

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



March 29, 2019

To: Members of CASF Distribution List

Subject: Solicitation for the California Advanced Services Fund Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Grant Applications

This letter is to inform prospective applicants that the Communications Division (CD) is accepting the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Grant Application proposals to fund activities meeting program guidelines.

Background

On October 15, 2017, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 1665¹ (Garcia, Chapter 851, Statutes of 2017) into law, which among other things, established continuation of the CASF Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Grant Account (Consortia Grant Account) with an additional \$10 million in available funds.

On October 25, 2018, the Commission adopted Decision (D.) 18-10-032, implementing programmatic changes to the Consortia Grant Account as required by AB 1665, that funds be used to “facilitate the deployment of broadband services by assisting infrastructure grant applicants in the project development or grant application process”.²

Pursuant to rules developed to implement the law, the Commission will consider funding Consortium activities that achieve the following objectives:

- Collaborating with the Commission to engage regional consortia, local officials, ISPs, stakeholders, and consumers regarding priority areas and cost-effective strategies to achieve the broadband access goal.
- Identifying potential CASF infrastructure projects, along with other opportunities, where ISPs can expand and improve their infrastructure and service offerings to achieve the goal of reaching 98% broadband deployment in each consortia region.
- Assisting infrastructure applicants in the project development or grant application process.
- Conducting activities leading to infrastructure applications.
- Assisting the Commission in publicizing requests for wireline testing volunteers in areas, as needed.

¹ AB 1665 is codified at Public Utilities Code (Pub. Util.) Code, § 281.

² Pub. Util. Code, § 281(g)(1).

Eligibility

An eligible Consortium may include representatives, of organizations including, but not limited to, local and regional government, public safety, elementary and secondary education, health care, libraries, postsecondary education, community-based organizations, tourism, parks and recreation, agricultural, business, workforce organizations, and air pollution control or air quality management districts. An eligible Consortium is not required to have as its lead fiscal agent an entity with a certificate of public convenience and necessity.

Application Package

To assist prospective applicants with the application process, the revised CASF Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Grant Program Administrative Manual (Administrative Manual, *Version 7, April 2019*) provides a series of application attachments illustrating the various informational requirements and documents that must be properly completed and submitted as part of the application. The Administrative Manual is available on the CASF Consortia webpage: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/General.aspx?id=870>. Key attachments include:

- CASF Consortia Grant Application Checklist
- Description of Existing and Past Non-CASF Funded Projects
- Board Member Background and Project Role
- Work Plan and Performance Metrics Plan
- Proposed Budget Plan
- Affidavit Form

The application must include specific work activities; measurable, tangible, and verifiable work deliverables; specific timeline milestones; quantitative and data-driven performance measures; and the method for performance tracking and measuring in their proposed *Work Plan and Performance Metrics Plan*. Examples of activities, deliverables, performance measures are provided in the *Work Plan and Performance Metrics Plan* form template. Grantees must provide reporting and payment request documentation of performance/outcomes, consistent with the applicant's *Work Plan and Performance Metrics Plan*.

Both existing and newly formed consortia may submit applications. Applications will be evaluated based on meeting all the requirements in the Information Required from Applicants and scoring criteria. Applications will be objectively evaluated on how well they meet the goals of the CASF Consortia Program consistent with Pub. Util. Code, § 281.

Application Submission and Evaluation Process

The maximum funding cap per year per consortium is \$150,000, for up till December 31, 2022, plus \$10,000 (per consortium for up to 5 representatives) for attendance at the Annual Public Workshop. 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.

All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the scoring criteria in D. 18-10-032.³ Applicants that meet a minimum threshold scoring criteria of 70 points (out of a possible 100) will be considered for funding. Where multiple consortia apply for the same region with the highest score

³ D.18-10-032, Appendix 1, pp. 11-12.

will be considered for an award. As with the previous grant approvals, CASF grants awarded will be limited to and apply only to activities and programs that are not already funded by any other public or private sources. The CD will notify an applicant by letter specifying the reasons for rejection, should an application fail to meet the criteria set forth in D.18-10-032.

The Communications Division will host a session for prospective applicants on April 16, 2019. Details will follow.

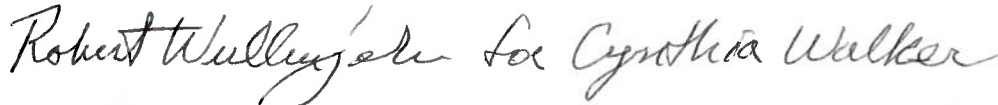
Applicants must submit their proposals by May 17, 2019 to ensure consideration. Applicants must submit their proposals via email and U.S. mail to the below addresses:

[CASF Consortia Grant Administrator@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto: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 [CASF Consortia Grant Administrator@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:CASF_Consortia_Grant_Administrator@cpuc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Wulley for Cynthia Walker".

Cynthia Walker, Director
Communications Division