Residential Retrofit: RANGE Program

What to Apply for and Why?

May 21,2025

MBI | MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE | at the MassTech Collaborative

Agenda

1. Program Overview
2. RANGE Listening Sessions
3. MBI Digital Equity Resource List
4. Group Discussions

Webinar Goals and Objectives

1. Share key takeaways from the MBI listening sessions

2. Provide resources to help support RANGE applications
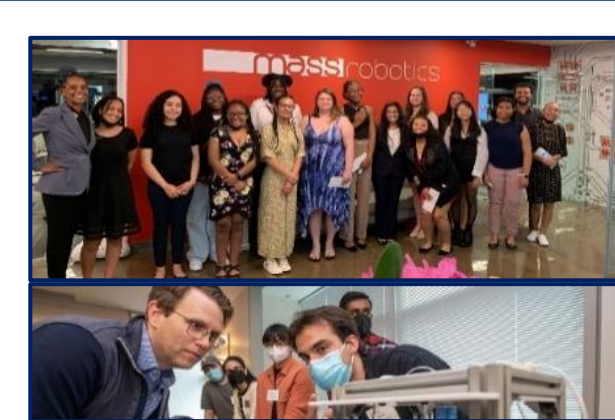
3. Generate application ideas through peer discussion

MASSACHUSETTS
TECHNOLOGY
COLLABORATIVE

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

THE INNOVATION INSTITUTE

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MASSACHUSETTS CENTER for
ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

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MASSACHUSETTS
eHEALTH INSTITUTE

MassCyberCenter

NEMC
Northeast Microelectronics Coalition
HUB

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

Established in 1982 by Legislative Statute

1. Program Overview

About the RANGE Program

To ensure the infrastructure enhancements being made under the Retrofit Program are utilized to their fullest extent, MBI introduced the Retrofit Ancillary Grantee (RANGE) program.
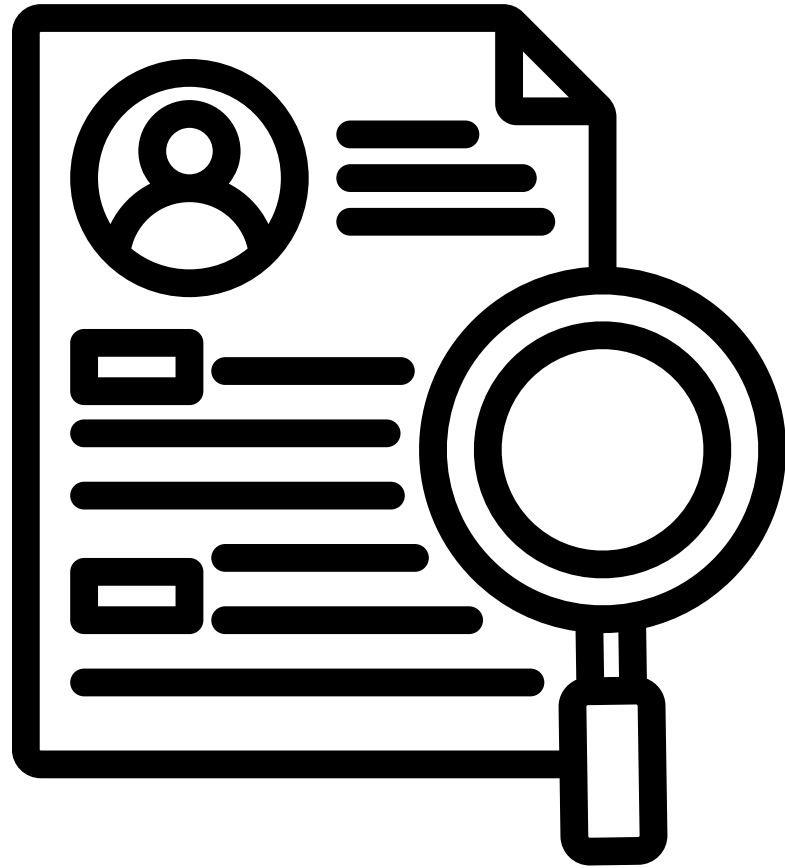
Awards will be made directly to Housing Operators to support initiatives that will increase broadband adoption / utilization.

