



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

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**CPUC Awards \$172 Million in Grants for
Broadband Projects Across California**

Additionally, Volume 2 of BEAD Program approved for grant distribution

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 26, 2024 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today approved \$172 million in the sixth round of grants for last mile broadband projects as part of the \$2 billion [Last Mile Federal Funding Account Grant Program](#), which expands broadband internet access for underserved and unserved communities across California. This continues a rolling process of awards and recommendations, highlighting the state’s commitment to bridging the digital divide through [Broadband For All](#).

Separately, the CPUC approved Volume Two of the Initial Proposal for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, refining the rules for distributing grants to support broadband expansion across California.

Continuing to Invest Where it Matters Most

Many Last Mile Federal Funding Account grant awardees are creating new networks, connecting the next generation to education, improving access to healthcare, and empowering rural communities for economic development and emergency connectivity. Combined, these proposed projects will serve predominantly disadvantaged and low-income communities across the state.

Currently, the total amount in grants recommended and awarded is \$674 million for projects in 30 counties. For a full list of recommendations and awards to date, visit the CPUC’s [Federal Funding Account Recommendations and Awards](#) webpage.

“We are making significant progress in investing these funds in communities across the state, bringing us closer to achieving California’s Broadband for All objectives,” said CPUC President Alice Reynolds. “After today’s vote, we have approved projects in 27 of California’s 58 counties, with more projects on the way.”

Last Mile Federal Funding Account grants awarded today include:

- \$172 million for 14 Last Mile Federal Funding Account broadband infrastructure grant projects in Del Norte, El Dorado, Humboldt, Santa Clara, and Siskiyou counties.
- Grants to three Tribal entities in Del Norte and Humboldt counties—the Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation, Karuk Tribe, and Yurok Telecommunications Corporation.

“Today we approved Federal Funding Account grants that expand broadband service in Del Norte, El Dorado, Humboldt, Santa Clara, and Siskiyou counties,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck. “These Federal Funding Account grants represent another critical step in closing the digital divide and ensuring all Californians have access to fast and reliable broadband, especially communities that have seen historic underinvestment. These grants, combined with all the efforts to expand broadband to all of California, have turned the tables from historic underinvestment to historic investment for Californians in the hardest communities to reach.”

Last Mile Federal Funding Account Grant Recipients Empower Their Communities – What They Are Saying

- **Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation**
 - “This Fiber-To-The-Home project will build both middle mile and last mile fiber networks in Smith River, along Highway 101. It allows many homes, both tribal and non-tribal alike, to access high-speed fiber broadband. Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation is grateful for the funding from the CPUC, which makes this project possible.” –

Tribal Chairperson, on Behalf of Tribal Council Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Jeri Lynn Thompson

- **County of El Dorado**

- “Securing these broadband grants will be transformative for our rural county, where many households lack adequate internet access, impacting our citizen’s education, health, and safety. El Dorado County has been steadfast in providing this much-needed infrastructure, and this funding will help us bridge the digital divide, providing essential connectivity that empowers local students to excel academically, supports remote work opportunities, enhances telehealth services for our residents, and provides real-time emergency information. By investing in broadband infrastructure, we are not just connecting homes; we are creating opportunities for education, economic growth, and an improved quality of life for everyone in our community.” – Deputy Director, Economic Development and Administration Planning and Building Department, County of El Dorado, Kyle Zimbelman

- **City of Placerville**

- “Today marks a monumental step forward for the City of Placerville. Thanks to the CPUC’s approval, we can now move ahead with the Placerville Broadband project, which will deliver reliable, high-speed internet to more than 1,300 unserved residents. This project is not just about improving connectivity—it’s about opportunity and preparing our city for the future. The open-access fiber network we’re building will provide our residents with affordable options, improve public safety, and position Placerville as a leader in digital innovation. We are deeply grateful for the CPUC’s support in helping us build a more connected and resilient community.” – Mayor, City of Placerville, Jackie Neau

- **Hankins Information Technology:**

- “We are truly honored to be considered for this opportunity, and we appreciate the support from the CPUC and partners, like Millennium, in recognizing the importance of our work. Our project is designed to significantly enhance broadband access for Californians, especially in underserved communities. By expanding reliable internet services, we aim to bridge the digital divide, fostering

educational, economic, and social opportunities for all residents. This funding will allow us to implement critical resources that directly impact the lives of many individuals and families throughout south Santa Clara County.” – Chief Executive Officer, Hankins Information Technology

