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MCA, Maine DOT, and Sertex Broadband Solutions begin construction of MOOSE Net.

MOOSE Net will be a 530-mile open access, fiber-optic network to extend connectivity to some of Maine's most rural and un(der)-served areas



# Legislative Annual Report

2025 Fiscal Year



**MAINE  
CONNECTIVITY  
AUTHORITY**

# Annual Report

January 2026

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### State of Connectivity in Maine/Executive Summary

Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) is the public agency leading statewide expansion of high speed internet and digital opportunity so that Maine’s people, businesses, institutions, and communities can thrive in a connected world. Established in 2021, MCA’s statutory connectivity goals include:

1. High-speed connectivity be universally available in the State, including to all residents, businesses and community anchor institutions;
2. There be secure, affordable, reliable, competitive and sustainable forward-looking advanced communications technology infrastructure that can meet current and future needs;
3. All residents, businesses and institutions in the State be able to take full advantage of the economic, health, educational and other opportunities available through connectivity services; and
4. Existing public and private infrastructure be used effectively and efficiently in the public interest to provide advanced communications technology infrastructure in all areas of the State.

In order to meet these statutory goals, MCA has championed an all-solutions approach for connectivity across different communities, geographies, and digital infrastructure. After four years of aggressively implementing our comprehensive connectivity strategy, there are now over 135,000 homes and businesses in Maine (approximately 21% of locations) funded for high speed, reliable internet because of MCA.

Like many organizations and public agencies in 2025, MCA has had to quickly adapt and evolve—to not abandon our strategy and values nor ignore the real changes in the funding landscape. In February, federal funding freezes threatened to halt progress on dozens of last mile connection grants under MCA’s administration. In May, \$35 million in Digital Equity Act funds coming to Maine were terminated, halting progress in every region in the State. In June, the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice altered our use of, and access to, Maine’s \$272 million BEAD Program allocation. This last change resulted in MCA and all participating internet service providers having to conduct three years of work in three months.

Despite these changes, Maine’s BEAD Final Proposal was approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in November 2025 which outlines how we’ll reach nearly 22,000 locations throughout the State that still struggle with slow, unreliable connections. Maine’s BEAD Program awards include \$48 million to Maine-based and national internet service providers, complemented by \$109 million in matching funding from subgrantees. For the first time ever, every known location in Maine has a confirmed and dedicated funding source to ensure access to modern broadband.

While this addresses the access challenge which has historically been the primary issue to resolve—just because someone has access does not mean they can afford or know how to use the internet. Maine’s ability to use the remaining \$200+ million in BEAD Program funds originally allocated is unclear. Maine’s current \$48 million “infrastructure-only” plan requires exclusion of critical enabling investments like workforce development, digital literacy programs, and cybersecurity. This loss is in addition to the \$35 million in Digital Equity Act funds that were terminated - funds that had been planned to provide programming to thousands of people in Maine for education, health care, employment and basic communication needs.

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Over four years, thousands of individuals in Maine provided input on the concurrent BEAD and Digital Equity Act planning process, hundreds of partners were convened, and more than ten other statewide programs supplemented Maine's connectivity needs knowing that the BEAD Program was on the horizon. MCA invested nearly \$20 million in building capacity of local resources through the Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners program, building physical spaces where people could access these resources through the Connectivity Hubs program, and building approachable tools that would be available regardless of entry point like Tech Help for ME. With the reduction in federal funding, the needs remain the same and yet our ability to leverage previously allocated resources has changed.

MCA has a statutory obligation to ensure that all residents, businesses and institutions in Maine are able to take full advantage of the economic, health, educational and other opportunities available through connectivity services. It is to enable a future where connectivity is a constant presence when and where it is needed. It is to ensure we use our tools effectively to not just reduce the fear, angst, frustration, and the limitations of being disconnected, but to open up new opportunities, to create new value and to spark new relationships. Providing these types of support also ensures our infrastructure investments can be sustained. While we have continued to bring momentum through 2025, and see progress across all areas of our strategy, MCA's work is not done.

**We can get EVERYWHERE from here!**



Andrew Butcher  
President, Maine Connectivity Authority

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## Introduction

### One Maine Agency for Connectivity

In 2022, the ConnectMaine Authority (CME) functionally integrated with the Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) to serve as a “single door” solution and simplifies internet access for Maine individuals and communities, broadband stakeholders, and governmental partners as intended in the passage of the Maine Connectivity Act in 2021. That Act created MCA to serve as the primary broadband agency responsible for planning, developing, investing, and expanding Maine’s connectivity capacity.

The integration is codified via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and beginning July 1, 2022, contractually assigned ConnectMaine funding, responsibilities, and staffing to MCA. By streamlining operations and financial resources, we can efficiently plan, develop, fund, and maintain our broadband infrastructure. This allowed MCA to accelerate the pace of planning and deployment of funds building from Maine’s model of high-impact and forward-looking broadband policies and practices while also adequately receiving, redeploying, and administering nearly \$300 million in State and Federal funding.

In 2026, MCA will review current statutes and propose a path to consolidation to the Energy, Utilities, and Technology (EUT) Committee by January 2027. This will allow MCA to focus on deploying the largest broadband investment that Maine has ever received, mitigates risks to delaying or jeopardizing active federal funding, and will allow for thoughtful planning and engagement.

