

Context

Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) Plan:

As recipient of \$5 million in Initial Planning Funds through BEAD from NTIA, MCA must submit a 5 year broadband plan for the state in order to access full Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Funding (\$95 million + formula allocation).

Digital Equity Plan:

As recipient of \$542k in Digital Equity Planning Funds, MCA must submit a State Digital Equity Plan for the state in order to access digital equity implementation funding (\$1.44B to states, formula TBD).

BROADBAND ACTION PLAN:

These two NTIA required plans must be aligned, as they have shared objectives and a unified objective of closing the digital divide. MCA has combined the planning processes into one, resulting in a comprehensive broadband action plan with digital equity at its core. This ensures seamless integration, maximizes use of our resources, and avoids potential stakeholder fatigue and/or confusion.





Service Promise

Deploying the latest technologies AND long-standing communications tools to achieve awareness, promote engagement, and hear from everyone, however they choose to participate.

Maintain a focus on projects, places, and people to ensure everyone can see their perspective and priorities in Maine's all-in vision of universal high-speed internet access.



Overcome barriers, create belonging, and achieve equity through partnerships with established communities. Prioritize organizations that can bring new participants to public planning.



Timeline



**February, March,
and April 2023**

May 2023

June 2023

July 2023



ENGAGEMENT PERIOD

- Community meetings
- Surveys and focus groups
- Stakeholder group meetings
- Industry and trade groups
- Regional and Tribal Broadband Partners, Maine Broadband Coalition, Digital Equity Taskforce

DRAFT COMPLETED

- Plan assembled by MCA staff
- Reviewed by committee representing stakeholder groups

