**California Public Utilities Commission (Commission)**

**Broadband Adoption Account**

**Requirements and Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What is the purpose of the Broadband Adoption Account?
   1. *The Broadband Adoption Account, created via Assembly Bill 1665 in 2017, provides 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. The Commission is required to give preference to programs and projects in communities with demonstrated low broadband access, including low-income communities, senior citizen communities, and communities facing socioeconomic barriers to broadband adoption.*
2. How much funding is available?
3. *The Broadband Adoption Account is authorized $20.024 million for fiscal year 2022-2023 to provide grants to increase publicly available or after-school broadband access and digital inclusion.*
4. Who is eligible to apply for funding?
   1. *Eligible applicants include local governments, senior citizen 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. What types of projects are eligible for funding?
   1. *Digital Inclusion Projects: Digital Inclusion projects may include digital literacy training programs and public education to communities with limited broadband adoption, including low-income communities, senior citizen communities, and communities facing socioeconomic barriers to broadband adoption.*
   2. *Broadband Access Projects: Broadband Access projects may include projects that increase or provide free broadband access in community training rooms or other public spaces, such as local government centers, senior citizen centers, schools, public libraries, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations. The Commission may also fund community outreach, such as analysis, comparison of Internet plans within the community, and call centers that will increase broadband access and adoption.*
6. How will projects be evaluated?
7. *Applications will be reviewed and evaluated for completeness and overall quality.*
8. *Applications may be rejected for the following reasons:*
   * 1. *The applicant submitted an incomplete application and did not respond to inquiries from Staff regarding missing information.*
     2. *The applicant is a non-profit organization that that failed to provide documentation showing good standing with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the California Secretary of State.*
     3. *The applicant has previously had a Commission grant award rescinded for violation of Commission or program rules.*
     4. *The applicant has made false statements to the Commission or to the Federal Communications Commission.*
9. What types of costs associated with the projects are eligible for reimbursement?
   1. *The following may be eligible for project cost reimbursement:* 
      1. *Education and outreach efforts (including travel, up to 10% of grant amount) and materials.*
      2. *Acceptable computing devices (does not include smartphones) within budgetary limits and inclusive of computer.*
      3. *Software (inclusive of licensing for online platforms).*
      4. *Printers.*
      5. *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).*
      6. *Mobile hotspots, only when no inside network is available.*
      7. *Provision of technical support for the installation of equipment subsidized through this program or technical support for the equipment for the duration of the project subsidized through this program.*
      8. *Desks and chairs to furnish a designated space for training/access.*
      9. *Gathering, preparing, creating and distributing digital literacy curriculum (for Digital Literacy projects).*
      10. *Digital literacy instructors or staffing for monitoring the designated space or staffing for call centers.*
      11. *Reimbursement for administrative costs is limited to administrative costs representing 15% or less of the overall proposed budget.*

*Note that 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.*

1. What is the difference between having a project approved through ministerial review as opposed to being approved by a Commission Resolution and what are the requirements for a project to be approved by ministerial review?
   1. *A project can be approved by the Communications Division through ministerial review if it meets ministerial review criteria. Applications not meeting ministerial review may be approved through a Commission Resolution which requires a full Commission review. Ministerial criteria are the following:*
      1. *Applicant requests a grant of $150,000 or less.*
      2. *The nonprofit organization has existed for more than one year.*
      3. *The applicant has at least one year’s experience conducting a digital literacy training or broadband access project or if they have completed at least one digital literacy training or broadband access project.*
      4. *The applicant has designated in person or virtual space for trainings or public computer access or provided detailed information on how such in person or virtual space will be obtained.*
      5. *For digital literacy projects, the proposed project costs $477 per participant or less (exclusive of in-person and take-home computer or hot spot reimbursements, if applicable).*
      6. *For broadband access projects, the proposed project costs $42 per participant or less (exclusive of in-person and take-home computer or hot spot reimbursements).*
      7. *For call center projects, the proposed project costs $205 per subscription or less.*
      8. *The application meets all other Broadband Adoption Account application requirements*
2. Is there a limit to how much funding an applicant can request (outside of ministerial criteria limits stated above)?
3. *Reimbursement for in-classroom computing devices used in community training rooms or other public spaces is limited to $750 per device, and a maximum funding of $11,250 per project.*
4. *Reimbursement for take-home computing devices is limited to only households with incomes at or below the thresholds required to participate in the California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE), in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, the National School Lunch Program, or the Women, Infants, and Children Program upon completion of the digital literacy training courses (Digital Literacy Programs only). Reimbursement for these take-home computing devices is limited to $300 per device (inclusive of computer warranty), is limited to two devices per eligible household, and is limited to $40,000 per project. Grantees should ensure proof of eligibility in their distribution of computing devices for households.*
5. *Reimbursement for mobile hotspots used in community training rooms or other public spaces such as local government centers, senior centers, schools, public libraries nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations or used by individuals in locations where no inside network exists, is limited to a cap of $300 per device and $20,000 per project.*
6. With regards to the reimbursement limitation on the device cost and quantity, can the applicant leverage other funding sources, or use out of pocket funds for the costs exceeding the limit?
7. *Yes. The Commission encourages applicants to consider the availability of other funding sources for the project, including contributions from broadband service providers, or from other public or private broadband adoption programs.*
8. Is there a limit to the number of projects an applicant can apply for?
9. *No, there is no statutory limit to the number of projects an applicant can seek funding for.*
10. *Separate applications must be submitted for locations which have both a digital literacy and broadband access component.*
11. Is there a time limit between the awarding of funds and project completion?
12. *Yes. Grantees must start the project within six months after submitting a consent form accepting the terms stated in the Broadband Adoption Account Award Letter or Resolution (after the ramp-up time if applicable) and complete the project within a 24-month timeframe or earlier.*
13. What are the reporting requirements once funding for a project is granted and when can payment requests be made?
    1. *The grantee must submit a ramp-up period report (if a ramp-up period was executed). The grantee must submit a year 1 report (if the project was not completed at the end of the year 1 period). The grantee must submit a completion report.*
    2. *A maximum of three payment requests can be made. A payment request must be submitted with the completion report. A payment request for the ramp-up period (if applicable) or the year 1 period can be submitted with the period report or submitted separately.*
    3. *A maximum of 25% of the grant can be requested for ramp-up activities. A maximum of 90% of the remaining grant funds can be paid out before the submission of the completion report and final payment request ).*
    4. *Please see the Broadband* [*Adoption Account Guidelines*](https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/communications-division/documents/casf-adoption-and-access/adoption_account/information/adoption-account-guidelines-may-2022.pdf) *for further information.*
14. How can I apply?
    1. *Please see the Broadband* [*Adoption Account Application Instructions.*](https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/communications-division/documents/casf-adoption-and-access/adoption_account/information/broadband-adoption-account-application-instructions.docx)
15. When are the application deadlines?
16. *Please refer to the* [*website*](https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/california-advanced-services-fund/casf-adoption-account) *for the current schedule.*
17. How will applicants find out if their application has been approved or denied and what is the process for accepting the award?
18. *Staff will notify an applicant by letter specifying reasons for rejection should an application fail to meet the Commission criteria or other factors.*
19. Applications approved by award letter or Resolution will be provided a consent form. By signing the consent form the grantee agrees to the terms stated in the approving Commission Resolution or award letter and authorizes the award. In the consent agreement the grantee will provide the name of the grantee organization and names of officers, and the form must be signed by an authorized representative of the organization. Should the grantee not accept the award through failure to submit the consent form within 30 calendar days from the date of the award, the Commission will deem the grant null and void.