### Broadband Definitions

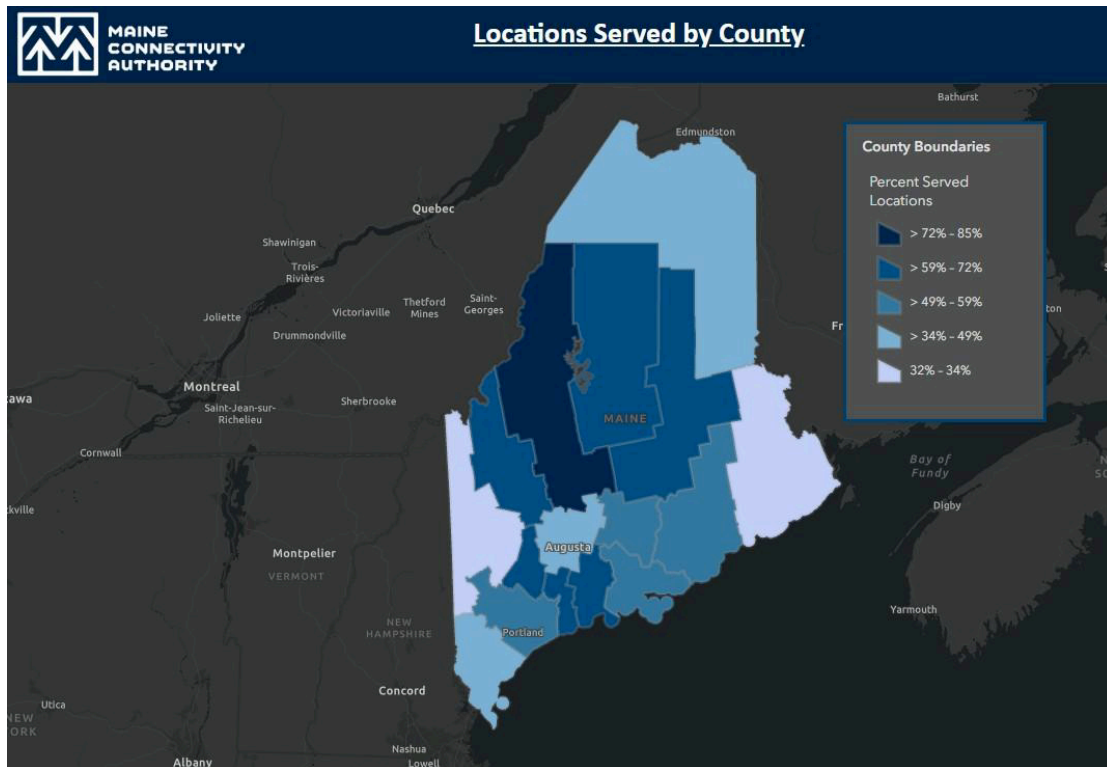
Maine’s statutory definition of broadband service is **100 Mbps download by 100 Mbps upload**, which ensures access to symmetrical high-speed internet. The Maine state standard for broadband service recognizes that not only does having a connection matter, but that the performance of that connection is crucial. MCA proposes the consistent application of this definition across the State.

As MCA administers funding through the BEAD Program and other programs in the coming years, maintaining a consistent definition of symmetrical high-speed internet provides clarity for all partners in the statewide ecosystem, and ensures an accurate baseline and measurement of progress. While BEAD and other federal programs will deliver a minimum 100/20 Mbps connection to all broadband serviceable locations, work remains to bring reliable 100/100 Mbps service to Maine’s people, businesses, and communities.

Availability of 100/100 Mbps service is uneven throughout the state. Somerset county has the highest percentage of locations served at 85%, while Oxford and Washington counties have the lowest, with 34% and 32% of locations having access to 100/100 Mbps service, respectively.

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MCA is committed to bridging this service gap and meeting the evolving demands of technology using a range of funding sources and a diversity of technologies. MCA continues to distribute funds generated through the CME Assessment Fee in support of infrastructure and programming that reduce this service gap and maximize the workforce, education, and economic benefits of high speed connectivity throughout Maine.

### Market Conditions

MCA’s goal to increase broadband connectivity and capacity includes supporting an industry environment in Maine in which homes and businesses have access to broadband options that best meet their needs. Using the most recently available Broadband Data Collection Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric, published in December of 2025, MCA conducted an analysis of internet service provider (ISP) count and speed tier availability by broadband serviceable location in Maine. Statewide, most locations are served by two or fewer ISPs. A smaller share of locations, approximately 40%, have only one ISP offering service speeds of 100/20 and 100/100, while 53% of locations have access to 100/20 from two or more providers.

| Internet Service Provider Count by Speed Offering (Percent of Locations Statewide) |              |                       |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|
| Speed Available  | One Provider | Two or More Providers |
| 100 Mbps/20 Mbps   | 40%          | 53%                   |
| 100 Mbps/100 Mbps  | 41%          | 15%                   |

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## Outcomes and Impact

As MCA implements our comprehensive connectivity strategy, the organization will continue monitoring progress toward success. In the past year, MCA has made measurable progress across many metrics:

### Connectivity Stats at a Glance

- **Over 95%** of locations in Maine have adequate or full broadband service, as defined by the federal government (100/20 Mbps).
- **Nearly \$300M** of public investment have been made since 2021, braiding state and federal funds leveraging private investment.
- **Over 110,000 connections to homes and businesses were directly funded**, through 8 distinct programs across hundreds of communities.
- **Only 4%** of locations in Maine remain unserved by modern internet and not included in prior CME or MCA grants. The BEAD program will ultimately provide connection solutions to these locations in 2026.
  - **Approximately 3%** of these locations (~21,818) have a slow and unreliable internet connection, and are unserved as defined by FCC (less than 100/20 Mbps).
  - **Approximately 1%** of these locations (~8,000) have no type of internet service or technology at all. For some of these locations, an option to connect has been provided through Maine's Working Internet ASAP Program; the remainder will have connectivity options funded through the BEAD program.

### Other Impact Stats

- **MCA closed out the \$28 million NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program** award in Maine which successfully connected 15,000 homes and businesses from Isle au Haut to Farmington.
- **15 of the 35 broadband infrastructure projects** funded through the Capital Projects Fund are operational, serving over 21,000 homes and businesses. Ten more projects have completed construction and are under review, with all CPF-funded projects expected to be complete in 2026.
- **MCA was approved to award \$48 million in BEAD "Infrastructure Deployment" Program funds** to Maine-based and national internet service providers, complemented by \$109 million in matching funding from subgrantees to serve the 21,818 homes and businesses with slow and unreliable internet connectivity. Maine was among the first States to be approved by NTIA following a restructuring of the Program in June 2025.
- In its third year, the Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners program have conducted **557 community meetings, 191 regional coalition meetings, and participated in 3,878 educational activities or presentations**. They collectively have 16 Digital Navigators providing digital skills training and tech support in community anchor institutions across their geographic areas.

