

Massachusetts Broadband Institute Request for Qualification for Outreach and Engagement Services to Support Digital Equity Statewide
(RFQ No. 2023-MBI-09)

Questions and Answers

July 26, 2023

<p>Q1: What are the award amounts for each Category of Service?</p>	<p>Q1A: Category 1 is capped at \$15K for individual/ single entity applicants and \$40K for Lead/Coalition Applicants. Category II funding allocations have not yet been determined as those services are due to begin in mid-November.</p>
<p>Q2: How soon can we receive the survey templates?</p>	<p>Q2A: The online survey is available on the masstech.org website. https://made.civilspace.io/en/projects/ma-digital-equity/engagements/ma-sdep-public-survey/sections/1 and is translated into 8 additional languages other than English which can be done by clicking at the top right.</p> <p>Paper surveys are available to download here.</p>
<p>Q3: Can we customize the surveys, and is the expense for the materials included in the funding?</p>	<p>Q3A: The survey cannot be customized; it must be completed as designed for the data to be analyzed correctly across the covered populations and different geographies of the state.</p> <p>Expenses such as printing and other materials related to this scope are allowable expenses. Please be sure to include them in your budget if you want to be reimbursed for them.</p>

<p>Q4: How will funds be issued in advance or through reimbursement?</p>	<p>Q4A: Funds will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis.</p>
<p>Q5: Can RPAs, if they do not work directly with Targeted Populations, still apply to the RFQ if they intend to oversee the project and train CBO sub-awardees?</p>	<p>Q5A: Yes.</p>
<p>Q6: How does MBI want applicants to "document executed surveys" presuming they are being submitted via the online portal?</p>	<p>Q6A: The intent for this RFQ is direct engagement with covered populations to ensure those without access that are unable to take the online survey have the opportunity to participate in this process. Engagement for additional online responses can be documented by stating the outreach and engagement methods along with the number of unique individuals targeted to receive that information and take action post-engagement.</p>
<p>Q7: Do applicants have to show proof that our outreach directly led to those submissions?</p>	<p>Q7A: As outlined in section 2.3 of the RFP applicants will need to provide deliverables including agendas and attendance sheets from any engagement events or focus groups, a written description of the number of individuals reached through those activities, documentation of executed surveys, and lessons learned; however, proof that outreach led directly to submissions will not be required.</p>
<p>Q8: What percentage of a region's "Targeted Pop" sample would MBI consider representative?</p>	<p>Q8A: MBI is not seeking to reach a statistically valid "representative" population sample. MBI hopes to collect qualitative data based on the lived experiences of individuals among target</p>

	populations.
<p>Q9: Can we assign an ACC Fellow, who starts in September, to help with this work as a liaison to CBOs?</p>	<p>Q9A: Yes, an ACC fellow can support this work, but as MBI/Comcast is fully compensating their wages through Lead for America their staff time should be qualified as in kind in any submitted budget.</p>
<p>Q10: What is a listening session?</p>	<p>Q10A: Listening sessions are public forums led by MBI and its partners that seek to gather information from the public on questions of digital equity in Massachusetts communities. Unlike focus groups, listening sessions are larger events open to anyone. MBI, HR&A, and partners craft programming, facilitate conversations, and take notes on input received from attendees for usage in the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP).</p> <p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening Sessions should run 90-120 minutes • MBI and HR&A will provide template runs of show, scripts, guidance, and logistics support • Recommend hybrid virtual/in-person for inclusivity <p>Listening sessions will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short remarks from state and municipal officials and leaders • Discussion of digital equity conditions and plans in the region led by local co-hosts • Semi-structured, facilitated conversations with participants about digital equity needs and assets

