

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**Communications Division
Broadband, Video and Market Branch**

**RESOLUTION T-17773
April 27, 2023**

RESOLUTION

Resolution T-17773: Approves 11 project proposals for \$9,318,782 and denies two project proposals from the California Advanced Services Fund Broadband Adoption Account submitted in the July 2022 application round.

I. Summary

This Resolution approves grant funding in the amount of \$9,318,782 from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Broadband Adoption Account (Adoption Account) for 11 projects to the California State University: Fresno Foundation (Fresno State Connect), Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective (Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: English Language Learners, Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: Justice Involved Individuals, and Northeastern and Upstate Call Center), County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department (Digital Navigator Program), human-I-T (human-I-T Connect Los Angeles County), Insure the Uninsured Project (California Health Programs Beneficiaries: ACP Outreach and Enrollment), Santa Barbara Partners in Education (Santa Barbara Partners in Education Computers for Families Program), Thai Community Development Center (Advancing Tech Equity), The Children's Movement (Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion: The Children's Movement Project), and Westside Family Preservation Services Network (Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion: Westside Family Preservation Services Network Project). Collectively, these projects will provide digital literacy trainings to 9,121 participants, and broadband subscriptions to 32,810 participants. This Resolution denies grant funding for two projects to NextGen Policy (Future-Proofing California's Economy and Workforce through Advanced Digital Skills Training and Sacramento Connect Corps).

II. Background

On October 15, 2017, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 1665 (Garcia) into law. This legislation amended the statutes governing the CASF program, Public Utilities Code sections 281, 912.2, and 914.7, and added the Adoption Account, which provides grants to increase publicly available or after school broadband access and digital

inclusion and allocated \$20 million to the account. Eligible applicants include local governments, senior centers, schools, public libraries, non-profit organizations, and community-based organizations with programs to increase publicly available or after-school broadband access and digital inclusion. The Commission is required to give preference to programs in communities with demonstrated low broadband access, including low-income communities, senior communities, and communities facing socioeconomic barriers to broadband adoption.

On June 21, 2018, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) issued Decision (D).18-06-032 which implemented provisions of AB 1665 and adopted rules and guidelines for the Adoption Account (Adoption Account Guidelines). On February 21, 2019, the Commission issued D.19-02-008 modifying and clarifying the Adoption Account Guidelines.¹

In 2021, the Legislature deleted the minimum cumulative appropriation for each of the CASF accounts and authorized the CPUC to set these appropriation amounts.² Consequently, the CPUC issued D.22-05-029 which set an appropriation amount of \$20.024 million for fiscal year 2022/2023 for the Adoption Account. This appropriation was adopted in the 2022 California Budget Act.³ In D.22-05-029, the Commission made further modifications and programmatic changes to the Adoption Account Guidelines. Key provisions of the Decision relevant to this Resolution include:

- *Moneys in the Adoption Account are available to the Commission to award grants to increase publicly available or after-school broadband access and digital inclusion, such as grants for digital literacy training programs and public education to communities with limited broadband adoption, including low-income communities, senior communities, and communities facing socioeconomic barriers to broadband adoption;*⁴
- *Eligible applicants are local governments, senior centers, schools, public libraries, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations with programs to increase publicly available or after school broadband access and digital inclusion, such as digital literacy training programs;*⁵
- *The Commission assigned Commission Division (CD) staff (Staff) the task of approving applications that meet the criteria for ministerial review;*
- *Applicants requesting a grant greater than \$150,000 do not qualify for ministerial review;*

¹ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 1 (Appendix 1).

² Public Utilities Code section 281, subdivisions (b)(6) and (c)(3).

³ <https://www.ebudget.ca.gov/>.

⁴ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 1 (Appendix 2).

⁵ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 3 (Appendix 2).

- *Applicants who do not meet the per-participant program implementation costs⁶ (no more than \$477 per participant trained, \$42 per participant provided access or \$205 per subscription for digital literacy, broadband access or call center projects, respectively) do not qualify for ministerial review;*
- *Nonprofit organizations that have not existed for one year or more do not qualify for ministerial review;*
- *Organizations who do not have at least one year's experience conducting a digital literacy training or broadband access project or who have not completed at least one digital literacy training or broadband access project do not qualify for ministerial review.*
- *Where an application does not meet the ministerial review criteria, it may still be considered for a grant, but it must go through the traditional Commission Resolution approval process.⁷*

Projects eligible for grant funding include digital literacy projects and broadband access projects. Digital literacy projects may include digital literacy training programs and public education to communities with limited broadband adoption. Broadband access projects may include those that provide free broadband internet access in community training rooms or other public spaces. It may also include projects that perform community outreach such as analysis, comparison of Internet service plans within the community, and call centers that will increase broadband access and adoption.⁸

III. Applicant Request

For the July 1, 2022, application cycle, 13 projects do not qualify for ministerial review as noted in Table 1, below.⁹ Eleven of these projects are considered for funding in this Resolution.

⁶ Adoption Account grants are awarded in two categories – one category for computing devices and hotspots, and a second category for all other expenses (program implementation).

⁷ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 3-4 (Appendix 2).

⁸ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 3 (Appendix 2).

⁹ 34 applicants requested a total of \$29,027,844 for 100 projects (a list of all submitted projects can be found on the [CASF Adoption Account website](#)).