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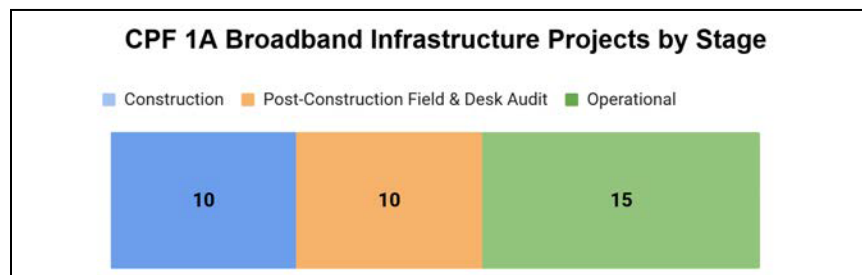
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## Activity #1: Last Mile Broadband Infrastructure

### Capital Projects Funds / All-In Programs

To date, MCA has deployed more than \$110 million from the American Rescue Plan’s Capital Projects Fund (CPF) through MCA’s All-In Programs. This complementary suite of programs is designed to reach the last mile in Maine’s most rural places, connect communities ready to scale their infrastructure, prepare communities for investment, ensure affordable options for everyone, and invest in partnerships to build a modern broadband infrastructure. MCA estimates that the All-In Programs will bring high-speed broadband to over 80,000 homes and businesses in rural and remote areas.

Over the past year, MCA’s CPF-funded projects have made significant progress towards completing construction and addressing critical connectivity needs throughout the state. At the end of 2025, 25 out of MCA’s 35 CPF broadband infrastructure projects are completing post-construction audits or are operational (10 are in post-construction audit, and 15 are operational), with the remainder currently under construction. All projects are expected to be completed by Fall 2026.



### Connect the Ready Public-Private Partnerships

MCA has allocated \$56.7 million of CPF funding to successfully develop and deploy two cohorts of competitive Connect the Ready last mile infrastructure grants to support public-private partnerships. MCA designed the program to support community-driven public-private partnerships at a regional scale, which design, fund, and build universal broadband infrastructure projects in MCA-designated eligible areas. Through two cohort application periods, first in Fall 2022 and then again in Fall 2023, the MCA Board ultimately approved eighteen projects for a total of \$56.7 million, leveraging \$29 million of community and private funding. Connect the Ready grants will help reach more than 22,000 locations across 63 communities along 1,700 route miles

As of December 2025, all Connect the Ready projects are under construction or operational: 16 out of 18 projects are already operational or are completing the last phases of post-construction audits. Five Connect the Ready projects are under construction and are expected to be completed in the first half of 2026.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/connect-the-ready-grants](https://maineconnectivity.org/connect-the-ready-grants)

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## Reach Me Line Extension Incentives

As a new approach to achieving last-mile connectivity goals in Maine, MCA established the Reach Me Line Extension Incentives program to optimize broadband deployment by incentivizing internet service providers (ISPs) to complete their existing networks through extending service to unserved locations in their coverage areas. The application process for Reach Me opened in October 2022, and eight projects were ultimately funded with \$16 million, leveraging an additional \$11.5 million of private funding. These projects will reach approximately 4,800 locations across 56 communities. To date, five of the eight Reach Me Line Extension projects are already operational or completing post-construction audits, two are under construction, and one project is in the pre-construction phase.

On December 12, 2025, the MCA Board approved contract amendments to four active Reach Me awards through the Reach Me Line Extension program, to accelerate broadband access for an additional 22,000 homes and businesses that are eligible to meet the “served” standard in Maine (100/100 Mbps).

Requests for contract amendments were open to subgrantees in good standing with an existing Reach Me contract who could commit to completing construction on any proposed amendment project by September 2026. These amended awards will serve homes and businesses with broadband that are not eligible for BEAD Program funding due to their current service levels, which range from 100/20 to 100/100 Mbps.

Being able to proactively reach homes and businesses falling into the underserved gap is one of the reasons MCA was created—to stretch public resources, maximize the impact of those resources, and solve barriers to connectivity issues with creative solutions.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/reach-me](https://maineconnectivity.org/reach-me)

## Partnerships Enabling Middle Mile

MCA allocated \$28.3 million of CPF funding to the Partnerships for Enabling Middle Mile (PEMM) program to address large-scale, regional broadband needs by leveraging middle-mile infrastructure and maximizing private and community financial contributions. The PEMM program serves as another evolution in Maine’s broadband funding, seeking to leverage community-informed, regional-scale partnerships through a proactive partnership model that addresses concentrations of unserved locations and ensures universal coverage. MCA has awarded six PEMM projects, totaling \$28.3 million, which leverages an additional \$41.3 million in private and community funding. These projects cover over 29,000 locations along more than 1,000 route miles across over 30 communities in Maine

At the end of 2025, three PEMM projects are operational or completing post-construction audits, and three are currently under construction.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/enable-middle-mile](https://maineconnectivity.org/enable-middle-mile)

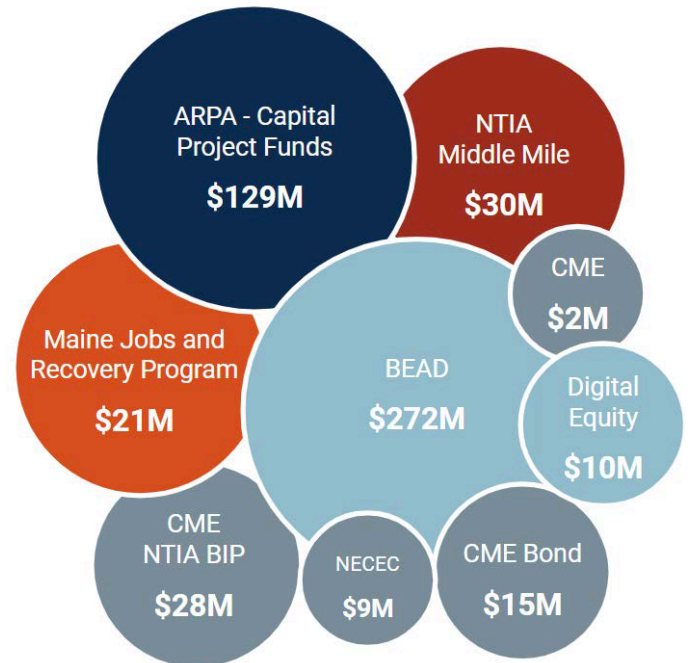
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## Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides Maine with a \$272 million grant that will bring critical resources to fund broadband infrastructure and other enabling investments for the entire state. The BEAD program prioritizes Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) that have service of less than 100/20 Mbps.

