CONNECTMAINE

February Meeting Notes

25 February 2021

Temporary Recording: https://networkmaine.zoom.us/rec/share/sPjnzYEGhozGcqKcxC1oMSnBHwxatOeJO_ilXq6oltaGATwpnVFaG8dKDwTNSrXs.G7uIB9SWsboHfrRp

Authority Members
Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
Fred Brittain
Susan Corbett
Heather Johnson
Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

Introductions of Members and Staff
Liz Wyman, Jeff Letourneau, Jasmine Bishop, Heather Johnson, Susan Corbett, Nick Battista, Peggy Schaffer, Stephenie MacLagan and Emily Atkins

Meeting Kickoff
Broadband Investments—Nick

- Consolidated Communications announced investments in Maine beyond their Rural Digital Opportunity Fund projects
- Governor's state address, "asking for an additional $30M bond for broadband"

Notes of Last Meeting
Approval of the January meeting notes: Jeff motioned, Susan second, 5:0, Heather abstained

Review of Operations
Executive Director's Report—Peggy

- Community-driven broadband planning model, e.g., Maine West Bootcamp

Lot of interest in repeating this model in other areas; however, there's a lot of coordination effort involved, that Mia Purcell conducted for Maine West with the Northern Forest Center

- Recent presentations and communications plan

A Bangor Daily News series on broadband has started. Presentation to Bangor Chamber of Commerce should be available now. Please read articles posted on the News webpage.

- Presentation to the Appropriations Committee on the budget

Nick, Andrew Butcher and Nancy Smith also testified. The committee hasn't yet moved on the supplemental budget.

- Status of Project Manager II hire

After meeting with the project management team of OIT this week, suggestion made to interview up to five of them. This would be a shared position with the Department of Economic and Community Development, which has already purchased Salesforce. ConnectMaine will be investigating the use of Salesforce for some of its grants management activities. Hire will occur in the next couple of weeks.

Board Questions

- Jasmine: Are DECD and ConnectMaine needs aligned?

Peggy: yes. Heather: Getting higher caliber of talent if the position were made fulltime given skills needed. Peggy: The previous work done on mapping DECD needs around Salesforce is informing this.

Decisions on Policies & Procedures

Review revisions—Peggy

- Policies & Procedures of the Finance Authority of Maine and the Maine Technology Institute were mashed up as a model for ConnectMaine
- Revisions proposed by Jeff

Separating duties, for functionality, given two people or entities involved in the waiver process. Amount of scrutiny increases based on the costs of acquisition. Waivers approved by chair and then those of higher costs requiring full vote to approve.

Board Discussion

- Susan: Jeff's revisions provide guidance while maintaining flexibilities, echoed by Liz
- Nick: Jeff's revisions include structural changes that are helpful, separating the RFP requirements from the waiver requirements
- Nick: These are revisited at least annually

Approval of the ConnectMaine Policies & Procedures for 2021, with Jeff's revisions: Jeff motioned, Susan second, 6:0

Discussion on Operations

Funds to support initiatives around ConnectMaine operations—Nick & Heather

- Governor's support and a grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission

Governor worked to find funds to support broadband and the tools needed to expand broadband. Finding out about this earlier this week, seems germane to these discussions.

- Flexibility remains or opportunities on how to leverage these funds for the purpose of broadband expansion in Maine.

Update from Governance Committee—Jasmine

- Desire to contract for professional assistance

Nick: Questions about communication and workflow among staff and board, roles & responsibilities, decision-making, so the proposal is to seek outside help with potentially drafting bylaws and aligning with staff job descriptions.

- Governance Committee to further this proposal

Susan: Move forward, need to figure this out, echoed by Jeff

Nick: Look to committee and staff to figure out details of timing and dollar amounts for upcoming meetings.

- Modeling from other government entities

Peggy: This isn't rocket science, great models from FAME, MTI, etc. Jeff: Encourage borrowing from other entities, echoed by Nick

Action: Staff and Governance Committee (Jasmine, Liz & Heather) will act quickly to provide sense of direction at the March meeting.

Updates from Committees on RFPs—Peggy & Liz

- Two committees were formed last meeting

Grants management & accountability has been narrowed to verification & validation. Data management and mapping is now described as a broadband intelligence platform.

- Request for Proposal for grants Verification and Validation is being finalized to be issued end of this week.

The V&V RFP has been further narrowed by separating the two tasks: 1 makes sure that staff and board have technical expertise they need for the application process and task 2 focused on post-grant including field inspection. Bidders can respond to one or both as long as services and costs are separated in the response.

- The RFP for broadband intelligence platform will be based on that one

Further work will occur next week with that committee (Jeff, Fred & Nick) to allow focus on opening the infrastructure grants.

Action: Staff will post RFPs on the ConnectMaine website, email to its providers list and ask State Procurement to post them as well.

Decisions on Infrastructure Grants

Final review of the infrastructure grants program materials by the Grants Committee—Nick

- Stakeholder engagement process recalled

Many changes made based on that process and many iterations have been reviewed and discussed in past meetings. Staff has thought out timing and amount of funds available.

- Some elements of the application and other materials are still clunky

This is partly a product of the ConnectMaine rule, flagging these difficulties, toward improvements. Staff anticipates workshop with potential applicants, tentatively March 10.

Discuss timing for next application window for infrastructure grants—Stephenie

- Provider Outreach requirement

This allows applicants and providers to connect the dots on any plans for broadband expansion, and allows state to efficaciously deploy funds. The timing is triggered by the applicant, so the sooner the applicant outreaches to providers, the sooner providers have to respond, the more time the applicant has to revise their application. Applicants can start on this as soon as the application window opens, regardless of the track used.

- Timing of application windows

The option of a 45-day window doesn't allow applicants to revise project areas after provider outreach, but it allows ConnectMaine to get money out the door faster. The 60-day window, proposed in the binder materials would open today through April 29. Either the 45-day or 60-day windows could be used in the second round of these bond funds.

- Amount available for grants

Staff recommend awarding up to $7.5 million in this application window, with the remaining bond funds being awarded in the next application window. This is based on very high interest level, expecting dozens of applications even in this first round, but it also allows us to refine the grants program based on what's learned in this application window before deploying the rest of the bond funds.