Table 1: Projects that do not qualify for ministerial review

APPLICANT	PROJECT	TYPE	REQUESTED	REASON
California State University, Fresno Foundation	Fresno State Connect	Call Center	\$ 1,230,000	Above the \$150,000 per project cost
Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective	Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: English Language Learners	Digital Literacy	\$ 247,264	Above the \$150,000 per project cost
Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective	Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: Justice Involved Individuals	Digital Literacy	\$ 246,700	Above the \$150,000 per project cost
Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective	Northeastern and Upstate Call Center	Call Center	\$ 490,393	Above the \$150,000 per project cost; above the \$205 per participant cost
County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department	County of Los Angeles - Digital Navigator Program	Digital Literacy	\$ 3,375,700	Above the \$150,000 per project cost
human-I-T	human-I-T Connect Los Angeles County	Call Center	\$ 2,050,000	Above the \$150,000 per project cost
Insure the Uninsured Project	California Health Programs Beneficiaries: ACP Outreach and Enrollment	Call Center	\$ 1,230,000	Lacks experience running a digital inclusion project
NextGen Policy*	Future-Proofing California's Economy and Workforce through Advanced Digital Skills Training	Digital Literacy	\$ 3,735,663	Above the \$150,000 per project cost; above the \$477 per participant cost
NextGen Policy*	Sacramento Connect Corps	Digital Literacy	\$ 469,890	Above the \$150,000 per project cost; above the \$477 per participant cost
Santa Barbara Partners in Education	Santa Barbara Partners in Education Computers for Families Program	Digital Literacy	\$ 165,000	Above the \$150,000 per project cost; above the \$477 per participant cost
Thai Community Development Center	Advancing Tech Equity	Call Center	\$ 150,000	Lacks experience running a digital inclusion project

APPLICANT	PROJECT	TYPE	REQUESTED	REASON
The Children's Movement	Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion: The Children's Movement Project	Digital Literacy	\$ 126,375	Less than one year old
Westside Family Preservation Services Network	Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion: Westside Family Preservation Services Network Project	Digital Literacy	\$ 133,500	Lacks experience running a digital inclusion project
			\$ 13,650,485	

* The NextGen Policy projects are not being recommended for approval

IV. Project Evaluation Process

D.22-05-029 states that all applications be reviewed, and awarded based on completeness, overall quality, and project costs reasonableness.¹⁰

Overall Quality: All projects were reviewed based on how well they met the requirements and goals set out in D.22-05-029 to increase publicly available or after-school broadband access and digital inclusion in communities with limited broadband adoption.

Completeness: D.22-05-029 requires all applicants to submit a complete application package that includes the project description, work plan, performance metrics, detailed budget, cover letter, curriculum (if applicable), as well as a notarized affidavit. Additionally, nonprofit applicants are required to provide tax documents showing their status as a nonprofit organization and documentation showing good standing with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, the California Secretary of State, or the California Department of Justice. Staff reviewed each project's application to ensure that all the required information was submitted. If the application was incomplete in any way, Staff provided the opportunity for applicants to complete the application to meet program requirements.

Budget: D.22-05-029 states the Commission may fund up to 85 percent of the eligible program costs and may reimburse for education and outreach efforts, travel, computing devices, printers, network routers, switches, modems, and cabling deployed for the purpose of establishing a space for broadband access or digital literacy that connects to an existing in-building broadband network such as Wi-Fi (inside network), mobile hotspots (only when no inside network is available), administrative costs (limited to 15% of the overall budget), staffing for instruction and technical support, desks, chairs,

¹⁰ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 9 (Appendix 2).

and the gathering, preparing, creating and distribution of digital literacy curriculum (see Appendix E).¹¹ Staff reviewed each project's budget to ensure that no more than 85 percent of eligible program costs were included and asked applicants to adjust their budgets as required, removing any ineligible expenses such as reimbursement for rent, utilities, internet service, lodging, and snacks.¹² Further adjustments were made by Staff, if necessary.

Staff further reviewed project cost reasonableness based on the applicants' proposed budgets, in addition to an evaluation of overall cost per participant. Staff evaluated the mean, median, minimum, and maximum request amount for each of the expense categories and determined a reasonable cost for expenses. Staff also reviewed all expenses to ensure budgeted items were attributable to a required activity.

V. Project Review and Recommendations for Funding

Staff recommends funding for 11 projects submitted by nine applicants based on the quality, completeness, and cost reasonableness of the application. All 11 projects did not qualify for ministerial review per reasons stated in Table 1 (above). See Appendix A, Approved Project Budget and Performance Metrics, for per-project details regarding the approved budget and expected outcomes.

Staff reviewed the applications and finds that the following projects align with CASF's goal to increase publicly available or after-school broadband access and digital inclusion to serve communities with limited broadband adoption and recommends approval for these projects. Details of each Adoption Account application are discussed below.

California State University: Fresno Foundation (Fresno Foundation) - (one project)

The nonprofit Fresno Foundation is the fiscal agent for the Office of Community and Economic Development at Fresno State (OCED). Since 2014, Fresno State Connect, administered by OCED, has been helping low-income communities and neighborhoods in the San Joaquin Valley, including rural communities facing socioeconomic barriers, with opportunities to adopt low-cost broadband. Fresno State Connect has received funding from the CPUC and the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF). To date, Fresno State Connect has documented well over 10,000 subscriptions, principally

¹¹ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 3 (Appendix 2).

¹² Project costs not authorized for funding by the Adoption grant must be funded by other sources (leveraged or self-funding). See Decision, Slip. Op., at 3 (Appendix 2).

in the Central Valley region. The proposed Fresno State Connect Call Center project proposes to continue this work statewide.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$1,230,000 for this project, averaging \$205 per participant subscription, for a total of 6,000 subscriptions (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective (NSPDC) - (three projects)

The nonprofit NSPDC is comprised of the Center for Economic Development (CED), established in 1986, and its sister agency, the Geographical Information Center (GIC), established in 1988. The NSPDC provides services and resources to the region's businesses, governments, and residents by pairing GIS mapping services and broadband infrastructure support with economic development research, surveying, analysis, planning and implementation throughout the State of California. Additionally, the NSPDC is the lead agency for the Northeastern California Connect Consortium and Upstate California Connect Broadband Consortium, providing support for broadband infrastructure projects and adoption and access initiatives to rural communities. The NSPDC's two broadband consortia are funded through the CASF Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Account.

