



Blandin Community Broadband Program

April 27, 2020

Blandin Broadband Communities (BBC) Online Process Guide

Our Blandin broadband team accepts the challenge to conduct the BBC process in a very different way than with communities past. We have even identified some ways in which this online process offers opportunities for even more inclusive community engagement, potentially resulting in better projects. Clearly, at a minimum, our present situation has spotlighted the need for widespread broadband networks and online services adding a heightened sense of urgency to our efforts.

Our online process will require some new learning as we move forward, for our Blandin team and the local steering teams both. We commit to providing a tested set of technology tools that communities can successfully use with a minimum of difficulty. When we have a choice of technologies, we will err on the side of simplicity. We commit to making your steering team feel comfortable using these tools before trying to engage the wider community participants.

We ask for your patience as we move from the virtual drawing board to the virtual community vision meeting. We will be interested in your feedback as we implement this process with the goal of maximizing the return on investment from your community's commitment and of Blandin resources.

It is our goal for you to have your initial set of projects developed and funded by August 1.

High Level Process Overview

Technology

We will be using the following technology applications to inform the community, engender community conversation, set goals and desired outcomes, brainstorm project ideas, prioritize projects, and form project teams:

- **Project web site:** Blandin staff will create a webpage on the Blandin Foundation website for each BBC that will hold key information about the process, meetings, links, and documents
- **Zoom:** This videoconferencing application has become incredibly widespread in a very short period of time. We will use Blandin Foundation's Zoom account for the primary process meetings. Individual community members can sign up for free accounts to use with smaller community project meetings.
- **Google Docs:** A free group word processing application is widely used in business and education.
- **SurveyMonkey:** An online survey tool.
- **Group texting:** Communities may choose to use a texting program to keep in touch with participating community members

Meetings and Activities

We anticipate the following meeting schedule and ancillary activities:

- **Steering Team meeting:** Zoom meeting where we provide an orientation to the 10-to-15-person steering team about the BBC program and process. We will do some team building and develop a plan to successfully host the online Vision Workshop. We will also select community members to participate in the Intelligent Community presentation that covers the Intelligent Community pillars – Broadband; Knowledge Workforce; Innovation; Digital Equity; and Advocacy.
- **Technology orientation meeting:** Zoom meeting with three to five community technologists during which the Blandin team will discuss and demonstrate the use of the technology tools, accounts, and local tech support strategies.
- **Registration for Vision Meeting:** Includes a community survey created and deployed by the Blandin team
- **Vision Meeting:** Zoom meeting where we outline community strengths and gaps across the Intelligent Community indicators, and hold break-out sessions for small group discussion and determination of desired outcomes.
- **Brainstorm Meeting:** Zoom meeting that will review the results of the Vision 1 meeting and then brainstorm and discuss project ideas.
 - *Communities may hold multiple Vision Meetings to encourage participation by targeted populations, such as students and/or new Americans*
- **Project Ideation:** Additional project ideas submitted online. Projects categorized, clarified and combined by community leadership assisted by the Blandin team
- **Project Voting and Commitment:** Online voting via SurveyMonkey.
- **Vision Meeting report:** Prepared by the Blandin team.
- **Project Team Meetings:** Called by project leaders to create specific project goals, tasks, and budgets (including determining local match.) Create project plans.
- **Steering Team Meeting:** Receives, discusses and considers project proposals. Allocate funds.
- **Grant application:** Community submits formal grant application to Blandin Foundation for funding approval

Process Details

When	What
Week 1	Steering Team meeting – Two Hours A Zoom meeting where we provide an orientation to the steering team (10 to 15 members) about the BBC program and the process. We will do some team building and develop a plan to successfully host the Vision Workshop. We will also select community members to participate in the Intelligent Community presentation that covers the Intelligent Community pillars: Broadband Knowledge Workforce Innovation Digital Equity Advocacy Complete Vision Meeting invitee sheet – list prospective invitees and determine who invites them. <u>Recommended attendees:</u> steering team members

When	What
Week 2	<p>Technology orientation meeting</p> <p>Zoom meeting with three to five community technologists where the Blandin team will discuss and demonstrate the use of the technology tools, accounts and local tech support strategies.</p> <p><u>Recommended attendees:</u> BBC project coordinator; school technology coordinator, librarian; local tech support company; ESL advocate</p>
Week 3	<p>Community Vision Process Registration Survey</p> <p>Launch invitation and survey effort. We will ask prospective participants to complete a survey to gather their perspective on assets, needs, opportunities and prospective projects, and register for the Vision and Brainstorm meetings. They will also pre-register for their preferred small group discussion topics – one of the five Intelligent Community elements.</p>
Week 5	<p>Vision Meeting – Two Hours</p> <p>A Zoom meeting where we present the BBC process, present the five elements of the Intelligent Community framework, hear local experts assess the current community strengths and gaps across the Intelligent Community indicators, hold break-out sessions for small group discussion on the community’s assets and gaps per the Intelligent Community elements. The small groups will discuss and determine the community’s desired outcomes for each of the five elements.</p> <p><i>Communities may hold multiple Vision Meetings to encourage participation by targeted populations, such as students and/or New Americans.</i></p> <p><u>Recommended attendees:</u> see the invitee worksheet completed at the Steering Team meeting.</p> <p>Two local facilitators will be needed for each of the five Intelligent Community pillars (total of ten); one person to lead the conversation, one person to record information on Google Docs. A facilitators’ guide will be provided.</p> <p><u>Agenda</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and logistics (5 minutes) • ICF presentation – Coleman and community reps (55 minutes) • Small groups by topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asset & Gap discussion (15 minutes) ○ Desired Outcome discussion (10 minutes) ○ Report outs (15 minutes) ○ Closing (5 minutes)
Online input	<p>Offer an online opportunity to suggest project ideas.</p> <p>Report on input received at second Vision Meeting(s).</p>

When	What
Later Week 5	<p>Brainstorm Meeting – 90 minutes</p> <p>A Zoom meeting for brainstorming project ideas.</p> <p><u>Agenda</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review work from Vision 1 meeting (15 minutes) • Random breakout in rooms to develop project lists. Preliminary categorization by Intelligent Community elements (30 minutes) • Round robin listing of projects by room reporter. Discussion and clarification and enhancement of project ideas. Possible combination of project ideas (20 minutes) • Discussion of voting process and wrap-up (10 minutes) <p>Need facilitator and recorder with Google Docs</p>
Online input continues	Participants may submit more project ideas online within a certain number of days. Close before voting begins
Week 6	<p>Project Prioritization and Voting</p> <p>Create voting tool via SurveyMonkey. People will be able to vote and volunteer to be on project teams. Survey will allow voters to allocate their support among projects by dividing their 100 points among projects.</p>
Week 7/8	<p>Project Team Meetings</p> <p>Volunteers and key stakeholders meet via Zoom (or appropriate platform of choice) to create goals, tasks, budgets, and raise matching funds.</p>
Week 9	<p>Steering Team Meeting – 90 minutes</p> <p>Steering Team meets to discuss and allocate project funds, facilitated by Blandin team.</p> <p>Grant Application</p> <p>Deadline TBD (several weeks after week 9)</p> <p>The sponsoring organization should submit a grant application of up to \$75,000 to Blandin Foundation. At the time of application, at least half of the grant dollars should be allocated to projects.</p> <p>Mary Magnuson will provide grant application instructions by week 5.</p>

For more information:

Mary Magnuson, Broadband Program Administrator:
memagnuson@blandinfoundation.org | (218) 301-6640

Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors:
bill@communitytechnologyadvisors.com | (651) 491-2551