



California Public Utilities Commission  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

Docket #: R.20-08-021

## **CPUC EXPANDS BROADBAND GRANT RULES TO INCREASE DEPLOYMENT THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA**

SAN FRANCISCO, May 19, 2022 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in its commitment to bridging the digital divide, today allocated funding and expanded program rules to provide no-cost connections for residents of low-income and farm worker housing, support regional broadband consortia, and provide digital literacy training and devices.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated affordability challenges and heightened the need for universal broadband access. The California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) provides financial support in the form of competitive grants for public housing broadband infrastructure and broadband adoption projects. In addition, it provides support to rural and urban regional broadband consortia to fund activities that are intended to facilitate broadband deployment. The program rules modified in today's Decision apply to three CASF accounts: Broadband Public Housing Account; Broadband Adoption Account; and Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Account.

The program rules adopted today include, among other items, project eligibility, allocations of funding between CASF subaccounts, procedures for reimbursing grantees, modifications to the review processes whereby CPUC staff may approve certain projects, and minimum performance standards for grantees.

In 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156, SB 4, Assembly Bill (AB) 164, and AB 14, each of which affected program administration of the CASF, either through creation of new CASF subaccounts, adoption of individual program modifications, extension of the program, or through increasing total program funding to spur the deployment of broadband facilities in unserved and underserved areas of California.

“This is another step forward in the CPUC’s implementation of the Governor’s and Legislature’s 2021 broadband package. Changes made here will allow for more funding per project for Adoption, Public Housing, and Consortia grantees, provide more flexibility for certain budgeting and reimbursement processes, and expand eligibility for Public Housing grants to farmworker housing developments,” said CPUC Commissioner Darcie L. Houck, who is assigned to the proceeding.

“To be fully and meaningfully connected to Internet services, communities need not just access to affordable broadband infrastructure, but also devices, training, and support. Today, we have taken a step forward in bridging the digital divide, supporting initiatives to build gap networks in low-income and affordable housing communities, train digital navigators, and provide digital literacy education,” said CPUC President Alice Reynolds.

“The expansion of the California Advanced Services Fund categorical eligibility to public housing, publicly subsidized housing, and farm worker housing will kickstart the needed upgrades in this housing stock in order to leverage broadband, in particular for many customers who will be eligible for the federal Affordable Connectivity Program and wireline broadband subsidies that we are working on implementing in the California LifeLine proceeding,” said Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma.

The proposal voted on is available at

<https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M476/K657/476657346.PDF>.

Documents related to the proceeding are available at

[https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5\\_PROCEEDING\\_SELECT:R2008021](https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R2008021).

More information on the CASF is available at [www.cpuc.ca.gov/casf](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/casf).

More information on the CPUC’s other efforts in broadband implementation for California is available at [www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-implementation-for-california](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-implementation-for-california).

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