NSPDC submitted two digital literacy project proposals.

1. The goal of the "Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: Justice Involved Individuals" is to provide 528 individuals with at least 8 hours of digital literacy instruction, with a focus on justice-involved and post-incarcerated populations.
2. The goal of the "Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: English Language Learners" is to provide 528 individuals with at least 8 hours of digital literacy instruction, with a focus on communities with limited English language proficiency and other disadvantaged populations in Northern California.

The digital literacy courses will focus on workforce skills such as resume building in Microsoft Word, online job searches, virtual interviews, and file saving for application submission.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding total CASF funding for these two projects in the

amount of \$493,964, averaging \$468 per participant trained (see Appendix A for information on per project evaluation, funding request and recommended funding).

NSPDC also submitted one call center project proposal. The goal of the Northeast and Upstate Call Center project is to enroll 1,500 low-income households to the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefit and low-cost home broadband at the average cost of \$327 per participant subscription, and to provide information on low-cost device and digital literacy opportunities. The cost per participant is above the ministerial review cost benchmark of \$205 per participant subscription. On inquiry, the applicant explained that per-participant costs are higher due to the rural nature and geographic heterogeneity of the service area, which creates diversity in media outlets and other forms of community outreach.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$490,393 for the call center project, with a total funding of \$984,357 for all three NSPDC projects (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department (ISD) - (one project)

Los Angeles County is the most populous county in the State of California, with more than 10 million residents across 4,084 square miles. The Internal Services Department (ISD) was established in 1989 by the Board of Supervisors to help manage and support the basic functioning of the Los Angeles County's 37 departments, and approximately 200 committees and commissions. Among the support services provided are acquisition services, administrative services, building support, communication services, data center management, energy & environmental services, programming services, and other support services. In November 2021, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors approved a motion appointing ISD as the lead department in accelerating digital equity among unserved and underserved communities. In this role ISD administers the County's Delete The Divide initiative, which works to ensure that disadvantaged communities have direct access, training, and support services in modern technologies.

ISD will establish a Digital Navigator Program as a community-centered approach to improving broadband adoption and digital literacy in neighborhoods adversely impacted by the digital divide. Digital Navigators will provide support services to constituents by in-person visits to residences, community outreach events, classroom instruction, and telephone call centers. The primary objectives are to assist residents in securing internet access and acquiring computer devices, teaching digital literacy skills,

and providing ongoing support. Digital Navigators will be local hires who live in the targeted communities, and who are trained to provide the necessary assistance in collaboration with partner community-based organizations.

ISD's budget from its submitted application was reduced given that certain proposed project costs are not eligible for reimbursement per program rules.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding total CASF funding for this project in the amount of \$3,375,700, averaging \$443 per participant trained for 7,500 participants (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

human-I-T - (one project)

human-I-T is a nonprofit focused on digital inclusion issues. It has been providing refurbished computer hardware, internet access, and digital literacy training since 2012. human-I-T received a grant in June of 2021 to subscribe 3,364 income-qualified households to the internet throughout the state of California; the project is ongoing and is expected to be completed in December of 2023. It is a continuation of an earlier, completed, project, awarded in September 2019, where human-I-T successfully signed up 3,947 income-qualified households to the internet.

human-I-T proposes to work in partnership with the County of Los Angeles to subscribe 10,000 income-qualified households to the internet. human-I-T will work closely with the Los Angeles County Internal Services Department to do integrated outreach through all social service agencies to raise awareness regarding low-cost internet and ACP, to sign up qualified individuals and families to these programs, and to provide access to low-cost computers, when appropriate.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$2,050,000, averaging \$205 per subscription (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

Insure the Uninsured Project (IUP) - (one project)

ITUP is a nonprofit with over 25 years of experience in California health policy. The mission of ITUP is to promote innovative and workable policy solutions that expand health care access and improve the health of all Californians. ITUP does not have a background in implementing digital inclusion projects. However, they are partnering with human-I-T in the proposed Call Center project; human-I-T will be able to provide

them the necessary guidance to complete the project successfully.

ITUP proposes to do outreach to Medi-Cal populations in the Central Valley, Los Angeles County, Alameda County, and greater Sacramento Metro Area to raise awareness regarding low-cost internet and the ACP and to sign up qualified individuals and families to these programs. Through this project, ITUP proposes to address the issues of barriers to telehealth (caused by a lack of sufficient, affordable, and equitable broadband and connectivity) to support better health outcomes.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$1,230,000, averaging \$205 per subscription, for a total of 6,000 subscriptions (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

Santa Barbara Partners in Education (SBPE) (one project)

SBPE was established in 2000 and attained nonprofit status in 2001. Its mission is to connect businesses and volunteers with Santa Barbara schools to improve public education. One of its core programs, Computers for Families, provides free, refurbished computers and tech support/training to Santa Barbara students and families in need. SBPE's intent in this project proposal is to further fund this ongoing project with a specific focus on the communities of Lompoc and Guadalupe. SBPE proposes to work closely with educational institutions and other educational and family-oriented organizations to identify and serve those most in need and to provide services such as digital literacy training and free computer offerings.

SBPE offered no commitment to provide at least eight hours of training to any individual as required by D.22-05-029¹³ in its initial application. SBPE's program is not designed to provide such structured trainings but instead provides ad-hoc training, as needed. SBPE stated that this flexibility is most beneficial for those needing services, as their clients are facing numerous challenges around meeting basic needs such as food and shelter. However, in its revised application submitted after Staff followed up for clarification, SBPE committed to provide eight hours of training to 50 participants and, to do so, increased its grant request from \$150,000 to \$165,000 (inclusive of \$15,000 for take-home devices). SBPE's total grant request for program implementation (not inclusive of devices) is now \$3,000 per participant trained.