- **$ 8 Million Dollar Grant Program**

- **There is no match required**

- **Projects must be completed by 12/31/2026**

RANGE: 3 Grant Cycles Offered

Cycle 1

- Open Date: April 30, 2025
- Close Date: June 18, 2025

Cycle 2

- Open Date: September 16, 2025
- Close Date: October 28, 2025

Cycle 3

- Open Date: January 6, 2026
- Close Date: February 12, 2026

Program Offerings

Digital Literacy and Education

Device Distribution

Digital Navigation/ Tenant Coordination

Public Space Improvements

Resident Coordinator(s)/ Navigators

RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Supports the Retrofit Process

Serves as the liaison between ISP, Housing operator, and Residents for installation

Potential activities:

- Identify residents' needs regarding retrofitting and/or broadband access;
- Coordinate activities, events, and programs;
- Educate residents about new services.

DIGITAL NAVIGATOR

Supports Broadband
Access/Adoption

Connect residents to community resources and services

Possible activities:

Record and communicate resident needs regarding broadband access;

Foster community interaction and shared learning through events and group learning ;

Develop and implement activities, events, and programs.

National Digital Inclusion Alliance Resources:
Digital Navigator Job Description
Digital Navigator Program Toolkit

2. Digital Literacy & Education

Digital Literacy Training: Including lessons on how to use the internet effectively, from basic tasks like using a search engine to more advanced skills like online job searching

Development of Outreach Materials: Programs may include developing marketing, education, and outreach materials—both print and digital—including expenses for translation and graphic design.

3. Public Space Improvements

- Create a computer lab or multi-use space with accessible computers and equipment.

- Install specialized privacy areas for telehealth, education, or job interviews.

- Purchase devices for a computer lab

- Provide additional equipment such as video conferencing technology, monitors, etc.
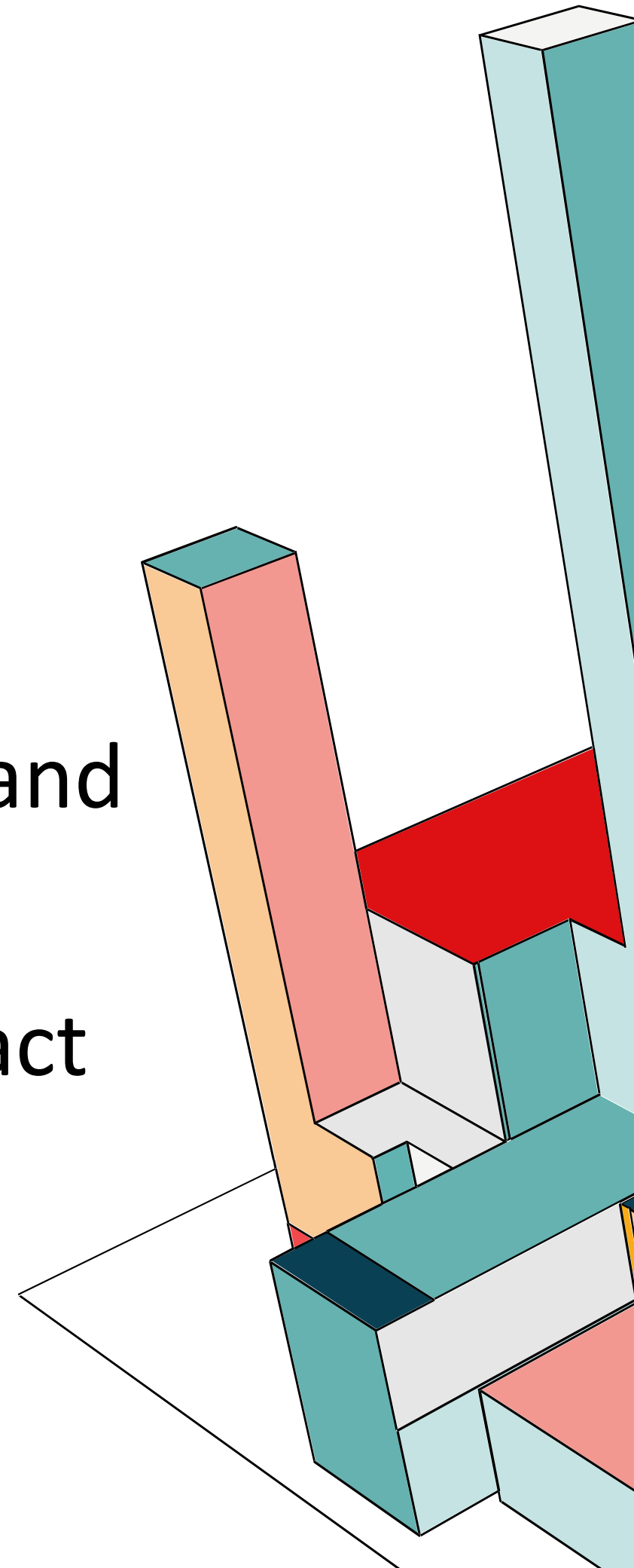
4. Device Procurement and Distribution

Purchase and distribute bulk devices, new or refurbished, for residents.

