

## **Maine Broadband Community Planning - Precertification Checklist**

A community must answer each of these items to be certified for the planning grant process. A “no” answer is perfectly acceptable; this is stakeholder and information gathering process. Once certified, a community will be eligible to participate in the competitive process to receive funds from the ConnectME Authority for a broadband planning grant.

### **I. Create a Community Broadband Team**

- Provide list of members, including name and title:
  - Must include at least one representative from municipal government for each community seeking certification
  - If it is known that a non-profit or economic development entity will ultimately be seeking a grant using this precertification, should include one member of that non-profit
  - Members could include residents and representatives with experience in health care, business, and education.
- Must designate single point person for communications with ConnectME for certification process, provide email address to ConnectME.

### **II. Hold at least one Community Broadband Meeting**

- Send emails to broadband providers currently serving your community and invite them to the community meeting.
- Share results of ConnectME Mapping for this community.
- Questions for attendees:
  - Which providers are currently serving your community?
  - Which providers attended your meeting?
  - How do the mapping results compare with members’ actual experiences?
  - Does existing broadband access meet your needs?
  - If it is inadequate in what ways does it fall short?
  - If you have broadband, how do you use it now?
- Provide documentation showing meeting dates, notes, agenda and number of attendees, emails to providers and responses to the questions above.
- [ConnectME may need to provide guidance/suggestions on how address areas of this section]

### **III. Identify Key Documents/Existing Efforts**

- Does the municipality use broadband to deliver municipal services? Describe the services, and how broadband is used to deliver these services. (e.g., town office has a broadband connection it uses to submit information to state government, police department uses broadband to communicate with state or federal databases or assessors' office make access to property records and maps available to the general public)
- Is there local or regional economic development plans in which broadband could play a role? If so, provide a list of these documents.
- Does the town have a cable franchise agreement?
- Are there any on-going community projects focusing on the digital divide or information technology (public access through schools or libraries, training, improving access to broadband, etc.)?
- Is there a TIF or other economic development grant for all or part of the area to be served?
- Does the town have a municipal electric company? If not, what electric utilities serve the area?
- [ConnectME may need to provide guidance/suggestions on how address areas of this section]

#### **IV. Identify potential Community Anchor Institutions**

- Provide a list of potential community anchor institutions.
- Community anchor institutions are entities such as schools, libraries, hospitals and other medical providers, public safety entities, institutions of higher education. Anchor institutions can also be community support organizations that facilitate greater use of broadband by vulnerable populations, including low-income, the unemployed, and the aged.
- Provide a list of commercial institutions that could benefit from lower cost, higher bandwidth, and/or improved reliability of broadband.

#### **V. Create a Vision Statement**

- A Vision Statement is created by Community Broadband Team with input from public at the Community Broadband Meeting, with the goal to take a first step toward being able to set a direction for the community's future broadband efforts.
- The statement should describe the role broadband would play in this community's future, using input from the other steps in the precertification process.
  - Identify specific priority areas (e.g., connecting community anchor institutions, ensuring older citizens can age in place, closing the "homework gap", providing affordable high speed connections to a business park).
- Explain how this effort conforms to other planning documents/published visioning efforts on other issues in your community.