Board Discussion

- Jeff: Use two different timelines for the two tracks, shorter one for Provider Expansion Projects and longer for Community-Driven Broadband Projects. Then all applications won't come in at the same time, echoed by Susan and Liz. Stephenie: Few cases where existing providers have plans for Provider Expansion Projects, so shorter timeframe might be possible. It's more for staff to keep track of, but not a big deal.
- Jeff: Set expectation on the amount, as around half of the bond funds, rather than tying ourselves to a ceiling. Liz: Don't want to go so far where future applicants don't feel like ample funds are then available, echoed by Jasmine. Nick: It can help an applicant with sizing a project, to know the pool of funds available.
- Jasmine: If they aren't awarded, will first round applicants be asked to reapply for the second round? Jeff: Feedback should be provided, echoed by Nick. Jeff: Two rounds provides the opportunity—some communities might try to apply in this round but have to revise the project area based on provider outreach that then requires the town to take another vote, so they'd have to apply in the next round.
- Liz: Some applicants are ready now and some are still in the planning stages, but we're not spending all the bond funds at once, so get things started. There should be flexibility for which track an applicant chooses. Nick: Scoring criteria or points are different depending the track, and ConnectMaine can't tell applicants which track is the best fit for their projects.

Approval of opening an application window from today through April 29 for infrastructure grants for community-driven broadband projects, and an application window from today through April 12 for infrastructure grants for provider expansion projects, with the amount of awards totaling about half of the $15 million bond funds: Jeff motioned, Liz 2nd, 6:0

Public Comments

- Colleen, Minot: Knowing about the amount available is helpful. Trying to figure out which track to use. The 45-day window is doable regardless of the track, but trying to figure out which one will be most successful, echoed by Melinda, Charter, and Brian, Casco Bay Advisors.
- Brian, Casco Bay Advisors: Need 60-day window at a minimum, if provider outreach is required, because mostly like going to have to modify applications based on feedback from providers.
- Chris, Somerville: Town meeting vote approval for matching monies and borrowing, which has notice requirements and timeframes, so the 45-day window might be too short, especially if modifying the size of the project based on provider responses.

Discuss timing of next application window for infrastructure grants—Stephenie
- Options include the 45-day or 60-day application windows

A 64-day option for the next application window is proposed as June 23 through August 26, with announcement of awards at the September meeting; the 45-day option would be June 23 to August 9. Desire to avoid setting hard & fast timeline for this application window, to ensure lessons learned can be incorporated.
- To spend remaining bond funds
- These discussions are focused on infrastructure grants. Another planning grants window is potential for this spring also but not for discussion today.

Board Discussion
- Liz: Concerned with reality of getting through the first application window, over promising on the timing of the second application window. Nick: Identification of the timing for this round is important for communities that are trying to prepare their meetings in preparing to apply.
- Nick: Intention would be to open the next round as quickly as possible, unless there are major systematic issues to before then, so late June or maybe into July, then do the 45 or 60 days with award decisions in late August or September, support echoed by Jasmine & Liz.

Other Business

Foreshadow strategic planning in-depth discussion for March meeting—Nick
- The current triennial plan expires before the Feb '22 meeting; now is the time to be thinking about the process and what content to cover.

Staff has created an outline from required elements for triennial plans, and included initiatives discussed by staff, board and stakeholders, as well as building from the state action plan, climate council and economic recovery committee reports. Lots of interest in understanding the economic value of broadband expansion, and grants scoring categories, and process to talk through a bunch of things even if they don't end up in the plan.
- Further discussion at March meeting

Importance to pull in lessons learned from recent stakeholder engagement process
Action: Staff propose timeline and further direction to discuss at March meeting

Public Comments

None

Approval of adjournment: Liz motioned, unopposed

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January Meeting Notes

27 January 2021

Zoom Recording: https://networkmaine.zoom.us/rec/share/0ezNsgmLL7sgl1GQkp3-pr64FvNog9CQX-taOfOZ-WhzBEUXUcMLSoRpEdgZtZRz.PkuOiU-JBighgLlz

Authority Members
Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
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Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

Introductions of Members and Staff
Jeff Letourneau, Liz Wyman, Fred Brittain, Susan Corbett, Jasmine Bishop, Nick Battista, Peggy Schaffer, Stephenie MacLagan, Emily Atkins

Notes of Last Meeting
Approval of the December Meeting notes: Susan motioned, Fred 2nd, 6:0

Review of Operations
Executive Director's Report—Peggy
- Connect Kids Now! grants
- Independent quasi-agency activities
- Constituent services & legislature

Board Discussion Welcomed
- Annual report and presentation to the legislative EUT committee
- State Broadband Leaders Network meeting with presentation on Starlink
- Federal funds to and from NTIA

Capacity Discussion
Debrief decisions made at January emergency meeting—Nick
- Content of Requests for Information
- Process for contracting for services and products

Update from Contracts Committee—Liz
- Governance, process and communication flow
- Deliverables from RFIs
- Sole-source contracting
- Timing for deliverables
- Capacity vs expertise needs
- RFI vs RFP

Approval of the contracts committee (Liz, Jasmine & Susan) to develop & issue RFPs for chosen deliverables (bolded in the committee's document) with one for a grants application portal, one for technical assistance in the grants program, and one for post-award auditing services: Susan motioned, Liz 2nd, 6:0

Approval of an RFP committee (Fred, Jeff & Nick) to develop & issue an RFP for the chosen deliverables (bolded in the committee's document) for a data & mapping platform: Jasmine motioned, Susan 2nd, 6:0

Review Policies and Procedures
- Independent quasi-agency vs state agencies
- Statutory requirements to revise our Policies and Procedures

Action: Staff will revise Polices and Procedures, and contracts committee will review ahead of February meeting for approval

Decisions on Infrastructure Grants
Review and discuss drafted materials for the infrastructure grants program—Peggy
- Drafts provided
- Ongoing input for clarity

Action: Members will provide input within a week
Discuss timing for next application window for infrastructure grants—Nick
- Timing remains uncertain
- Aiming for clarity at the February meeting

Board Discussion Welcomed
- Timing in the context of governance

Potentially eligible areas publicly posted—Stephenie
- Process approved at January emergency meeting
- 30-day comment period ends February 24
- Future opportunities to request to review unserved areas

No Other Business

Public Comments
- Timing of grants program design in context of application portal and auditing
- Process for identifying unserved areas
- Uncertainty of size and number of potential projects
- Next application window for infrastructure grants
- Broadband affordability
- Grants program online portal

Approval of adjournment: Susan motioned, unopposed

CONNECTMAINE

Executive Director's Report

25 February 2021

Peggy Schaffer, Executive Director

Authority Members
Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
Fred Brittain
Susan Corbett
Heather Johnson
Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

Active grant awards

Most planning projects awarded grants have commenced. We continue to approve payments and get reports from past grants. Some of those require some back and forth on compliance with proposals and the rule. We are also beginning to process payments for awarded Connect Kids Now! grants.

Local and regional planning support

Public Utilities Commission has undertaken a rulemaking around pole processes. This is the 6th year of this incremental approach to poles, painfully long and plodding.

The need for centralized, significant assistance with the community-driven broadband planning process continues to be raised by communities and the legislature. Replicating the Maine West Boot Camp and Island Institute's broadband program in other regions of the state would be great. That requires local entities to step up and do the coordination and follow through that Community Concepts did for Maine West to make that program a success. While ConnectMaine staff continue to facilitate conversations about communicating planning resources, a staff of two simply cannot do this level of intensive community work.