Throughout the past year, MCA focused on administering the BEAD Applicant Pre-Qualification Evaluation, BEAD Project Applications, and the Subgrantee Selection Process. Following the BEAD Program Restructuring Policy Notice issued in June, MCA re-ran both Applicant Pre-Qualification and Project Application phases as part of the required Benefit of the Bargain round. All bids were reviewed, scored for competitiveness, and then presented within [MCA's BEAD Final Proposal](#) for public comment ahead of submission to the NTIA.



In November 2025, MCA received Final Proposal approval from NTIA, resulting in 25 awards to six internet service providers, connecting nearly 22,000 unserved and underserved locations throughout Maine. These BEAD awards include \$48 million to Maine-based and national internet service providers, complemented by \$109 million in matching funds from subgrantees, resulting in one of the lowest average per location subsidy costs in the nation at \$2,217. With these awards, 100% of broadband serviceable locations in Maine will have high speed internet coverage. A diversity of technologies are represented in MCA's provisional awards: 85% Fiber, 14% Low Earth Orbit Satellite (LEO), and 1% Hybrid Fiber/Coax. MCA expects to execute awarded BEAD contracts to subgrantees in early 2026.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/bead](https://maineconnectivity.org/bead)

## Other State and Federal Funding

### ConnectMaine State Bond Program

In July 2020, voters overwhelmingly supported a \$15 million High-Speed Internet Infrastructure Bond. The \$15 million bond represented the first significant funding that the ConnectMaine Authority had received in its twelve-year history. In May 2021, ConnectMaine approved the first round of broadband infrastructure projects funded by this bond, including \$8,671,323 in grants to 20 projects in 11 counties across Maine, serving 8,571 locations.

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In May 2022, a second round of broadband infrastructure awards was announced in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Lincoln, Oxford, and Waldo counties. Through the eight projects, approximately 6,000 Maine homes and businesses were connected in the communities of Buckfield, Chebeague Island, Cooper, Hartford, Hebron, Leeds, Northport, Princeton, Searsport, and Southport.

As of the end of 2025, all ConnectMaine State Bond Program projects are either currently completing the post-construction audit process or are already operational.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/connectmaine](https://maineconnectivity.org/connectmaine)

## NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Projects

The ConnectMaine Authority and its partners received a competitive \$28,097,295 in NTIA grant funding to build fiber broadband infrastructure to over 14,000 unserved addresses in rural Maine. The Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP) allows the state and its Internet service provider partners to construct fiber-to-the-premise infrastructure in areas the private sector finds to be cost-prohibitive. The public-private partnership and federal funding makes it feasible for regional ISPs to expand their fiber-based footprints into some of the most rural unserved areas in the state.

As of October 2025, all NTIA BIP projects were complete and fully operational in the communities of Jefferson, Blue Hill, Farmington, Rangeley, Somerville, Washington, and Isle au Haut, which required the installation of a subsea cable. In total, these projects connected 14,059 locations in rural Maine.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/connectmaine](https://maineconnectivity.org/connectmaine)

### Activity #2: Digital Opportunity Programs

#### Approach & Integration

MCA has a statutory goal to ensure that everyone in Maine has access to and can use information and communications technologies so they can fully realize all of the civic, economic, health, educational, social and other benefits which these provide. MCA's comprehensive connectivity strategy integrates various funding sources to closely align the statewide goals and outcomes of all connectivity programs. Maine's [Digital Equity Plan](#) and [Broadband Action Plan](#) provides insight into how MCA's strategy bridges these two bodies of work.



As we build upon the progress and success of capacity building, Connectivity Hub investments, and end user technology—the alignment with our infrastructure investments is critical to ensure full realization of statewide connectivity. In May 2025, \$35 million coming to Maine through Digital Equity Act funding was terminated. The elimination of this funding disproportionately impacts older, rural residents, small businesses, veterans, low-income households, and students. Programs that would have been funded through the awards ensure that all people have the skills and technology necessary to safely participate in an increasingly digital society.

MCA works with its partner organizations to effectively reach these key populations throughout each part of the state. With over 70 partners engaged, the Maine Digital Equity Alliance is a central organizing entity for our statewide digital opportunity approach. Partners representing local planning organizations, educational institutions, Maine State Library, healthcare systems, and veteran organizations come together monthly to

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learn, share, and move forward Maine's goals. As the Digital Equity Alliance has evolved over the last two years, a focus on cybersecurity and internet safety has risen to the forefront. In 2024, Maine experienced a significant rise in internet scams, with residents losing over \$31 million through tech support fraud, investment schemes, and government impersonations. Conversations about how to address this culminated at the third annual Digital Opportunity Workshop that took place at the University of Maine in October 2025. The workshop invited Maine's digital opportunity ecosystem to network in person, learn about new approaches from partners across the state, and work through the new frontier of challenges digital opportunity is facing in 2025 and 2026.



## Capacity Building

### Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners

The Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners program helps deploy, sustain and maximize the benefits of broadband infrastructure investment in all Maine regions. Program goals include supporting community-driven broadband solutions that ensure universal connectivity, strengthening and growing the number of partners thinking about digital opportunity, and creating alignment and coordination between communities, regions, and the state. In Year 1 (2023), partners built and led digital inclusion efforts in their region and Tribe while also providing support for community and regional-scale broadband infrastructure solutions and investments. In Year 2 (2024), all 15 returning partners leveraged the work and collaboration of year one to launch localized initiatives and programming focused on accelerating Maine's Digital Equity Plan.

As Year 3 (2025) came to a close, the expanded 18 partners, including all Wabanaki communities as direct funding recipients, sustained local efforts, expanded regional coalitions to include over 300 partners, and honed areas of greatest need with programs that address internet safety, affordable access, and municipal technology improvements. Between December 2023 and June 2025, these partners conducted 557 community meetings, 191 regional coalition meetings, and participated in 3,878

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educational activities or presentations. They collectively have 16 Digital Navigators providing digital skills training and tech support in community anchor institutions across their geographic areas.

