



Request for Qualifications for Municipal Digital Equity Planning Services

RFQ No. 2025-MBI-09

**Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
75 North Drive
Westborough, MA 01581-3340
<http://www.masstech.org>**

Procurement Team Leader: Ariana Fielding

RFQ Issued:	February 3, 2025
Questions Due:	February 10, 2025
Answers to Questions Posted:	February 21, 2025
Responses Due:	March 3, 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 Qualifications for **municipal digital equity planning services** (RFQ No. 2025-MBI-09) (the “RFQ”) to solicit responses from qualified contractors (“Respondents”) with experience in **digital equity and broadband planning**. The submissions of all Respondents shall be compared and evaluated pursuant to the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFQ, and it is expected that multiple Respondents will be prequalified.

The following contractors, which have been pre-qualified for municipal digital equity planning services under RFQ No. 2023-MBI-03, will maintain their pre-qualification and do not need to respond to this RFQ. This RFQ only seeks responses from consultants other than those listed below who are eligible and available to provide municipal digital equity planning services. The consultants listed below, and those consultants selected as part of this RFQ, are known as the “Qualified Consultant Pool.”

- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Cape Cod Commission
- Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
- Broadband Equity Partnership (known as “CTC Technology & Energy”)
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- Kimley-Horn
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District
- Vanasse Hangen Brustlin

Mass Tech Collaborative will be the contracting entity on behalf of MBI for the purposes of this RFQ, and (except where the specific context warrants otherwise), MBI and Mass Tech Collaborative are collectively referred to as Mass Tech Collaborative or MassTech. Mass Tech Collaborative will enter into a **Services Agreement (Federally Funded)** with selected Respondents containing certain standard provisions (the “Agreement”), located under *Providing Professional Services to the MassTech Collaborative* [HERE](#).

1.2 Mass Tech Collaborative and MBI

Mass Tech Collaborative is an independent public instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts chartered by the Commonwealth to serve as a catalyst for growing its innovation economy. Mass Tech Collaborative brings together leaders from industry, academia, and government to advance technology-focused solutions that lead to economic growth, job creation, and public benefits in Massachusetts. For additional information about Mass Tech Collaborative and its programs and initiatives, please visit our website at www.masstech.org.

MBI is the central broadband program for the Commonwealth. MBI was created on August 4, 2008, when Governor Deval Patrick signed Chapter 231 of the Acts of 2008, An Act Establishing and Funding the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (the “Broadband Act”). The primary mission of MBI is to extend affordable, robust, high-speed Internet access to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public places across Massachusetts, with a focus on the hard-to-serve areas of western and central Massachusetts. For more information about MBI and its programs and activities generally, please visit the web site at <https://broadband.masstech.org>.

2. SERVICES REQUIRED

2.1 Overview

Following the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's award to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the [Digital Equity Act Capacity Grant Program](#), MBI is re-opening its Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program ("MDEP") under which qualified consultants will work with additional municipalities to engage in planning activities related to digital equity. These planning activities will result in a set of strategic recommendations designed to:

- Guide municipal decision-making and investments related to services and infrastructure that will increase access, adoption, and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the digital divide.
- Prepare municipalities to submit grant proposals to state or federal programs to support digital equity activities.

The ability to engage in digital equity planning activities will be a critical step for municipalities to build a broad understanding of how internet access, or lack thereof, affects residents of their community. MBI has released a municipal planning application and municipalities with approved applications will be able to choose between two planning activity options. This process will accommodate the diverse needs of communities within our state. For example, some municipalities may elect to start with a one day or multi-day planning charrette. Other municipalities may elect to pursue the development of a comprehensive digital equity plan. MBI will also allow for municipalities to coordinate on a regional basis.

Respondents that are prequalified by MBI through this RFQ will then become part of the Qualified Consultant Pool and will be available to provide digital equity planning activities to eligible municipalities that apply and are selected for support through the MDEP Program.

