

RFP No. 2024-Cyber-01 Answers to Questions

Updated 12/11/2024

Applicant Eligibility Questions

Question	Answer
Can a county government apply?	County governments may apply if they are applying on behalf of one or more municipalities, as municipalities must be the end recipients of funds.
Can a county sheriff apply for a grant?	No, municipalities must be the end recipient of funds for cybersecurity improvement projects.
Are private schools eligible for grants?	Private schools are not eligible to receive grants under this program.
Are Special Education Collaboratives eligible for funding?	No, Special Education Collaboratives are not eligible for funding.
Are we able to apply as a quasi-city agency, or does the applicant have to be City Hall/Mayors Office?	City agencies are eligible to apply under this grant. However, we would encourage joint applications from city departments, as municipalities are only eligible for a total of \$25,000 in funding.
Is this program open to Housing Authorities?	Yes, municipal housing authorities are eligible to apply.
Are regional planning agencies eligible to apply?	Regional bodies can apply on behalf of municipalities, but municipal entities must be the end recipients of funds.
Are county governments eligible or would we need to partner with an RPA?	Regional bodies can apply on behalf of municipalities.
Can state-run entities apply?	No, state run-entities cannot apply. Only municipalities, or municipally run entities, or entities applying on behalf of a municipality may apply.
Can public schools apply?	Yes, public schools can apply for funding.
Can charter schools apply?	Yes, public charter schools can apply for funding if they are a local entity.
Can regional school districts apply?	Yes, regional school districts can apply.
Can regional sewage treatment facilities apply?	Yes, regional sewage treatment facilities can apply if they are a local entity (such as a Publicly-Owned Treatment Plant).
Can school districts apply separately from their towns? Or should the town/school district file jointly?	Joint applications are encouraged but towns and schools can apply separately, however no one municipality may receive more than \$25,000 in funding across municipal entities.
As a regional school district, we have three participating municipalities. Would an application be submitted for each municipality, or one for the entire school	Regional school districts may submit one application. For regional school districts we will consider funding up to \$25,000 per municipality, though grants will be evaluated

district? Would the grant be up to \$25k for the regional district or up to \$75k?	against overall program funding and the criteria listed in section 2.3 of the NOFO.
Is there a limit to the number of entities in a town that may apply and/or be awarded the grant?	There is no limit to the number of entities in a municipality that may apply but joint applications from entities within a municipality are encouraged, as municipalities are only eligible for a total of \$25,000 in funding.

Project Funding Eligibility Questions

Question	Answer
Do you have a list of examples of what types of projects you anticipate towns will do under the grant?	The following are examples of projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing Microsoft best practices in O365 or Google best practices in Google Workspace • Purchasing a new firewall certificate • Purchasing a firewall or other smart switches/routers to integrate within a municipal network
Can grant funding be used for SOC services or Managed Detection and Response / Endpoint Protection services?	No. Subscription services are not eligible. Grants should be for narrow projects with a beginning and end that close vulnerabilities.
Would a vulnerability scanning and remediation project be eligible for funding under this grant?	Yes, the grant could fund a project to remediate any gaps that appeared in a vulnerability assessment for a town. However, the grant can't pay for the original assessment.
Could the grant pay for cameras inside Town Halls?	It is possible that cameras inside town halls would be an eligible expense, but we will prioritize applications based on the following evaluation criteria listed in the NOFO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that will address cybersecurity vulnerabilities identified as part of an assessment and reduce the cybersecurity risk of the respondent • Likelihood that the improvements will assist the respondent in developing a mature cybersecurity program • Participation of the respondent in statewide cybersecurity collaborations in Massachusetts • Considerations of geographic and economically equitable outcomes
Can grants fund currently implemented cybersecurity managed services?	No. Ongoing managed services or subscription services are not eligible for funding. Grants should be for one-time narrow

	projects that with a beginning and endpoint that close vulnerabilities.
Can grant funding be used for developing a written Cyber Incident Response Plan, Multifactor Authentication, or in-person cybersecurity trainings?	No, these are not eligible expenses under this program.
Can the program used to pay a school's portion of equipment under eRate?	Yes. Grants will fund cybersecurity improvement projects identified through a vulnerability assessment.
What are the criteria for what can be considered "cybersecurity improvements"?	Projects that map to the CIS Critical Security Controls and close vulnerabilities identified in an assessment are considered cybersecurity improvement projects.
Can grant funds be used for cloud-based services?	Yes, but it would depend on the exact services funds would be used for. Projects that require a subscription are not eligible, but projects that are a one-time cost are eligible.
Can funding be used to pay for a school department moving from GSuite Free to Google Plus?	Yes, these would be eligible expenses of grant funding provided that the grant is not paying for the subscription to Google Plus itself.
Can you combine projects? For instance, doing both O365 hardening AND a new firewall?	Yes, projects can be combined as long as the total funding request is no more than \$25,000.
Could grant funding cover the cost of a new firewall that I just purchased and received today?	Grants may only fund expenses incurred after an application is submitted to MassTech. However, submission of an application is not a guarantee of receiving an award from MassTech, and applicants must assume all project costs if the application is not selected for an award.
If the assessment found that existing Exchange 2012 needed to be upgraded to 2019/2020, would this Grant cover those costs (licensing and associated labor)?	Yes, this would be an eligible expenditure of grant funding.
If receiving eRate funding to reduce firewall purchase costs, can you use the grant to pay for the school district's portion?	Yes. Grants will fund projects that close vulnerabilities identified as part of a cybersecurity vulnerability assessment.
Can grants fund services, like a "Virtual CISO"?	No, ongoing services are not eligible. Grants should be for narrow projects that with a beginning and endpoint that close vulnerabilities. Municipalities can also consider utilizing free services from the MassCyberCenter and EOTSS Office of Municipal and School Technology.
Will this grant fund hardware or license updates?	The grant can fund one-time hardware upgrades for cybersecurity that close vulnerabilities identified in an assessment.

