



Playbook: **Broadband Public Housing Account Grant Program**

**California Advanced
Services Fund (CASF)**



The California Advance Services Fund (CASF) Broadband Public Housing Account (BPHA) is a program funded and run by the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC). It provides grants and loans to build networks offering free broadband services for residents.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS INCLUDE:

- Publicly supported communities.
- **Must not have access to any broadband service provider** that offers free broadband service that meets or exceeds **100 Mbps/20 Mbps service**.
- **Farmworker housing** - housing that is consistent with the definition of “farmworker housing” outlined in California Health and Safety Code Section 50199.7 (h), which includes the requirement that “farmworker housing” means housing in which at least 50 percent of the units are available to, and occupied by, farmworkers and their households
- **Other Housing Development** - (a new category) includes housing sites with 80% or more units that ‘are low income.’ This opens an opportunity for mixed-income projects, having some units that are not ‘low income,’ specifically:
 - a **multi-dwelling unit development** such as a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) or an apartment complex, in which all units are owned by the same entity(ies) and that has 80% or greater residential units that are “low-income”
 - **Tribal housing**, including developments funded with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding or through a Tribally Designated Housing Entity
- **Mobilehome parks** - any area or tract of land where two or more lots are rented or leased, held out for rent or lease, or were formerly held out for rent or lease and later converted to a subdivision, cooperative, condominium, or other form of resident ownership, to accommodate manufactured homes, mobilehomes, or recreational vehicles used for human habitation, as defined in Section 18214 of the California Health & Safety Code. The rental paid for a manufactured home, a mobilehome, or a recreational vehicle shall be deemed to include rental for the lot it occupies. This subdivision shall not be construed to authorize the rental of a mobilehome park space for the accommodation of a recreational vehicle in violation of Section 798.22 of the Civil Code. “Mobilehome park” shall meet all of the requirements of California Health & Safety Code 18214.
- **Chartered public housing authorities or 501(c)3 organizations** that own publicly supported housing or farmworker housing.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS MUST BE WILLING TO ATTEST TO THE FOLLOWING:

- No broadband service provider currently offers free broadband service that meets or exceeds **100 Mbps/20 Mbps service**.
- The property will be in residential use as a low-income community for the next ten (10) years.
- The applicant will operate and maintain project equipment, broadband technology, and internet services for at least five years after the successful completion of the project.

- The applicant will not charge residents for broadband internet services for the first five years.
- The applicant has not filed for bankruptcy, been sanctioned by the FCC or a state regulatory agency, or been held civilly or criminally liable for violating the California Business and Professions Code.
- The project can be completed within 12 months of Commission approval as required.
- The applicant identified an internet service provider with the required bandwidth capacity.
- The applicant will secure project-funded hardware to prevent theft and vandalism.

The grant will fund up to 100 percent of the costs to install inside wiring and broadband network equipment, including hardware, software, wireless access points, modems, switches, routers, firewalls, labor costs (installation, provisioning, and configuration,) network engineering and design, hardware warranty of broadband network, taxes, shipping, and insurance.

Note: The BPHA (Broadband Public Housing Account) program has introduced the 'BPHA Internet Extension' initiative, which covers the costs of last-mile and middle-mile infrastructure for 'low-income communities.' This development opens up opportunities for properties to seek funding for both last-mile connectivity and onsite infrastructure enhancements. Eligible entities must complete a separate application for the BPHA Internet Extension initiative, which can be obtained from the [CASF Public Housing Account website](#), to leverage the BPHA Internet Extension. You must submit one application per project.

In the event an applicant requests funding for middle-mile infrastructure to serve the last mile of a project, the following must be provided:

- A written justification as to why any existing middle-mile facility cannot support the serviceable locations requested in the project area
- A notice confirming that the applicant has consulted with the California Department of Technology (CDT) within three (3) months after Commission approval to ensure that the middle-mile components of the project complement the statewide open-access middle-mile broadband network as described in SB 156.

BPHA Internet Extension applications must be attached to a BPHA Infrastructure application and cannot be submitted as a standalone.

Applicants **may request any amount**. However, additional ministerial approval is required for applications above the following amounts and may cause a delay during the approval process:

50 units or less	\$3,000 per unit or less
51-100 units	\$1,500 per unit or less
101 units or more	\$1,000 per unit or less

Projects that exceed these costs will require approval through the Commission and may take longer to finalize.