Each municipality will then be able to make a list selection from a subset of the Qualified Consultant Pool provided by MBI to the municipality. MBI will base the subset of qualified consultants on each consultant's prequalification status to provide the municipality's selected planning activity (charrette or plan) and the geographic alignment of the consultant's service area with the municipality. The consultant selected by the municipality will submit a scope of work and budget to MassTech based on the municipality's planning request and in alignment with the consultant's approach, rates, and fee structure set forth in the Services Agreement. MassTech will then enter into a statement of work with the consultant selected by the municipality.

Respondents are eligible to be prequalified for one or more of the services options outlined in Section 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3.

2.2 Scope of Services

MBI intends to offer municipalities two service options to pursue digital equity planning activities with the support from their selected planning consultant, described in the following sections. Both service options are intended to yield similar outcomes in terms of deliverables, but will differ in process, duration of the planning activities, and level of detail and nuanced information provided to the municipality as an outcome of the planning process.

Municipalities applying under the MDEP Program will be required to designate a staff member – either a municipal employee or elected official – who will be responsible for coordinating the municipality's involvement and engagement in the planning activities. This designation will be a prerequisite for any municipality to be eligible to receive digital equity planning support. Consultants should expect that the

municipal designee will assist with identifying key stakeholders in the community, reserving space for meetings/events, providing consultants with community context related to other activities relevant to digital equity planning, and other activities that require specific knowledge of a locality.

Municipalities will be allowed to apply for digital equity planning services jointly as “regions”, so long as there is one designated lead for each participating municipality.

MBI seeks consultants who can provide services related to the planning service options detailed in the following sections. All Respondents will need to demonstrate their ability to execute all activities associated with the service options outlined in section 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3 for which they seek prequalification. MassTech expects that consultants may need to sub-contract with specialized organizations for community engagement or other elements outlined in section 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3. Respondents must indicate in the proposal if they are proposing to use subcontracted services for those additional resources to meet the standard for prequalification. Respondents may be prequalified for one or more of the service options.

2.2.1 Planning Service Option 1: Digital Equity Charrette

The Digital Equity Charrette option is intended to be a low barrier to entry option to support municipalities with limited staff capacity and existing knowledge or activities related to digital equity. As part of the Digital Equity Charrette, consultants will organize and facilitate an intensive workshop engaging municipal officials, community groups, and other stakeholders (“digital equity stakeholders”) to gather information on the needs of residents and the digital equity issues facing the municipality and focusing on the eight Covered Populations of the federal Digital Equity Act:

- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Members of a household earning income not more than 150% of the federal poverty level
- Members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Rural residents
- Veterans

With guidance from the municipality’s chosen consultant, digital equity stakeholders will work together to identify priorities, challenges, and solutions addressing the digital equity divide in the municipality. Consultants should anticipate charrette meetings totaling 8 hours with digital equity stakeholders, spread across one or two days with additional time required for site preparation and clean up. Consultants will be expected to work with municipal staff to enable in person, hybrid, or fully virtual activities as needed by the community.

At the end of the charrette, the consultant will capture and synthesize all data and input received from the digital equity stakeholders into a report deliverable. The report deliverable must provide strategic recommendations for the municipality to begin or expand on digital equity programs/investments and a detailed, realistic vision for future action.

At a minimum, consultants should expect to engage in the following activities as part of running a Digital Equity Charrette:

Workshop Preparation

- Capturing and preparing relevant community data (US Census ACS SF2801, MLab, Microsoft, FCC, NTIA, AllConnect, and other relevant sources)
- Designing community specific materials (maps, charts, posters, etc.)
- Coordinating charrette agenda and facilitative process
- Outreach and engagement, in partnership with municipal staff

- Reservation of appropriate space, in partnership with municipal staff

Workshop Execution and Facilitation

- Site preparation
- Procurement and preparation of needed equipment and materials
- Presentations and dissemination of information
- Facilitation of stakeholder conversations/activities
- Site clean up after charrette(s) end

Workshop Documentation and Reporting

- Intake and synthesis of data (transcription of notes, quantifying collected data, etc.)
- Development of strategic recommendations
- Creation of report deliverable
- Final documentation or reporting to municipal leaders as requested.

