

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

October 21, 2015

To: Members of CASF Distribution List

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF AN ESTIMATED
\$5,000,000 IN ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CALIFORNIA
ADVANCED SERVICES (CASF) REGIONAL CONSORTIA
GRANTS**

This letter is to inform prospective applicants that the Communications Division (CD) is accepting proposals to fund activities within the guidelines outlined below.

Background

On June 23, 2011, the Commission adopted Decision 11-06-038, implementing the CASF Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Account ("Consortia Grant Account"). The Consortia Grant Account funds "broadband deployment activities other than the capital cost of facilities, as specified by the Commission."

The Commission approved 16 consortia when it passed Resolutions T-17349 (December 2, 2011), T-17355 (February 16, 2012), T-17440 (May 15, 2014), and T-17445 (June 12, 2014). To date, the Commission has awarded a total of \$9,263,476 in grant funding for 16 consortia groups.

On September 2, 2015, Governor Brown signed AB 1262 (Wood, Chapter 242, Statutes of 2015), which reallocates funding between two accounts within the CASF for purposes of encouraging broadband deployment in the state. Specifically, AB 1262 results in a reduction of \$5,000,000 from the Broadband Infrastructure Revolving Loan Account and a corresponding increase to the Consortia Grant Account.

As discussed in Decision 11-06-038, the Commission must establish a schedule for a new round of applications seeking the additional Consortia Grant program funds, with the same eligibility criteria, filing requirements, and scoring protocols adopted for the initial filing round applying to subsequent rounds. Previously awarded consortia grant recipients may seek renewed funding for additional activities. The Commission will consider how efficient and cost effective any previous granted

consortia funds were spent as a basis for awarding any new and/or additional funding.

Application Process

With the reallocated funds from AB 1262, an estimated \$5,000,000 is now available to fund new and existing consortia activities. As with the previous grants, funds will be used to promote ubiquitous broadband deployment in unserved and underserved areas and to advance broadband adoption throughout California. An eligible Consortium may include, but is not limited to, local and regional governments, public safety, K-12 education, health care, libraries, higher education, community-based organizations, tourism, parks and recreation, agricultural, and business.

Consortia activities shall be designed to promote regionally appropriate and cost-effective broadband deployment, access, and adoption within a given region. The Commission currently funds grantees for activities such as:

- Identifying potential CASF infrastructure projects, along with other opportunities, where providers can expand and improve their infrastructure and service offerings to achieve the state's goal of reaching 98% broadband deployment.
- Providing information and data about broadband availability and demand aggregation to local broadband providers and informing them about CASF.
- Inventorying regional broadband assets or mapping broadband availability in the area; improving access for low-income populations.
- Increasing adoption through efforts such as digital literacy training.
- Providing education and information to policymakers about broadband deployment, access, and adoption and identifying existing barriers and prospective strategies to help bridge the "digital divide."

Per Decision 11-06-038, the maximum award per consortium will be \$150,000 per year, for up to three years, plus \$10,000 (per consortium for up to 5 representatives) for attendance at the Annual Learning Summit. Given the program is operating with a limited amount of funding available, the Commission may award more grants of smaller amounts (proposals requesting less funding) and/or that offer services for less than three years. It is likely that awards will be less than the allowed maximum amounts in order to leverage available funding.

All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the scoring criteria in Decision 11-06-038. Applicants that meet a minimum threshold scoring criteria of 70 points (out of a possible 100) may be eligible for funding. Proposals from previously funded Regional Consortia that meet the minimum threshold scoring will also be considered in the context of past performance in implementing their Action Plan and

Work Plan. Where multiple applicants seek funding in the same region, the highest ranking applicant shall be considered eligible to receive a grant. As with the previous grant approvals, the Commission intends to avoid funding duplicative activities in the same area.

Incomplete proposals will not be evaluated. To assist prospective applicants for Consortia, Decision 11-06-038 provides a series of attachments illustrating the various informational requirements and documents that must be properly completed in order for an application to be considered and approved. Key attachments include:

- Action Plan and Work Plan Contents
- Sample of Action Plan Format
- Sample of Work Plan Format
- Requested Budget
- CASF Consortia Application Checklist
- Consortium Scoring Criteria

CD will host an informational session for prospective applicants in December 2015. More specific details will follow.

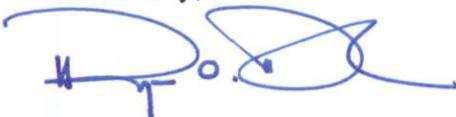
Applicants must submit their proposals by January 29, 2016 to ensure consideration. Applicants must submit their proposals via email and U.S. mail to the below addresses:

CASF_Consortia_Grant_Administrator@cpuc.ca.gov

California Public Utilities Commission
Attn: CASF Consortia Coordinator
Communications Division
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298

If you have questions, please contact Selena Huang by email at xsh@cpuc.ca.gov or CASF_Consortia_Grant_Application_Questions@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Ryan Dulin
Director, Communications Division