

Solicitation No. 2024-MBI-01 for Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program Round 2- Questions and Answers

#	Question	MBI Response
1.	If a municipality had provided a letter of support for a project included in a proposal in Round 1, which was not awarded, and the applicant intends to submit the same project for that municipality in a project proposal in Round 2, must the applicant obtain a new letter of support or may it submit the original letter of support?	The letters of municipal support obtained during Round 1, can be resubmitted by an applicant as part of Round 2 application. Letters of municipal support must be submitted by the Applicant as an attachment to the application. Municipalities should not directly submit letters of support to MBI.
2.	How much of the \$145M is left?	A total of \$45,425,202.90 was allocated in Round 1. Therefore, there is a total of \$99,574,797.10 of grant funding remaining.
3.	Why were our gap round one questions not responded to?	MBI responded to all questions that it received during the bidders' conference and those submitted in written format prior to the submission deadline of 5:00 p.m. on November 22, 2023. MBI posted its responses to the MassTech website and on CommBUYS.
4.	I know the list of municipalities that were awarded and covered under Round 1 are listed in one of the documents on the solicitation webpage. However, could you please tell me where I might find the list of those municipalities covered under Round 1 with the corresponding award amount and vendor who was awarded for each?	MBI will be issuing a press release that will include the names of each awardee and the amount of the grant award for each project service area awarded in Round 1.
5.	We are in receipt of MBI's notice of which towns are being awarded. Will any additional information be provided about which providers have been awarded and funding totals per towns?	MBI will be issuing a press release that will include the names of each awardee and the amount of the grant award for each project service area awarded in Round 1.
6.	I wanted to confirm that you can begin to enter data for the round 2 program and exit the site with the data being retained. I entered some information but want to	Yes, all of your data and attachments will be saved, and you will see them again as long as you use the same computer and browser when you resume filling out the application.

	confirm it does not get deleted upon exiting.	
7.	A potential applicant is interested in applying for Round 2 of the Gap Program, in the areas of Florida, Hawley, Monroe and Savoy, however, we won't do so if you've already awarded grant funds in those areas, can you confirm?	The towns and cities that were awarded in Round 1 are listed in Section 1, Program Overview, in the grant solicitation. The towns of Florida, Hawley, Monroe and Savoy were subject to award in Round 1 of the Gap Networks Grant Program and are no longer eligible for award in Round 2.
8.	Do you know if a full application needs to be submitted or just the new project areas we would like to apply for given we filed a complete application in Round 2?	A new full application will have to be completed in its entirety and submitted for Round 2.
9.	Why was the Speed Testing Data from New Bedford not accepted for GAP?	Section 4.4.1 of the grant solicitation states: "Quality of service challenges will not be considered by MBI when reviewing applications." MBI is not accepting speed test data from Gap Networks Grant Program applicants. Individuals interested in learning more about the submission of speed test data through the challenge process for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program, can find more information here .
10.	Why was New Bedford not accepted for a GAP waiver?	This is an open procurement and therefore MBI will not discuss or provide details associated with any application submitted under this program at this time.
11.	Was feedback shared with New Bedford on this?	This is an open procurement and therefore MBI will not be discuss or provide details associated with any application submitted under this program at this time.
12.	Can the Town of Bourne be approved for a waiver if it were to choose to move forward with a gap grant in round two despite no broadband debt?	No. The eligibility requirements for the funding match waiver are provided in Section 5.4 of the grant solicitation, which states: "The match requirement may be waived for municipal Applicants with outstanding debt from broadband-related infrastructure projects that will have broadband coverage gaps addressed by the proposed project. There is no minimum amount of outstanding debt required. The debt must be incurred prior to the date of the Program application."
13.	Why was the broadband debt requirement for a waiver even in this program when the language of the gap waiver requiring	The funding match waiver as stated in Section 5.4 of the grant solicitation reflects the Commonwealth's policy approach to the match waiver.

	existing broadband debt is a concern flagged by several towns.	
14.	Was Bourne’s December letter highlighting the issue with the waiver reviewed?	Yes. MBI has received correspondence and emails from Bourne from time to time related to the Gap Networks Grant Program that were sent outside the formal Q&A process for this program.
15.	Why was the feedback rejected ?	The funding match waiver as stated in Section 5.4 of the grant solicitation reflects the Commonwealth’s policy approach to the match waiver.
16.	Also, it was my understanding that round two is targeting municipalities. Is this still the case?	The structure for Project Service Areas has been modified for Round 2. A Project Service Area is now limited to a single municipality. The list of eligible entities that can apply for a grant has not been modified.
17.	Given the tight time frames it might be necessary for a non-profit to apply. Would a non-profit be able to apply for a co-funding waiver and succeed? For example, from time to time, the Cape Cod Canal Chamber foundation, a 501c non-profit, has applied for grants instead of the town. This is often done due to time constraints in the municipal approval process or lack of availability of town staff. Falmouth might also be concerned with the same issue but with an MLP applicant.	Please refer to the requirements for a funding match waiver as stated in Section 5.4 of the grant solicitation. Section 5.4 states: “The match requirement may be waived for municipal Applicants with outstanding debt from broadband-related infrastructure projects that will have broadband coverage gaps addressed by the proposed project. There is no minimum amount of outstanding debt required. The debt must be incurred prior to the date of the Program application.”
18.	Why is speed testing not a factor in the gap program and this is strictly based of the FCC maps?	Section 4.4.1 of the grant solicitation states: “Quality of service challenges will not be considered by MBI when reviewing applications.” MBI is not accepting speed test data from Gap Networks Grant Program applicants. Individuals interested in learning more about the submission of speed test data through the challenge process for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program, can find more information here .
19.	Where is the funding coming from for gap?	The Gap Networks Grant Program is funded through the Capital Projects Fund (“CPF”), which is administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The CPF was established through the American Rescue Plan Act.

20.	During the Webinar, MBI indicated applicants who obtained Letters of Support from a municipality whose project was not funded may resubmit the letter to support the rebid. Given that some individual locations may change due to the use of BSLs versus addresses, please confirm letters may be re-submitted as long as the project is materially similar.	The letters of municipal support obtained during Round 1, can be resubmitted by an applicant as part of Round 2 application. Letters of municipal support must be submitted by the Applicant as an attachment to the application. Municipalities should not directly submit letters of support to MBI.
21.	Can the MBI adjust the functionality of its form application to allow applicants to save work and return to the applications later to complete?	The functionality is set for the online application form so that all of data and attachments are automatically saved. When you return to the application you will see data and applications again as long as you use the same computer and browser when you reopen the application.
22.	Will MBI require the successor program to ACP be on terms comparable to the ACP Program?	If a federal internet subsidy program is subsequently authorized by Congress, MBI will determine at that time if the program shall be deemed to be a successor to the Affordable Connectivity Program.
23.	I assume if there are 3 projects that each one has to have their own PSA Overview, Support of targeted populations and equity form, etc.?	The fillable PDFs only need to be completed once regardless of the number of project service areas. For certain questions, the applicant will need to break down the answer into sections designated with a header PSA #1 (Municipality Name), PSA #2 (Municipality Name), etc.