

Application: Greater East Grand Broadband Task Force

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Community Broadband Grant Program 2020

Summary

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Community Broadband Application 2020

Completed - Jul 31 2020

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Section 1 PROJECT INFORMATION

Amount Requested from MaineCF

(Maximum grant size: \$15,000)

\$ 15000

Total Project Budget

\$ 30000

Additional Program Information

Please let us know if your project aligns with any of our strategic goals. check all of the following categories that will be addressed by your project. This is information for our internal use only and will not be used to evaluate your proposal.

Responses Selected:

Older adults or aging in place

Entrepreneurship & innovation

Counties Served

Please identify counties that will most directly benefit from funding requested in this application.

Responses Selected:

Washington

One Sentence Project Description

Complete the following sentence in 25 words or less: **We request support to . . .**

complete the funding match for the Phase 1 ConnectMaine project, and provide funds to prepare the ConnectMaine Phase 2 Infrastructure grant application in 2021.

Section 2 NARRATIVE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Use up to 300 words for each entry unless otherwise specified.

Project Overview and Goal(s)

Briefly describe your proposed work. Include in your description any short and long term goals you've identified.

The GEGR Broadband Task Forces short term goal is to complete the Phase 1 planning project and secure Phase 2 funding for infrastructure planning and design. The long-term goal is to implement a broadband model and phased build-out plan in partnership with towns, plantations, UT communities, and broadband internet providers serving the region. The Phase 1 project includes the following deliverables:

- Fully functioning Task Force that is oriented and prepared for the “marathon” ahead.
- Identified broadband needs and goals for each community in the region.
- Inventory mapping of existing broadband infrastructure.
- Gap analysis between community goals and existing infrastructure.
- Assessment of municipal procedures, rules and ordinances that will impact option and decisions.
- Digital inclusion plan informed by Covid-19 experience of families/students, health center patients and businesses.
- A final Phase 1 document that recommends next steps for Phase 2 planning and funding.

Phase 2 project funds will then be secured to complete pole surveys, determine "make ready" costs, recommend the most effective and efficient model to meet community and business needs, and provide a total cost for the build-out phases. We anticipate that the build-out will take place over multiple years given the regional map and existing infrastructure.

Long-term, the region's economic development goal is to have all the towns and businesses within the GEGR have the fastest possible fiber-optic broadband service possible.

Community & Partners

Describe your community for the purposes of this project. What geographic area are you focusing on? Who are the key partners and what are their roles?

This project serves the Greater East Grand Region (GEGR). GEGR economic planning initiative began formally in April 2019 by a concerned group of local residents and business leaders committed to developing a community-based ten-year plan to advance its vision for the region's sustainability and future vitality. (See attached map).

The GEGR was delineated because of the historical and current strong business, education and community connections to Danforth as a service center and the cross-county boundaries of school district RSU 84/MSAD 14 served by exclusively by East Grand School in Danforth. The region, with 7 communities, 3 plantations and 6 TWP's, is situated at the remote extremities of three counties - Washington, Aroostook and Penobscot - has seen ever-changing international border rules, and is divided by two state legislative districts and three state tourism areas. This makes the prospect of coordinated economic and community planning very limited.

Since 2014, citizen groups, key community leaders, civic-minded landowners, creative business people and outside sources of funding have helped foster huge investments of time, energy and volunteerism into the well-being of some of our communities and in local education. These investments have produced returns, and we believe the hurdles the region has can be turned into strengths.

It is with a sense of urgency that we capitalize on these developments and take advantage of prior investments to advance our collective vision: By 2030, the Greater East Grand Region is a stable, collaborative constellation of rural communities that attract people of all ages to live, work, visit and play because of its heritage and vision as a remote and welcoming region.

The following communities are part of the initiative: Amity, Orient, Haynesville, Bancroft, Weston Reed Plantation, Drew Plantation, Danforth, Forest City, Brookton TWP, Forest TWP, Codyville Plantation, T3R3 Wels, T3R2 Forkstown, T11R3, T8R4, T8R3, T7R2.

Need

Describe the need for high speed internet access in this community. What is your existing service? What do you know about who has access?

The year long economic planning initiative identified access to high-speed broadband as a critical priority for the region. The pandemic's impact on families, businesses, education and health care underscored and amplified these needs. The experiences of East Grand School, East Grand Health Center, members of the East Grand Chamber, and many local businesses confirmed the lack of reliable internet services across the region. What people were living with and deemed "acceptable" before Covid19 quickly became unreliable for large percentage of homes and businesses. The Phase 1 project will assess and confirm the current service levels, need and satisfaction using two surveys - one for Residents and one for Business/Organizations. Existing school data collected in March will also be part of the review. The region has approximately 1200 homes, businesses and PO boxes. In addition, summer residents, sometimes an additional 4000 people, will be encouraged to provide their feedback. It is very important to the region's future that permanent and seasonal residents participate. Existing service options and access opportunities will be assessed by our partner Pioneer Broadband.