Recent public presentations and implementation of our communication plan included a national webinar on data analytic tools to address the digital divide with VETRO and CostQuest on Broadband Breakfast, a conversation with the Scripts News Service on mapping and the importance of ensuring Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) bidders can actually accomplish what they bid on, and another conversation with CCI about partnering on some of their RDOF projects to help bring gig service to near-by, non-RDOF, still-unserved census blocks. Such partnerships required funds.

Federal partnership activities

A deeper map dive into the RDOF funds show that the FCC did a great job of providing funding to mountain tops, conserved land, blueberry fields, state parks, seasonal camp, and coastal enclaves with big houses. Consolidated Communications won bids on about 11,000 locations in these very rural census blocks; hopefully if we are able to partner with them on some of their work, we can leverage some of that federal investment to expand service to areas where more people live. That will require, of course, that ConnectMaine has significant funds to do that work, and the tools we need to do it smartly and correctly.

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As a member of the steering committee of Broadband Connects America, I've met with 3 of the 4 FCC commissioners' staff to talk about the importance of a symmetrical connection, partnering with the states to use local knowledge and understanding of what is going on at the community level, and about digital inclusion and affordability efforts. These meetings will continue with key members of Congress.

Federal funding update

NTIA is charged with administering the most recent coronavirus relief funds. The Tribal benefit is about $1 billion that can be used for deployment and affordability. The other funds include $300 million for states or state subdivisions. NTIA is working on a notice of funding opportunity for both of these funds, and despite the tight timeline of 60 days, we do not yet have any details on what they are thinking.

Staff and program management

Project Manager II hiring process is underway. The job was posted last week.

Staff revised the ConnectMaine Policies & Procedures for 2021, modeling the process for purchasing on the FAME policies & procedures. Additionally, a piece from the MTI policies includes a preference for Maine-based companies.

State legislative activities

Budget hearing was yesterday and included corrected language for cell numbers on the new 10-cent surcharge, which was previously moved from e-911 to ConnectMaine and was supposed to provide $1.7 million in funding, but because of where it was placed in statute, it only counted landlines, dropping the revenue to $600,000. The language in the budget, copied from the PUC statute, corrects that placement.

The legislature has not yet moved on the supplemental budget, and the funds proposed in that budget for a data analytics platform, and grants management and accountability are still pending.

Mapping and data update

Staff finalized a calendar year work plan for Sewall, including the mapping of recent grant projects in the Broadband Availability Map.

Information on unserved areas were posted for public comment. Because we are lacking the appropriate data tools, and potential applicants had a hard time submitting GIS-enabled maps, the Assistant Director spent a significant amount of time uploading and identifying those unserved areas for the purpose of our grants. This would have been much easier if we have a data analytics tool. Much of the work other agencies do for planning and tracking is on a GIS system, which ConnectMaine simply does not have yet. Yesterday was the final day for any comments on these potentially eligible areas for infrastructure grants that were publicly posted on February 25th.

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Financial Policies & Procedures

2021

Revised and Approved in February

Authority Members
Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
Fred Brittain
Susan Corbett
Heather Johnson
Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

Background

The ConnectMaine Authority is required to establish financial policies and procedures in accordance with M.R.S.A 5 §12022. If you have any questions concerning these guidelines, please contact the Executive Director.

I. Membership Dues & Subscription Payments

ConnectMaine may join organizations that broadly support the mission and purpose of the ConnectMaine Authority, including national advocacy organizations. Invoices that total over $5,000 per organization per year must be approved by the ConnectMaine Authority Chair. Dues and subscriptions should meet the following criteria:

- Services, resources, and/or other benefits that are provided directly relate to the ConnectMaine's /mission and purpose;
- Services offered are specialized and unavailable by other means;
- Dues and subscriptions are specific to the organizations and are set by the organizations; and
- Invoicing clearly indicates the period of time covered by the dues or subscriptions.

II. Gifts, Donations and Sponsorships

In accordance with M.R.S.A. 35-A §9205 & 9212, the ConnectMaine Authority has the power to:

- receive and accept from any source aid or contributions of money, property, labor or other things of value, to be held, used and applied to carry out the purposes of ConnectMaine, including, gifts or grants from any department or agency of the United States or the State;
- accept gifts and contributions for the purpose of designing, constructing, reconstructing, renovating or acquiring a project;
- place money of gifts, federal funds or other types of income in a special account for the purpose for which it is provided; and
- invest the money, subject to any limitations imposed by the donor.

III. Travel

ConnectMaine follows the State of Maine policies outlined in the State Administrative & Accounting Manual. https://www.maine.gov/osc/administration/saam.

A. Meals

Per Diem meal rates are set every fiscal year by the General Services Administration agency of the United States Government. The rates are based on your destination state and city. If you would like to see the rates before you travel here is the website https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates. Per Diem reimbursement will be paid upon your return. The breakdowns for individual meals are, breakfast is 20%, lunch is 24% and dinner is 51% of your per diem total. No receipts are required. You may also be reimbursed for meals if you travel to a night meeting. For night meetings, your reimbursement amount will be made based on your actual cost (not to exceed the per diem amount) and must be verified by a receipt.

B. Transportation

Mileage reimbursement is based on travel from the point of the start of your trip and the point where your trip ends. These points may be your home residence, work location or a meeting location. The current mileage rate is set by the General Services Administration agency of the United States Government annually and will be reimbursed upon return with review of your route. Taxi, bus, train, ferry & tolls are reimbursable but require a receipt. Parking for meetings, airports and bus stations will be reimbursed with a receipt. If traveling out-of-state, please follow the DAFS preapproval process. If airfare is required, flights will be booked through the State of Maine travel management website. Exception can be made if flights are not available or if lower costs are available.

C. Lodging

ConnectMaine staff will be reimbursed for lodging expenses at actual costs up to the specific daily maximum allowable lodging rate in effect at the time of travel for the specific area or locality, unless it is approved by the Executive Director or Authorized by Subsection 10.30.20 in the SAAM manual.

IV.   Internal Controls

In accordance with M.R.S.A. 35-A §9205, the ConnectMaine Authority has the power to:

- make and execute contracts and other instruments; and
- enter into such transactions as necessary or convenient for the exercise of ConnectMaine's powers and functions.

A. Contracts for Grants

Grants approved by vote of the ConnectMaine Authority for infrastructure or community planning shall be drafted by the Assistant Director. The contracts will identify specific services to be covered and include project milestones. Generally, there will be four even payments for infrastructure contracts: commencement at the beginning of the project, then two interim payments, and a final payment when the project is finished. All submissions for payment will include invoices that document detailed expenses for the project. Community planning grants will be in two payments: commencement when the planning process begins, and a final payment when the completion report is submitted to ConnectMaine.