¹³ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 3 (Appendix 2). "Digital literacy project applicants must commit to providing at least 8 hours of digital literacy training to each participant through digital literacy classes, one on one tutoring or self-paced instruction."

The average cost per participant trained for all proposed digital literacy applications (whether approved by this resolution or by ministerial review) from the July 1, 2022, round is \$327, with a maximum amount of \$477 per participant trained. Therefore, Staff finds the proposed cost per participant trained to be unreasonable.

D.22-05-029 states that “all funding requests will be assessed for reasonableness and may be adjusted accordingly at the discretion of the Commission.”¹⁴ Accordingly, Staff recommends adjusting SBPE’s budget to reimburse SBFE at the rate of \$477 per participant trained.

Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$38,850 to train 50 participants, averaging \$477 per participant trained (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC) (one project)

Thai CDC was established in 1994, with the idea that all peoples have a basic right to a decent standard of living and quality of life. Since its establishment, Thai CDC has addressed the needs of Thai and other disadvantaged immigrants faced with substandard housing conditions and lack of access to basic health services, education, and employment opportunities. Thai CDC addressed these needs through housing programs, small business development programs, neighborhood and community development programs, and human rights advocacy.

The goal of the Thai Community Development Center's Call Center project is to bridge the digital divide and enroll 2,400 low-income households a year to the ACP and low-cost home broadband, and to provide information on low-cost devices and digital literacy opportunities.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$150,000, averaging \$31 per subscription (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

The Children's Movement (TCM) - (one project)

TCM is a cross-sector network first formed in 2011 by a diverse group of educators, institutional leaders, and parents who decided to work together to advocate for children in Fresno County. This loose affiliation of concerned citizens advocated for programs and policies benefiting children and families. TCM participated in the formation the

¹⁴ See Decision, Slip. Op., at 4 (Appendix 2).

successful Fresno Grade-Level Reading Campaign (3rd Grade Reading Success Matters) which was a collective effort of several local education agencies in Fresno County, philanthropic organizations, and other community-based organizations. Also, TCM advocated for the See-to-Succeed project, a mobile optical unit that provides low-cost eyeglasses to high need communities throughout Fresno County. In 2021, TCM formed the Fresno Residents Council: a 100-member council made up of grassroots resident leaders from across the county, representing all races and ethnicities, and speaking five different languages, all united under a vision of shaping policies for the benefit of all children of Fresno. TCM became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit in August 2021.

TCM proposes to provide at least eight hours of digital literacy training to 200 participants, with a specific focus on residents of Mendota and Firebaugh. Trainings will occur in the evenings or weekends at local community sites or schools. This project is an outgrowth of the Fresno Residents Council; Council members will be working the outreach effort and will be participating in the instruction. The training is based on the Fresno State digital training provided in their Parent Institute.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$126,375, averaging \$476 per participant trained (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

Westside Family Preservation Services Network (WFPSN) (one project)

WFPSN has been in existence since 1999. WFPSN has been focused on helping the community of Huron and serves as a neighborhood resource center where Huron residents can access a variety of services, based on their needs. Examples include, but are not limited to, public assistance applications, employment and educational navigation, computer support, as well as a wide array of classes and workshops for prevention of child abuse and neglect (i.e., parenting classes).

WFPSN proposes to provide basic digital literacy training to 315 residents from the rural, west Fresno County with training locations in Huron and surrounding towns (Coalinga, Kerman, Tranquility, San Joaquin, and Firebaugh). WFPSN seeks to address issues that arise due to the poverty of the community (typically Spanish-speaking, farmworker communities), and its geographic isolation, which is exacerbated by a lack of public transportation. WFPSN seeks to provide mental health services through the internet and, through this grant, seeks to educate participants on how to use computers and the internet to utilize such services.

Therefore, Staff recommends awarding CASF funding in the amount of \$133,500, averaging \$424 per participant trained (see Appendix A for information on the approved budget and performance metrics).

Staff Recommendation to Not Fund the NextGen (NextGen) Policy Projects (two projects)

Future-Proofing California's Economy and Workforce through Advanced Digital Skills Training project (First Proposal)

In its "Future-Proofing California's Economy and Workforce through Advanced Digital Skills Training" project proposes to train participants in select communities in Los Angeles, Sacramento, and the San Francisco Bay Area to become certified Full Stack Developer/Web Developers using a software training platform from Qwasar Silicon Valley. Adult learners (ages 18-40) from disadvantaged communities will be taught programming languages and how to use them in web development. The project incorporates wrap-around services for participants such as the provision of socio-emotional and safety net services, job placement, stipends for milestone completion, and other such activities to assist participants who come from difficult situations to successfully navigate a complex educational endeavor and secure employment. NextGen requests \$5,147,195 (in total costs) to train 750 individuals which is \$6,783 per participant for program implementation costs(see Appendix D¹⁵). NextGen subsequently adjusted its request to \$3,735,663 (\$4,923 per participant) after Staff informed NextGen that some proposed activities could not be funded per program rules.