STEP BY STEP CASF APPLICATION GUIDE

1

STEP 1

Create/Confirm A CPUC File Transfer Protocol (FTP) Account

1. Go to [CPUC](#)
2. Click on “Need help signing in?”
3. Enter your email address in the dialog window to create your FTP account
4. Activate your account via email
5. Click on “ACTIVATE” to set a personal password for your account

2

STEP 2

Confirm project scope and budget to complete the Application Workbook

1. Broadband Public Housing Account [Infrastructure Application Package](#)
2. In the application tab, complete everything in sections 1 through 5. For section 6, identify which property eligibility type you are working with and complete that section. Only one Application Information tab is needed per vendor.
3. Fill out an Infrastructure Project tab for each separate project (building). To create a new tab:
 - Right-click on the Project Information tab
 - Select Move or Copy
 - Select Project Information
 - Check the Create a Copy box
 - Repeat for each separate project

Reminder: Be sure to check all the boxes.

4. For the CEQA exemption, be sure to cite both the exemption and the justification. You can include both narrative and photo evidence to show that your project uses pre-existing infrastructure and does not directly impact the environment. Please refer to the CEQA sample document below.
5. **Applicant Name_Type of Application_# of this application type submitted to date.** If this is the first time you are submitting a CASF application, this would be 1 submitted.

3

STEP 3

Obtain a Managed Wi-Fi Network proposal

1. **Identify a managed services provider (MSP) to provide a proposal.** This could be a current IT provider with which your organization has already been engaged. Many MSPs across the country operate in California and can be great partners.

Note: The MSP will provide all the documents referenced below

2. **Work with your chosen MSP on the backhaul (internet circuit) option.** As the grant recipient, you will be responsible for providing residents with **five years of free Wi-Fi**. The monthly recurring cost will include the internet and the monthly managed service fee and will be considered the project “match.”

Note: While you will be working with your MSP to ensure the proper broadband speeds are procured for your network, the formula from the CPUC for calculating your building’s minimum speed requirements can be found under [Sample Documents](#).

3. **Prepare engineering documents and schematics:**

- A [high-level narrative](#) of the proposed network should include:
 - The type of technology that will be used on the project with all technical specifications, network topology, schematic diagram, engineering, and design documentation.
 - Project plan showing the number of residential units in the low-income community to be connected.
 - Entities that will provide broadband Internet service on the project site (E.g., The type of Internet service and the bandwidth offered by a named ISP).
 - Download and upload data rate/speed capabilities for an average user within the property at a given time of peak and off-peak hours must meet at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream (for an average user) or current state standard.
 - Project budget outlining all the budget costs, both actual line items and the matching funds.
- Technical description and specifications** of all networking elements of the project and a brief narrative for supporting network downstream and upstream speed capability, including
 - [Network Design](#)
 - [Heat Map](#)
 - [Bill of Materials \(BOM\)](#)
- Infrastructure Project Schedule.** The grant allows up to 12 months for completion of the projects, and we have shown a 12-month schedule for each to give maximum flexibility in scheduling the installs. *File-naming convention: Applicant Name_(Document Name)*

4

STEP 4

Assemble required documents

1. **Eligibility Documents** – required eligibility documents vary by applicant type.

Chartered Public Housing:

- Annual HUD Contributions Contract
- Naming Convention: Applicant Name_HUD Contribution Contract

Publicly Supported Housing developments that are NOT in contract with HUD:

- Any agreement between the applicant and the source of the public subsidy
- Details of the publicly supported housing development, including any applicable income eligibility requirements for the program resident
- Naming Convention: *Applicant Name_Non HUD Agreement*

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)3:

- IRS Letter confirmation status as a 501(c)3 entity. The IRS letter must also include the applicant's tax Identification Number
- Award letter from a public agency providing its receipt of public funding for affordable housing purposes
- Naming Convention: *Applicant Name_Award Letter*

Farmworker Housing:

- The total number of units in the housing development and
- The number of units available to and occupied by farmworkers at the time the application is submitted.
- Provide proof of Farmworker Housing Grant Program acceptance

Tribal Housing:

- A letter from the Tribal Governing Body or designee (such as Tribal Chairperson or Tribal Administrator) authorizing it to seek funding and
 - The total number of units in the housing developments
 - The number of units available to and occupied by tribal members

Household income levels (250% FPG) or based on current enrollment in public assistance programs:

- The number of total residential units at the property.
- The number of residential units that are “low-income” (at or below 250% FPG) based on each unit household income or that are “low-income” through current enrollment in an acceptable public assistance program by at least one (1) person in the household.
- Attest that 80% or greater of the total units at the property are “low-income” by having a ratio of the total number of low-income units (2 and 3) to the total number of units (1) that is greater than or equal to 0.8.