B. Procurement Policy

The purpose of this Procurement Policy (the "Policy") is to:

- assure that supplies, products and services are procured efficiently, effectively and at favorable prices;
- assure that quality, experience and service are given strong consideration along with pricing;
- promote open and free competition in contracting;
- provide safeguards for maintaining a procurement system of quality and integrity; and
- assure that ConnectMaine purchasing actions are in full compliance with applicable Federal standards and regulations and State and local laws.

The Policy applies to the ConnectMaine Authority, its members and staff. Unless otherwise stated in the Policy, the Executive Director, or whomever the Director authorizes in writing, shall serve as the Procurement Officer to administer all of ConnectMaine's procurement transactions. ConnectMaine will maintain records sufficient to detail, including the rationale for the method of procurement, contractor or vendor selection or rejection, the basis for the contract or vendor price, and such other information as ConnectMaine determines appropriate, maintaining such records for a minimum of five years.

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The contract term will be utilized in determining the total purchase amount, and the Executive Director may authorize any non-budgeted purchases under $10,000, or non-budgeted contracts that obligate ConnectMaine to an amount under $10,000 annually. Amounts over $10,000 must be signed by the ConnectMaine Authority Chair. ConnectMaine may enter into State and local intergovernmental agreements for procurement or use of common goods and service.

When acquiring supplies, products or services, ConnectMaine will obtain quotes based upon size of purchase. ConnectMaine may obtain these price quotations by telephone, email, fax, internet, verbally, as long as the information is documented, or as otherwise allowed by State or local laws. Except as provided below, ConnectMaine will make the award to the vendor providing the lowest acceptable quotation meeting required specifications. ConnectMaine may make the award based on factors in addition to price so long as it justifies its action in writing. Examples of these factors include:

- The item is available only from a single source, based on a reasonable review of available sources;
- An emergency for the requirement does not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation; or
- After solicitation of a number of sources, ConnectMaine determines that there are no other vendors that meet its needs.

1. Procurement < $10,000

For purchases below $10,000, ConnectMaine may solicit one quotation if ConnectMaine considers the price received reasonable.

2. Procurement > $10,000 < $50,000

For purchases from $10,000 to $50,000, ConnectMaine must obtain quotations from three qualified sources.

3. Procurement > $50,000

For purchases above $50,000, ConnectMaine will use requests for responses (RFR), requests for information (RFI) or requests for proposals (RFP) to identify all the evaluation factors and their relative importance. For the purposes of the Policy, all will be referred to as an RFP. ConnectMaine will identify criteria for evaluating proposals received and selecting awardees. ConnectMaine will make awards to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the applicable program, with price and other factors considered. ConnectMaine may reject any and all proposals or be allowed to negotiate price and services beyond the original submittal.

4. Waiver to Procurement Policy

The Procurement Officer may seek an exception (waiver) to the processes set forth above. For purchases from $10,000 to $50,000, a waiver may be granted by the ConnectMaine Authority Chair. For purchases above $50,000, a waiver may be granted by a vote of the ConnectMaine Authority. In order to qualify for an exception (waiver), one of the following conditions must exist:

- item or service is available only from a single source;
- benefits attained by Maine constituents or ConnectMaine could not be replicated by another source; or
- a public urgency or emergency exists, and the urgency will not permit delay beyond the time needed to employ competitive procurement.

ConnectMaine, as a state-funded instrumentality, inasmuch as possible, will do conduct business with instate firms. RFPs may be opened to out-of-state firms if Maine based firms are limited in capacity or inadequate in number to ensure that low-cost bids are available. "Presence" does not equal "headquartered in"; a firm that

maintains business offices in Maine is considered to have presence, even if headquartered in another State or country.

RFPs should be distributed on a public, available to all basis. If the nature of certain needs is sufficiently narrow or specialized, that there is evidence to suggest that only a limited number of qualified vendors exist and a targeted, by-invitation is justified. In such cases, ConnectMaine will document the justification for a limited-scope solicitation, citing to include the cost justifications and the approach to be used to identify qualified vendors. This written justification should be able to withstand a challenge from a vendor not deemed to be qualified. RFPs that will be distributed to the public will be noticed on the Division of Purchasing page, sent out through ConnectMaine's distribution list, and accessible on ConnectMaine's website for the length of the proposal submission period. RFPs targeted to a limited number of vendors need not be advertised or put on the ConnectMaine's website. The final decision from any review committee is public information.

The following documentation will be required for each purchase:
- Name and address of vendor(s) or contractor(s)
- Price, quantity, specifications of product or service, and quality of product(s)
- Criteria for Decision Making
- Reasons for Decision if for not using price as deciding factor in Competitive Proposals

The length of a contractual agreement to provide supplies, services or product generally should not exceed five years for services rendered. Prior to the end of the contract ConnectMaine should begin the process for replacing the contract according to the Policy.

The Executive Director will administer the Policy and will assure all ConnectMaine expenditures comply with the Policy. The ConnectMaine Authority will vote to approve the selection of ConnectMaine's auditors. The Executive Director and Assistant Director will submit all required reports to the Maine State Legislature.

C. Cash Receipts & Disbursements

The Executive Director or Assistant Director shall review all invoices and reports submitted by vendors and will seek additional documentation as necessary. The Executive Director shall review and approve invoices. Payments under $10,000 can be approved by the Executive Director and payments over $10,000 are sent to the ConnectMaine Authority Chair for approval. The Executive Director and Assistant Director shall review cashflow reports monthly to confirm accuracy.

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ConnectMaine Authority Members: Nick Battista, Jasmine Bishop, Fred Britain, Susan Corbett, Heather Johnson, Jeff Letourneau, Liz Wyman

25 February 2021

Press Release

BROADBAND GRANTS ANNOUNCEMENT

The ConnectMaine Authority seeks grant applications to plan and expand the availability of broadband service in the state.

In July, Maine voters approved a state bond of $15 million toward expanding the availability of broadband service in the state. ConnectMaine grants are also funded through assessments or surcharges on certain communications, video and internet service bills. Along with other sources of funds, ConnectMaine anticipates awarding up to $7.5 million at this time, toward projects that generate significant public benefit. Broadband service enables civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning and access to essential services.

Infrastructure grants are awarded to support investments in expanding the availability of broadband service in the state. Communications service providers and community leaders are encouraged to partner on infrastructure grant applications. Currently, preference is given to projects that propose the greatest relative improvement to existing internet service in unserved areas only.

Many communities in Maine have gone through a community-driven planning process. Looking to meet the current and future broadband needs of the community, and ensure equitable access, most plans call for broadband service that is universally available. Community-Driven Broadband Projects are substantial and seek to widely expand infrastructure that brings affordable and reliable connectivity. Many of these communities are actively seeking enough funds to implement projects.