2.2.2 Planning Service Option 2: Digital Equity Planning

The Digital Equity Planning option is designed to provide municipalities an opportunity to execute a full comprehensive planning exercise. For the Digital Equity Planning option, consultants will provide expanded data collection and dive into deeper conversations and engagement with digital equity stakeholders.

At a minimum, planning consultants should expect to engage in the following activities as part of the Digital Equity Plan option:

Existing Conditions Analysis

Consultants will leverage the broadband coverage and related data gathered by MBI through the public online mapping portal that MBI launched 2022 and has since updated. The consultant will conduct additional, complimentary data aggregation and synthesis from other data sources related to internet access, reliability, and service provider marketplace to supplement the data in the mapping portal when available. Data sources that could be analyzed include US Census ACS SF2801, MLab, Microsoft, FCC, NTIA, AllConnect, and other relevant sources.

This analysis will provide a baseline overview of digital access and equity gaps affecting the municipality's populations.

Community Engagement / Stakeholder Outreach

Planning consultants, in partnership with municipal staff and digital equity stakeholders, will establish community engagement/stakeholder outreach methods and execute a stakeholder outreach process. These outreach methods should be in alignment with similar planning processes (e.g., Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, etc.) the municipality has engaged in, and meet the needs of the target populations. Outreach methods could include surveys, focus groups, informational interviews, online/in person forums, development of online or print collateral, translation/interpretation (which may include Spanish, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese, or other major languages spoken in the Commonwealth), or other methods.

This process will allow for the collection of a more nuanced and localized layer of data onto the existing conditions analysis that will inform community specific needs related to digital literacy, devices, connectivity, affordability, and other issues related to digital equity.

Recommendation Development

Through data synthesis and integration from both the existing conditions and community engagement processes, consultants will develop a suite of recommendations for consideration and adoption by the municipality that meet the needs and goals of the target populations within the municipality.

Future Funding Investigation

Consultants will identify which recommendations will require future funding and the potential sources of funding so that municipal partners are best equipped to take immediate action upon completion of the planning process. This will include a review of all relevant state and federal funding programs, including programs under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”).

Documentation and Plan Writing

Consultants will document all planning activities and integrate their findings and recommendations into a cohesive written document specific to the municipality. Consultants must prepare a final presentation of summary findings and recommendations to the lead municipal partner, executive official, city council, school board, or other municipal body to be determined by the applicant municipality. This will include developing the written content and integrating any relevant photographs, maps, charts, or other visual collateral into a formatted plan that can be published in print and digital formats. The final report will also include a list of all participants in the planning process. A final report of planning activities will be a required element of all municipal grants.

Municipal Coordination

Consultants must coordinate with municipal leaders, schedule regular updates with staff and elected representatives as requested, and liaise with any relevant municipal body (i.e. school board, broadband task force, human rights commission, etc.).

2.2.3 Planning Service Option 3: Implementation Planning Services

In addition to each other service option, Respondents may also be prequalified to provide Implementation Planning Services. Municipalities participating in the MDEP program will be eligible to apply to MBI’s Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program upon completion of the planning process. These municipalities may work with their chosen consultant to define, scope, and plan for the implementation of a specific project or set of projects. These activities should build on the final Digital Equity Plan or Charrette Report and reflect a more in-depth approach to the strategic recommendations developed in Planning Service Options 1 & 2.

Planning consultants should expect to engage in the following activities as part of the Implementation Planning Services option:

- Working with municipal staff to define and scope a local digital equity project based on recommendations in the local Digital Equity Plan or Charrette Report.
- Facilitating coordination with relevant community partners or MBI Partnership grantees on the creation of the local digital equity project scope.

Eligible costs for providing Implementation Planning Services shall not exceed 10% of each approved municipal planning budget pertaining to Options 1 & 2. The additional 10% for Implementation Planning Services will be included in the amendments described below in section 2.3, along with each municipality-specific scope of work.