Sacramento Connect Corps project (Second Proposal)

The Sacramento Connect Corps project proposes to provide a 12-month period of vocational training so participants can attain a Help Desk job by earning a Computing Technology Industry Association A+ certification. The participants will receive on-the-job training as Digital Navigators. Digital Navigators will staff Community Help Desks for in-person and telephone technical support, provide digital coaching and will perform community outreach through neighborhood canvassing, and having a presence at community events. NextGen requests \$469,890 to train 20 individuals as Digital Navigators (\$22,707 per participant for program implementation costs). NextGen's proposal includes digital literacy training to 100 community participants to be provided

¹⁵ NextGen's budget as provided in their original submission details the full picture of the proposed project.

by Tech Exchange, a third party and increasing the total number of participants trained to 120 (at \$3,784 per participant for program implementation costs). Staff notes that the Digital Navigators to be trained will not be providing the minimum 8 hours of digital literacy training mandated under program rules. For the Tech Exchange digital literacy training, NextGen requests funding for devices but no other costs.

Issues with Next Gen's Proposals

The NextGen project proposals exceed the intent of the Adoption Account. Digital Literacy projects previously approved for Adoption Account funding provided basic information on how to use computers and the internet as well as instruction of use of common office software (and similar subjects) and training that was short-term in length. These previously funded projects reflected the intent of the Adoption Account¹⁶ and were in line with Public Utilities Code section 281, subdivisions (j)(1) and (j)(2) which states that grants shall be made available to “increase publicly available or after school broadband access and digital inclusion, such as grants for digital literacy training programs and public education to communities with limited broadband adoption including low-income communities, senior communities and communities facing socioeconomic barriers to broadband adoption.”

In contrast, NextGen's projects do not provide training for day-to-day skills necessary to use computers and the internet but, instead, seek funding to provide extensive vocational training. This type of training exceeds the intent of the Adoption Account.

NextGen's grant requests per participant are exceptionally high. The amounts far exceed previous per participant funding, which provided, on average, \$234 per participant trained (with a maximum of \$766 per participant trained). Funding multiple projects at a lower per participant cost would be a more efficient use of scarce funds. Additionally, the approval of such a high-cost projects may encourage similar applications going forward and may more quickly exhaust available funds.

Approval of these projects at such a high cost per participant trained would be inconsistent with the treatment of other applications and previous approvals. In fact,

¹⁶ See Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications, 2017 (specific to Assembly Bill 1665, which created the Adoption Account) stating “this bill establishes an Adoption Account to assist with digital inclusion through literacy and training, including for areas that may already have infrastructure access, but lack knowledge or understanding about the Internet” (and similar comment).

Staff has consistently constrained costs throughout the implementation of the Adoption Account by reducing budgets to meet reasonable standards (which is consistent with Staff's recommendation for the Santa Barbara Partners in Education project proposal discussed in this resolution). Further, Adoption Account funds have not been awarded to fund extensive career-level training, and to date, have only been provided for short-term instruction like the County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department's proposed Digital Navigator program discussed above.

Lastly, with respect to NextGen's second proposal, the CalBright CompTIA+ training is already available for free at CalBright College (CalBright College is fully subsidized by the State of California and any person can register for classes for free at this online institution).¹⁷ NextGen requests staffing costs of up to \$165 thousand to train, at the most, 20 individuals to be able to pass the CompTIA+ training (a training already available at no cost), and to provide job preparation training when such training is not provided for under current Adoption Account rules.

Per rules in D.22-05-029, a digital literacy project must provide at least eight hours of digital literacy training to each participant and oversight by Commission Staff to evaluate how well grantees are able to provide the eight hours of training. Adoption Account digital literacy projects previously approved provided around eight hours of training whereas NextGen proposes projects that require a much larger number of hours over a longer duration for a single participant to complete given the complexity of the material to be covered. Previously funded digital literacy projects typically provided instruction on common topics specific to digital literacy, whereas the NextGen projects seek to provide very specialized vocational instruction. Given the differences in program length, the much greater complexity of the material presented, and more demanding outcomes for participants, Staff cannot provide proper oversight over NextGen's projects as it would for any other funded digital literacy project.

Additionally, a number of the activities/positions requested to be funded are ineligible to be funded per D.22-05-029 rules (see Appendix E).

Thus, Staff recommends the Commission deny NextGen's applications for funding.

¹⁷ <https://www.calbright.org/>. For information on CalBright College's CompTIA+ training see <https://www.calbright.org/programs/it-support/>.

VI. Compliance Requirements

California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development Center, The Children's Movement, and Westside Family Preservation Services Network (grant recipient or recipients) are required to comply with all the guidelines, requirements, and conditions associated with the grant of CASF funds as specified in D.22-05-029. Such compliance includes but is not limited to the items listed below.

A. Execution and Performance

Each grant recipient must start the project within six months after the grant approval (after the ramp up time) and complete the project within a 24-month time frame. The Commission may withhold, reduce, or terminate grant payments if the grantee does not comply with any of the requirements set forth in its application or the CASF rules. If the grantee fails to complete the project in accordance with the terms of approval granted by the Commission, the grant recipient will be required to reimburse some or all the CASF funds it has received.

The grantees must complete all performance under the award by the termination date of the award.

Upon adoption of this Resolution, grantees must sign a consent form agreeing to the terms stated in the Resolution. A completed and executed consent form should be emailed to CASF_Adoption@cpuc.ca.gov within 30 calendar days from the date of the award. Failure to submit the consent form within 30 calendar days from the date of the award will void the grant.

Material changes in the entries shown in the application, such as discontinuing operation or bankruptcy, or change of name (including DBA), change of address, telephone, fax number or E-mail address should be reported by a letter to the Commission Director of the Communications Division, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102.

B. Project Audit and Reporting Requirements

See Appendix B.

VII. Payments to CASF Recipients

Reimbursement payments will be made in accordance with, and within the time specified in California Government Code, section 927, et seq. Grantees must notify the Director of Communications Division as soon as they become aware that they may not be able to meet project deadlines. The Commission may withhold or reduce payment if the grantee fails to notify the Director of such changes. See Appendix C for payment details.