4

STEP 4

Assemble required documents

1. Eligibility Documents Continued...

- Multidwelling unit development with 80% or greater residential “low-income” units:**
 - Attest to the specific form of eligibility claimed on the application.
 - Report the median household income for the census block group(s) in which the project is located
 - The appropriate comparison threshold (e.g., also provide the relevant county-specific low-income threshold)
- Mobile home park**
 - Attest that 50% or greater of the total units at the property are “low-income”

2. Financial Documents – required eligibility documents vary by applicant type.

- Chartered Public Housing:**
 - The most recently prepared annual report and audit submitted to HUD
 - Naming convention: Applicant Name_HUD_Annual Report
- Publicly Supported Housing developments that are NOT in contract with HUD:**
 - Program details of the publicly supported housing development, including any applicable income-eligible requirements for the program residents
 - Any housing development contractor or agreements between the applicant and the source of public subsidy
 - Naming convention: Applicant Name_Non HUD Applicant Contract
- Non-Profit Organization 501(c)3:**
 - The most recently prepared annual report and audit submitted to a government entity, i.e., California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC)
 - Naming convention: Applicant Name_Gov Entity Audits
- Farmworker Housing:**
 - Provide 501(c)3 documentation, including the most recently prepared annual reports and audits submitted to a government entity.

3. Organizational Chart showing applicant's parent organization subsidiaries and affiliates for all eligible entities.

5

STEP 5

Adoption Plan & Quarterly Report

1. Provide an [adoption plan](#) that includes:
 - How to connect to a Wi-Fi network
 - Network troubleshooting
 - Best practices for staying safe on the internet
2. Share the [quarterly report](#) with the MSP and ensure that adhering to this requirement is memorialized in the contract.

6

STEP 6

Obtain a notarized affidavit of the application's accuracy.

Guidelines for the affidavit can be found on page 9 of [this document](#), and a link to the affidavit can be found on the main CASF Broadband Public Housing Account landing page, right next to the application package as well as below under sample documents.

7

STEP 7

Submit the application

With all the assembled documentation above, complete the application per the instructions from Step 2. As a reminder, you must fill out one application per vendor. However, multiple buildings can be included in one application by adding a tab for each property.

8

STEP 8

Project Status and Reporting

- 1. Grantees must submit a project status report within six months of the project award date IF the project has not been completed. The report must include the following:**
 - Project Plan and deployment schedule showing the major milestones with planned and actual completion dates.
 - Any discrepancies or differences between planned and actual dates must be substantiated with appropriate justification or reasoning.
 - The Project Risk Mitigation plan aims to manage and reduce the BPHA project's cost and schedule impacts by identifying, evaluating, selecting, and implementing appropriate options. This helps to maintain acceptable risk levels within the program's constraints and objectives.
 - Budget Plan with a cost line item matched with the application.
- 2. Grantee must submit a [project completion form](#) to receive final payment. A link to the form can be found with the sample documents.**

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

- [Infrastructure Application Package](#)
- [High-Level Network Narrative](#)
- [Network Design](#)
- [Heat Map](#)
- [Bill of Materials \(BOM\)](#)
- [Infrastructure Project Schedule](#)
- [Adoption Plan](#)
- [Affidavit](#)
- [Quarterly Report](#)
- [Project Completion Form](#)
- [CEQA Link](#)

CALCULATING BANDWIDTH & EXAMPLE:

$(\text{Upload or download bandwidth} \times \text{total number of units}) \div \text{average number of persons per household} = \text{total bandwidth per average user}$

EXAMPLE:

1. Let's consider a scenario where there is a 100-unit community. To calculate the total bandwidth per household, you need to multiply the upload or download bandwidth by the total number of units.
2. The CPUC uses the census to determine the average number of people living in a household, which is 3. In order to obtain the total bandwidth per average user, you must take the total upload or download bandwidth and divide it by 3.

DOWNLOAD BANDWIDTH CALCULATION FOR THE COMMUNITY:

1. $100 \text{ units} \times 100 \text{ Mbps} = 10,000 \text{ Mbps}$ total download bandwidth needed for 100 units
2. $10,000 \text{ Mbps} \div 3 \text{ average persons per unit} = 3333.33 \text{ Mbps}$ total download bandwidth needed per average user.

The minimum download bandwidth needed for the project is: 3333.33 Mbps.

UPLOAD BANDWIDTH CALCULATION FOR THE COMMUNITY:

1. $100 \text{ units} \times 20 \text{ Mbps} = 2,000 \text{ Mbps}$ total upload bandwidth needed for 100 units.
2. $2,000 \text{ Mbps} \div 3 \text{ average persons per unit} = 666.66 \text{ Mbps}$ total upload bandwidth needed per average user.

The minimum upload bandwidth needed for the project is: 666.66 Mbps.

About EducationSuperHighway

EducationSuperHighway is a national non-profit with the mission to close the digital divide for the 17 million households that have access to the internet but can't afford to connect. We focus on America's most unconnected communities, where more than 25% of people don't have internet.

From 2012 to 2020, we led the effort that closed the classroom connectivity gap. In 2013, only 10% of students had access to digital learning in their classrooms. Today, thanks to an unprecedented bipartisan effort by federal, state, and school district leaders, supported by K-12 advocacy organizations, the classroom connectivity gap is closed – 47 million students are connected, and 99.3% of America's schools have a high-speed broadband connection.