To-date most projects receiving state grants have been proposed by internet service providers to address coverage gaps within or between communities, such as providing line extensions or filling dark pockets. Given that these types of coverage gaps aren't experienced by whole communities, less community engagement occurs. By leveraging and expanding the existing broadband networks, Provider Expansion Projects help achieve the state's broadband vision.

The mission of ConnectMaine is to facilitate the universal availability of broadband to all Maine households and businesses, and to promote the valuable role it can play in enriching their lives and helping their communities thrive. The state has set a goal to contribute 25% of the total cost of expanding the availability of broadband, to connect 95% of potential subscriber locations by 2025.

More information and applications can be found on the ConnectMaine website: www.maine.gov\connectme. Please direct any questions to ConnectMaine staff.

CONNECTMAINE

Infrastructure Grants Application
Community-Driven Broadband Projects

Authority Members
Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
Fred Brittain
Susan Corbett
Heather Johnson
Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

Contact Staff
Connect.ME@maine.gov
207.624.9894

This application binder is for community-driven broadband projects, which involve expanding infrastructure that ensures broadband service is universally available, affordable and reliable, to meet the current and future needs of the community. Many communities in Maine have gone through a community-driven planning process that is goal-driven, leverages local investments and engages the private sector; thus, scoring is weighted in favor of cost-benefit and community support.[1]

This application window is February 25 through April 29. Please submit your application materials by emailing Connect.ME@maine.gov with the subject heading Grant Application.

The window for identifying unserved areas was January 6 to January 25, with any 30-day public comment period ending February 24.

The current window for provider outreach is February 25 to March 27, with the response window effectively being March 11 to April 10.

Instructions
Please don't include attachments or reference attachments; please insert evidence in the order requested. Any information that may be deemed confidential must be submitted as separate files to remain confidential. Please note that applications submitted are made publicly available; please submit confidential information as separate files. Some details of projects funded with grants are posted on the ConnectMaine website.

The proposed project area must be contiguous for each application; please submit separate applications for non-contiguous project areas. If any elements of the application can't be completed, then in those locations demonstrate how those elements will be developed as part of the proposed project. The ConnectMaine Authority reserves the right to request additional information necessary to evaluate applications for infrastructure grants.

Please contact ConnectMaine staff for any assistance. Please note that the score of an application is only one factor considered by ConnectMaine in awarding grants, among many other factors required or allowed to be reviewed in accordance with the statute and rule, including that infrastructure be forward-looking to meet future broadband needs.

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[1] Evaluation of applications is conducted in accordance with the ConnectMaine rule:
https://www.maine.gov/connectme/about/statutes-rulemaking

CONNECTMAINE

I.   Applicant Information

Applicant Signature:
Date Submitted:

A. Fiscal Agent

Entity Name:

B. Grant Requested

Amount:

C. Affected Communities

List each affected municipality, local government or local government authority, or a local nonprofit providing economic development programs, as applicable to the proposed project.

Points of Contact for Affected Communities and any community broadband committees:

Community	Name	Title or Role	Email or Phone

D. Applicant or Agent

Name:
Title or Role:
Mailing Address:
Phone Number:
Email Address:

E. Communications Service Provider

Company Name:
Point of Contact Name:
Title:
Phone Number:
Email Address:

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F. Applicant Eligibility

Briefly describe the history and nature of the public-private partnership, if this application is being submitted by entities working in a public-private partnership, for purposes such as but not limited to separate construction, ownership or operation of the proposed network.

Any communications service provider (ISP) that is an applicant, or partner to this application, must be in good standing with all ConnectMaine reporting obligations. Indicate the date of the most recent "infrastructure grant tracking" report, if applicable, and most recent "required filing of data."[2]

Date of grant report:

Date of data filing:

If the applicant isn't an eligible ISP, the applicant may be any unit of local government, including town, city, county or regional council of governments; or any broadband utility district or corporation, wholly or partially owned by a unit of local government. State the legal entity of this applicant or partner, if applicable.

Name and type of entity:

Either the applicant or its partner, if applicable, must demonstrate technical, managerial and financial capacity, and experience to operate the network capability, for ConnectMaine to determine whether or not the responsible entity is capable of installing, using and managing broadband infrastructure.

List the entity(ies) that will build, own and operate the network.

If any, list the most recent grant award(s) by ConnectMaine to any of the entity(ies) of this applicant.

Date of last award	Entity receiving funds

List prior experience in designing, installing, operating and managing infrastructure, if necessary.

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[2] Details of these reporting requirements are contained in ConnectMaine rule:
https://www.maine.gov/connectme/about/statutes-rulemaking

G. Unserved Areas

Granted funds may be applied in unserved areas only; however, proposed project areas may include areas designated underserved.[3] Areas designated as unserved may be identified in any or all of the following sources:

- The ConnectMaine Broadband Availability Map: https://maps.sewall.com/connectme/public/
- The ConnectMaine Unserved Reports: www.maine.gov/connectme/communities-resources/Broadbandmapping
- Community Broadband Plans posted on the ConnectMaine website: www.maine.gov/connectme/grants/planning-grants/awards

Indicate how the project area was identified as unserved or underserved.

If the project area wasn't identified as unserved in the above sources, indicate the date that a request under the opportunity to review such areas was submitted to ConnectMaine. That request must have included accurate mapping of address-specific, availability data of actual speeds in the proposed project area, including a map of the geographic area at a fine enough scale to identify street-level data, and the GIS data behind the map. The request may have also included the dates and times of speed testing conducted by the method directed by ConnectMaine, customer testimonials or other evidence demonstrating that the areas are unserved. For a 30-day period, ConnectMaine posts the general information of the relevant areas for any public comments on the availability, or lack thereof, of broadband service.[4]

Date of Request:

H. Provider Outreach

ConnectMaine directs state funds to expand broadband service availability in places where the private sector hasn't plans to install broadband infrastructure during the same time period. Indicate the date of when provider outreach occurred. Within 30 days of the application window being opened, the applicant must have sent an email, which must have been copied to Connect.ME@maine.gov, followed with a letter sent certified-mail to existing ISPs to confirm that "no plans exist to provide service meeting or exceeding the minimum build standard for broadband[5] within the following 12 months" in the project area; any responses from ISPs must have been copied to Connect.ME@maine.gov, within 14 days of receiving the applicant's email.

Date of Outreach:

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[3] At least annually, and subject to 30-day comment period, ConnectMaine designates geographic areas that are unserved. Currently areas are designated as unserved where internet service is less than 25mbps/3mbps, and areas are designated as underserved where less than 20% of the households have access to internet service of at least 25mbps/3mbps.