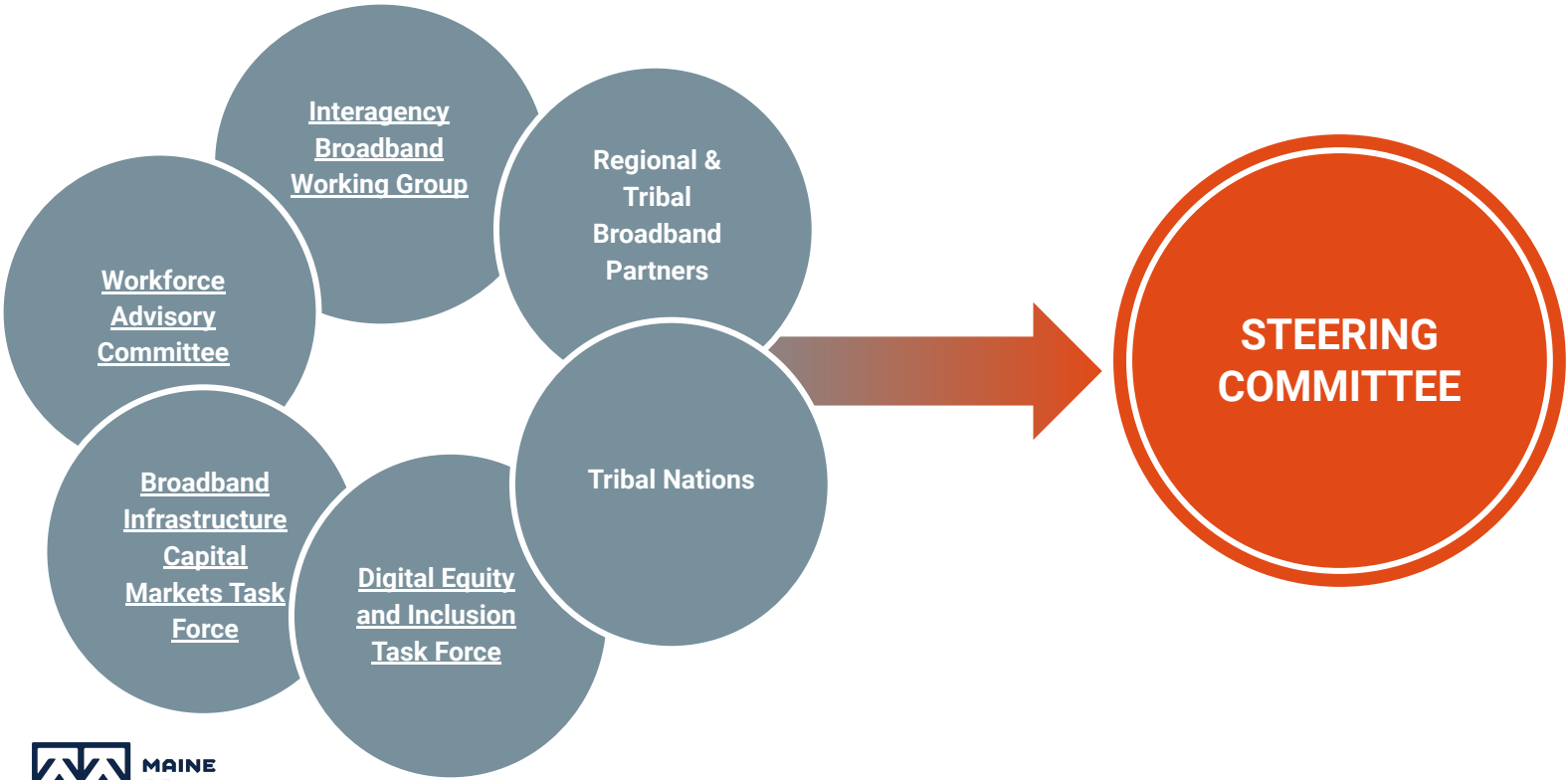
PUBLIC COMMENT

- Plan is published for an extended public comment period, seeking feedback from all interested parties

REVISE AND SUBMIT

- Plan assembled by MCA staff
- Reviewed by steering committee

Stakeholder Groups



Regional and Tribal Broadband Partners

- **Attendance** at monthly partner meetings as well as Digital Equity and Inclusion Taskforce.
- Creation of a **regional digital inclusion coalition**, shaped around key anchor institutions, organizations already working on digital inclusion in some way within the region, and partners representing or serving the covered populations in the DE Act.
- With National Digital Equity Center facilitation and support, creation of a **regional digital inclusion plan** using a template outline provided by MCA and data supported by our research partner.
- Host at least one **community meeting** during the February, March, and April 2023 outreach and engagement period, with support from Maine Broadband Coalition and MCA staff.
- Help MCA identify existing meetings within the region where we might seek community feedback on broadband and digital equity.
- Distribute and help collect **survey responses** from within the region during the outreach and engagement period of February, March, and April 2023.
- Provide **support to communities** within the region exploring broadband solutions through proactive outreach to community officials, broadband committees, and other organizations and community members. Help connect communities to resources through MCA, Maine Broadband Coalition, National Digital Inclusion Alliance and others as necessary.
- Additional activities based on their **regional needs** - for example, ACP enrollment activity, digital navigators, digital skills trainings w/ adult education, hiring of various staff and contractors to fulfill the activities.



Role for DE Taskforce in BAP planning

- **Design an inclusive and representative planning process** that effectively engages and serves the people and communities most impacted by the digital divide;
- **Support and advise on the elements of the Digital Equity Planning process** for Maine, including:
 - Data inventory and collection,
 - Community and stakeholder collaboration, engagement, outreach,
 - Process & timeline, and
 - Structure & budget;
- **Participate in and inform the development of the 5-Year Broadband Action Plan (BAP)** by:
 - advising on and contributing to the Digital Equity Plan for Maine; and
 - assigning liaisons to the Steering Committee (Megan, Susan)
- Build awareness with **digital equity ecosystem partners** in Maine to prepare for the funding opportunities for implementation.



How you can help - beyond DEITF

1. Understand the process and timeline.
2. Publicize and attend engagement opportunities in your region and your communities.
3. Discuss with community members why this BAP process is so important and encourage their participation.



**MAINE
CONNECTIVITY
AUTHORITY**

