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News & Updates

April 2025

Launchpad Concept Paper Due Friday, April 25 - Sign Up for Technical Assistance

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) continues to offer technical assistance to organizations interested in MBI's [Launchpad Program](#). The Launchpad Program is open to a diverse range of eligible entities, including nonprofit organizations, municipalities, regional planning agencies, philanthropic foundations, state agencies, quasi-public entities, educational providers, health care providers, and community action agencies. Register now for the final technical assistance session on [Monday, April 22](#). Please [submit your questions](#) prior to the session.



LAUNCHPAD

Municipal Planning and Implementation Applications Due Friday, April 25

The [Municipal Digital Equity Planning and Implementation](#) programs offer key opportunities for municipalities working to expand digital access and empower their communities. These programs provide funding and support for local governments to develop or act on digital equity plans tailored to their community's specific needs. Through access to pre-qualified consultants, municipalities can choose between a short-term planning charrette or a full-scale Digital Equity Plan under the Planning Program.



The Implementation Program offers funding to move from planning to action for communities that have already completed a digital equity plan or similar planning process, but did not enter into a reservation of funds agreement with MBI last year. Click the buttons below to learn more about these programs.

[Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program](#)

[Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program](#)

Coming Soon: RANGE Program for Residential Retrofit Grantees

MBI is gearing up to launch the Retrofit ANcillary GranteE (RANGE) program, offering a total of \$8 million in grants to housing operators participating in the [Residential Retrofit Program](#). RANGE will support investments in digital literacy, device distribution, public space improvements and tenant coordination to ensure residents can benefit from an upgraded broadband infrastructure. MBI plans to have multiple RANGE program award cycles.

This is a great opportunity to enhance digital access in affordable housing communities. Stay tuned for more details on the application process, opening soon.

MBI Leads \$10.4 Million Effort to Expand Internet Access in Public Housing Across Massachusetts

Through the Residential Retrofit Program, MBI is leading a major statewide effort to expand digital access in affordable housing. In Retrofit Round II, MBI directed over \$10.4 million to improve internet infrastructure in nearly 8,000 public and affordable housing units across 26 communities.

MBI is spearheading the installation of modern, high-speed internet cabling to ensure residents have reliable and affordable broadband access. This investment, backed by the Healey-Driscoll administration, reflects a strong commitment to closing the digital divide and empowering communities statewide.



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Creating Courses for All Digital Learners: Spotlight on Boston Housing Authority

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA), a [subrecipient](#) of the MBI [Digital Equity Partnerships Program](#), launched courses to boost digital literacy among residents. To make learning more accessible, the BHA team hired a Cantonese-speaking facilitator to support 10 Cantonese-speaking participants. Among them was 82-year-old, Judy Tsui, who through this more personalized, engaging learning experience, embraced technology with determination.

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Boston and Somerville Residents Help Inform the RANGE Program

The MBI team held listening sessions at the Boston Housing Authority and Somerville Housing Authority to hear firsthand about residents' internet experiences. These sessions helped



MBI and Comcast Host Lead for America Fellows

On March 18, MBI hosted six Lead for America (LFA) Fellows and held rich discussions exploring the future landscape of broadband connectivity and the impact of digital inclusion as a super social determinant of health. Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association Senior Director of Virtual Care and Clinical Affairs Adam Delmolino and Comcast Director of Community Impact Becca Fracassa, also joined to share their insights. This gathering was a reminder of the power of community engagement and the collective effort needed to ensure all residents have access to quality broadband service.



Next Municipal Learning Session is Tuesday, May 6

The Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Learning Sessions are a forum for municipalities to engage in meaningful conversations about putting their local plans into action. These virtual gatherings create space for cities and

inform the design of the soon-to-launch Retrofit Ancillary GranteE (RANGE) program, which aims to support broadband adoption in public housing communities. Residents shared barriers to accessing reliable internet and discussed tools that could enhance their digital skills and quality of life. The sessions highlighted the importance of digital connectivity, and the significant impact expanded broadband access can achieve.

towns to share experiences, ask questions and explore practical strategies for advancing digital empowerment. The next session on Tuesday, May 6, will focus on device purchasing and lending.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Ecosystem Updates / Events

Comcast Awards \$20,000 to Urban League of Springfield to Expand Digital Learning Lab

Comcast has awarded a \$20,000 grant to the Urban League of Springfield to expand its [Digital Learning Lab](#), enhancing access to digital literacy, job-readiness training and essential technology resources. This investment will help bridge the digital divide by providing the Springfield community with tools and skills needed to succeed in the digital economy.