COMMENTS ON DRAFT RESOLUTION

In compliance with Public Utilities Code section 311, subdivision (g), a notice letter was emailed on March 24, 2023, informing all parties on the CASF Distribution List of the availability of the draft of this Resolution for public comments at the Commission's documents website at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/documents/>. This letter also informed parties that the final conformed Resolution adopted by the Commission will be posted and available at the same website. The Commission received no public comments.

FINDINGS

1. On or before July 1, 2022, staff received 11 applications for 13 projects that do not qualify for approval by ministerial review.
2. Staff reviewed, and recommended awards based on completeness, overall quality, and project costs reasonableness
3. Based on its review, Staff recommends funding for 11 of the 13 projects for Commission consideration by resolution as listed in Appendix A of this resolution. Staff determined that nine of ten applicants meet eligibility requirements. Staff further determined that these 11 projects qualify for funding under D.22-05-029.
4. Staff recommends reducing SBPE's requested budget consistent with requirements stated in D.22-05-029. Staff recommends funding as listed in Appendix A of this resolution.
5. Based on its review, Staff recommends denying NextGen Policy's applications because the project proposals exceed the intent of the Adoption Account, the costs are exceptionally high, approval of these proposal would be inconsistent

with the treatment of other applications, and the distinctly different structure and goals of the proposed projects prevents proper project oversight by Staff.

6. A notice letter was emailed on March 24, 2023, informing all parties on the CASF Distribution List of the availability of the draft of this Resolution for public comments at the Commission's documents website at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/documents/>. This letter also informed parties that the final conformed Resolution adopted by the Commission will be posted and available at the same website. The Commission received no public comments.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The Commission shall award the following grant amounts:
 - \$1,230,000 to California State University, Fresno Foundation for one project;
 - \$984,357 to Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective for three projects;
 - \$3,375,700 to the County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department for one project;
 - \$2,050,000 to human-I-T for one project;
 - \$1,230,000 to Insure the Uninsured Project for one project;
 - \$38,850 to Santa Barbara Partners in Education for one project.
 - \$150,000 to the Thai Community Development Center for one project;
 - \$126,375 to The Children's Movement for one project;
 - \$133,500 to the Westside Family Preservation Services Network for one project;

The total grant award is \$9,318,782. All awards are based on the descriptions of the projects as described herein and are predicated on commitments to provide adoption services as expressed in its application and in compliance with all guidelines, requirements and, conditions associated with a CASF award, as specified in D.22-05-029, and this Resolution.

2. California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development Center, The Children's Movement, and Westside Family Preservation Services Network must complete

all work and achieve all performance metrics identified in Appendix A of this Resolution and workplans submitted with its application.

3. California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development Center, The Children's Movement, and Westside Family Preservation Services Network must complete and execute the consent form agreeing to the conditions set forth in this Resolution.

A completed and executed consent form shall be emailed to CASF_Adoption@cpuc.ca.gov within 30 calendar days from the date of the adoption of this Resolution. Failure to submit the consent form within 30 calendar days from the date of the adoption of this Resolution will deem the grant null and void.

4. By receiving a CASF grant, California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development Center, The Children's Movement, and Westside Family Preservation Services Network agree to comply with the terms, conditions and requirements of the grant and thus submits to the jurisdiction of the Commission with regard to disbursement and administration of the grant.
5. California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development Center, The Children's Movement, and Westside Family Preservation Services Network (grant recipients) must maintain files, invoices, and other related documentation for three years after final payment. Grant recipients shall make these records available to the Commission upon request and agree that these records are subject to audit and review by the Commission at any time within three years after grant recipients incurred the expense being audited.
6. If California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal

Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development Center, The Children's Movement, and Westside Family Preservation Services Network fail to complete the project in accordance with the terms outlined in D.22-05-029 and this Resolution, they must reimburse some or all the CASF funds it has received.

7. The Commission denies NextGen's applications for CASF Adoption Account funds.

This Resolution is effective today.

I hereby certify that this Resolution was adopted by the Public Utilities Commission at its regular meeting on _____. The following Commissioners approved it:

Rachel Peterson
Executive Director

APPENDIX A
Approved Project Budget and Performance Metrics*

#	Applicant Name	Project Name	Project Type	Provide Digital Literacy Training to (Participants)	Number of Subscriptions*	Device Award**	In-classroom Devices	Take-home Devices	Amount for Program Implementation	Total Adoption Account Award
1	California State University, Fresno Foundation	Fresno State Connect	Call Center	N/A	6000	\$ -	0	0	\$1,230,000	\$1,230,000
2	Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective	Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: English Language Learners	Digital Literacy	528	0	\$ -	0	0	\$ 247,264	\$ 247,264
3	Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective	Digital Literacy for Workforce Development: Justice Involved Individuals	Digital Literacy	528	0	\$ -	0	0	\$ 246,700	\$ 246,700
4	Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective	Northeastern and Upstate Call Center	Call Center	N/A	1500	\$ -	0	0	\$ 490,393	\$ 490,393
5	County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department	County of Los Angeles - Digital Navigator Program	Digital Literacy	7500	2000	\$51,250	50	2000	\$3,324,450	\$3,375,700
6	human-I-T	human-I-T Connect Los Angeles County	Call Center	N/A	10000	\$ 750	0	0	\$2,049,250	\$2,050,000
7	Insure the Uninsured Project	California Health Programs Beneficiaries: ACP Outreach and Enrollment	Call Center	N/A	6000	\$ -	0	0	\$1,230,000	\$1,230,000

