Request for Information for Digital Equity Resource List

RFI No. 2025-MBI-07

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
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Procurement Team Leader:	**Kathryn Downes**
RFI Issued:	**1/31/2025**
Informational Webinar:	**2/12/2025**
Questions Due:	**2/14/2025**
Answers to Questions Posted:	**2/21/2025**
Responses Due:	**3/14/2025**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   Overview

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative ("Mass Tech Collaborative" or "MassTech"), on behalf of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute ("MBI"), is issuing this Request for Information (RFI No. 2025-MBI-07) (the "RFI") to solicit responses from interested parties ("Respondents") who represent service providers and vendors that are currently able to provide digital equity services (see Section 2.1) or are planning to provide such services in Massachusetts at the time of RFI response.

Respondents to this RFI must respond to Questions 1-11 in Section 2.3 of this RFI. This RFI does not obligate MassTech to issue or amend a solicitation or to include any of the RFI provisions or responses in any solicitation. An RFI response is entirely voluntary, and it will not affect MassTech's consideration of any proposal submitted in response to a subsequent solicitation, nor will it serve as an advantage or disadvantage to the Respondent in the course of any solicitation that may be subsequently issued or amended.

1.2   Mass Tech Collaborative and MBI

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative ("MassTech") is an independent public instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts chartered to serve as a catalyst for growing its innovation economy. MassTech brings together leaders from industry, academia, and government to advance technology-focused solutions that lead to economic growth, job creation, and public benefits. For additional information about MassTech and its programs and initiatives, please visit our website at www.masstech.org. Massachusetts Broadband Institute ("MBI"), a division of MassTech, serves as the broadband office for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The primary mission of MBI is to extend affordable, robust, high-speed internet access to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and public places across Massachusetts. For more information about MBI and its programs and activities generally, please visit the website at massbroadband.org.

1.3   Goals and Objectives

MBI is committed to enhancing digital equity across Massachusetts and increasing visibility of the ecosystem, including vendors and suppliers who may support and advance our mission to close the digital divide. As part of our efforts, we are issuing this RFI 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.

The results of this RFI will be made publicly available with the intent of encouraging more visibility into digital equity vendors and suppliers, in Massachusetts and nationally, and to create a publically-available resource list of those vendors and suppliers. **This RFI is not a mechanism to pre-qualify vendors or suppliers for future funding from MassTech/ MBI. Furthermore, the results published from this RFI do not serve as an endorsement on behalf of MassTech/ MBI.**

2. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

2.1   Introduction

MBI is particularly interested in vendors who offer services in the following areas. For more information about current metrics for each initiative area, see Attachment D.

- **Digital Literacy:** Provision of training programs to improve digital literacy and skills to use devices, online resources, and other digital tools. Literacy program curricula and models may

vary based on learner needs and familiarity with devices and the internet, such as in-person group instruction, a-synchronous online instruction, or one-on-one training.

- **Device Refurbishment and/or Distribution:** Provision of new or used internet-connected devices, such as laptops, tablets, and smart phones, to distribute to organizations and/or residents.

- **Education, Outreach, and Adoption:** Enrollment of eligible residents in discounted or free options for broadband service, devices, and digital skills training. Outreach may include workshops, call center phone banking, door-to-door outreach, online/printed communications, and public service announcements. This area also includes Digital Navigators, who are defined as trusted guides who assist community members with ongoing, individualized support for accessing affordable and appropriate connectivity, devices, and digital skills (Reference: National Digital Inclusion Alliance).

- **Public Spaces Internet Modernization:** Improvements to inadequate broadband infrastructure and facilities and equipment to support digital use in public spaces, such as libraries, community centers, senior centers, educational facilities, workforce training locations, and commercial corridors.

- **Wi-Fi Access:** Assessment, design, and establishment of an appropriate technology solution to provide in-unit access to the internet for residents living in affordable housing and/or low-income neighborhoods.

2.2. Respondent Qualifications
To qualify for this RFI, Respondents must:

- Cite experience working with at least one of the Digital Equity Act defined Covered Populations (Attachment B).

- Offer a digital equity and inclusion service aligned with one or more of the areas in Section 2.1.

- Attest that they have been providing digital equity and inclusion services for at least 6-months within the United States.

- Attest that they have capacity to serve communities in Massachusetts at the time of RFI response submission.

2.3 Information Requested
Respondents must respond to Questions 1-11 below:

Question 1. Service Description: What specific digital equity and inclusion services do you offer (refer to Section 2.1)? Please provide a detailed description of each service. Descriptions should indicate what, if any, specific technology or tools are used in your service offerings.

Question 2. Pricing Structure: What is your pricing model for these services? If pricing is not uniform, please provide a range of pricing options and/or packages of service in the form of a rate card, pricing sheet, or other documentation. Please refer to Attachment C for a list of potential cost categories per digital equity area.

Question 3. Target Audience: Who are the primary end beneficiaries of your services? Please describe which Covered Populations and/or Disadvantaged Populations are represented (refer to Attachment B). How do you tailor your offerings to meet the needs of different populations?

