

## ***MassBroadband 123* Community Anchor Institution (CAI) FAQS**

### **Who is MBI?**

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), was created by the Patrick-Murray Administration and the Massachusetts Legislature back in 2008. Our mission is to “close the digital divide” in Massachusetts and bring high speed internet to those communities which do not have adequate service today. Most of those communities are in western and north central Massachusetts.

### **What is *MassBroadband 123*?**

*MassBroadband 123* is a new fiber optic network being deployed in western Massachusetts. The network will deploy over 1,000 miles of new fiber optic cable, connect over 120 communities in western and north central Massachusetts, and provide a direct connection to close to 1,400 Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) such as public safety entities, community colleges, libraries, medical facilities, town halls and state offices.

When complete in mid-2013, the *MassBroadband 123* network will expand high-speed Internet access to improve the lives of residents, close the digital divide and bring new economic opportunities to the region.

### **What is a Community Anchor Institution?**

Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) are defined by the NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) as schools, libraries, colleges, universities, healthcare facilities such as hospitals, clinics, large medical buildings, public safety entities including state and municipal police, fire, public safety answering points, town halls, state offices, community centers, senior centers and large multi-dwelling public housing. Community Anchor Institutions will have their direct connection to the network paid for by the MBI during the term of the grant.

### **What does it mean for a CAI to have a “direct connection” to the network?**

The CAIs that are part of this project will have a fiber-optic cable and necessary equipment installed directly into the building from the *MassBroadband 123* network. This cable will come into the building typically where other communication services enter into the building. This installation will allow the institution to connect their internal network into *MassBroadband 123* and the Internet.

### **Will the service be free?**

No, the service will not be free. It will be the responsibility of the CAI to purchase internet or other network services from a retail service provider that uses the *MassBroadband 123* network. The retail rate will be determined by the retail service providers. *MassBroadband 123* is an open-access network which means there will be competition in the marketplace. Consumers, businesses and institutions will be able to determine who will provide them retail network services.

One other unique aspect of the *MassBroadband 123* network that will result in lower prices, the capital used to build the network does not need to be repaid. As a result service providers will not need to price in capital cost recovery.

**Am I required to commit to buying services prior to installation?**

No, CAIs are under no obligation to purchase services. However, the bandwidth that can be offered over the *MassBroadband 123* network will be substantially higher and more affordable than the “fast” services available today. If you know for sure you do not want to be connected please let us know as we have a substantial waiting list of CAIs that want to be connected.

**How is *MassBroadband 123* being paid for?**

The *MassBroadband 123* network is being constructed using a combination of state and federal funding. In July 2010 the MBI was awarded a \$45.4 million grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. In addition to the federal funds, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is investing \$26.2 million in state bond funds in the project.

**What happens when the grant is over?**

The MBI selected Axia NGNetworks USA, to be the network operator for *MassBroadband 123*. Axia will be responsible for operating, maintaining, and extending the network, and selling wholesale network services to retail providers. They will open their US headquarters in western Massachusetts by 2012. The contract term is for 10 years and Axia expects to invest \$35m - \$45m to operate and extend the network. Axia is currently engaging retail service providers to understand how they will use the *MassBroadband 123* network. For more information see their website at [http://axia.com/open\\_access\\_networks/massachusetts.asp](http://axia.com/open_access_networks/massachusetts.asp)

**Where should the equipment be placed? How much space is needed?**

Equipment will typically be placed in or near the wiring closet, close to where the fiber optic cable enters the building. The equipment is a small network device that will fit on a wall shelf or in a small equipment rack.

**What are the next steps to getting the CAI connected?**

We need to complete the interior portion of the design for each CAI. This means that someone needs to have access to your building to inspect where the fiber will be coming in and what needs to be done to prepare your location for the fiber drop.

**Who will be contacting me?**

An employee of Gannett Fleming, part of the Design Build team will be contacting you to schedule a time to inspect your facility.

**What happens if I refuse installation?**

If you refuse to permit installation of the system, then your location will be dropped from the network and you will lose the opportunity to have a free no-commitment installation funded by the MBI.

**How can I find out what service providers are available for me to purchase service?**

The list of service providers will be available in early 2012.

**If you'd like more information regarding *MassBroadband 123* please visit [www.massbroadband.org](http://www.massbroadband.org)**

**For questions regarding the project please contact:**

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