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#	Applicant Name	Project Name	Project Type	Provide Digital Literacy Training to (Participants)	Number of Subscriptions*	Device Award**	In-classroom Devices	Take-home Devices	Amount for Program Implementation	Total Adoption Account Award
8	Santa Barbara Partners in Education,	Computers for Families Program	Digital Literacy	50	2500	\$ 15,000	0	50	\$ 23,850	\$ 38,850
9	Thai Community Development Center	Advancing Tech Equity	Call Center	N/A	4800	\$ 1,500	2	0	\$ 148,500	\$ 150,000
10	The Children's Movement	Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion: The Children's Movement Project	Digital Literacy	200	10	\$31,250	26	300	\$ 95,125	\$ 126,375
11	Westside Family Preservation Services Network	Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion: Westside Family Preservation Services Network Project	Digital Literacy	315	0	\$ -	0	0	\$ 133,500	\$ 133,500
				9,121	32,810	\$9,318,782				

* Performance for digital literacy projects is based on number of participants trained; performance for call centers is based on the number of subscriptions obtained.

** None of the listed projects requested hotspots.

APPENDIX B

Reporting Requirements

Project Audit

California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development Center, The Children's Movement, and Westside Family Preservation Services Network (grant recipients) must maintain files, invoices, and other related documentation for three years after final payment. Grant recipients shall make these records available to the Commission upon request and agree that these records are subject to audit and review by the Commission at any time within three years after the grant recipients incurred the expense being audited.

Project Reporting Requirements

The grant award is contingent upon fulfilling reporting requirements during and after project completion as specified in D.22-05-029, Appendix 2, Section XIII.

A template for all necessary reports is provided in the CASF Adoption Program Administrative Manual, which is posted on the Commission's Adoption Account website and is also available directly from the website. Up to three reports will be required throughout the course of the project:

i. Ramp-up period report

A "ramp-up period report" is required after completion of the ramp up activities and when deployment is set to begin (if applicable). This report must be submitted by no later than 3 months after the completion of the ramp up activities. In this report, recipients will report on the completion of the ramp up activities per the work plan, milestones met, as well as request payment for relevant expenses to date. The ramp up period may not exceed 6 months from the time the application is approved.

ii. Year 1 Progress Report

The Year 1 progress report is required at the end of the first year of deployment. This report must be submitted by no later than 3 months after the end of the first year of deployment. In this report, recipients will report on the status of Year 1 milestones per the work plan, as well as request payment for relevant expenses to date.

iii. Year 2 Completion Report

The Year 2 completion report is required at the end of the 24-month period, or after the work plan milestones/deliverables have been accomplished if earlier than the 24-month

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period. This report must be submitted by no later than 3 months after completion of the project. In this report, recipients will report on the completion of the overall project, milestones met per the work plan, as well as request payment for final and remaining relevant expenses.

All required reports must be submitted via email to: CASF_Adoption@cpuc.ca.gov. The grant recipients must certify that each report submitted is true and correct under penalty of perjury.

APPENDIX C

Payments to CASF Recipients

- California State University: Fresno Foundation, Chico State Enterprises: North State Planning and Development Collective, County of Los Angeles: Internal Services Department, human-I-T, Insure the Uninsured Project, Santa Barbara Partners in Education, Thai Community Development (grant recipients) may submit payment requests at 3 points throughout the project period. Payment requests may accompany the 3 reports noted above (Ramp Up Period, if applicable, Year 1, Year 2).
- Payment requests may also be submitted separately from and in addition to the Calendar Year reporting described above, provided that each payment request includes the information provided on the most recently submitted Calendar Year report and any additional information or costs incurred since the most recent Calendar Year report was submitted.
- Whether tied to Calendar Year reporting or outside of that reporting schedule, no more than three payment requests may be submitted.
- Payment request for the ramp-up period may not exceed 25% of grant amount.
- No more than 90% of the grant amount will be reimbursed before the completion report and final payment request;
- All payments requests require documentation of project participation (number of participants trained or provided access and the number of participants that subsequently subscribe to a broadband Internet service provider to use a device in their home).
- Grant recipients shall submit final requests for payment no later than 3 months after completion of the project.
- Payment will be based upon receipt and approval of invoices and other supporting documents showing the expenditures incurred for the project are in accordance with their approved application and budget.
- Grant must notify the Director of the Communications Division as soon as they become aware that they may not be able to meet project deadlines. The Commission may withhold or reduce payment if the grantee fails to notify the Director of the Communications Division of such changes.
- Payment will be made in accordance with, and within the time specified in California Government Code § 927 et seq.
- The Commission has the right to conduct any necessary audit, verification, and discovery during project implementation to ensure that CASF funds are spent in accordance with the terms of approval granted by the Commission.
- The Grant recipients' invoices will be subject to audit by the Commission at any time within three years of final payment.

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Grant recipients must certify that each report and payment request submitted is true and correct under penalty of perjury. All required reports and payment requests, including invoices and other supporting documents should be submitted via email to: CASF_Adoption@cpuc.ca.gov.

APPENDIX D

NextGen Budgets

Project: Future-Proofing California's Economy and Workforce through Advanced Digital Skills Training