2.3 Contracting Process

Respondents prequalified under this RFQ become part of the Qualified Consultant Pool offered by MBI to participating municipalities, depending on geography and the alignment of a municipality's planning needs. MassTech will execute a **Services Agreement (Federally Funded)** (sample agreement located [HERE](#)) with all prequalified consultants, which establishes the types of services the consultant is approved to provide, and the agreed upon rates. Entering into a Services Agreement does not commit MassTech, or any municipality, to use the consultant for any projects. Consultant(s) approved by MassTech for a specific planning service(s) will be provided to a participating municipality with aligning digital equity planning needs and within the consultant's stated geography of service. Each time a municipality selects an approved consultant, MassTech will amend the consultant's Services Agreement with the selected consultant to add a municipality-specific scope of work and funding allocation. Consultants will be reimbursed in accordance with the budget approved with each scope of work for the planning services to be provided. All proposed budgets are expected to align with the budget guidance set forth in Attachment D. Any expanded scope of work and associated additional fees, determined during the performance of the work, must be approved in advance in writing by MassTech and if approved shall be incorporated into an amended scope of work/task order. Consultants prequalified through this RFQ will not contract directly with the municipalities. Mandatory federal flow down provisions will be incorporated into the Services Agreement.

3 APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Application and Submission Instructions

Respondents are cautioned to read this RFQ carefully and to conform to its requirements. Failure to comply with the requirements of this RFQ may serve as grounds for rejection of an Application.

- a. All full Applications **must** be submitted electronically, in Microsoft Word, to proposals@masstech.org (please include the RFQ number in the subject heading).
- b. Required Submissions- All Applications must include the items listed below:
 - Application Cover Sheet ([Attachment A](#))
 - Application, which shall include:
 - A description of the firm responding to the RFQ (including descriptions of proposed subcontractors, if any) and the firm's qualifications to perform the Services including references to other projects/planning activities where these Services have been successfully implemented. Describe any lessons learned from these projects that are relevant to the Services that the Respondent would provide under the Municipal Planning Program. Specifically, please state whether the Respondent completed any previous work related to digital equity/broadband planning. Please provide specific examples and links to any published materials.
 - If the Respondent has not completed any previous work in digital equity/broadband planning, please describe how the Respondent would go about building the skill set and knowledge to become proficient in this new topic area.
 - For each Service Option listed in 2.2 that the Respondent seeks to be prequalified for, provide the approach that would be taken. Respondent should provide a base case cost assumption for each Service Option in alignment with the guidance set forth in Attachment D. The base case

- assumption shall be supported by the Respondent's projected level of effort, the timeline for providing the services, and the variables that would impact costs or timeline from the base case assumptions. Respondents should also provide the hourly rates for each member of the project team that will be involved in providing the services.
- For each type of service option, provide a list of the Respondent's staff that would support related activities, including names, titles, and the hourly billable rate that would be charged for each staff and total costs assumptions for a base case municipality for each planning service option. Please provide this information in the Budget Template (Attachment C). As a general policy, the Mass Tech Collaborative does not pay mark-ups on reimbursables or out-of-pocket expenses. MassTech does not pay for any alcoholic beverages. For travel costs, the Mass Tech Collaborative pays the IRS rate per mile.
 - Respondents are also invited to propose alternative(s) which provide substantially better or more productive or cost-effective structures than as stated in this RFQ scope of services.
 - Three references for work previously performed by the Respondent that is substantially similar to the Services for which the Respondent seeks prequalification. References should include a contact person, address and phone number.
 - The names of the municipalities or counties within the Respondent's service area within which they would be available to provide planning services.
 - Identify Respondent's staff that would provide services in the following areas and provide their qualifications and related experience in the following areas.
 - Community Engagement
 - Meeting Facilitation
 - Development of Actionable and Quantifiable Recommendations
 - Data Analysis and Mapping
 - Project Management
 - Translation/Interpretation capacity in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese, and other major languages spoken in the Commonwealth.
 - Respondents may need to sub-contract with specialized organizations for community engagement or technology/technical components of the planning process. Please describe where the Respondent anticipates a need or benefit from additional on the ground resources. Roles and rates of any known subcontractors must also be provided.
 - It should be noted in the Application if the firm and/or any subcontractors is a minority business enterprise, women's business enterprise or a labor surplus area firm (based on the Fiscal Year 2025 list of areas published by the United States Department of Labor).
 - Respondent's W-9 and EIN.
- **Authorized Application Signature and Acceptance Form (Attachment B). By executing the Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form and submitting a response to this RFQ, Respondents certify that they (1) are in compliance with the terms, conditions and specifications contained in this RFQ, (2) acknowledge and understand the procedures for handling materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative as set forth in subsection d. below, (3) agree to be bound by those procedures, and (4) agree that the Mass Tech Collaborative shall not be liable under any circumstances for the disclosure of any materials submitted to the Mass**