2. Key Themes From the Listening Sessions

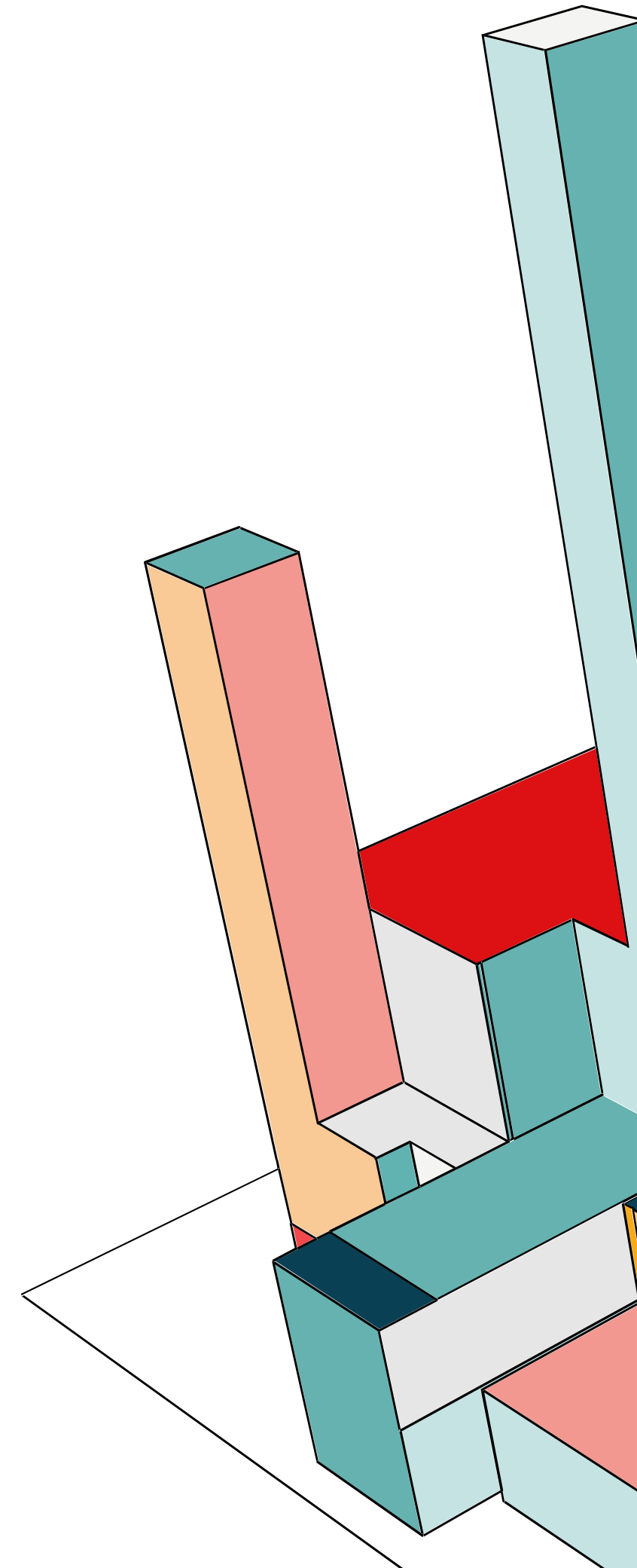# Themes & Insights from RANGE focus groups

- Internet affordability and access remains a major obstacle

- Many residents feel confident on limited digital tasks and often avoid using devices when problems arise.