### SINCE 2023, REGIONAL & WABANAKI BROADBAND PARTNERS HAVE:



In three years, these partners simultaneously built their own knowledge and capacity, developed coalitions of nearly 200 additional partners statewide, and directly served communities and individuals. As current available funding for this program sunsets, the needs from communities and individuals will not. MCA will continue to explore future opportunities to support this work through Maine’s Digital Opportunity Fund.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/regional-broadband-partners](https://maineconnectivity.org/regional-broadband-partners)

## Partnership Contracts

MCA partnered with two nonprofit organizations to achieve the aggressive goals set in Maine’s Digital Equity Plan, to break down the barriers that keep Maine people from using the internet: give IT. get IT. and National Digital Equity Center (NDEC). Investments in 2025 created the capacity and investments needed for give IT. get IT. to enhance its refurbishment capacity by investing in additional refurbishment technicians and other necessary resources over 18 months. The funding also allowed give IT. get IT. to increase the number of donated devices, expand the refurbishment team to ensure more devices can be given a new life, and increase efficiency in the program to distribute devices to more people. This work will continue through the first half of 2026.

MCA also provided NDEC with funding to enhance its capacity through strategic investment in additional digital skills instructors and other essential resources across Maine, such as multilingual classes and translated individual learning plans. This initiative aimed to significantly boost the output of digital skills training, with an anticipated increase in the number of partner onsite locations, digital navigators, and increased hours for the instructors. Looking ahead to 2026, NDEC will establish and sustain a train-the-trainer approach to their programming to ensure longevity beyond capacity funding.

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MCA also launched two initiatives in coordination with these partnerships:

- [Tech Help for ME](#) - A directory of resources in Maine that help people use the internet. This tool enables users to locate public Wi-Fi, public computers, low-cost computers, digital skills classes, technology help, video call rooms, financial assistance, and more.
- [Maine Tech Share](#) - MCA partners with give IT. get IT., a non-profit electronics recycler with over two decades of experience, to transform unused or underutilized technology into opportunity equipment by providing a vital resource to people who are struggling to access the internet.

## Community Anchor Institutions

### Connectivity Hubs

MCA's Connectivity Hub program provides funds for capital improvements, such as construction and renovation, and for essential assets, including affordable devices for public access and lending programs, to eligible organizations in areas most impacted by a lack of access to reliable, high-speed broadband. Connectivity Hubs ensure that all Maine residents, communities, businesses, and institutions can take full advantage of the economic, health, and educational opportunities made available through affordable and reliable high-speed internet. All Connectivity Hubs projects are establishing programming or facilitating activities that will enable work, education, and health monitoring/telehealth services at no cost to Hub participants for a period of at least five years beyond the project's completion.

In the last year, MCA executed contracts for nine Connectivity Hub projects totaling \$8.5 million to support libraries, community centers, municipal and Tribal buildings, and affordable housing developments. As of the end of 2025, six Connectivity Hub projects are under construction, one is fully operational, and two are completing pre-construction permitting requirements.

In August, the first MCA-funded Connectivity Hub opened to the public at the GRACE Innovation Center in St. George, and is developing a healthy, highly skilled, and innovative workforce that supports student learning, strong families, economic growth, and community resilience.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/connectivity-hubs](https://maineconnectivity.org/connectivity-hubs)

### Project Profile: St. George Municipal School Unit Connectivity Hub

Since its inception, the GRACE Innovation Center Connectivity Hub has been led, supported, and designed by the community to meet the unique needs of St. George. The mission of the GRACE Innovation Center is to develop a healthy, highly skilled, and innovative workforce that supports student learning, strong families, economic growth, and community resilience. To support that mission, St. George employed a cross-sector, "cradle to career" approach that incorporates Pre-K-12 Career & Technical Education, Adult Education & Workforce Development, and Telehealth & Paramedicine. The Center will serve as a hub for learning, innovation, and community wellbeing while providing a model for similar hubs in other rural communities.

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Capital Projects Funds were used to complete construction of the Center and to purchase a laptop cart, laptops, Tryten carts, Kubistands, and equipment for telehealth appointments, and to ensure accessibility for those with vision or hearing impairments. The Center will tie into St. George School's high-speed, fiber network. Through partnerships with a variety of organizations—including the St. George Community Development Corporation (CDC), St. George Community Paramedicine Program, the Mid-Coast School of Technology, the Roux Institute, and the Island Institute—online learning will be provided in subjects ranging from digital literacy to data analytics, telehealth integrated with community paramedicine, and online workforce training integrated with hands-on applications. These partnerships have greatly expanded the offerings and impact of the Center.



The GRACE Innovation Center will provide students and adults with skills to excel in a broad range of industries that are critical to the St. George region. Through a PreK-12 curriculum that engages students while preparing them for high-demand jobs, adult education programs that provide lifelong opportunities to gain new skills and certifications, and increased access to healthcare through telehealth and community paramedicine, the Center will foster a more resilient workforce and community. In August 2025, a successful ribbon-cutting event marked the official opening of the GRACE Innovation Center. The project is expected to complete verification and validation in the coming months.

***"This project really exemplifies the power of a small community when it comes together to do truly innovative work that not only helps our own students and residents but can be an example to the surrounding states and nation."***

***"St. George School already serves as a community hub for not only our students and families, but also provides space for concerts, athletic contests, Parks & Recreation programming, Town Meetings, and other large, community events. Our project partners will help ensure that we reach the entire community and provide equitable access and high-quality programming. Given the district's long history of working with the St. George CDC and Town, we are building the Connectivity Hub on a network of existing, trusting relationships between organizations that have experience planning and executing projects together. –Mike Felton, Superintendent - St. George Municipal School Unit***

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## Activity #3: Middle Mile Infrastructure