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ISP to Begin Network Construction in West Boylston and Holden

[Ripple Fiber](#), a North Carolina-based internet service provider, will begin construction this spring on a 10-gigabit-per-second fiber network in West Boylston and Holden, Massachusetts. This \$140 million investment plans to launch services by mid-2025, marking Ripple Fiber's expansion into the Northeast region. Further expansions are planned in Worcester, Norfolk and Bristol counties in the coming months.

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Cape Cod Rallies Around Digital Empowerment

The Cape Cod Commission hosted a virtual collaborative working session on Friday, March 28, alongside MBI, Cape Cod Technology Council, and Healthy Aging Cape Cod. This session focused on helping local organizations prepare for new digital empowerment funding opportunities. MBI shared updates on

Western Massachusetts Municipal Convening on Digital Empowerment

On Monday, March 24, the Alliance for Digital Equity hosted the Western Massachusetts Municipal Convening on Digital Equity to bring together local leaders to discuss strategies for enhancing digital inclusion and bridging

grant programs, including Launchpad and Residential Retrofit, and support for communities developing a Municipal Digital Equity Plan. Over 25 participants joined to explore ways to expand internet access, offer digital skills training, distribute devices and build community capacity.

the digital divide in the region. The event featured presentations on municipal digital equity planning, affordable internet resources and the development of community-owned fiber networks. Speakers included MBI Director Michael Baldino as well as representative from the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and more.

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In the News

AcessPlus Expands High-Speed Fiber Internet in Pittsfield via Residential Retrofit Program Award

One of MBI's [Residential Retrofit Program](#) awardees, AccessPlus, was showcased by the Associated Press (AP).

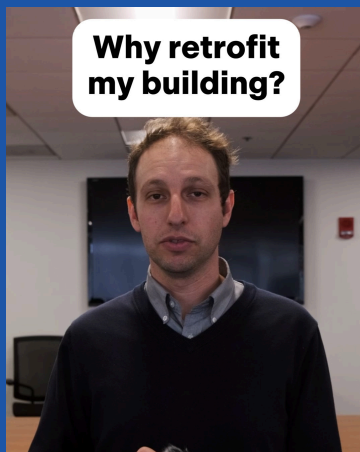
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Faster Internet Coming to 1,600 Affordable Housing Units in Pioneer Valley

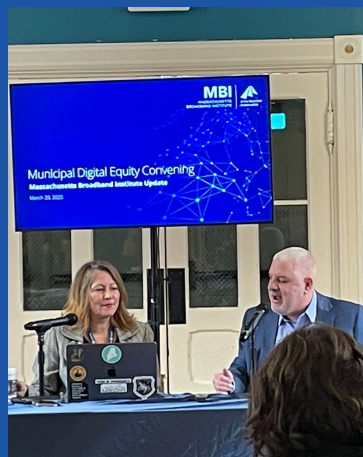
MassLive highlighted the 1,600 public housing units in the Pioneer Valley that will receive upgraded internet access through MBI's [Residential Retrofit Program](#).

[READ STORY](#)

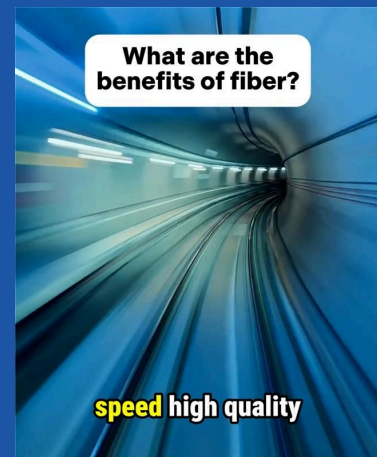
On Social Media



Apply Today for MBI's Residential



MBI Director Highlights the



MBI's Residential Retrofit Program

Retrofit Program

MBI's [Residential Retrofit Program](#) brings state-of-the-art broadband infrastructure to affordable and public housing residents across the state. Applications for Retrofit Round IV will open this spring. More details to come.

[VIEW POST](#)

Benefits of the Municipal Digital Equity Program

MBI Director Michael Baldino spoke with the [Alliance for Digital Equity](#) about how the [Municipal Digital Equity Program](#) can support local strategies to close the digital divide statewide.

[VIEW POST](#)

Delivers High-Quality Internet

The [Residential Retrofit Program](#) works to provide high-speed fiber service to ensure Massachusetts residents can access the high-quality internet need to participate in education, telehealth and more.

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