

ConnectME Advisory Council Meeting

December 9, 2013 rescheduled:

January 6, 2014

1:30 – 3:30

Cross Office Building, Conf. Room 300

Dial in: 877-455-0244, pin: 476 563 0661

Agenda/Meeting Notes

Meeting attendees: Jeff Letourneau, Ben Sanborn, Fletcher Kittredge, Josh Broder, Wayne Jortner, Phil Lindley, Lisa Leahy

1. Scoring Guide - handout
 - a. Project scope – page 2 of Scoring Guide – language adjustment recommendation:
 - i. The **standard or basic package advertised “speed”** or bandwidth

Notes: Advisory Council recommends the following Project Scope scoring criteria change:

The standard or basic package advertised “speed” or bandwidth of the broadband service to be provided by the proposed project. For example: a speed greater than 25 Mbps (FCC Tier 6) will be scored highest; and projects will receive more points for service that provides up and down speeds in the higher FCC Broadband Tiers.¹

Broadband Speed or Bandwidth by FCC Tier	Points
Tier 6 or better (25.1 to 100 Mbps)	20
Tier 5 (10.1 to 25 Mbps)	15
Tier 4 (6.1 to 10)	10
Tier 3 (3.1 to 6 Mbps)	10 5
Tier 2 (1.6 to 3 Mbps)	5 0
Tier 1 (768 to 1.5 Mbps)	0
1 st generation (200 Kbps to 768 Kbps)	0

¹ Basic Broadband Tier 1, 768 kbps to 1.5 Mbps; Broadband Tier 2, 1.5 Mbps to 3 Mbps; Broadband Tier 3, 3 Mbps to 6 Mbps; Broadband Tier 4, 6 Mbps to 10 Mbps; Broadband Tier 5, 10 Mbps to 25 Mbps; Broadband Tier 6, 25 Mbps to 100 Mbps; Broadband Tier, 7 Greater than 100 Mbps. As defined by the Authority, May 12, 2011.

The change to a new tier level for funding purposes should not be interpreted as precluding a project with 1.5 to 3 Mbps. A proposed project at this tier level would still be eligible but 0 points would be awarded in the project scope category.

2. Underserved – Unserved

- a. Definition – ConnectME Rule § 6, page 2, BTOP/BIP definition, page 5
- b. Purpose of defining
- c. Speed, % of adoption, census block
- d. Increase funding tier level, subscription rate, penetration rate
- e. Prioritize for areas previously funded or not funded by Authority

Notes: Advisory Council discussed at length the difference between unserved and underserved. Of importance was staying within the letter of the law when defining parameters. Designation of a community within the law is seen as a shape that can be determined by the layout of area in need as determined by the applicant. It is not predetermined to be configured within a census block or a designation of town on a map. No more than 20% can overlap into areas currently labeled as served. The council proposes uses the same scoring guidelines and process for underserved as is used for unserved. The designation for underserved is measured as speeds less than Tier 5 level = 10 to 25 Mbps. Applications can be submitted for underserved, but as long as there are remaining unserved areas seeking Authority funding, underserved will not be funded. The AC recommends that the definition of unserved be raised to broadband service at less than Tier 2 (1.5 Mbps – 3 Mbps). The previous definition was service at less than Tier 1 (768 kbps – 1.5 Mbps)/

3. Innovative broadband installation grants

- a. Percentage of funding set aside
- b. Small group of applications
- c. Individual applications
- d. High cost installation fund
 - i. In previously funded grant areas

A lengthy discussion took place regarding innovate grants. In the past, the Authority has funded high cost installation grants as well as the Franklin Community Health Network: Telehealth fiber network. All grants in the past have directly responded to an unserved need. Some of the areas of focus for this particular discussion were:

- “Out of the box” attempt to solve Maine’s overall broadband issues
- New technology pilot
- Projects far exceeding the normal costs thus precluding their ability to qualify for the traditional grant funding process
- Consumer applicants
- Line extension subsidy

Additional concerns were providing another avenue for broadband needs that aren’t addressed directly in the Authority’s current granting process. Should an innovative fund be a separate amount of money,

or would it fit within the current structure? Could it be an add-on to the unserved/underserved model? Could adding points to the current structure meet the desired outcome? Would incentivizing a provider to meet special needs be the best bang for the buck?

The council decided to investigate the innovative grant area further at its next meeting.

The council also recommends that it assist with developing a high- cost installation program that could be separate from the grant program. It could be administered by the Exec. Director with parameters set by the Board to fund high cost installations in unserved areas.