### MOOSE Net Middle Mile Project

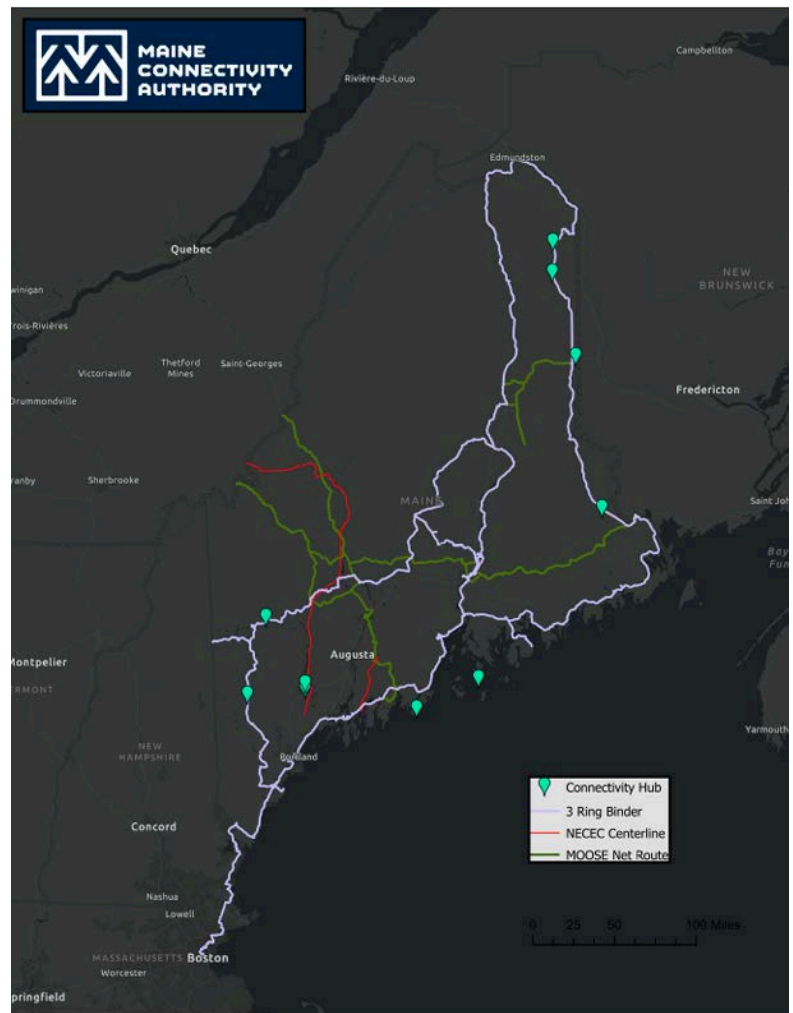
Ensuring a resilient and redundant internet infrastructure is key to the long-term success of Maine's comprehensive connectivity strategy. Middle mile is the regional fiber optic infrastructure that enables last mile internet connectivity to homes, businesses, and other users at the local level. It is made up of high-capacity fiber that carries large amounts of data at high speeds over long distances and other telecommunications infrastructure (e.g., points of presence, community anchor institutions, etc.) that act as "off-ramps" that connect middle mile fiber to local networks that serve last mile connections to local homes and businesses.

Maine's existing internet infrastructure is a patchwork of individual private networks. The middle mile infrastructure supporting these networks was generally not created to support the goal of universal broadband access throughout the state.

In July 2023, MCA was awarded a competitive \$30 million grant for the [Maine Online Optical Enabling Network](#) (MOOSE Net) through NTIA's Enabling Middle Mile program. MOOSE Net will be a 530-mile open access, fiber-optic network to extend connectivity to some of Maine's most rural and un(der)-served areas in complement to existing middle mile infrastructure funded through the 2009 BTOP program.

The program is a collaboration between MCA, Maine Department of Transportation, The University of Maine via Network Maine, the Maine Office of Information Technology and others. MOOSE Net will cover 131 communities, representing over 11,000 unserved local businesses and residents, passing through areas including Somerset, Franklin, Piscataquis, Aroostook, and Washington Counties, areas that currently lack strong middle-mile infrastructure.

MOOSE Net will also reach more than 200 community anchor institutions, including schools, hospitals, libraries, local government buildings, and civic centers. This funding will directly impact how other grant funds are incorporated to achieve regional-scale solutions to maximize last mile



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connectivity. MOOSE Net represents a unique opportunity to establish a more resilient, redundant and sustainable broadband infrastructure in Maine.

Throughout 2025, substantial progress was made towards MOOSE Net construction readiness. Following a competitive Request for Proposals, Sertex was chosen to finalize the design of MOOSE Net and build 450-miles of the 530-mile network. Environmental assessments are complete, and preliminary design and fielding activities are well underway, and survey engineering is nearly complete. “Make ready” work including utility pole attachment agreements, insurance, and permitting continues to progress.

**For more information:** [maineconnectivity.org/middle-mile](https://maineconnectivity.org/middle-mile)

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## Activity #4: Alternative & Wireless Technologies

### Working Internet ASAP (WIA)

The Working Internet ASAP Program provides a low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite internet access option for qualified remote and rural locations in Maine. These homes and businesses are extremely difficult to reach and currently have no service or technology option. As of October 2024, less than 1.5% of locations had no service or technology of any kind (including cable, DSL, or fixed wireless) and no current project planned to connect those locations. MCA has coordinated the bulk purchase and deployment of LEO satellite hardware and service reservations to ensure that eligible locations have the option to receive LEO equipment and installation support, and access internet service.

Throughout 2025, the WIA Enrollment Portal allowed eligible homes and businesses to sign up for LEO satellite internet service with free hardware and the option for free installation provided by MCA. Community outreach and engagement on the WIA program, including mailers to eligible addresses, press releases, and coordination with Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners, increased awareness of the program. The WIA program will be integrated into the BEAD Program in 2026. By the end of 2025, 219 locations in Maine had activated the LEO satellite service.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/wia](https://maineconnectivity.org/wia)

### Jumpstart Connectivity Initiative

In 2022, MCA launched the Jumpstart Connectivity Initiative (Jumpstart) to provide accelerated low-cost internet access to the least-served areas of the state by trialing the deployment of wireless technology. The program targeted communities across five counties with a high concentration of unserved homes and businesses, where wired deployments are currently impractical.

After an open RFP process in May 2022, MCA selected ISP partners, all with differing technologies and operating models, to evaluate where and how to incorporate wireless solutions into the State's connectivity strategy. The selected projects piloted new technologies and hybrid operating models, leveraging existing infrastructure and deployment to enable speed to market.