Tech Collaborative pursuant to this RFQ or upon the Respondent’s selection.

- Exceptions to the **Services Agreement (Federally Funded)**, located [HERE](#), if any.
- c. Applications **must** be delivered electronically to proposals@masstech.org (please include the RFQ number in the subject heading).
- d. Any and all responses, Applications, data, materials, information and documentation submitted to Mass Tech Collaborative in response to this RFQ 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 and **shall only include the confidential material in the hard copy of 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:
RFQ Released	February 3, 2025
Questions Due	February 10, 2025 @ 5 PM EST
Question and Answer File Posted	February 21, 2025 @ 5 PM EST
Applications Due	March 3, 2025 @ 3 PM EST
Notification of Award	March 21, 2025

3.3 Questions

Questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted by electronic mail to proposals@masstech.org with the following Subject Line: “Questions – RFQ No. 2025-MBI-09”. All questions must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on February 10, 2025. Responses to all questions received will be posted on or before 5:00 p.m. on February 21, 2025 to Mass Tech Collaborative and Comm-Buys website(s).

4 EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

4.1 Process

The Mass Tech Collaborative shall evaluate each Application that is properly submitted. As part of the selection process, Mass Tech Collaborative may invite finalists to answer questions regarding their Application in person or in writing. In its sole discretion, Mass Tech Collaborative may also choose to enter into a negotiation period with one or more finalist Respondent(s) and then ask the Respondent(s) to submit a best and final offer.

4.2 Criteria

Selection of a Respondent to provide the services sought herein may be based on criteria that include but are not limited to:

- Documented previous work related to digital equity/broadband planning
- Demonstrated expertise, approach, and ability to execute all activities associated with the service option(s) the Respondent seeks to be prequalified in, as outlined in Section 2.2
- Staff qualifications in:
 - Community Engagement
 - Data Analysis and Mapping
 - Project Management
 - Translation/Interpretation in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese, and other major languages spoken in the Commonwealth.
- Status of the Respondent and/or any subcontractor(s) as a minority business enterprise, women's business enterprise or a labor surplus area firm.
- Reasonableness of Fee Structures and Hourly Rates Offered

Lack of debarment status by either the state or federal government is also required.

The order of these factors does not generally denote relative importance. The goal of this RFQ is to select and enter into an Agreement with the Respondent that will provide the best value for the Services to achieve MassTech Collaborative's goals. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to consider such other relevant factors as it deems appropriate in order to obtain the "best value".

5.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

5.1 General Information

- a) If an Application fails to meet any material terms, conditions, requirements or procedures, it may be deemed unresponsive and disqualified. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to waive omissions or irregularities that it determines to be not material.
- b) This RFQ, as may be amended from time to time by Mass Tech Collaborative, does not commit Mass Tech Collaborative to select any firm(s), award any contracts for services pursuant to this RFQ, or pay any costs incurred in responding to this RFQ. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withdraw the RFQ, to engage in preliminary discussions with prospective Respondents, to accept or reject any or all Applications received, to request supplemental or clarifying information, to negotiate with any or all qualified Respondents, and to request modifications to Applications in accordance with negotiations, all to the same extent as if this were a Request for Information.
- c) On matters related solely to this RFQ that arise prior to an award decision by the Mass Tech Collaborative, Respondents shall limit communications with the Mass Tech Collaborative to the Procurement Team Leader and such other individuals as the Mass Tech Collaborative may designate from time to time. No other Mass Tech Collaborative employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any questions or inquiries concerning this RFQ. Respondents may contact the Procurement Team Leader for this RFQ in

the event this RFQ is incomplete.

