



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC Awards First Round of Grants for Last Mile Broadband Infrastructure Projects Across California

SAN FRANCISCO, July 11, 2024 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today approved the first round of awards for last mile broadband projects as part of the \$2 billion [Last Mile Federal Funding Account Grant Program](#). This program aims to expand internet access for underserved and unserved communities across California. Today’s decision kicks off a rolling process that will continue throughout the summer and fall, highlighting the state’s commitment to bridging the digital divide through [Broadband For All](#).

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.

Investments are being made where they matter most

Many 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 projects will serve predominantly disadvantaged and low-income communities across the state.

Today’s awardees include the [Golden State Connect Authority](#) and [Plumas Sierra Telecommunications](#) in Imperial, Lassen, and Plumas Counties. In addition, awards were made to the Cities of Oakland and Fremont, the City and County of San Francisco, and Plumas Sierra Telecom in the counties of Alameda, San Francisco, and Sierra. In all, 11 grants were awarded for a total of \$88.6 million. In addition, three projects in Plumas County for \$16.7 million were awarded by staff delegated authority.

“These projects will build community-based, future-proof, and equity-focused broadband infrastructure across California,” said CPUC President Alice Reynolds. “The Federal Funding Account – and these projects – are a shining example of our state’s Broadband For All values and objectives.”

“I am pleased to support these Federal Funding Account grants for last mile broadband infrastructure funding across various California counties,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck. “These grants are another important step to help close the digital divide, especially in areas that have seen a historical lack of investment. I am excited to support these grants as we take a critical leap forward in ensuring broadband for all Californians.”

Grant recipients empower their communities

- **GSCA Imperial County:**

- “The importance of broadband connectivity cannot be overstated, especially for unserved and underserved residents. Access to high-speed internet is essential for education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. We are grateful to the CPUC for providing this important and substantial investment in our rural communities.” - Jack Garamendi, GSCA Board Chair and Calaveras County Supervisor
- “We are thrilled at the CPUC’s award of grant funds for GSCA’s Imperial County Broadband Network project. The deployment of broadband and the implementation of this innovative model will have a transformative impact on our community; helping to close the digital divide, foster economic growth, and improve quality of life in Imperial County.” - Michael Kelley, Imperial County Supervisor

- **Plumas-Sierra Telecommunications:**

- “With broadband access now a necessity—much like electricity in the early 1900’s—the award of Federal Funding Account grant funds will allow Plumas-Sierra Telecommunications to continue to bridge the digital divide in these rural areas that would otherwise remain unserved due to the high cost of fiber-optic cable construction in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of Northern California.” - Jeff Blagg, Right-of-Way Engineer for Plumas Sierra Telecommunications and Plumas Sierra Rural Electric

Cooperative

- **City of Oakland:**

- “I am extremely proud of the team that worked on this. I also want to thank the CPUC for selecting our project and providing this incredible opportunity to invest in underserved communities in Oakland.” - Tony Batalla, Chief Information Officer, City of Oakland
- “This represents the culmination of years of collaboration between the City of Oakland, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland Housing Authority, and many trusted community partners. The Oakland Connect project will promote a more connected and more equitable Oakland.” - Patrick Messac, Director of OaklandUndivided

- **City of Fremont:**

- “The City of Fremont is grateful for the opportunity that this funding presents. The funding will have a profound impact on Fremont’s broadband infrastructure, and enhancing this critical utility will promote digital equity in underserved and unserved areas of the community and create a broadband-rich environment to support our constituents and promote local economic growth.” - Sanford Taylor, Information Technology Services Director

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 two Draft Resolutions approved today, please visit the CPUC’s [Federal Funding Account Recommendations and Awards webpage](#).

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.

Prior to today's awards, the CPUC previously issued grants to tribes and local agencies through the \$50 million [Local Agency and Technical Assistance \(LATA\) grant program](#). These grants funded eligible pre-construction expenses that facilitate deployment of broadband network deployment projects to areas in need. The work paid off, with nearly 75 percent of LATA grant recipients participating in an application for the first window of the Federal Funding Account.

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 \(CASF\)](#).

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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.