As of December 2025, all Jumpstart projects are complete. The Jumpstart program yielded valuable insights regarding the viability, sustainability, and technical feasibility of multiple alternative technologies in the least-served parts of Maine.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/jumpstart](https://maineconnectivity.org/jumpstart)

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## Cellular & Mobile Connectivity

As MCA looks to future initiatives, an increased focus on cellular and mobile connectivity will be a key complement to broadband internet deployment. In 2025, MCA initiated a focused wireless and cellular initiative in partnership with the Maine State Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), building on CME's 2020 cellular analysis and the last four years of infrastructure deployment to better understand the geographic deficiencies of wireless and cellular service.

This initiative aims to build on past research and learnings from programs such as Jumpstart, and to leverage over 6600 miles of drive testing to pinpoint geographic areas with service deficiencies. The project will involve extensive outreach to stakeholders, including businesses and government agencies, to understand their connectivity needs and align infrastructure development with state-wide economic goals. The resulting analysis will identify key areas for investment, focusing on strategies to improve 4G and 5G access and leverage existing assets.

In February 2025, MCA received a \$1.25 million competitive award through the Northern Border Regional Commission, matched by \$400,000 from Maine DECD, to develop a [Cellular and Wireless Action Plan](#). The plan will guide investments to improve wireless and cellular connectivity across Maine, accelerating the implementation of Maine's Economic Development Strategy. This effort is crucial for achieving Maine's vision of becoming a leader in sustainable economic growth and ensuring quality of life for its residents by 2030.

As part of this initiative, MCA is gathering significant information from community members through a dead zone map and cellular connectivity survey. Over 1,600 survey responses were collected and over 350 dead zone maps were submitted by community members and stakeholders throughout Maine.



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## Activity #5: Reducing Barriers

MCA works actively with local, state, and federal policy-makers to ensure that everyone in Maine has a reliable, affordable internet connection by effectively deploying funding broadband infrastructure and ensuring digital opportunity. The key to MCA's success is focusing on cross-cutting policy, practice, and systems that can eliminate barriers to strategic objectives. Known priorities addressed in 2025 included utility pole access, workforce development, regional capacity building, interagency coordination, and broadband affordability.

### Utility Pole Strategy

Utility poles are a critical part of Maine's broadband infrastructure. Because of the rocky terrain in Maine, wired networks are almost always less expensive and quicker to install aurally on existing utility poles rather than underground. MCA-funded projects will require access to tens of thousands of poles across the state.

In 2024, MCA submitted the Utility Pole Attachment Study for Broadband and final report to the Public Utilities Commission as a result of the issues presented in LD 1456. In 2025, MCA facilitated quarterly Utility Pole, Data & Performance Working Group meetings that focused on bring key utility pole infrastructure partners together to discuss ongoing pole processing systems, develop suggested workflows for Alden One utilizations, and create an informal opportunity to elevate issues among pole owners and attachers to expedite solutions and infrastructure expansion. More than 50 partners across utility pole owners, attachers, and state agencies met four times in 2025 with a plan to continue in 2026.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/utility-poles](https://maineconnectivity.org/utility-poles)

### Workforce Development

In 2024, MCA awarded \$475,000 to secure an additional \$475,000 in matching funds from the Maine Community College System (MCCS) to create the Fiber Optic Technician Program, with the first site to implement the program at Central Maine Community College (CMCC). In partnership with CMCC, the Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce, the Fiber Broadband Association, and with funding from the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, the Fiber Optic Training Program offers a free 4-week course for students to learn the fundamentals of installing, testing, and maintaining fiber-to-the-home networks. After successfully completing this program, students will have the skills to become a FBA Certified Fiber Optic Technician. This course runs on-site in Auburn, with new cohorts starting each month on average. Wraparound support includes resume assistance, employer connections, job matching services, and a \$800 stipend through a learn-to-earn model.

Through the end of June 2025, CMCC has enrolled 89 students across 10 cohorts, with an 82% completion rate. Enrolled students receive support with their resume, meet potential employers, benefit from job matching services, and have opportunities to interview with industry employers. Enrollment is free for eligible Maine residents, and students receive an \$800 stipend upon successful course completion. MCCS and CMCC have found that stipend funding is paramount in recruiting and retaining program participants as they help offset the

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costs of travel and lost wages during training. In the last six months, CMCC provided 29 stipends to enrolled students.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/workforce](https://maineconnectivity.org/workforce)

## Affordability Constraints

Previously, through Maine’s Broadband Action Planning process, broadband affordability was identified as the primary barrier to achieving universal connectivity. As a result, MCA ramped up outreach, engagement and technical support to maximize the number of Maine households participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Due in part to the creation of the “ACP 4 ME” outreach campaign, over 96,000 Maine households benefited from the federal subsidy for income-qualified households. MCA estimates that this saved Maine low-income households approximately \$2.7 Million per month until the Federal Communications Commission suspended the program.

As MCA hoped to continue these efforts in 2025, multiple federal funding sources rolled back affordability standards and initiatives. At this time, MCA has been partnering with awardees and community partners to keep affordability efforts in reach without ACP specific opportunities or funding to subsidize. This has resulted in providers continuing to offer low-cost programs and low-cost and free device programming with Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners and give IT. get IT. as partners.

For more information: [maineconnectivity.org/policy](https://maineconnectivity.org/policy)

## Community Engagement

Maine has a long and successful history of building broadband projects on a foundation of community-driven public-private partnerships. Through the deployment of infrastructure and digital opportunity funds, communities continue to be active partners and participants in Maine’s infrastructure programming. MCA continues to adapt its community engagement strategy to ensure communities have a voice in decision-making without requiring a burdensome process for resource-deprived communities. Local knowledge growth was prioritized statewide by supporting *Let’s Talk Broadband* weekly calls, municipal government education and informational sessions, and collaborative decision-making with local leaders to ensure community-supported solutions within all of MCA’s funding programs.