- Fear of scams and previous negative experiences impact trust and discourage internet use
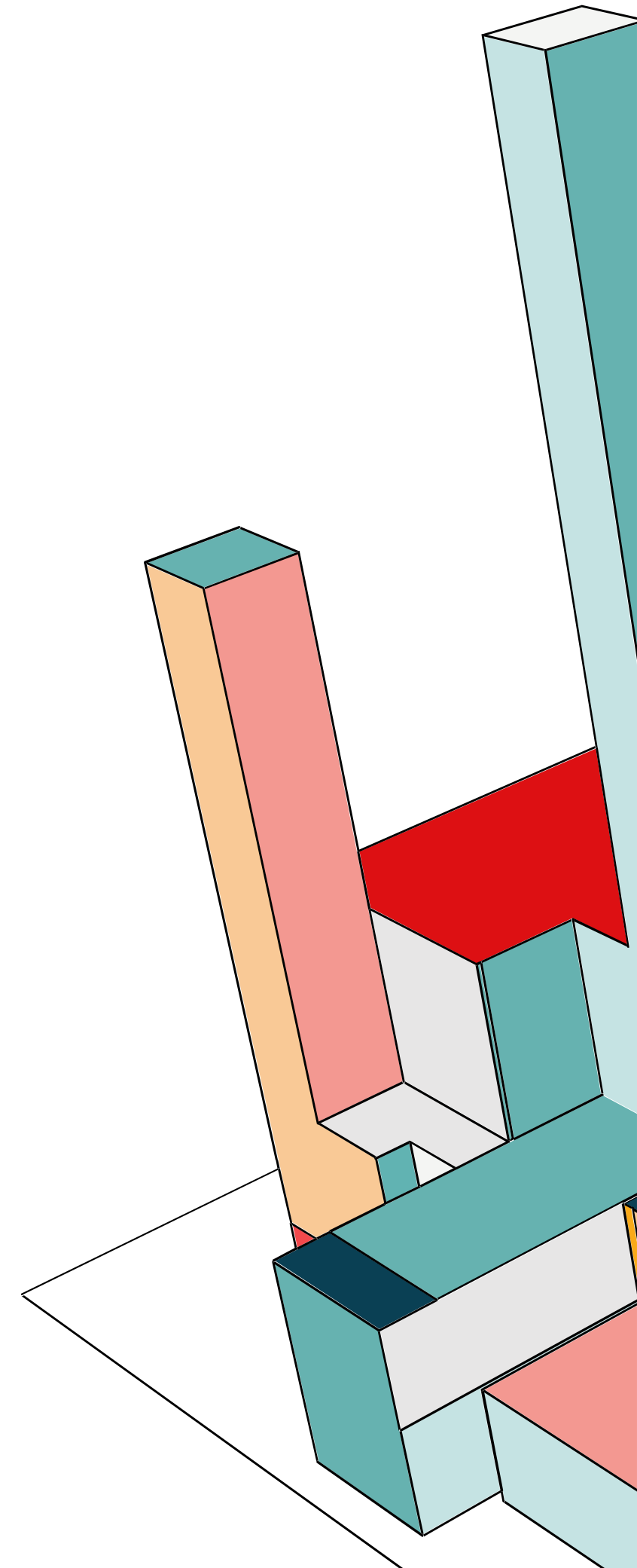
What We Heard From Residents

- A desire for hands on learning – a dedicated person to support digital navigation ; via drop-in learning sessions or group classes including language translation services

- An interest in understanding the new service and plan options offered under Residential Retrofit

- A need for access to amenities to support digital services such as a dedicated space for online learning, job interviews, and telehealth.

What We Heard From Operators

- Challenges with capacity for coordinating construction projects
- Reliability of resident internet access due to missed payments
- General communication of building services including facilitates requests, policy , and emergency notifications remains an obstacle
- A need for relevant industry provider resources operating in Massachusetts

3. MBI Digital Equity Resource List

Massachusetts Digital Equity Resource List

[Digital Equity Resource List](#)

MBI issued a Request for Information in January 2025.

Purpose: To identify vendors and suppliers who provide services aimed at promoting digital equity and inclusion, specifically Digital Literacy; Device Refurbishment and/or Distribution; Education, Outreach, and Adoption; Public Spaces Internet Modernization; and Wi-Fi Access.

Interested vendors and suppliers may currently operate in Massachusetts or elsewhere within the United States.

Please note: Furthermore, the results published from this RFI do not serve as an endorsement on behalf of MassTech/ MBI.

4. Discussion

Discussion Topics

General Purpose and Vision

- Is this program connected to any core mission or goal of your work or organization?
- What impact are you hoping to have on your community and residents through the Retrofit/RANGE process?

Needs and Challenges

- What is the biggest obstacle currently holding back your work?
- Are there gaps in resources (staff, tools, space, training) that a grant could help fill?
- What challenges do you face that funding could help you solve creatively?

Discussion Topics

Capacity Building

- What skills, systems, or tools would improve your capacity to do your work more effectively? (Software, technology, equipment)
- Could a grant help you improve outreach, or develop a community to support larger goals?

Innovation/Change

- How would a grant contribute to the long-term goals of your work?
- Is there an innovative approach you want to try but haven't had the resources to explore?