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News & Updates

SPRING 2026

MBI Connected & Online Program Applications Due Sunday, April 5

Applications are open for Round 2 of the **Connected & Online (C&O) Program**. Launched in 2025, the \$28.5 million program will deploy over 35,000 laptops, tablets, desktops and ancillary equipment across Massachusetts to help close the digital divide. These devices will support expanded access to education, workforce training and telehealth by establishing public device lending programs and on-site device stations. Increased access to devices will enable residents to pursue additional career readiness opportunities such as the new, free online AI training through the **Massachusetts AI Hub** and **Grow with Google's** partnership.



Interested individuals must submit an [application](#) by **Sunday, April 5 at 11:59 p.m.**

Retrofit Housing Operations: RANGE Cycle 4 is Open

The **Retrofit Ancillary Grantee (RANGE) Program** is accepting applications for Cycle 4. The program allows housing operators enrolled in MBI's Residential Retrofit Program to apply for funding to help residents receive digital skills training, access the internet, and more. Housing operators wanting to apply for funding must **submit an application** by **Wednesday, April 15 at 11:59 p.m.**

Call for Public Comment: Joint Rulemaking by the Massachusetts DPU and DTC

The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and Department of Telecommunications and Cable (DTC) have opened a **joint rulemaking** to consider

proposed updates to regulations governing pole attachments, ducts, conduits, rights-of-way complaints and enforcement procedures. The DPU and DTC are seeking input from the public this spring.

A virtual public hearing will be held Wednesday, May 27 at 2 p.m. Initial written comments must be submitted by Tuesday, May 12. The deadline for submission of reply comments is Thursday, June 11.

Coming Soon: Request for Qualifications

In April, MBI plans to launch a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to pre-qualify vendors to provide strategic, technical, and project management support for MBI's infrastructure portfolio. Proposals will be due mid- to late-April. Please visit MBI's [Procurement and Grants Opportunities](#) webpage for information.

Nearly \$16 Million Awarded to Four Internet Services Providers through MBI's Residential Retrofit Program

Over 4,500 additional public and affordable housing units will receive updated internet wiring through the final round of the [Residential Retrofit Program](#). Since its launch in 2024, the program has invested over \$75 million across the state to increase reliable internet access in affordable and public housing. The [final round of awards](#) provides nearly \$16 million to internet service providers Aervivo, CBN America, Hawk Networks, and AccessPlus. Through these updates, residents will have access to updated broadband wiring, allowing them to participate in essential activities such as working remotely, pursuing educational opportunities and accessing telehealth.

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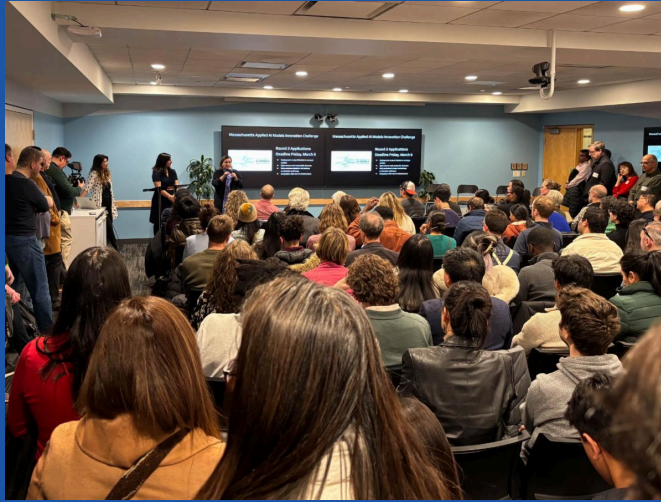
MBI Awards \$7.6 Million to 37 Housing Operators Via the RANGE Program

Thirty-seven housing agencies across the state will be able to provide their residents with increased digital skills training, access to devices and other services thanks to funding through MBI's [RANGE Program](#). The program will provide a total of \$9.9 million to housing operators, which will allow the housing operators to help residents fully utilize the updated, high-speed internet service made available through MBI's Residential Retrofit Program.



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MBI Joins Massachusetts AI Hub's First Community Night in Cambridge



In February, MBI Broadband and Digital Equity Grants Manager Caitlin Schubert joined Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech) colleagues to listen in as **Massachusetts AI Hub** (MA AI Hub) Director Sabrina Mansur moderated a panel for the Hub's first community night, in partnership with Red Hat at Venture Café, Cambridge. Panelists Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan Labor Economics Researcher Isabela Loayza and MIT LEAP Director John Liu discussed the future of work, how communities can apply workforce research, and designing flexible upskilling programs to keep pace with rapidly evolving AI technology. Additionally, the panelists touched on how communities can apply workforce research and design flexible upskilling programs to keep pace with rapidly evolving AI technology.

Massachusetts Perspective Represented at National BEAD Conference

MBI Director Michael Baldino participated in Broadband Breakfast's **Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Implementation Summit** in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, March 18. Baldino represented Massachusetts as part of a panel of experts from state broadband offices in Delaware, Maine, Vermont and Virginia. He discussed the status of BEAD implementation in Massachusetts, the challenges to achieving universal access to affordable and reliable broadband service, areas where flexibility or clarity is needed, and priorities for the remaining BEAD non-deployment funds.

MBI Team Attended State Broadband Leaders Network Summit in Washington, D.C.

MBI Director Michael Baldino and MBI Program Manager of Broadband Grants Karen Jenkins participated in the State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN) 2026 Winter Summit, a two-day conference in Washington, D.C. Jenkins and Baldino attended several panel discussions, roundtables and sessions that discussed various issues impacting state broadband offices with a focus on the BEAD Program such as permitting and compliance.

Calling All Digital Navigators: Register for MassDNA 2026 Inaugural Annual Conference

The MBI team is pleased to be a sponsor of the inaugural Statewide Digital Navigators' Conference. The conference will take place Wednesday, May 13 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Wellsworth Hotel in Southbridge. Hosted by the Alliance for Digital Equity, this event will convene over 100 digital navigators and focus on professional development. Members of the MBI team will also participate in the event's panel sessions



Click below to register.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

In the News

MBI Launches Round 2 of Connected & Online Program

The Benton Institute covered the launch of round two of MBI's Connected & Online Program, which aims to bridge the digital divide by connecting residents to resources such as the Massachusetts AI Hub's free AI training program with Google.

[READ STORY](#)

Pittsfield Housing Authority Lands \$2 Million in State Grants to Increase Internet Access for Residents

The Berkshire Eagle reported on two MBI grants that will expand internet access and digital education in Pittsfield.

[READ STORY](#)

On Social Media



MBI Celebrated Residential Retrofit Go-Live in Pittsfield

MBI, Pittsfield Housing Authority (PHA) and AccessPlus celebrated the completion of updated wiring at PHA's Columbia Arms building through the Residential Retrofit Program. The project expands access to modern broadband infrastructure for residents of public and affordable housing.

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