- d) The Mass Tech Collaborative 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. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to grant or reject any request for accommodations.
- e) Respondent's Application 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 reject the Application and/or terminate of any resulting Agreement.
- f) Costs that are not specifically identified in the Respondent's response and/or not specifically accepted by Mass Tech Collaborative as part of the Agreement will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFQ.
- g) Mass Tech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this RFQ. The selected Respondent will take all appropriate steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. The selected Respondent is responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Subcontractors are required to meet the same requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as the selected Respondent.
- h) Submitted responses must be valid in all respects for a minimum period of sixty (60) days after the deadline for submission.
- i) Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to amend the Agreement at any time prior to execution. Respondents should review the Agreement as they are required to specify any exceptions to the Agreement and to make any suggested counterproposal in their Application. A failure to specify exceptions and/or counterproposals will be deemed an acceptance of the Agreement's general terms and conditions, and no subsequent negotiation of such provisions shall be permitted.
- j) The MassTech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this RFQ. The selected Respondent will take all appropriate steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. The selected Respondent is responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Subcontractors are required to meet the same requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as the selected Respondent.
- k) The MassTech Collaborative embraces a workplace where the values of diversity and inclusion support varying perspectives and backgrounds to produce a richer environment. MassTech expects Respondents as well as all our consultants, contractors and vendors, to demonstrate a similar commitment and, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.321(a), take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. If Respondent will be subcontracting under this RFQ, affirmative steps must include at least the following six steps: 1. Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists; 2. Assuring that small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources; 3. Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises; 4. Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage

participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises; 5. Using the services and assistance, as appropriate, of such organizations as the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce; and 6. Requiring all subcontractors to take the same affirmative steps as listed in numbers 1 through 5.

- l) Respondent shall not discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, religion, physical or mental handicap, or sexual orientation. Respondents shall comply with all applicable Federal and State statutes, rules and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment including but not limited to: the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 et seq.), M.G.L. c. 151B, M.G.L. c. 272 §§ 92A, 98, and 98A, M.G.L. c. 111 § 199A, 42 U.S.C. 9918 (c) and 45 C.F.R. 80.
- m) Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352) – Respondent's that are awarded an amount exceeding \$100,000 must file the required certification. Each tier certifies to the tier above that it will not and has not used Federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Each tier must also disclose any lobbying with non-Federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award. Such disclosures are forwarded from tier to tier up to the non-Federal award.
- n) Debarment and Suspension- (Executive Orders 12549 and 12689) – Respondent understands that a contract award may not be made to parties listed on the government-wide exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM).
- o) Respondent's must be able to comply with all applicable standards, orders or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401-7671q) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251-1387). Violations must be reported to the Federal awarding agency and the Regional Office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- p) As appropriate and to the extent consistent with law, Respondents should, to the greatest extent practicable, provide a preference for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States. The requirements of this section must be included in all contracts and sub awards awarded hereunder.
- q) Respondent understands and agrees that the Executive Office of Economic Development ("EOED") staff and authorized representatives may evaluate any subcontractors with whom MBI and/or Mass Tech Collaborative executes a contract or other form of legal agreement in order to complete the activities funded under this RFQ/Solicitation, through ongoing monitoring. As deemed appropriate by EOED, EOED's staff and authorized representatives may also conduct further reviews and site-visits during the contract term, which may include fiscal reviews. EOED staff shall use interviews, inspection of files, site visits and direct observation to identify program areas of concern so that contractors can improve their productivity, efficiency, quality, and management capacity.