Digital Inclusion

How will you make sure people in your community understand how high speed internet access will improve their quality of life? How are you/will you make sure that your community has the skills necessary to use high speed internet? What steps are you taking/will you take to ensure people can afford the equipment/service?

The digital inclusion questions will be answered through the Phase 1 project assessment. Information provided through mailings, in the community news and at town offices will help amplify messages about the value of high-speed internet to economic development and quality of life. The economic planning initiative's report will be published on-line in mid to late August. This will also provide an opportunity beginning in September to provide information about digital inclusion issues. People's need for skill building programs and access to affordable equipment/services will be addressed in the final report from the Broadband Task Force. East Grand School, East Grand Health Center and East Grand Chamber of Commerce will play important roles in developing recommendations later this year. The beginning of school this fall offers another opportunity to gather a second round of data about student and family access to reliable and affordable services and equipment.

Underserved Populations

Select all of the groups that will be directly served by your project

Responses Selected:

Older Adults- 60+ years old

People living in remote rural areas

People living poverty

Racial minority groups

Immigrants and Refugees

Students (early childhood to adults)

Entrepreneurs, small businesses

Section 3 CRITERIA

Additional Project Details

Community Support

What indicators of community support can you share? This could include financial commitments, attendance at public meetings, numbers and diversity of partners involved, affirmative votes by community members or elected officials, survey responses, etc.

Over the past year, the economic planning initiative included meetings and interviews with many of the towns in the region, local businesses, the school, health center, and other local leaders. The GEGR Broadband Taskforce membership includes the Chamber, school, health center, large employer/landowner, and several town managers. Financial investments in the region over the past six years has been substantial from foundations and individual donors because of the enthusiasm, commitment and belief of its residents that the region does not have to succumb to its challenges. Volunteer time and services has been significant to move forward goals for East Grand School and other youth engagement programs. The Town of Danforth continues to invest in its downtown revitalization and has been designated an AARP Livable Community. The work by talented people to plan for and enhance the recreational infrastructure needed to attract four-season tourism has been a major collaborative effort since 2014 with the Conservation Fund, Baskahegan Company, and many others. It is this investment and support for the region's vision that continues to encourage everyone forward. Late summer through November will be an important time for community-wide feedback about the draft economic planning report. This will also be the time that the final push for survey feedback about high-speed broadband services will occur. The timing of both these efforts has turned out to be very positive, and will encourage engagement and continued commitment.

Replicability

Describe any ways that this work could provide a model for or be replicated by other communities in Maine or beyond.

Efforts similar to the GEGR citizen-led planning process are certainly prevalent in Maine and outside of Maine. The planning team has learned from and built its approach on other's work and process. Bringing forward a citizen-led economic planning initiative, as compared to a municipal-led effort, remains an important commitment for the process. The Broadband project will offer town leaders and residents across the region an opportunity to collaborate and develop short and long-term goals to meet the region's needs. Transparency, frequent communication and inclusive discussions are all essential. The efforts over the past year, and the specific broadband project, have laid a foundation from which to build.

Timing

Describe how this grant support could advance your work at this specific moment in time. Is there something timely about this opportunity? Please indicate if you are planning to apply for state or federal broadband funding in 2020/2021.

The timing of this Phase 1 Broadband project is extremely important. As a top priority from the economic planning effort, it is the driver for other goals and strategies. It demonstrates to residents and businesses that the economic planning initiative can move from ideas to actionable projects. In other words, the initiative can move from planning to actual development with the region as the central theme. This request for grant support is two-fold: First to complete the match for the Phase 1 ConnectMaine grant received in June. Second to provide funds to prepare and deliver all of the Phase 2 Infrastructure grant requirements in order to have a successful application in 2021 to ConnectMaine.

Section 4 PROJECT FUNDING

Project Timing

Identify the start and end dates of the activities you plan to fund with a MaineCF grant. Please note that MaineCF grants may not be used for expenses already incurred. All activities for which you request funding should take place after September 11, 2020.

Starting Date (mo/year)	September 12, 2020
Ending Date (mo/year)	August 31, 2021

Amount Requested

This information feeds in from the first page of this section (Project Information). If you need to change this figure please change it there.

\$ 15000

Total Project Budget

\$ 30000

Project Revenues

In this section, list all of the funding sources you have identified for your project. This includes this MaineCF request, grants from other foundations, in-kind donations (donations of time, goods or services from your organization or others), and earned income (fees for services, or income from sales).