Question 4. Experience and History: How long have you been providing the digital equity services described in Question 1? Please indicate the number of clients served and/or projects completed in this time frame.

Question 5. Geographic Reach: In which areas of Massachusetts do you currently provide your services? Have you worked in other states or regions, and if so, which ones? Please describe your potential to scale to additional geographic areas in Massachusetts.

Question 6. Success Metrics: How do you measure the success of your services, both qualitatively and quantitatively? Can you provide examples of outcomes or impacts achieved with past clients?

Question 7. Client Engagement: How do you involve your clients in the planning and implementation of your services? What kind of support do you offer during and after delivery of service?

Question 8. Partnerships: Do you collaborate with other organizations or stakeholders as part of your service delivery model? If so, please describe those partnerships, including names of organizations, duration of partnership, and services/ capabilities provided.

Question 9. Training and Support: What training or support do you provide to ensure organizations can effectively implement and sustain your services?

Question 10. Case Studies: Please provide up to 3 case studies representing related work with past clients that highlight your effectiveness and the quality of your services. If possible, include specific outcomes or metrics to demonstrate effectiveness.

Question 11. Contact: If an organization is interested in learning more or potentially working with you, what email address and phone number should they contact?

Question 12. Additional Information: Respondents may include additional relevant information that elaborates on their role as a digital equity and inclusion vendor or supplier.

3   PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING A RESPONSE TO THIS RFI

3.1 Submission Instructions

a. Responses are due by 5:00 PM EST on March 14, 2025. Responses should be submitted electronically using MBI's online form, linked here. The form requests that RFI Respondents provide basic contact and organizational information and contains long text fields for each of the required 11 Questions. The form will also allow for the upload of .doc(x), .xls(x), .pdf, and other file formats in the Optional Attachments. As part of the online form, Respondents must also upload a signed copy of Attachment A: Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form.

Please note that all responses will be published unless the Respondent does not confirm that they meet Respondent Qualifications, or the Respondent does not answer all required 11 Questions. In addition to publishing as a PDF document as part of the RFI Responses, MBI may also use provided information to create or modify Assets within the Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory, which is a publicly sourced and available database listing digital equity "assets" in or available to Massachusetts organizations and residents.

b. There are no specific character limits on the responses to this RFI, but Respondents are asked to be concise.

c. Any and all responses, data, materials, information and documentation submitted to Mass Tech Collaborative in response to this RFI shall become Mass Tech Collaborative's property and shall be subject to public disclosure. As a public entity, the Mass Tech Collaborative is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (set forth at Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66). There are very limited and narrow exceptions to disclosure under the Public Records Law. If a Respondent

wishes to have the Mass Tech Collaborative treat certain information or documentation as confidential, the Respondent must submit a written request to the Mass Tech Collaborative's General Counsel's office no later than 5:00 p.m. fourteen (14) business days prior to the required date of Application submission set forth in Section 4.2 below. The request must precisely identify the information and/or documentation that is the subject of the request and provide a detailed explanation supporting the application of the statutory exemption(s) from the public records cited by the Respondent. The General Counsel will issue a written determination within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written request. If the General Counsel approves the request, the Respondent shall clearly label the relevant information and/or documentation as "**CONFIDENTIAL**" in the Application. Any statements in an Application reserving any confidentiality or privacy rights that is inconsistent with these requirements and procedures will be disregarded.

3.2   Application Timeframe

The application process will proceed according to the following schedule. The target dates are subject to change. Therefore, Respondents are encouraged to check Mass Tech Collaborative's website frequently for updates to the schedule.

Task	Date:
RFI Released	1/31/2025
Informational Webinar	2/12/2025 @ **1:00 PM EST**
Questions Due	2/14/2025 @ **5 PM EST**
Question and Answer File Posted	2/21/2025 @ **5 PM EST**
Responses Due	3/14/2025 @ **5 PM EST**

3.3   Questions

Questions regarding this RFI must be submitted by electronic mail to proposals@masstech.org with the following Subject Line: "Questions – RFI No. 2025-MBI-07"). All questions must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on 2/14/2025. Responses to all questions received will be posted on or before 5:00 p.m. on 2/21/2025 to Mass Tech Collaborative and COMMBUYS website(s).

3.4   Informational Webinar

An informational webinar will be held on 2/12/2025 at 1:00 PM EST. To register, please complete the Zoom registration. Mass Tech Collaborative will post summary responses to procedural questions and issues addressed during the webinar on the Mass Tech Collaborative's and the COMMBUYS websites.

3.5   Other

By executing the Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form and submitting a response to this RFI, Respondent certifies that it (1) acknowledges and understands the procedures for handling materials submitted to MassTech, as set forth in Section 3.1.c; (2) agrees to be bound by those procedures; and (3) agrees that Mass Tech shall not be liable under any circumstances for the disclosure of any materials submitted to it pursuant to this RFI.

This RFI does not commit the Mass Tech Collaborative to select any firm(s), award any work order, pay any costs incurred in preparing a response, award any grants, or procure or contract for any services or supplies. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to accept or reject any or all submittals received, discuss the contents of a response with any or all qualified respondents, and

request modifications to responses in accordance with such discussions; request supplemental or clarifying information from respondents; or cancel, amend or modify the RFI in part or in its entirety.