[4] Details about this process for identifying unserved areas is posted on the ConnectMaine website: https://www.maine.gov/connectme/communities-resources/Broadbandmapping

[5] Either annually or through its strategic planning process, ConnectMaine sets a build standard for broadband, an accountability requirement for all state funded projects, which currently is offering a service level of at least 10/10mpbs.

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II.   Executive Summary

Provide a five-sentence executive summary that identifies the applicant, what type of infrastructure will be provided, where in Maine, what level of service (speeds, latency, jitter, network capacity, etc.) will be available, and when completion is anticipated. This serves the purpose of quickly identifying the proposed project among applications and past projects. This summary will also be used when announcing awards of successful applications.

III.   Cost-Benefit

In total the cost-benefit scoring category accounts for 50 points.

Describe whether or not the infrastructure would be installed without this grant being awarded.

A. Potential Subscribers

In awarding grants, ConnectMaine is directed to consider the number of potential subscribers to be served by the project. In the affected communities, indicate the total number of potential subscribers; of those, the number currently unserved; and of those currently unserved, the number to be served by the proposed project.

Potential Subscribers	Currently unserved	To be served

B. Grant Funds

Calculate the grant amount requested per customer eligible to be served by the project. Use the number "to be served" above for the number of customers below.

Grant amount ($)	Unserved customers to be served (#)	Funds per customer ($)

The grant amount per eligible customer is a factor considered in the cost-benefit scoring category, with lower funds per customer receiving a higher cost-benefit score, up to 50 points.

Grant/Customer	Points
<$2,000	50
$2,000-4,000	1-49
>$4,000	0

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IV. Community Support

In total the community support scoring category accounts for 25 points.

Describe evidence of community support for expanding availability of broadband service, such as results of speed testing or surveying.

Indicate the results of community(ies) vote(s) to financially commit to the proposed project.

Supportive votes to financially commit to proposed projects help ensure successful projects and help demonstrate sufficient community support; 5 points, if there was a positive vote, or 0 points.

A. Project Focus

The percentage of households to be served, a community support factor, is calculated from the total number of households, which is separately considered as a project scope factor in section V below. In the affected communities, indicate the total number of households and those that are proposed to be served.

All households	Households to be served

ConnectMaine collects data on the type, number and percentage of premises and unserved areas that become served by awarded funds. The percentage of households that will be served is a factor considered in the community support scoring category, with higher percentages scoring higher, up to 15 points.

Households	Points
<50%	0
50-75%	1-14
>75%	15

B. Active Community

List the community broadband committee members, their backgrounds and the expertise or roles[6] contributed.

Name	Background	Role

Involving relevant backgrounds and essential roles helps ensure successful projects and helps demonstrate adequate community support; 5 points, if the list is deemed complete, or 0 points.

C. Inclusion Commitment

List community commitments and strategies to increase the subscription rate and maximize the use of the proposed broadband infrastructure. These are often developed and included in community broadband plans, which may be referenced.

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[6] Review the relevant backgrounds and necessary expertise or roles on a broadband committee that are listed in the Community Broadband Planning Grants Precertification Form.

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V.   Project Scope

In total the project scope scoring category accounts for 15 points.

The proposed project area must be contiguous for each application; please submit separate applications for non-contiguous project areas. ConnectMaine requires filing of data of the extent of broadband service. As a separate file, submit a map of the extent of broadband service in the project area that is at a fine enough scale to identify street-level data. Also submit separate file(s) of the GIS data behind the map.

Applicants who are awarded and receive funds must submit grant reports, including infrastructure grant tracking for five years, which may include accurate mapping, cost and speed-level data; address-specific, availability data of actual speeds; and verification of performance criteria by submitting as-built drawings and/or notification of speed testing. Please contact ConnectMaine staff with any questions about accountability requirements.

A. Existing Service

Describe the existing internet service in the unserved areas of the affected community, for ConnectMaine to evaluate the proposed project for the greatest relative improvement.

B. Proposed Service

Describe the type of service to be provided, including years of growth with proposed capacity.

Also indicate the available download and upload speeds of current and proposed service to customers in the project area.

Current (mbps/mbps)	Customers (#)	Proposed (mbps/mbps)	Customers (#)

Applicants are held accountable for funded projects meeting performance criteria, including that resulting service meets the minimum build standard for broadband. The speeds of service to be offered is a factor consider in the project scope scoring category, with faster speeds, of the offering that will be available to the most customers in the project area, scoring higher, up to 10 points.

Proposed upload speed	Points
Less than or equal to 10mbps	0
Up to and including 100mbps	1-5
Greater than 100mbps	10

C. Potential Customers

Indicate the type and number of customers to be served by the project.

Customers	Households	Businesses

D. Road Miles

ConnectMaine collects data on the miles of roads that are unserved in the state. In the affected communities, indicate the total miles of roads; of those, the miles in currently unserved areas; and of those currently unserved, the miles proposed to be in served areas.

Total miles	Currently unserved	To be served

E. Timeline and Milestones

Insert a timeline that lists the milestones of the proposed project and indicates an estimate of the time required to complete the proposed project.

F. Financial Commitment

List all costs of the proposed project and the secured, financial commitments from the applicant and other sources. Itemized costs may be estimated at time of application; applicants who are awarded and receive funds are required to itemize all expenses. Include service drops and other capital expenses associated with making retail connections to the proposed network, either listing the costs covered by the proposed project, or listing $0 for costs to be covered by customers or other future sources. Committed dollars includes all secured matching funds and may include federal grant funds awarded for the same project area, such as coronavirus relief funds.

Capital & Operations	Quantity (#)	Unit ($)	Total ($)	Committed ($)	Grant ($)
Totals	-	-			

Calculate the percentages of total cost covered by the communications service provider's (ISP) financial commitment; the community financial commitment, including secured municipally-authorized funds and private funds raised; and the financial commitments from any other sources, including federal grant funds; and the percentage of total cost covered by grant amount requested.

ISP/Cost	Community/Cost	Other/Cost	Grant/Cost

The applicant's financial commitment is a factor considered in the project scope scoring category, with lower proportions of grant funds scoring higher, up to 5 points.

Grant/Cost	Points
<25%	5
25-49%	3-4
50-65%	1-2
>65%	0

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VI.   Project Value

In total the project value scoring category accounts for 10 points.

Describe evidence of project benefits to students, remote workers, telehealth patients and support facilities, and small businesses.

A. Service Prices

Describe the service levels to be offered and the price per customer to receive service, which must be equal to or less than the price per customer offered elsewhere in the state.

Service (mbps/mbps)	Price ($/mo)	Details

ConnectMaine collects data on service levels and prices per customer for various offerings provided in the state. The estimated price per customer to receive service is a factor considered in the project value scoring category, with the lowest monthly price of service offerings that have an upload speed of at least 10mbps scoring higher, up to 10 points.

