



# Hubbardston Receives Grant to Participate in MBI Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program

**Hubbardston, MA - April 2, 2024** - The Town of Hubbardston is pleased to announce its participation in the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program. The town's application, has been approved by MBI, granting Hubbardston the opportunity to work with Kimley-Horn, a leading consulting firm in this space, at no cost to the town.

The Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program aims to develop a comprehensive plan addressing internet access and connectivity issues in the community. Through this collaboration, Hubbardston will benefit from the expertise of a consultant who will assist in creating a thorough plan to improve broadband access and explore potential fiber utilization.

As part of the planning process, the consultant will conduct an in-depth analysis of the town's current broadband situation, including data on subscription levels, internet speeds, available services, pricing options, and device access. The consultant will also engage with community members and stakeholders to gather input on specific needs related to internet access, affordability, and more.

Upon completion of the planning process, Hubbardston will receive a set of strategic recommendations tailored to meet the needs and goals of its residents. These recommendations will include an assessment of existing and future funding opportunities available through sources such as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The final deliverable will be a comprehensive report guiding the town's efforts to improve internet access and potential fiber utilization.

Following the completion of the Digital Equity Plan, Hubbardston has reserved the right to enter into a Reservation of Funds Agreement with MassTech, reserving \$70,000 in digital equity implementation funding for the town. This amount may increase up to \$100,000, subject to MBI's review and approval of the funding application and proposed budget. The partnership between Hubbardston and MBI is fully funded by MBI, providing the town with professional guidance and support at no cost.

"We believe that participation in the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program will have a significant positive impact on Hubbardston," said Nathan Boudreau, Town Administrator. "By working with MBI we can develop strategies to expand internet access, improve affordability, and provide the necessary resources to ensure that all members of the community can benefit from reliable broadband connectivity. The Town of Hubbardston looks forward to collaborating to create a more connected community."

For more information about the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program, please contact Nathan Boudreau at [admin@hubbardstonma.us](mailto:admin@hubbardstonma.us) or 978-928-1400 x200.