

Proposals for Residential Retrofit Program Round IV

(No. 2025-MBI-11)

Questions and Answers

Questions Due: Friday, May 16, 2025

Posted: May 23, 2025

	Question	Answer
1.	<p>Do submissions have to be for all projects in a project group?</p> <p>We can service facilities in the town of Concord, MA, but not outside. I'd like to apply for the 5 sites in Concord, MA, but not the other 2 in the Western Middlesex, (Framingham and Maynard).</p>	<p>Applicants must serve all properties in a given project group.</p>
2.	<p>Please clarify how the MBI will award bonus points for a commitment to "open access"?</p> <p>Section 2.1 of the solicitation reads: "Open Access" shall mean an internet network where there may be more than one ISP that provides retail services over the same access network infrastructure simultaneously, allowing the subscribers to decide from which ISP they will purchase their services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please confirm that in order to earn the bonus points, an applicant must make available its access network, i.e. the fiber that brings internet service to the building, accessible to other competing providers such that the resident can choose among those providers. • If the MBI considers open access to apply to the inside wiring, please confirm that any incumbent broadband provider that currently owns inside wiring in the building would be granted 10 points given the 	<p>As outlined in section 7.3.2 of the RFP In order to receive bonus points for Open Access Infrastructure, Applicants may submit a narrative indicating whether they plan to provide open-access use of their network and equipment.</p> <p>Applicants may propose open-access arrangements ranging from provision lit fiber services for other ISPs, to installation of second pathways or shared conduits to Properties that allow other ISPs to provide their own service (or other arrangements that would lower barriers to entry for serving Properties by other ISPs).</p> <p>Applicants may charge a fee for use of an Open Access network. If an Applicant proposes to charge a fee, they must explicitly state expected rates and justify the reasonableness of those rates in the narrative response for this section of the RFP.</p>

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	<p>application of the Federal Communications Commission’s Inside Wiring rules and how an applicant can make this clear to MBI in its application to receive these 10 points.</p>	<p>Applicants are not required to offer open-access options.</p> <p>MBI has clarified that the Access Network includes all in-building, broadband-related infrastructure and as such begins at CPE and terminates at the demarcation point that marks the point at which end-user traffic begins to exit the building to interconnect with the wide area network providing internet backhaul to the building. See Amendment 1 to Solicitation 2025-MBI-11 (posted 5/20/25).</p> <p>Any broadband provider, incumbent or otherwise is welcome to apply for the Open Access Network bonus points in alignment with the above definition. An applicant must indicate affirmatively in the online application that they are seeking bonus points for Open Access Network by clicking the “yes” button within section 4 of the online application and providing the required narrative description.</p>
3.	<p>The Solicitation provides: “Residential Retrofit Program” or the “Program” shall mean the grant program described in this RFP to fund deployment of new and/or upgraded fiber-based broadband infrastructure to and within Affordable Housing properties throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please confirm that each Property in a Property Group must be served with a fiber connection, not merely one Property with other technologies for remaining Property Group Properties, which would result in such an application receiving fewer points or being disqualified. See Solicitation at 6.2 - This RFP solicits applications through an open and competitive process from ISPs or 	<p>Any given applicant must provide fiber backhaul to each development within a project group. For campus style developments that have multiple buildings on the same property or proximate properties, MBI will allow applicants to use wireless or other technologies to provide service between buildings, in addition to fiber to the premise approaches.</p> <p>Section 7.1.1 of the RFP has been amended to make this clarification explicit. See Amendment 1 to Solicitation 2025-MBI-11 (posted 5/20/25).</p>

	Question	Answer
	MSPs for fiber construction to eligible Affordable Housing Properties.	
4.	<p>With regard to the Award Cap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the Award Cap? Would an assessment of the applicant’s financial, managerial and operational experience achieve the same purpose? • Please confirm if MBI would consider waiving the Award Cap if an application is otherwise the most competitive and therefore the best use of public funds to meet the Program’s goals. • How will an applicant know which Property Groups will be competitive? How should applicants factor this into their prioritization of projects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the award cap is to ensure that MBI has a diverse pool of vendors that are able to complete the CPF Retrofit work by the required date of 12/31/2026. • MBI will not waive the award cap. • Applicants should carefully review sections 2.1, 6.1 and 6.2 where details of MBI’s administration of the award cap are outlined to make the best and most informed decision regarding their application approach.
5.	<p>Treasury considers a dark fiber IRU to be an eligible expense. Confirming that dark fiber needed to provide service to a location(s) is acceptable for Round IV funding. Dark fiber is either procured via lease or IRU. In either case, there are recurring fees associated with the fiber.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will MBI allow a one-time cost allotment based upon a set cost over a period of time? • If so, what is the acceptable period of time for the lease/IRU? • Is there a maximum amount of dark fiber that would be covered? 	<p>Monthly recurring charges for leased dark fiber are considered operational expenses and therefore are not eligible costs. Upfront non-recurring charges can be considered an eligible capital expense.</p> <p>NRCs must relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Construction, installation, or activation of broadband infrastructure. ○ Engineering, permitting, or make-ready work directly tied to the physical build. ○ Equipment purchase and installation necessary for delivering service.
6.	Confirming that the last mile can include a combination of infrastructure construction and dark fiber.	Please see response to question 5.