Category	Total Cost	Grant Request	Match Funding
<i>In-Classroom Computing Devices</i>	\$ 11,250.00	\$ 9,562.50	\$ 1,687.50
<i>Take Home Computing Devices</i>	\$ 39,963.42	\$ 33,968.91	\$ 5,994.51
<i>Hot Spots</i>	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 16,575.00	\$ 2,925.00
<i>Staff for Outreach</i>	\$ 240,000.00	\$ 204,000.00	\$ 36,000.00
<i>Staff for Instruction (applicant stated this is incorporated in the purchase of the Qwasar licence)</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>Other Staffing: Wrap Around Services Coordinator: will facilitate the provision of socio-emotional and safetynet services for participants in need across all three program sites.</i>	\$ 100,006.40	\$ 85,005.44	\$ 15,000.96
<i>Other Staffing: Marketing coordinator: will coordinate marketing and outreach efforts by contracted firms, NextGen Policy Comms staff, and community college partners.</i>	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 110,500.00	\$ 19,500.00
<i>Cost for Qwasar to provide virtual instruction (Pay unit- per license)</i>	\$ 1,813,372.50	\$ 1,541,366.63	\$ 272,005.88
<i>Travel Costs</i>	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
<i>Cost per site for Qwasar to install curriculum software at the community colleges (Pay unit - per site)</i>	\$ 37,318.83	\$ 31,721.01	\$ 5,597.82
<i>Safetynet Supports</i>	\$ 375,000.00	\$ 318,750.00	\$ 56,250.00
<i>Socio-emotional supports</i>	\$ 1,080,000.00	\$ 918,000.00	\$ 162,000.00
<i>Contracted Job Placement Services</i>	\$ 337,500.00	\$ 286,875.00	\$ 50,625.00
<i>Milestone Incentives for Participants</i>	\$ 375,000.00	\$ 318,750.00	\$ 56,250.00
<i>Contracted Marketing Services</i>	\$ 674,112.00	\$ 572,995.20	\$ 101,116.80
<i>Technical support</i>	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 31,875.00	\$ 5,625.00
<i>Administrative costs</i>	\$ 775,000.00	\$ 658,750.00	\$ 116,250.00
TOTALS	\$ 6,055,523.15	\$ 5,147,194.68	\$ 908,328.47
Per Participant (for program implementation costs)		\$ 6,782.78	

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Project: Sacramento Connect Corps

Description	Total Cost	Grant Request	Match Funding
<i>In-Classroom Computing Devices</i>	\$ 11,250.00	\$ 11,250.00	\$ -
<i>Take Home Computing Devices</i>	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00
<i>Hot spot devices for digital navigators when they are studying at home</i>	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -
<i>Staff for Outreach - if applicable</i>	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 187,500.00	\$ -
<i>In-person instructors for CompTIA coursework and soft skills training</i>	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 48,000.00	\$ -
<i>IT staff to configure devices for digital navigators, set up web portal/IT ticketing system for digital navigator clients</i>	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ -
<i>Digital navigator supervisor - annual salary</i>	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ -
<i>Partnership director - part-time</i>	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ -
<i>Job coach - \$450 per digital navigator</i>	\$ 6,750.00	\$ 6,750.00	\$ -
<i>Supportive services coordinator</i>	\$ 13,300.00	\$ 13,300.00	\$ -
<i>Travel Costs</i>	\$ 1,170.00	\$ 1,170.00	\$ -
<i>Printer</i>	\$ 750.00		\$ 750.00
<i>Computer Software</i>	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 2,250.00	\$ -
<i>Furniture: Desks</i>	\$ 9,000.00		\$ 9,000.00
<i>Furniture: Chairs</i>	\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00
<i>CompTIA IT Fundamentals Exam</i>	\$ 1,890.00	\$ 1,890.00	\$ -
<i>CompTIA A+ Exam</i>	\$ 3,480.00	\$ 3,480.00	\$ -
<i>Technical support</i>	\$ 4,200.00	\$ 4,200.00	\$ -
<i>Flyers, website for marketing digital navigator services, tablet devices</i>	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
<i>Costs for grant/program administration and regulatory compliance</i>	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 72,000.00	\$ -
<i>8 additional computers, rent for help desk locations, mentoring</i>	\$ 73,000.00		\$ 73,000.00
TOTALS:	\$ 577,640.00	\$ 469,890.00	\$ 107,750.00
Per Participant (For program implementaton costs)	\$ 3,784.50		

APPENDIX E
Allowable Cost per Decision 22-05-029

The Commission may fund up to 85 percent of the eligible program costs and may reimburse the following:

- a. Education and outreach efforts (including travel, up to 10% of approved grant amount) and materials;
- b. Acceptable computing devices (does not include smartphones) within budgetary limits and inclusive of computer warranty;
 - In-classroom computing devices
 - Take-home computing devices (for Digital Literacy Projects only)
- c. Software (inclusive of licensing for online platforms);
- d. Printers
- e. Network routers, switches, modems, and cabling deployed for the purpose of establishing a space for broadband access or digital literacy that connects to an existing in-building broadband network such as Wi-Fi (inside network);
- f. Mobile hotspots, only when no inside network is available;
- g. Provision of technical support for the computing devices subsidized through this program;
- h. Desks and chairs to furnish a designated space for digital literacy or broadband access;
- i. For Digital Literacy Projects, gathering, preparing, creating, and distributing digital literacy curriculum;
- j. Staff including digital literacy instructors, staff for monitoring the designated space, or staff for administering call centers (if applicable); and
- k. Reimbursement for administrative costs,¹⁸ (other than for excluded items, listed below) is limited to administrative costs representing 15% or less of the overall proposed budget.

Device technical support must be able to respond either by phone or in person within 24 hours. Refurbished devices must have at least a six-month warranty. New devices must have at least a 30-day warranty.

Facility rent, utilities, internet service costs, food costs, lodging, marketing incentives for participation (gift cards, giveaways, etc.), certain classroom supplies and accessories, and other items not listed above are not eligible for reimbursement. All funding

¹⁸ “Administrative costs” are defined here as “indirect overhead costs attributable to a project per generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and the direct cost of complying with Commission administrative and regulatory requirements related to the grant itself,” consistent with other CASF program rules.

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requests will be assessed for reasonableness and may be adjusted accordingly at the discretion of the Commission. Any remaining project costs not authorized for funding by the CASF Adoption grant must be funded by other sources (leveraged or self-funding).