MassTech may provide reasonable accommodations, including the provision of materials in an alternative format, for Respondents with disabilities or other hardships. Respondents requiring accommodations shall submit requests in writing, with supporting documentation justifying the accommodations, to the Procurement Team Leader. MassTech reserves the right to grant or reject any request for accommodations.

Respondent's submission shall be treated by the Mass Tech Collaborative as an accurate statement of Respondent's capabilities and experience. Should any statement asserted by Respondent prove to be inaccurate or inconsistent with the foregoing, such inaccuracy or inconsistency shall constitute sufficient cause for Mass Tech Collaborative in its sole discretion to pull down Respondent's application or remove information about Respondent from the Resource List or the Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory.

Attachment A
Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the Respondent listed below. The Respondent has read and understands the RFI (No. 2025-MBI-07). The Respondent specifically acknowledges the application of the procedures regarding submission and disclosure of sensitive information as set forth in Section 3.1.c of the RFI, and specifically agrees that it shall be bound by those procedures.

I certify that the information provided in response to the RFI is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Respondent: _____
(Printed Name of Respondent)

By: _____
(Signature of Authorized Representative)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Attachment B

Covered Populations and Disadvantaged Populations per Digital Equity Act and Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Act

Aging Individuals (60 and older)

Immigrants/ Refugees

Incarcerated Individuals

Individuals with a Language Barrier (English Learners or Low-Literacy)

Individuals with Disabilities

LGBTQ+ Individuals

Low Income Households (<150% of Federal Poverty Level)

Members of Racial/Ethnic Groups

Members of Religious Minority Groups

Residents of Rural Areas

Veterans

Women

Youth

Attachment C

Example Cost Categories: Digital Equity Initiatives

The following list includes example cost categories for the digital equity areas referenced in the RFI.

WiFi Access
- Network architecture development
- Internet service
- Network management
- Networking equipment, installation and configuration
- Software licenses
- Coordination with local service providers
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities

Public Space Internet Modernization
- Internal space design/architecture
- Network architecture as needed
- Internet service
- Network management
- Networking equipment and configuration
- Software licenses
- Furniture (chairs, desks, lighting, etc.)
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities

Digital Literacy
- Digital literacy training curriculum and/or service providers
- Professional development of digital literacy "trainers" for programs that model a "train the trainer" approach
- Physical space to conduct training activities
- Translation expenses
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities

Device Distribution and/or Refurbishment
- Equipment, materials and supplies required for laptop/device refurbishment
- New internet-connected devices, including Chromebooks, laptops and tablets
- Outreach and marketing of program to potential donors
- Training curriculum and or resources
- Program staff time
- Logistical expenses related to laptop distribution

Education, Outreach, and Adoption
- Stakeholder outreach and engagement
- Stakeholder surveys
- Data analysis and planning to inform targeted outreach
- Development of marketing and/or education and outreach materials, including translation and graphic design expenses (hard copy and online content)
- Technical consultants to support any of the above activities

Attachment D

Digital Equity Initiative Metrics

The following metrics are being collected as part of MBI's existing digital equity grant programs.

Wi-Fi Access:

- Number of unique network users – measured through backend management
- Length of session – measured through backend management
- Number of households adopting internet usage that were previously unable to – measured through survey
- Number of households able to save costs on internet because of WiFi system – measured through survey
- Number of residents citing improvements to education, economic, social, health opportunities because of WiFi systems – measured through survey

Public Space Internet Modernization:

- Number of unique network users – measured through backend management
- Length of session – measured through backend management
- Number of users citing ability to access improved resources in education, economic, social, health opportunities because of WiFi systems – measured through annual survey

Digital Literacy:

- Number of residents able to use basic technology at the level of a Tech Goes Home program graduate or equivalent
- Number of residents able to use intermediate technology at the level of a National Digital Inclusion Alliance ("NDIA") Digital Navigator program graduate or equivalent
- Number of residents able to use advanced technology at the level of a CompTIA Network + program graduate or equivalent
- Number of residents learning new digital skill(s) that meet a particular need (e.g. how to use a laptop to participate in a video telehealth visit)

Device Distribution and Refurbishment:

- Number of devices refurbished
- Number of devices distributed

Education, Outreach, and Adoption:

- Number of residents enrolled in Lifeline reported by grantee and tracked through USAC website (subject to the qualifier that there are limited wireline internet access options available to Massachusetts residents through Lifeline).
- Number of residents receiving digital navigation services; receipt of digital navigation services is defined as group or one-on-one interactions, delivered virtually or in-person, that accomplish the following:
  - Understanding a resident's digital access goals, assessing their current capacity, and supporting them through direct assistance or referral to other services.

- o Conducting warm hand-offs to other services as needed. These may be digital inclusion-related (e.g., digital skills training) or linked to other social determinants of health (e.g., housing assistance, employment assistance).
- o Providing a resident with current information on opportunities and services available to them within their community related to internet, devices, and/or digital skills.