the state's broadband availability landscape.

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Eligible Entities: Complete the Expression of Interest

https://form.fillout.com/t/1aRWBsaj4Kus
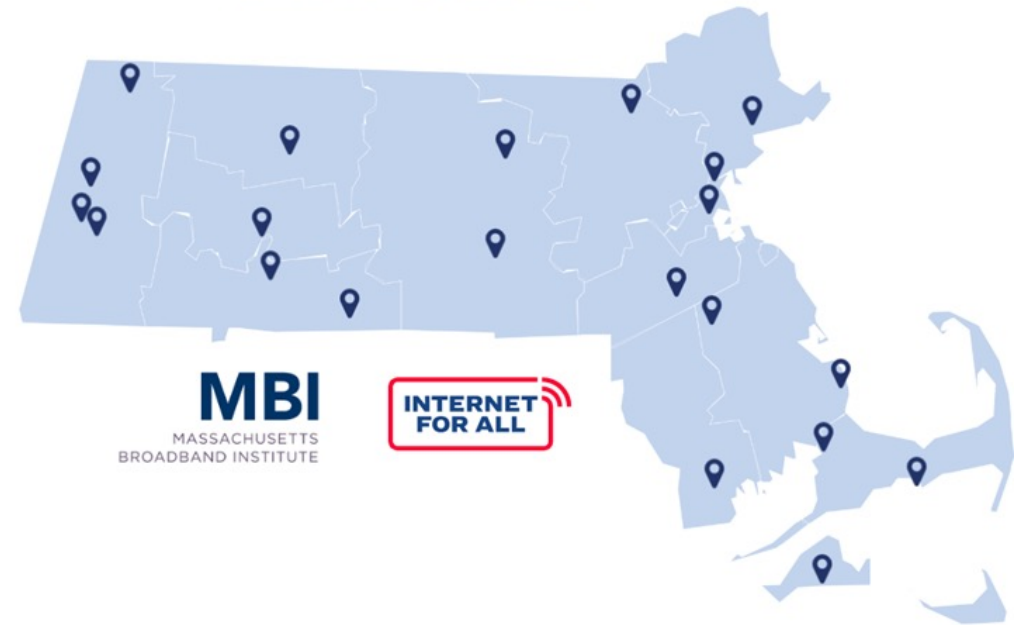
Next Steps – Invitation to Participate

- Keep an eye out for more Technical Assistance materials that will be posted to the MBI [BEAD Challenge Process Webpage](#)

- Please fill out the [Expression of Interest Form](#) for all BEAD Challenge Process updates

- Attend the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Webinar on April 22

- Know Your Numbers and Develop a Local Strategy!

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Thank You!

Please email additional questions to
broadband@masstech.org