	The grant will not fund recurring license or subscription costs.
If we didn't apply or don't receive funding from the MLCGP program, can we then apply for an item that was offered through the MLCGP?	No, the Cyber Resilient Massachusetts Grant Program will not fund items covered through the MLCGP.

Vulnerability Assessment Questions

Question	Answer
If we have 6 months to do the assessment (as stated in 2.2), how do we send it with the application?	The assessment needs to be completed before the application is submitted. That assessment must be completed within six months before the application submission (i.e. if you apply on June 6, 2024, the assessment needs to have been completed between December 6, 2023 and June 6, 2024). The improvement project that applications request funding for are based off the need identified in the assessment, so it has to be completed before the submission. The application form also requires applicants to attach the completed assessment.
Is there flexibility on the requirement that assessments need to be completed within the previous six months?	The assessment must have been completed 6 months before the application submission. Unfortunately, we cannot be flexible on that requirement.
Can a municipality that utilized an outside vendor for a service that is equivalent to a Health Check use this in lieu of doing another Health Check in order to qualify for a grant?	This municipality could use the health check-like vulnerability assessment from this vendor if that support was part of helping the municipality complete the Nationwide Cybersecurity Review as part of a Municipal Local Cybersecurity Grant Program application.
Do all the Health Checks offered through the Office of Municipal and School Technology count as qualifying assessments, or is the list restricted to particular services?	Yes, all Health Checks count as qualifying assessments. There isn't a restriction to particular services within the Health Check.
How can I schedule a vulnerability assessment?	Contact information for eligible providers of vulnerability assessments can be found on slide 3 of the Informational Webinar presentation here .
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Do we need to share the vulnerability assessment results with you?	Yes, applications under this program must include a copy of the completed vulnerability assessment.
Please clarify the requirement that the vulnerability assessment needs to be completed within six months of the application submission.	The assessment must be completed no later than 6 months before the application submission. For example, if an application is submitted on June 6, 2024, the vulnerability assessment must have been completed between December 6, 2023 and June 6, 2024.
How can we share CISA Cyber Hygiene scans if they are encrypted?	We can work with CISA to figure out how that can be shared. If you are applying using that report, you can highlight the vulnerability in your application.
Who are the qualified providers of vulnerability assessments?	See section 2.1 of the NOFO for the list of qualified providers of vulnerability assessments.
Are vendors on the ITS78 contract qualified providers of vulnerability assessments?	No, not all ITS78 vendors are qualified providers of vulnerability assessments. See section 2.1 of the NOFO for the list of qualified providers.
Can we include CISA Web Application Scanning results as the vulnerability assessment?	Yes, CISA Web Application Scanning is a qualified vulnerability assessment.
If I have not had an assessment yet I am not eligible to apply for this grant?	Applicants must complete a vulnerability assessment from a qualified provider listed in the NOFO before applying for a grant. Qualifying assessments must be completed within 6 months of application submission.
My customer has recently completed a comprehensive penetration test and vulnerability assessment by my company. Would that be sufficient for meeting the vulnerability assessment requirements?	Qualified providers of vulnerability assessments for this grant are listed in section 2.1 of the NOFO.

Other Questions

Question	Answer
Are ITS78 vendors who are doing Health Checks allowed to perform grant-funded services that they recommended in their Health Checks?	Yes, municipalities can choose their Health Check vendor or another vendor to make the changes recommended by the vulnerability assessment.
How could my company become a “qualified” vendor for this program?	Qualified providers of vulnerability assessments under this NOFO are only entities derived from federal or state programs that provide vulnerability assessments. However, municipalities may submit scopes of work from other companies to implement

	cybersecurity improvements recommended in the vulnerability assessment.
Is a recording of the informational webinar for this grant program available?	Yes, a recording of the webinar is available here .
How can my cybersecurity company get involved with supporting this grant?	While only those vendors listed in section 2.1 of the NOFO are considered qualified providers of vulnerability assessments for this grant, other businesses are eligible to assist any municipality in completing a scope of work based on a vulnerability assessment they receive.
Are grants \$25,000 per entity or per municipality? Can two entities in one municipality possibly both receive the \$25,000?	Grants are \$25,000 per entity. It is possible that multiple entities within a municipality could receive \$25,000 grants each, though joint applications between entities within municipalities are encouraged.
How many grants will be awarded?	The total of grants awarded will depend based on the number of applications received and the amount of each funding request. \$1.4 million is available for the program at this time and grants will be up to \$25,000 each.
Is this a rolling application or is there a deadline? Are funds allocated on a "first come - first served" basis? What date will the awarding start?	MassTech will begin reviewing applications on July 1, 2024, with the initial round due by 5PM on this date. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis thereafter and reviewed quarterly. Awards will be issued until all program funds are expended.
Will the list of grant awardees be published?	Whether or how we publish a list of grantees has not yet been determined. MassCyberCenter will consider the cybersecurity implications of naming individual awardees.
How is this program being marketed to local municipalities? Can vendors help push this program?	This NOFO has been posted on the MassTech website here and shared to municipalities through partner organizations. Vendors may share this funding opportunity with municipalities they are working with.