<p>Q12: How can I promote this event via email or social media?</p>	<p>Q12A: Please promote this event using the channels you would usually use to reach your constituents. We encourage using multiple mediums for outreach, such as social media, websites, paper flyers, email lists, and more.</p>
<p>Q13: What accommodations will be provided at listening sessions?</p>	<p>Q13A: All listening sessions will take place in ADA-accessible locations and have in-person ASL interpretation. All events will also have closed captioning accessible via the Zoom session.</p> <p>Language translation via the Zoom session will be assessed on a region-by-region basis, while printed MBI materials will be provided in multiple languages as noted above. Summary reports of each session will be translated into multiple languages.</p>
<p>Q14: What is a focus group? What are the objectives of a focus group?</p>	<p>Q14A: A focus group is a structured, small group conversation of around 10 to 15 members of a covered population, guided by a facilitator with one or more notetakers. The purpose of a focus group is to hear directly from specific covered populations, especially those who may have barriers to accessing the Massachusetts Digital Equity Survey online.</p>
<p>Q15: What are the responsibilities of a focus group host?</p>	<p>Q15A: Focus group hosts will be expected to recruit participants, find a venue that will accommodate all participants, schedule the focus group with MBI's awareness, and organize facilitation and notetaking for the session with MBI's support.</p>

<p>Q16: Should focus groups be held with one or multiple covered populations at a time? How should facilitators document the experiences of those who have multiple identities within the federally determined Covered Populations?</p>	<p>Q16A: MBI will provide focus group hosts with demographic questionnaires for each focus group. All participants should fill these out before or after the session. While focus groups should recruit for one particular covered population as the core of each group, having demographic information for all focus group participants will enable analysis across intersectional identities.</p>
<p>Q17: What materials are needed to plan and conduct a focus group session?</p>	<p>Q17A: MBI and partners will provide a focus group facilitation guide for awardees with questions to structure these conversations, as well as notetaking forms.</p>
<p>Q18: How will data gathered at focus group sessions inform the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP)?</p>	<p>Q18A: Each Focus Group should have a facilitator and a notetaker. Notes from the Focus Group, including quotations and sentiments, will be used to supplement what we learn from the Public Survey, adding depth and context to survey findings. MBI and its partners will process and code notes in order to create a full and holistic picture of needs and barriers to digital participation for those most impacted by digital inequity. This knowledge will inform the State's Digital Equity planning process.</p>
<p>Q19: What is the difference between a focus group and a listening session?</p>	<p>Q19A: A listening session is intended to be a public, structured, regional conversation to understand different geographic needs across the State. A focus group is a more intimate but highly structured gathering of members of a specific Covered Population to answer</p>

	<p>questions similar to those in the Digital Equity Survey. Qualitative data from Focus Groups adds depth, context, and humanity to survey findings.</p>
<p>Q20: What is the timeline to execute focus group sessions?</p>	<p>Q20A: Focus groups are designed and conducted so that the findings fit into the State Digital Equity Planning Needs Assessment, which requires mixed-methods data analysis. MBI encourages partners to plan and host focus groups before September 30, 2023, for inclusion in the draft of the Digital Equity Plan, and by November 30, 2023, for inclusion in the final plan.</p>
<p>Q21: Who will facilitate focus group sessions?</p>	<p>Q21A: Facilitation of a focus group is a direct eligible expense for this RFQ, which can be outsourced by applicants via their networks. MBI and partners are happy to support with facilitation training based on the focus group script.</p>
<p>Q22: Will facilitators be trained to facilitate focus group sessions, and if so, when will this training take place?</p>	<p>Q22A: Training is available. Dates and times are TBD based on the scheduling of focus groups and the facilitators. Attending the training is a billable expense.</p>

Q23: Should food / drink be served at focus group sessions?

Q23A: Refreshments can be served, but it is up to the discretion of each host. If refreshments are provided it should be in a cost-conscious manner. Note that alcohol is not an allowable cost per the terms of MBI's federal grants, and should not be served at these sessions..

Q24: What accommodations will be provided at focus group sessions?

Q24A: All focus group sessions should take place in accessible locations. If you need to rent an accessible venue, please include that cost in your budget for this RFQ. Focus groups should accommodate the needs of all recruited participants.