- r) The awarded Respondent shall maintain and utilize systems and procedures to prevent, detect, and correct fraud, waste, and abuse in activities funded under this RFQ.
- s) Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.303, the awarded Respondent shall establish effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets funded under this RFQ and assure that they are used solely for authorized purposes.
- t) The awarded Respondent shall maintain an accounting system and supporting fiscal records adequate to audit and otherwise verify that assistance payments and administrative costs meet Federal and State requirements.
- u) The Awarded Respondent shall use its best efforts to ensure that it will not knowingly use contract funds to purchase, or enter into contracts to purchase, any equipment, services, or systems that use prohibited telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of a system subject to 2 CFR § 200.216.

5.2 Standard Terms & Conditions for Department of Commerce Grants

All Digital Equity awardees are required to comply with all applicable provisions set forth in the following:

- Contract Provisions through 2 CFR § 200.327
- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements: Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this Program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.
- Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions: The Department of Commerce will apply to each award in this Program, the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions in effect on the date of award. The current version, dated November 12, 2020, is accessible at Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.
- Pre-Award Notification Requirements: The Department of Commerce will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), accessible at <http://go.usa.gov/hKkR>.

5.3 Posting of Modifications/Addenda to RFQ

This RFQ has been distributed electronically using the Mass Tech Collaborative and COMMBUYS websites. If the Mass Tech Collaborative determines that it is necessary to revise any part of this RFQ, or if additional data is necessary to clarify any of its provisions, an addendum will be posted to the websites. It is the responsibility of each potential Respondent to check the Mass Tech Collaborative, MBI and COMMBUYS websites for any addenda or modifications to the RFQ. The Mass Tech Collaborative accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Respondents who submit a response based on an out-of-date RFQ.

Attachment A
Application Cover Sheet

Name of Respondent			
Mailing Address	City/Town	State	Zip Code
Telephone	Fax	Web Address	
Primary Contact for Clarification		Primary Contact E-mail Address	
Authorized Signatory		Authorized Signatory E-mail Address	
Legal Status/Jurisdiction (e.g., a Massachusetts Corporation, LLC, LLP, etc.)		Respondents UEI No.	
W-9 provided Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			

Attachment B
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 RFQ requirements. The Respondent acknowledges that all of the terms and conditions of the RFQ are mandatory, and that Respondent's response is compliant with such requirements.

The Respondent understands that, if selected by the Mass Tech Collaborative, the Respondent and the Mass Tech Collaborative will execute an Agreement specifying the mutual requirements of participation. The undersigned has either (*please check one*):

- specified exceptions and counter-proposals to the terms and conditions of the [Services Agreement \(Federally Funded\)](#); or
- agrees to the terms and conditions set forth therein;

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that the failure to submit exceptions and counter-proposals with this response shall be deemed a waiver, and the Agreement shall not be subject to further negotiation.

Respondent agrees that the entire bid response will remain valid for sixty (60) days from receipt by the Mass Tech Collaborative.

I certify that Respondent is in compliance with all corporate filing requirements and State tax laws.

I further certify that the statements made in this response to the RFQ, including all attachments and exhibits, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Respondent: _____
(Printed Name of Respondent)

By: _____
(Signature of Authorized Representative)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Attachment C
Budget Template

SEE EXCEL SPREADSHEET

Attachment D
Budget Guidance

Community Type	Plan Cost Range	Charrette Cost Range
Gateway City (defined by MA legislature)	\$105,000-\$130,000	\$55,000-\$65,000
Regional Urban Center (population 40k+, excl. Gateway City)	\$80,000-\$95,000	\$50,000-\$60,000
Mature Suburb (population 25k-40k)	\$70,000-\$85,000	\$40,000-\$50,000
Developing Suburb (population 10k-25k)	\$45,000-\$60,000	\$30,000-\$40,000
Small Town (population <10k)	\$25,000-\$40,000	\$20,000-\$30,000

Any amount above the low end of a range will be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be justified by the following weighting factors: community size, percentage of population meeting Digital Equity Act Covered Population definition, prevalence of residents requiring extensive translation/interpretation services and/or extensive hours for meaningful community outreach, and consulting team members' hourly rates.

Costs shall not exceed the high end of the range for any community type.

Regional Plan budget proposals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with consideration of total combined population, geographic scope, and budget assumptions in the consultant's original RFQ response.