RFP No. 2024-MBI-02 for GIS Support Services for Gap Networks Grant Program- Questions and Answers

#	Question	MBI Response
1.	Can this work be completed remotely? What travel is expected? Can meetings be via zoom/teams?	Yes. This work can be completed remotely. No travel is expected. Meetings will be virtual.
2.	Are you expecting the selected consultant to provide any review of the applications, or just provide GIS support to MBI as MBI reviews the applications?	MBI will be responsible for reviewing the applications. The GIS support team will process and review geospatial data submitted with the applications and maintain all geospatial data for the Gap Networks Grant Program. This work is intended to support MBI in reviewing the applications and making award decisions for the Gap Networks Program.
3.	One requirement is "generating data summaries, maps and reports" Do you have any specific reports you are expecting you are going to need?	MBI does not have specific report templates that are required. MBI anticipates needing assistance with generating statistics, tables, charts and maps to be incorporated into presentations and reports that MBI will be providing to other entities.
4.	As part of "In-take of project location data..." is MBI expecting an online application to accept the data from ISP's during the application process, or is the data being submitted directly to MBI who will then work with the selected vendor to provide the data for use in analysis.	All Applicants to the Gap Networks Grant Program Applicants are required to submit data through an online application. Potential bidders can view the online application and associated documents on the Gap Networks Grant Program solicitation our website here: https://broadband.masstech.org/broadband-infrastructure-gap-networks-grant-program.
5.	Does MBI have an existing tracking process in place for the anticipated grant applications? If yes, can you please provide more details? If not, is MBI open to the use of Smart Sheets for tracking the applications received and the project timelines?	MBI is using an AirTable base for the intake of Gap Networks Program applications and currently intends to continue using AirTable as part of the project tracking process. However, the tracking process has not yet been fully defined.
6.	Does the consultant have the ability to send updates to (ENTER NAME HERE for example the grant applicant, or grant applicants contact designee) so their data is corrected?	No. MBI intends to handle interactions with the Applicants. If needed, MBI could arrange conference calls with the GIS support team and an Applicant that would also include a member of the MBI staff.
7.	We have a GIS specialist that performs this type of support to many clients, including supporting the National Center for Economic Gardening as the GIS specialist.	The Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL) datasets from the FCC/CostQuest and MBI are the primary geospatial datasets that all availability and eligibility data is related to. Applicants are encouraged to use one or both of these datasets to generate their

		service address lists; however, they may submit other valid BSLs not included in these lists. Applicants are expected to include the unique identifiers for any locations sourced from the FCC or MBI datasets. The Project Service Area (PSA) Address Data Template spreadsheet to be used by Applicants is available for download from the Associated Documents section at the bottom of MBI's Gap Networks Grant Program procurement page here: https://broadband.masstech.org/broadband-infrastructure-gap-networks-grant-program.
Is the geo-spatial data provided by the BSLs? Or is this provided elsewhere?		
8.	What system of record will be used by MA Tech Collaborative to handle this project?	MBI uses ArcGIS Desktop and ArcGIS Pro to access GIS data stored in SQL Server Express workgroup geodatabases or file geodatabases as the system of record. Respondents may use their preferred systems, as long as data can be delivered in an ArcGIS friendly format. File geodatabases are typically the preferred format for sharing large geospatial datasets and preserving geodatabase structure, but Shapefiles may also be used for sharing of smaller and less complex data.
9.	What is the Period of Performance for this Project?	The period of performance for this project starts when the GIS support contract is executed (approximately January 2024), through the issuance of all awards for round 2 (May - June 2024), and the final reporting from the GIS support team has been received by MBI (approximately July 2024).
10.	Will the BEAD Challenge Process mentioned in the RFP happen concurrently with the Gap Networks Program?	The BEAD Challenge Process is expected to commence in June 2024 and will therefore occur after the awarding of all Gap Networks Grant Program grants.
11.	Is there an estimated budget for this project?	MBI is not publishing a budget or not-to-exceed cap for this project.
12.	What is the current availability of data? Will any example data be collected or downloaded to a repository before project start?	In preparation for the review of Round 1 applications, MBI will be acquiring, processing and formatting updated BSL, availability and funding commitment datasets from FCC sources to use in tandem with the existing MBI BSL dataset currently available for download in the MBI Map Gallery here: https://broadband.masstech.org/map-gallery. MBI will provide all datasets in their most current state at the start of the project.
13.	Will the services be hosted within the Bidder or MA Tech Collab's account? If MA Tech Collab, will a sub-account	Bidders should assume that they will not need to host map services themselves. Data processing and formatting may be required to integrate updated BSL and eligibility data into existing MBI online maps or

	for the project be active and available at start of project?	made available using the MBI/MassTech ArcGIS Online account.
14.	What is your NTE budget for this assistance?	MBI is not publishing a budget or not-to-exceed cap for this project.
15.	Do you envision the need to use any external data sources such as Ookla speedtests for validating the eligibility of BSL's?	MBI has an Ookla license for fixed network speed tests. MBI may consider external data sources, such as Ookla, where there is uncertainty about the status of a Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL). This data would be used to help support a determination of the service availability only for particular BSLs.
16.	Can work be done remotely?	Yes, work can be done remotely.
17.	Is the data for the 18,000 known unserved/underserved Broadband Serviceable Locations GIS-ready?	There are two different unserved/underserved location datasets that MBI intends to use for the Gap Networks Grant Program, one was created by MBI and the other is the FCC data. The MBI BSL and unserved/underserved data is GIS-ready but requires some updates. New versions of the CostQuest FCC BSL Fabric and FCC unserved/underserved data will need to be downloaded and made GIS-ready. MBI will begin but may or may not complete this work prior to the execution of this contract. MBI will provide the data in its current state as of the start of the project.

