

# ConnectME Authority – Broadband Grant Scoring Guide

Revised January 16, 2014

The grant application evaluation process will allow the ConnectME Authority to evaluate all applications submitted during a particular application period set by the Authority. The scoring of applications is based on a 100-point scale. A project with a total score of less than 50 points may not be funded. Applications will be judged using the following four scoring categories, as described in the Authority rule:

Cost-Benefit. This category is worth **35** points.

The cost-benefit scoring is based on relevant factors, **including, but not limited to, the amount of funding requested from the Authority per customer eligible to be served by the project, with lower funding per customer receiving a higher cost-benefit score.** Applicants should demonstrate financial viability by providing pro-forma financial statements and detailed business plans.

Grant dollars requested/customer eligible to be served	Points
Less than or equal to \$500	25
\$501-\$1,000	20
\$1,001-\$1,500	15
\$1,501-\$2,000	10
\$2,000-\$2,500	5
Greater than \$2,500	0

**A maximum of ten additional points** will be added to the C-B score for any application requesting a 50% or less grant for the proposed project. A sliding scale will be used for those grant applications above 50% ( $\leq 50\%$  = 10pts; 51% - 60% = 5pts;  $>60\%$  = 0 pts.)

Community Support. This category is worth **20** points.

The community support score is based on relevant factors, including, but not limited to, evidence of community support for the project and the percentage of the geographic area to be covered by the proposal that will be served by the proposed project. Strong consideration (and higher point value as shown in the table below) will be given to those applications that include petitions or listings of a significant number of the available households and businesses expressing a strong desire to subscribe to broadband service provided from the proposed project.

Support as a percent of homes/businesses passed by project	Points
100%	20
50% - 99%	15
25% - 49%	10
<25%	5

Project Scope. This category is worth **30** points.

The project scope score is based on relevant factors prioritized below:

1. 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.<sup>1</sup>

Broadband Speed or Bandwidth by FCC Tier	Points
Tier 6 or better (greater than 25 Mbps)	20
Tier 5 (10.1 to 25 Mbps)	15
Tier 4 (6.1 to 10 Mbps)	10
Tier 3 (3 to 6 Mbps)	5
Less than Tier 3 (less than 3 Mbps)	0

Note: The change to a new tier level for funding purposes should not be interpreted as precluding a project providing Tier 2 service (1.5 to 3 Mbps). A proposed project at this tier level would still be eligible, but 0 points would be awarded in this part of the project scope category.

2. The **number of potential customers** to be served or households passed by the project. For example; a project that proposes to provide broadband service to 300 households will receive more points than a project that will provide service to 50 households.

Point values for the number of potential customers to be served by the project: 100 or more = 10 points; and less than 100 as a percentage of 10 points (e.g. 87 = 9 points, 46 = 5 points, 12 = 1 point, etc.).

3. The grant applicant’s financial commitment to the project (cash, in-kind, donations, etc).

Project Value. This category is worth **15** points.

The project value score is based on relevant factors, including, but not limited to, the estimated retail price per customer to receive service from the proposed project and any other details of the project that may benefit customers in the area proposed to be served by the proposed project. For example; more points will be awarded for a higher number of businesses and/or health care facilities in the project area that do not have access to broadband service; and

<sup>1</sup> 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.

lower scores for relatively higher retail prices; and higher or lower scores depending on other factors such as the type of construction required. **Applicants should use this category to introduce elements of their project that may be significant and not incorporated in one of the other three categories.**

**Note:** Legislative changes to the ConnectME Authority statute (to 35-A M.R.S.A. §9204) <sup>2</sup> state that, “(I)n awarding grants, the authority shall give priority to those proposals that, relative to other proposals, extend access to broadband service to a higher percentage of an unserved area within a municipality or other appropriate geographic area.”

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<sup>2</sup> See Public Law, Chapter 63, (LD 850, HP 0585), 124<sup>th</sup> Maine State Legislature, “An Act To Ensure Local Broadband Coverage.”