Price per customer per month	Points
<$65	10
$65-100	1-9
>$100	0

Describe any affordability offering to be available to potential subscribers in the project area, including the criteria or requirements for eligibility. Submit as a separate file, the affordability plan.

Service (mbps/mbps)	Price ($/mo)	Eligibility

B. Subscription Rate

Ensuring project value includes addressing the adoption or use of internet service available. Of potential customers, state the estimated subscription rate or take rate anticipated in the project area.

CONNECTMAINE

Infrastructure Grants Application
Provider Expansion Projects

Contact Staff
Connect.ME@maine.gov
207.624.9894

Authority Members
Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
Fred Brittain
Susan Corbett
Heather Johnson
Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

This application binder is for provider expansion projects which help achieve the state's broadband vision by leveraging and expanding existing broadband networks, such as addressing coverage gaps, providing line extensions or filling dark pockets within or between communities. Given that these types of coverage gaps aren't experienced by the entire community, scoring is weighted in favor of cost-benefit and project scope.[1]

This application window is February 25 through April 29. Please submit your application materials by emailing Connect.ME@maine.gov with the subject heading Grant Application.

The window for identifying unserved areas was January 6 to January 25, with any 30-day public comment period ending February 24.

The current window for provider outreach is February 25 to March 27, with the response window effectively being March 11 to April 10.

Instructions
Please don't include attachments or reference attachments; please insert evidence in the order requested. Any information that may be deemed confidential must be submitted as separate files to remain confidential. Please note that applications submitted are made publicly available; please submit confidential information as separate files. Some details of projects funded with grants are posted on the ConnectMaine website.

The proposed project area must be contiguous for each application; please submit separate applications for non-contiguous project areas. If any elements of the application can't be completed, then in those locations demonstrate how those elements will be developed as part of the proposed project. The ConnectMaine Authority reserves the right to request additional information necessary to evaluate applications for infrastructure grants.

Please contact ConnectMaine staff for any assistance. Please note that the score of an application is only one factor considered by ConnectMaine in awarding grants, among many other factors required or allowed to be reviewed in accordance with the statute and rule, including that infrastructure be forward-looking to meet future broadband needs.

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CONNECTMAINE

I. Applicant Information

Applicant Signature:
Date Submitted:

A. Fiscal Agent

Entity Name:

B. Grant Request

Amount:

C. Affected Communities

List each affected municipality, local government or local government authority, or a local nonprofit providing economic development programs, as applicable to the proposed project:

Points of Contact for Affected Communities and any community broadband committees:

Community	Name	Title or Role	Email or Phone

D. Applicant or Agent

Name:
Title or Role:
Mailing Address:
Phone Number:
Email Address:

E. Communications Service Provider:

Company Name:
Point of Contact Name:
Title:
Phone Number:
Email Address:

CONNECTMAINE

F. Applicant Eligibility

Briefly describe the history and nature of the public-private partnership, if this application is being submitted by entities working in a public-private partnership, for purposes such as but not limited to separate construction, ownership or operation of the proposed network.

Any communications service provider (ISP) that is an applicant, or partner to this application, must be in good standing with all ConnectMaine reporting obligations. Indicate the date of the most recent "infrastructure grant tracking" report, if applicable, and most recent "required filing of data."[2]

Date of grant report:

Date of data filing:

If the applicant isn't an eligible ISP, the applicant may be any unit of local government, including town, city, county or regional council of governments; or any broadband utility district or corporation, wholly or partially owned by a unit of local government. State the legal entity of this applicant or partner, if applicable.

Name and type of entity:

Either the applicant or its partner, if applicable, must demonstrate technical, managerial and financial capacity, and experience to operate the network capability, for ConnectMaine to determine whether or not the responsible entity is capable of installing, using and managing broadband infrastructure.

List the entity(ies) that will build, own and operate the network.

If any, list the most recent grant award(s) by ConnectMaine to any of the entity(ies) of this applicant.

Date of last award	Entity receiving funds

List prior experience in designing, installing, operating and managing infrastructure, if necessary.

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[2] Details of these reporting requirements are contained in ConnectMaine rule:
https://www.maine.gov/connectme/about/statutes-rulemaking

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G. Unserved Areas

Granted funds may be applied in unserved areas only; however, proposed project areas may include areas designated underserved.[3] Areas designated as unserved may be identified in any or all of the following sources:

- The ConnectMaine Broadband Availability Map: https://maps.sewall.com/connectme/public/
- The ConnectMaine Unserved Reports: www.maine.gov/connectme/communities-resources/Broadbandmapping
- Community Broadband Plans posted on the ConnectMaine website: www.maine.gov/connectme/grants/planning-grants/awards

Indicate how the project area was identified as unserved or underserved.

If the project area wasn't identified as unserved in the above sources, indicate the date that a request under the opportunity to review such areas was submitted to ConnectMaine. That request must have included accurate mapping of address-specific, availability data of actual speeds in the proposed project area, including a map of the geographic area at a fine enough scale to identify street-level data, and the GIS data behind the map. The request may have also included the dates and times of speed testing conducted by the method directed by ConnectMaine, customer testimonials or other evidence demonstrating that the areas are unserved. For a 30-day period, ConnectMaine posts the general information of the relevant areas for any public comments on the availability, or lack thereof, of broadband service.[4]

Date of Request:

H. Provider Outreach

ConnectMaine directs state funds to expand broadband service availability in places where the private sector hasn't plans to install broadband infrastructure during the same time period. Indicate the date of when provider outreach occurred. Within 30 days of the application window being opened, the applicant must have sent an email, which must have been copied to Connect.ME@maine.gov, followed with a letter sent certified-mail to existing ISPs to confirm that "no plans exist to provide service meeting or exceeding the minimum build standard for broadband[5] within the following 12 months" in the project area; any responses from ISPs must have been copied to Connect.ME@maine.gov, within 14 days of receiving the applicant's email.

Date of Outreach:

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[3] At least annually, and subject to 30-day comment period, ConnectMaine designates geographic areas that are unserved. Currently areas are designated as unserved where internet service is less than 25mbps/3mbps, and areas are designated as underserved where less than 20% of the households have access to internet service of at least 25mbps/3mbps.
[4] Details about this process for identifying unserved areas is posted on the ConnectMaine website: https://www.maine.gov/connectme/communities-resources/Broadbandmapping
[5] Either annually or through its strategic planning process, ConnectMaine sets a build standard for broadband, an accountability requirement for all state funded projects, which currently is offering a service level of at least 10/10mpbs.

CONNECTMAINE

II.   Executive Summary

Provide a five-sentence executive summary that identifies the applicant, what type of infrastructure will be provided, where in Maine, what level of service (speeds, latency, jitter, network capacity, etc.) will be available, and when completion is anticipated. This serves the purpose of quickly identifying the proposed project among applications and past projects. This summary will also be used when announcing awards of successful applications.

