

ConnectME Fund
Tenth Round Grant Application
Date

Due Date

- 1. Date:**
- 2. Project Title:**
- 3. Submitting Entity:**
- 4. Grant Amount Requested:**
- 5. Total Project Cost:**
- 6. Project Contact Information**
(Please include: Name, Title, Address, Telephone Number, Fax Number, and E-mail Address.)
- 7. Party Who Prepared Application**
(Please include: Name, Title, Address, Telephone Number, Fax Number, and E-mail address).
- 8. Executive Summary of the Project**
- 9. A description of the geographic area proposed to be served** by the project and sufficient information to establish that it is an **unserved** area, preferably at street-level granularity, and not likely to be served in the near future. (Most applicants conduct independent research to determine if a community has broadband or are sufficiently familiar with the community to know that there is not any terrestrial broadband available).

We recommend that applicants find partners among the various providers of broadband services or community-based organizations to use the grant as “gap-financing” to get operational infrastructure installed. The amount of local public and private funding and in-kind contributions will be strongly considered when reviewing the applications. Applicants should also be aware of Maine Fiber Company’s “Three Ring Binder” project for backhaul and middle mile transport (www.maineiberco.com).

Applicants must be aware that the ConnectME Authority will give priority to grant proposals that, relative to other proposals, seek to extend access to broadband internet service to a higher percentage of an "unserved" area within a municipality or other appropriate geographic area. The Authority will also consider the percentage of households with access to broadband service when establishing criteria to define unserved and underserved areas.

The Authority recently updated its definition of broadband. “Unserved” for grant application purposes will be any area that receives service that is not capable of providing 10Mbps download and 10Mbps upload. Application projects must be able to provide this level of service. As this currently applies only to unserved areas, previously

funded projects would not qualify for grants to upgrade service. Projects that provide the greatest increase in service delivered will receive higher scores.

All ConnectME Authority grant awardees will be **required** to fully cooperate with the Authority and its contractor, James W. Sewall Company, regarding data collection for the broadband mapping project.

10. A description of the proposed project, including:

- a. public-private partnerships and collaborations that have been established;
- b. evidence that the private partners in the project are eligible to receive funding from the Authority;
- c. sufficient information that allows the Authority to determine that without the Authority's action, the installation of advanced communications technology infrastructure in an unserved area would not otherwise occur;
- d. the type of service to be provided, indicating the technology used and the upstream and downstream speeds of the service to be provided;
- e. an estimate of the time required to complete the proposed project;
- f. the number and percentage of households and businesses within the area to be served by the project (i.e. who can be served given technical limitations);
- g. the estimated price per customer of the service to be provided by the proposed project; and
- h. a map (preferably GIS compatible) or list of municipalities or parts of municipalities that may be covered by the proposed project with GEO Codes.

11. The applicant's financial commitment to the project in addition to the funding requested from the Authority (additional funds and in-kind contributions);

12. The estimated number of customers/households who will directly benefit from the project who are currently **unserved** (provide lists or numbers of potential customers that have indicated a strong commitment to subscribe);

13. Evidence of community support for the proposed project, which may include letters or signatures of residents or businesses located within the area of the proposed project (also, provide letters of interest from landowners for placement of facilities and support commitments from municipalities or community groups);

14. A description of the applicant's experience relevant to the proposed project; and

15. A demonstration of financial viability provided by pro-forma financial statements for the project and company financial statements. Confidential information may be submitted and should be so marked and submitted in a separate file.

Completed applications are due **Date**. The ConnectME Authority will make grant awards after reviewing and ranking the applications; based on the availability of funds.

Due to recent statutory changes, the description of eligible applicants and the challenge process specified in the Authority's rule is no longer applicable. ¹

¹ See Chapter 284, Public Laws of 2015 (LD 1063)

The Authority has grant reporting requirements to include progress reports and final completion reports. Grant recipients will be required to report annually for five years regarding household availability, expected subscriptions, and actual subscriptions per project.

To ensure that all applications are completely and effectively reviewed, please follow the numbered/lettered format of the application above, addressing each section and subsection. See Grant Scoring Guide for evaluation criteria. Additional information may be included as necessary. Electronic formats are preferred (Adobe PDF or MS Word) and confidential information should be in a separate file. Submit applications electronically or by mail to:

ConnectME Authority

Phillip Lindley, Executive Director
Statehouse Station 78
Augusta, ME 04333-0078

Phone: (207) 624-9970
Mobile: (207) 441-0498
Email: phil.lindley@maine.gov
Website: www.maine.gov/connectme/

Financial Analysis and Budget

The budget will be reviewed on reasonableness and accuracy. Provide the following financial information with as much detail as possible:

	ConnectME Grant Funding	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Other Funding Sources	Total
Personnel					
Contractual Services					
Start up Expenses and Capital Expenditures (Hardware, software, etc.)					
Supplies and Materials					
Telecommunications					
Training					
Travel					
Other costs					
Total					

The ConnectME Authority reserves the right to request additional information deemed necessary to properly evaluate the application.

Please be aware that some of the information in the application may be made available to existing broadband service providers, as required by the ConnectME law and rule.

Confidential information may be submitted, but only those specific portions considered proprietary should be so marked (see also § 4 of the ConnectME rule).

ConnectME Authority – Broadband Grant Scoring Guide
Revised August 28, 2015

The 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% ($\leq 50\% = 10\text{pts}$; $51\% - 60\% = 5\text{pts}$; $>60\% = 0\text{pts}$.)

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 relative increase in the highest available advertised download “speed” or bandwidth compared to the existing internet service in the area to be served by the proposed project. This factor provides more points to projects that provide the greatest increase in download speeds. For example, a project providing speeds in excess of 25 Mbps (Tier 6) in an area where the highest available download speeds for internet access was 1.5- 3 Mbps (Tier 2) would provide an increase of 4 Tiers, and would receive 15 points. For purposes of the chart below, internet access speeds of <768 Kbps would be equivalent to “Tier 0.”¹

Increase in Download Speed Relative to Existing Services Providing Internet Access	Points
Increase of 5 Tiers	20
Increase of 4 Tiers	15
Increase of 3 Tiers	10
Increase of 2 Tiers	5
Increase of 1 Tier	0

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 100 households will receive more points than a project that will provide service to 25 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 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.**

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.