Note: The MBI data includes some BSLs that are not in the FCC BSL Fabric and, in some cases, have a different unserved/underserved status. As a result, there will be times that it will be necessary to determine which dataset is correct when there are discrepancies between the two datasets. |
18.	Is there an incumbent consultant already providing services for this project?	No, there is not an incumbent provider for the scope of services in this RFP. However, MBI has worked with a contractor during the development of the Gap Networks Grant Program.
19.	What is the anticipated duration of this project/contract?	The period of performance for this project starts when the GIS support contract is executed (approximately January 2024), through the issuance of all awards for round 2 (May - June 2024), and the final reporting from the GIS support team has been received by MBI (approximately July 2024).
20.	Do you have ArcGIS Online or should we plan to host publicly available maps ourselves?	Yes, MBI has limited licensing for ArcGIS Online. Bidders should assume that they will not need to host map services themselves. Data processing and formatting may be required to integrate updated BSL and eligibility data into existing MBI online maps or made available using the MBI/MassTech ArcGIS Online account.

21.	Can you consider utilities experience and give exception for broadband experience?	If Bidders have experience in the utility sector, but not specifically in the broadband sector, the response should explain how the utility work applies to the scope of work and demonstrate an understanding of the broadband sector at the level that will be necessary to perform the GIS work defined in the RFP.
22.	Both wired and wireless solutions are available that meet the throughput requirements for this RFP. Rural areas with dispersed housing can be economically served with wireless broadband. How is MassTech/MBI planning to evaluate the proposals for wireless broadband without having an accurate prediction of the planned coverage? In order to ensure that the proposed wireless broadband network will work as planned, an accurate radio path prediction from the proposed base stations (wireless access points) to each potential customer requires an advanced radio propagation analysis program along with a good database of the terrain, foliage (trees) and buildings. Would this capability be required from your GIS bidders or is this something that should be proposed as an Additional Support service?	No, MBI does not plan to independently develop our own coverage maps or wireless propagation models to validate an Applicant's proposed coverage. The burden is on the Applicant to demonstrate their coverage, which may include wireless propagation modeling.
23.	Do you anticipate the GIS dataset deliverables to be offline (geodatabase, etc, format) or would we be pushing data into or working within your Enterprise environment (if you have one)?	MBI expects offline deliverables, primarily in file geodatabase format. Some GIS dataset deliverables may require additional or alternatives formats, such as CSV or Shapefile.
24.	How will get geospatial data from isp?	ISPs will submit the geospatial data as attachments to their application. Potential bidders can view the application and associated documents on the Gap Networks Grant Program solicitation our website here: https://broadband.masstech.org/broadband-infrastructure-gap-networks-grant-program.
25.	Estimated value of project?	MBI is not publishing a budget or not-to-exceed cap for this project.

26.	Do you have the FCC data license for the area? Another way to state it - do you have a Costquest license?	Yes, MBI has a user class 2a license for the CostQuest FCC Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL) Fabric.
27.	Is there any survey required from supplier end or geospatial data will readily available?	No, there's not a specific survey requirement. Surveying is not required by the Applicants for the Gap Networks Grant Program, but they can use multiple methods to verify whether or not a Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL) is served and submit it for our consideration. MBI expects that Applicants will do their own due diligence to develop evidence for BSLs that are listed as served by the FCC or MBI data sources, which they believe are not served.
28.	Do you anticipate a field verification of existing broadband facilities to validate application submittals?	MBI's current expectation is that verification will be able to be done using various desktop analysis options and field verification will not be necessary. Even though it is highly unlikely, MBI reserves the right conduct field verification.
29.	Will you give written answers for all these questions?	Yes, MBI will post written answers for the questions posed during the webinar and any others received via email by December 5th. The answers will be posted to the procurement page on the MassTech website and COMMBUYS.
30.	Building on the geodatabase question. What RDBMS does MBI currently use? SQL Server? Some other database system?	SQL Server Express
31.	You may have answered this about remote work generally, but the biweekly meetings--would an in-person presence be requested or would those largely be zoom/teams?	MBI expects the biweekly meetings to be held virtually (e.g., through Zoom or Teams).
32.	How will funding commitments from other programs (e.g. CAF II, RDOF, etc) be provided to the GIS services provider to perform data updates for MBI? What is the anticipated update interval for funding from other programs?	MBI anticipates the possibility of needing help in verifying that we have the most accurate federal funding commitment dataset. During previous data reviews, MBI has had difficulty determining the most accurate and authoritative sources of the federal commitment areas. MBI assumes that the FCC Broadband Funding map should be the authoritative source, however, MBI has previously found discrepancies between what the FCC Broadband Funding Map shows, what data directly from the granting agencies show, what USAC is reporting, and MBI's own knowledge of the programs. MBI anticipates needing help with cross-checking the different sources to determine which information is correct, prior to finalizing the Round 1 awards. There

		should be a checkpoint before (1) Round 1 awards, (2) Round 2 awards, and (3) the launch of the BEAD Challenge Process to check for new funding commitments.
33.	When will this slide presentation be available on the website?	The slide presentation and recording of this webinar were posted on the GIS Support for Gap Networks Grant Program procurement page. They can be found here: https://broadband.masstech.org/request-proposals-gis-support-gap-networks-grant-program