	Name of Funding Source	Amount	Status (Pending or Secured)
	ConnectMaine	10000	Secured
	Washington County TIF	5000	Secured
	MaineCF	15000	Pending
Total		30000.0	

Project Expenses

Please list the specific items or expenses needed for your project under **Expense Items**. For each item, list the amount you request from MaineCF in **Amount from MaineCF**. List the amount you will need from other sources in **Amount from Other Sources** if that applies.

Please use only numbers, no commas, decimal points, or currency signs, for example: 25000, not \$25,000.00

Important things to consider:

1. Your detailed project budget must account for all of the funding you are requesting from MaineCF with this application
2. You can list up to 8 items in the budget. If you have more than 8 you can combine like items into categories (example: project materials and supplies or volunteer and staff management)
3. Your project budget may include up to 20% of the total amount requested from MaineCF for indirect or administrative costs. Be sure to label this line on your budget "Indirect". Please do not list specific

Key Project Personnel

List the specific roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of key personnel for this project.

Dwayne Young, Co-Chair, GEGR Broadband Project, administrative assistant to the Town of Weston

Jen Fronczak, Co-chair GEGR Broadband Project, high school teacher, East Grand School

Don Flewelling, Pioneer Broadband, In-kind Phase 1 Infrastructure Consultant

Sarah Strickland, Project Consultant, serves as project consultant on the GEGR economic planning initiative and the GEGR broadband project. She has worked extensively with organizations in the region on different projects including East Grand School, East Grand Health Center, Citizens Organization for Rural Education, and East Grand Chamber.

Aly Cropley, Project Assistant for the GEGR Broadband project. Aly is a resident of Brookton and works for the GearUp Program in the region. She is providing local assistance with all the activities for the Phase 1 project. The goal is that she will be the project consultant lead for Phase 2 and Sarah will serve as an advisor.

Note from Sarah: The decision to add a project assistant to the team is an effort by Sarah to cultivate local, younger talent in the region who can assume project management roles going forward on various economic development projects. This is Sarah's commitment to cultivate and mentor local talent as she scales back her work and moves toward retirement.

Partnerships and Collaboration

List any organizations that you will partner with to make this project successful. Include a brief description of what each partner organization will do in this project. (Example, do research or outreach, provide training, share resources, etc.)

The organizations most closely involved who serve on the Broadband Task Force are:

East Grand School: outreach to students; digital inclusion data

East Grand Health Center: outreach to patients; digital inclusion data

East Grand Chamber: outreach to businesses

Lake Associations: outreach to seasonal residents

The Town of Danforth/Town of Weston: outreach about survey with inserts in property tax notices; provides paper surveys for those that prefer them

C.O.R.E: continuity with economic planning initiative and related regional projects

Washington County TIF: connection to UT communities and needs

Baskahegan Company: outreach to businesses, Brookton-based

Pioneer Broadband: Broadband expert

Additional collaborators, volunteers and investors in the larger planning effort include:

- Many private donors
- Machias Savings Bank
- The Conservation Fund
- Sewall Foundation
- Maine Community Foundation
- Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation
- Forest Society of Maine/Stetson Fund
- Rural Aspirations
- Sunrise County Economic Council
- Northern Maine Development Commission
- Lakeville Shores, Inc.
- Southern Aroostook Development Corp

Section 5 ORGANIZATION FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Organization Financial Information

Please note: Public schools and Municipalities do not need to complete this section.

Refer to your organization's IRS 990 form, Part I and Part IX for information for this section.

A copy of this form is available on our webpage: [Organization Budget Form](#) to download a copy of this form for your reference.

Please use only numbers, no commas, decimal points, or currency signs, for example: 25000, not \$25,000.00

Operating Budget

Please provide information from the most recently completed fiscal or financial year. If your organization is new this year, please estimate the current fiscal year's information.

Fiscal Year Operating Budget	(No response)
Fiscal Year Start and End Dates (mo/yr - mo/yr)	(No response)

Revenues

Individual and Business Contributions	(No response)
Foundation Grants	(No response)
Government Funding	(No response)
United Way Contributions	(No response)
Program Income	(No response)
Interest, Dividends, and Endowment Income	(No response)
Other Revenue	(No response)
Total	0

Other Revenues Explanation

If you listed an amount for "Other Revenues" above, please identify the sources here. (For example: fees, fines, ticket sales, etc.)

(No response)

Expenses

For programs	(No response)
For management and administration	(No response)
For fundraising	(No response)
Other Expenses	(No response)
Total	0

Other Expenses Explanation

If you listed an amount for "Other Expenses" above, please identify them here. (For example, special construction, website, etc.)

(No response)

Total Revenues Minus Total Expenses

0

Deficit Explanation

If your expenses exceeded revenues for the last fiscal year, please explain how this shortfall was financed.

(No response)