

3.2 Partnerships, Collaborators and Stakeholders

Table 5: Partners

Partners	Description of Current or Planned Role in Broadband Deployment and Adoption
Broadband Infrastructure Capital Market Taskforce	Collaboration of leaders in banking and finance, philanthropy, legal, community development financial institutions, venture capital, and executives with experience in strategic financing who examine the challenges in how the broadband market has interacted with financial markets in Maine to date, challenges and opportunities, evaluate the diversity of funding sources, and inform MCA and partner actions to recommend and implement capital market-related items.
Digital Equity Task Force	Forty partners are engaged as advisors to ensure that covered populations are served through implementing the Maine Digital Equity Plan, and many will be directly involved as implementation partners. A portion of the task force may serve as a grant decision-making or advisory body for Connectivity Hubs or other digital equity funding programs. These partners will also be education parts and awareness builders about digital equity and inclusion programs and resources.
EducationSuperHighway	EducationSuperHighway (ESH) is a national nonprofit with the mission to close the digital divide for the 18 million households that have access to the Internet but can't afford to connect. ESH provides MCA with research and best practices and assists with the Maine-branded ACP4ME enrollment campaign and toolkit.
Federal Reserve Bank of New York	Partners in research, including identification of best practices in Community Reinvestment Act practices for banks to supplement available federal funding and participation in the Broadband Infrastructure Capital Markets Taskforce.
Give IT. Get IT.	A statewide nonprofit providing low-cost and high-quality computers to individuals and families, IT needs and goals assessment, and training and technical support. Give IT. Get IT. will partner in device access, training and technical support to help the state reach accessibility and digital equity goals throughout BEAD implementation.

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Partners	Description of Current or Planned Role in Broadband Deployment and Adoption
Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future	A state office created by Governor Janet Mills to collaborate across state agencies, stakeholders, and the public to recommend innovative policy solutions for critical issues facing Maine, including climate change, workforce development, housing, issues facing youth and older Maine people, and more. This office partners with MCA regarding how broadband is critical to innovative policy solutions, particularly community resilience and economic prosperity.
Interagency Broadband Working Group	Implementation partners, particularly for strategic broadband work across state agencies, partnerships evaluating shared services, infrastructure coordination, procurement as well as support in the ACP enrollment and other affordability strategies, digital skill building, affordable device access, inclusive government resources, and internet safety.
Maine Broadband Caucus	A bipartisan, bicameral, issues-based caucus of the Maine Legislature was created to improve the effectiveness and reach of policy designed to bridge the digital divide in Maine by fostering a path to universal broadband and digital inclusion and equity throughout the state. MCA will continue working with the Caucus to advocate for policy solutions to effect changes identified through the Five Year Action Plan and Maine Digital Equity Plan.
Maine Broadband Coalition (MBC)	A network of policy advocates, businesses, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and individuals advocating for Maine's digital future. MBC staff has been assisting MCA in working with the Regional and Tribal Broadband Partners and other outreach and engagement work, including policy analysis and advocacy. They also staff the Maine Broadband Caucus of the Maine Legislature. They will continue to work to augment MCA's capacity and support RTBPs and digital equity work on the ground throughout implementation.
Maine Community College System	Maine's seven community colleges offer diverse programs and services designed to meet Maine's workforce needs regionally and statewide and prepare individuals for continued education at four-year colleges.
Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)	DECD works collaboratively to support business development through available resources such as tax credits, reimbursements, research and development credits, to capital loans and even direct investment.

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State of Maine



Partners	Description of Current or Planned Role in Broadband Deployment and Adoption
Maine Department of Education (DoE)	Maine's Department of Education administers the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI), which provides device access for Maine's public school students. DoE has recently launched the Maine Learning Technology Initiative 2.0, which has expanded beyond device access to also focus on access to applications and learning tools.
Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT)	Maine's Department of Transportation provides part-time staff support to MCA's broadband efforts through a Program Liaison, the head of their Intelligent Transportation Systems section and Transportation Management Center, assisting with broadband integration across state agencies.
Maine State Chamber of Commerce (MSCC)	Maine's largest business association, the MSCC will continue to connect MCA to the business community and advocate for closing the digital divide, which is critical to Maine's economic success.
Maine Telehealth Advisory Group	Advisory group to Maine Department of Health and Human Services charged with evaluating technical difficulties related to telehealth and improving services statewide.
Maine Town, City, and County Management Association and Maine Municipal Association	Partners in broadband deployment by helping MCA to understand each community's needs, challenges, and opportunities for regional collaboration, models for scale, and local engagement. Assist with project identification, and raise local awareness of funding available for community projects.
Maine's Public Libraries & the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN)	Maine's 255 public libraries play a crucial role in supporting digital equity and inclusion and are one of the few local public services in rural areas. A key role of libraries is their ability to serve as an access point for free, publicly available wireless internet through the MSLN, which connects nearly 1,000 schools and libraries across the state. Public libraries' other important roles include device access, technical support, and training.
National Digital Equity Center (NDEC)	NDEC is a national nonprofit organization in midcoast Maine with a mission to close the digital divide. The organization has digital navigators on staff, offers digital skills classes, and works to provide devices and technical support through partner organizations to individuals who need them. NDEC offers over 40 classes and digital skills assessments and will continue collaborating on implementing many of the state's digital equity strategies.

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Partners	Description of Current or Planned Role in Broadband Deployment and Adoption
NetworkMaine	A unit of the University of Maine System providing Maine's Research & Education community with access to connectivity and services to deliver on their missions. Responsible for the design and operation of MaineREN , and provides K-12 schools and public libraries in the state with connectivity at little or no cost through the Maine School and Library Network project.
Northeast Telehealth Resource Center	A federally funded resource center to assist with technical assistance for developing, implementing, and expanding telehealth services in New England and New York.
Regional and Tribal Broadband Partners (RTBP)	Organizational partners in every region of the state to support community planning for infrastructure solutions and digital equity planning for each region and Tribe. Thanks to the work of these partners, there are now 13 separate regional and tribal digital equity coalitions with 180 partners engaged so far.
Workforce Advisory Committee	Advisors and practitioners to ensure underserved populations are engaged in broadband workforce strategies.

3.3 Asset Inventory

Maine Connectivity chose to combine the process and simultaneously develop a Broadband Action Plan, including both the Five Year Action Plan and Digital Equity Plan. To support the drafting of these plans, MCA and its collaborators conducted significant outreach and engagement between January 2023 and June 2023 to understand the assets available across the state.

- The statewide Maine Broadband Survey collected over 3,200 responses online and in hard copy versions and was translated into 12 languages.
- Thirteen focus groups were facilitated by MCA and hosted by organizations that serve or represent the covered populations.
- 16 community meetings were held around the state to collect feedback from the general public.
- Industry engagement included in-depth interviews with ten internet service providers and one industry roundtable session with 17 participants.