III.   Cost-Benefit

In total the cost-benefit scoring category accounts for 50 points.

Describe why the infrastructure wouldn't be installed without this grant being awarded.

A. Potential Subscribers

In awarding grants, ConnectMaine is directed to consider the number of potential subscribers to be served by the project. In the project area, indicate the total number of potential subscribers; of those, the number currently unserved; and of those currently unserved, the number to be served by the proposed project.

Potential Subscribers	Currently unserved	To be served

B. Grant Funds

Calculate the grant amount requested per customer eligible to be served by the project. Use the number "to be served" above for the number of customers below.

Grant amount ($)	Unserved customers to be served (#)	Funds per customer ($)

The grant amount per eligible customer is a factor considered in the cost-benefit scoring category, with lower funds per customer receiving a higher cost-benefit score, up to 50 points.

Grant/Customer	Points
<$2,000	50
$2,000-4,000	1-49
>$4,000	0

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IV.   Community Support

In total the community support scoring category accounts for 10 points.

Describe evidence of community support for expanding availability of broadband service, such as results of speed testing or surveying.

A. Project Focus

The percentage of customers to be served, a community support factor, is calculated from the total number of potential customers, which is separately considered as a project scope factor in section V below. In the project area, indicate the total number of customers and those that are proposed to be served.

All customers	Customers to be served

ConnectMaine collects data on the type, number and percentage of premises and unserved areas that become served by awarded funds. The percentage of customers that will be served is a factor considered in the community support scoring category, with higher percentages scoring higher, up to 5 points.

Customers	Points
<35%	0
35-75%	1-4
>75%	5

B. Active Community

Briefly describe the community engagement in the planning process.

Engaging the community in the planning process helps ensure successful projects and helps demonstrate adequate community support; 5 points, if community is engaged, or 0 points..

CONNECTMAINE

V.   Project Scope

In total the project scope scoring category accounts for 25 points; additionally, 10 bonus points are available.

The proposed project area must be contiguous for each application; please submit separate applications for non-contiguous project areas. ConnectMaine requires filing of data of the extent of broadband service. As a separate file, submit a map of the extent of broadband service in the project area that is at a fine enough scale to identify street-level data. Also submit separate file(s) of the GIS data behind the map.

Applicants who are awarded and receive funds must submit grant reports, including infrastructure grant tracking for five years, which may include accurate mapping, cost and speed-level data; address-specific, availability data of actual speeds; and verification of performance criteria by submitting as-built drawings and/or notification of speed testing. Please contact ConnectMaine staff with any questions about accountability requirements.

A. Existing Service

Describe the existing internet service in the unserved areas of the affected community, for ConnectMaine to evaluate the proposed project for the greatest relative improvement.

B. Proposed Service

Describe the type of service to be provided, including years of growth with proposed capacity.

Also indicate the available download and upload speeds of current and proposed service to customers in the project area.

Current (mbps/mbps)	Customers (#)	Proposed (mbps/mbps)	Customers (#)

Applicants are held accountable for funded projects meeting performance criteria, including that resulting service meets the minimum build standard for broadband. The speeds of service to be offered is a factor consider in the project scope scoring category, with faster speeds, of the offering that will be available to the most customers in the project area, scoring higher, up to 15 points.

Upload speed proposed	Points
Less than or equal to 10mbps upload	0
Up to and including 100mbps upload	1-14
Greater than 100mbps upload	15

C. Potential Customers

Indicate the type and number of customers to be served by the project.

Customers	Households	Businesses

The number of customers that will be served is a factor considered in the project scope scoring category, with higher numbers scoring higher, up to 5 points.

Customers	Points
<130	0
130-600	1-4
>600	5

D. Road Miles

In the project area, indicate the total number of potential subscribers and total miles of roads.

Subscribers	Miles

ConnectMaine collects data on the number of premises and miles of road in unserved areas. The number of customers to be served is a factor in the project scope scoring category, and state funds are intended to support expansion of broadband availability in places where the private sector alone can't justify the investment; less densely populated areas score higher, up to 10 bonus points.

Subscribers/Mi	Bonus
<10	10
10-20	1-9
>20	0

E. Timeline and Milestones

Insert a timeline that lists the milestones of the proposed project and indicates an estimate of the time required to complete the proposed project.

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F. Financial Commitment

List all costs of the proposed project and the secured, financial commitments from the applicant, its partner and other sources. Itemized costs may be estimated at time of application; applicants who are awarded and receive funds are required to itemize all expenses. Include service drops and other capital expenses associated with making retail connections to the proposed network, either listing the costs covered by the proposed project, or listing $0 for costs to be covered by customers or other future sources. Committed dollars includes all secured matching funds and may include federal grant funds awarded for the same project area, such as coronavirus relief funds.

Capital & Operations	Quantity (#)	Unit ($)	Total ($)	Committed ($)	Grant ($)
Totals	-	-			

Calculate the percentages of total cost covered by the communications service provider's (ISP) financial commitment; the community financial commitment, including secured municipally-authorized funds and private funds raised; and the financial commitments from any other sources; including federal grant funds, and the percentage of total cost covered by grant amount requested.

ISP/Cost	Community/Cost	Other/Cost	Grant/Cost

The applicant's financial commitment is a factor considered in the project scope scoring category, with lower proportions of grant funds scoring higher, up to 5 points.

Grant/Cost	Points
<25%	5
25-49%	3-4
50-55%	1-2
>55%	0

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VI. Project Value

In total the project value scoring category accounts for 15 points.

Describe evidence of project benefits to students, remote workers, telehealth patients and support facilities, and small businesses. Submit separate file(s) of letters identifying these groups.

Expanding broadband to these groups helps realize economic and social benefits of broadband, and contributes to project value; 2 points, if the list is deemed complete, or 0 points.

A. Service Prices

Describe the service levels to be offered and the price per customer to receive service, which must be equal to or less than the price per customer offered elsewhere in the state.

Service (mbps/mbps)	Price ($/mo)	Details

ConnectMaine collects data on service levels and prices per customer for various offerings provided in the state. The estimated price per customer to receive service is a factor considered in the project value scoring category, with the lowest monthly price of service offerings that have an upload speed of at least 10mbps scoring higher, up to 10 points.

Price per customer per month	Points
<$65	10
$65-100	1-9
>$100	0

Describe any affordability offering to be available to potential subscribers in the project area, including the criteria or requirements for eligibility. Submit as a separate file, the affordability plan.

Service (mbps/mbps)	Price ($/mo)	Eligibility

Proposed projects that result in affordability offerings help address affordability barriers to the adoption or use of internet service, and contributes project value; 3 points, if the list is deemed complete, or 0 points.

B. Subscription Rate

Ensuring project value includes addressing the adoption or use of internet service available. Of potential customers, state the estimated subscription rate or take rate anticipated in the project area.