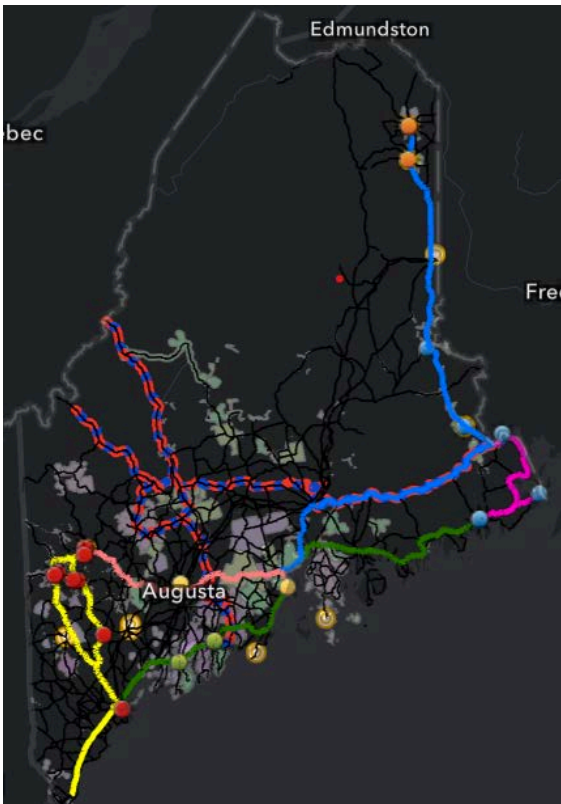
In partnership with MCA’s eighteen Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners (RWBP), over 300 partners convened monthly in local coalition building and resource sharing. The RWBP program has also invested in stipends and free device distribution for organizations and individuals to alleviate digital access barriers. Those who received access to devices also worked with one of the dozen digital navigators across the state to engage in digital skills training and adult education curriculum to smooth the pathway for digital access.

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## Shine A Light + Share the Love Community Engagement Events

MCA engaged with subgrantees and communities to host events that celebrated success around the state. MCA has affectionately named these community events “Shine a Light + Share the Love,” as they serve as an opportunity to acknowledge all of the time, resources, and dedication that goes into each project from the local community level to the internet service provider to MCA staff.



With an increase in infrastructure and digital opportunity projects in active construction or completion in 2025, MCA launched a new approach to celebration by embarking on a week long listening tour aptly named *Driving Connections*. MCA’s President and staff took the opportunity to celebrate and learn from our partners about our past successes and investments, and take local insights into the next phase of our work. In total, MCA’s President, Andrew Butcher

drove over 800 miles in his bright yellow Volkswagen van named Buttercup visiting 14 towns, 5 libraries, 2 connectivity hubs, and 15 regional partners. Over 150 community members and partners in both the public and private sectors were engaged.

Since 2023, MCA organized and supported Shine the Light + Share the Love events for over 75 communities featuring the Greater East Grand Region, county wide connectivity expansion in Lincoln County, Sebago, Brooks, Waldo, Northport, and Isle au Haut. These celebrations were in partnership with communities, many of our private industry partners, and our Regional & Wabanaki Broadband Partners.

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## Financial Statements

### Funding Allocation & Disbursements (as of end of 2025)

The following table outlines revenue allocated to MCA by state and federal funding partners, funding committed by MCA through subgrants and contracts, and funding disbursed as of 12/31/2025.

| Program  | Revenue Allocated | Revenue Disbursed | Subaward Obligations | Period of Performance   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ConnectMaine Bond Fund   | \$15,000,000      | \$15,000,000      | \$15,000,000         | 7/01/2021 - 12/31/2026  |
| NTIA BIP   | \$28,097,295      | \$28,097,295      | \$28,097,295         | 3/1/2022 - 6/30/2025    |
| Capital Projects Funds 1A<br>(Broadband Infrastructure)                | \$112,783,839     | \$76,762,636      | \$108,905,240        | 2/11/2022 - 12/31/2026  |
| Capital Projects Funds 1C<br>(Multi-Purpose Communities<br>Facilities) | \$9,049,149       | \$3,361,741       | \$8,549,149          | 2/11/2022 - 12/31/2026  |
| BEAD Planning  | \$5,000,000       | \$4,693,727       | N/A                  | 11/15/2022 - 6/30/2032  |
| BEAD Implementation *  | \$266,977,723     | \$3,975,437       | \$48,369,286         | 11/15/2022 - 12/31/2040 |
| NTIA Enabling Middle Mile  | \$30,016,472      | \$1,896,574       | \$19,827,372         | 7/01/2023 - 6/30/2027   |
| MJRP   | \$21,000,000      | \$16,155,832      | \$16,155,832         | 3/3/2021 - 12/31/2026   |
| NBRC - Cellular and Wireless   | \$1,250,000       | \$105,082         | N/A                  | 2/18/2025 - 9/30/2027   |

*\* Includes \$48.4M in Broadband Infrastructure Deployment and \$197M in Non-Deployment funds, which are subject to forthcoming NTIA guidance and approval.*

### Audited Financial Statements & Cash Flow Reports

Copies of draft audited financial statements and cash flow reports for both MCA and CME are available here:

- [Maine Connectivity Authority 2025 Financial Statements](#) (Revenues: \$63.8M; expenditures: \$62.6M; net position \$4.9M)
- [ConnectMaine Authority 6.30.25 Issued FS.pdf](#) (Revenues: \$5.5M; expenditures: \$7.8M; net position \$645,953)
- [ConnectME Monthly Report from Solix - June 2025.pdf](#)
- [ConnectMaine Cashflow as of June 2025](#)

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## Appendix

1. Appendix A: MCA's Mission Critical Activities for [January-June 2024](#) and [July-December 2025](#)
2. [Appendix B](#): MCA's Organizational Chart
3. [Appendix C](#): Service Contract between Maine Connectivity Authority and Connect Maine
4. [Appendix D](#): Triennial Plan, 2025-2027
5. [Appendix E](#): BEAD Final Proposal
6. [Appendix F](#): Broadband Action Plan
7. [Appendix H](#): Capital Projects Fund Annual Performance Report (2025)
8. [Appendix G](#): Final Report Pursuant to Resolves 2024, ch. 155, Resolve, to Direct the Maine Connectivity Authority to Develop Proposed Legislation to Increase Broadband Internet Access