- **Siskiyou Telephone Company:**

- “Western Siskiyou County is one of the most remote regions in California, encompassing agricultural, tribal, and multi-generational populations. This grant will ensure many California residents in our rural region will have access to one of today’s most critical infrastructure, fiber broadband. This grant will expedite builds in rural regions here in Western Siskiyou County where no other communication infrastructure is available. Communication is exponentially more important in this day and age where fire danger has heightened in our region. This grant will also benefit from the California State Middle Mile Broadband Initiative [MMBI] Project, as the MMBI will significantly reduce the last mile costs for this project by building through this project area.” – Chief Executive Officer, Siskiyou Telephone Company, Russell Elliott

- **Surfnet Communications**

- “The grants awarded to California Broadband Alliance and Surfnet will bring high-speed internet access to residents in the rural communities of the Santa Cruz Mountains who live within striking distance of Silicon Valley. The fiber network we will build will help level the playing field for the residents in remote communities by enhancing education, healthcare, and economic potential. State funding through the CPUC’s Federal Funding Account will help the California Broadband Alliance further our mission to provide universal broadband access at affordable prices to our communities along California’s Central Coast.” – Chief Operating Officer, Surfnet Communications, Ken Nye

- **AT&T:**

- “We’re so pleased to be selected for this important project to deliver reliable, high-speed broadband connectivity to Humboldt County. We agree that California communities, both large and small, deserve this kind of fiber connectivity and investment, and we’re excited to continue to work with communities across the

Golden State to make that happen.” – President, AT&T California and Pacific States, Marc Blakeman

Awarding Grants Throughout California

Today’s approval is part of a process to award last mile broadband grants to projects in every region in the state to established internet service providers, small providers, local governments, tribes, and special districts. Draft Resolutions with award recommendations will be released through the summer and early fall, each open for public comment. These recommendations will be considered and must be approved by vote at a public CPUC [Voting Meeting](#).

For more information, including the Last Mile Federal Funding Account grants approved today, please visit the CPUC’s [Federal Funding Account Recommendations and Awards webpage](#).

For more information on the allocation of Federal Funding Account grants across California, please visit [CPUC’s Broadband Federal Funding Account awards map](#)

Future application windows will be announced as funds are appropriated.

Fueling Economic Growth Statewide

Established under Senate Bill 156 (2021), the CPUC’s Last Mile Federal Funding Account is fueling economic growth across rural, tribal, and urban communities statewide.

Since the initial round of applications closed in September 2023, the CPUC has received and reviewed 484 grant applications from every county in the state, totaling more than \$4.6 billion in requests. This overwhelming response highlights the urgent need for and the opportunity to expand internet access across California.

In addition to the Last Mile Federal Funding Account, the CPUC is investing in a suite of programs in the state’s efforts in connecting millions of Californians with reliable, affordable high-speed internet, including the [California Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#) and the [California Advanced Services Fund \(CASF\)](#).

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

The CPUC also today approved [Volume Two of the Initial Proposal](#) for the [BEAD Program](#), refining the rules for distributing grants to support broadband expansion across California. This follows the submission of both Volume One and Volume Two of the proposal to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in December 2023. The BEAD Program, part of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), aims to distribute \$42.45 billion nationally to improve broadband access. California is eligible to receive approximately \$1.86 billion in funding, based on its share of underserved areas.

These projects will include deploying services to unserved and underserved areas, connecting community institutions, and enhancing broadband infrastructure in residential buildings, among other initiatives. Once the NTIA approves the CPUC’s final eligibility map, the CPUC will announce application deadlines for subgrantees to compete for funding to carry out broadband projects across the state.

“I am pleased to see us achieve this important milestone in the BEAD proceeding, which will provide a significant contribution to meet our shared goals in closing the digital divide and providing broadband for all Californians,” said Commissioner Houck. “As we move forward with the BEAD program, I encourage all stakeholders to remain engaged and continue to participate in the process leading to our final proposal to NTIA. We will need everyone’s contribution to help maximize this once-in-a-generation investment.”

More Information

- [Proposal approved](#) for Last Mile Federal Funding Account broadband infrastructure grants in Del Norte, Humboldt, and Siskiyou Counties
- [Proposal approved](#) for Last Mile Federal Funding Account broadband infrastructure grants in El Dorado and Santa Clara Counties
- [BEAD proposal approved](#)
- [BEAD proceeding documents](#)

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About the California Public Utilities Commission

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. Visit www.cpuc.ca.gov for more information.