

Federal Funding Account Awards Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How will awards be announced?

Awards will be made publicly available on a rolling basis starting in June 2024. Staff recommendations for awards, which will not be final until approved by the Commission, will be issued for public comment in the form of a Resolution.

A notification of proposed awards for public comment will be sent to the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Distribution List. Those interested can subscribe to the distribution list [here](#).

The Federal Funding Account proposed and final awards will be available on the [Federal Funding Account Recommendations and Awards \(ca.gov\)](#) page.

2. How can I comment on a proposed award or Resolution?

Public commenters must serve a copy of their comments to the Communications Division staff representative Caleb Jones (caleb.jones@cpuc.ca.gov) and on each party set forth on the service list attached to the draft resolution on the same date that the comments are submitted to the Communications Division.

[Here](#) is information on providing public comments at the California Public Utilities Commission in general.

3. If a project is not included in a Resolution proposing award what does that mean?

Communications Division Staff continue to analyze applications for Federal Funding Account grants and will continue to approve projects via Ministerial Review and recommend projects for funding via Resolution. Recommendations for award will be made for amounts up to the amount allocated for projects in each county in [California Public Utilities Code section 281 \(n\)](#) and the Federal Funding Account rules in [Decision 22-04-055](#).

4. What is Ministerial Review?

Ministerial Review is the authority delegated to Commission staff to make awards in a specific set of circumstances by letter. The [Decision 22-04-055](#) Ministerial Review criteria:

1. The applicant meets the program eligibility requirements;
2. The application has not received objections or CD Staff has determined that the project area is unserved;
3. The total grant does not exceed \$25,000,000;
4. The project is exempt from CEQA, or approval letter must state that authorization to construct and release funds will be provided in a forthcoming resolution;
5. There are no competing applications for the same project area in the same application period; and
6. The proposed project costs \$9,300 per household or less.

Applications not meeting these criteria may only be approved by the Commission via resolution.

Ministerial award letters will be posted to the Federal Funding Account website.

5. Will there be additional rounds of funding?

The Commission anticipates announcing additional rounds of Federal Funding Account pending state budget appropriations.

6. How were the county allocations determined?

California statute, in [California Public Utilities Code section 281\(n\)](#), specifies a distribution of ~\$2 billion dollars from the Federal Funding Account to be allocated to applications for projects in “urban counties” and “rural counties.” [Decision 22-04-055](#) adopting Federal Funding Account Rules included a formula and dollar amounts for projects in each county implementing this provision.

[Decision 22-04-055](#) also includes a discussion of how the formulas for the Allocations were determined, based on public comment by parties to the Rulemaking.

7. Does the county allocation expire?

The formula and allocation in [Decision 22-04-055](#) do not include an expiration and will currently apply for the life of the last mile Federal Funding Account program including future funding rounds. Should the decision be considered for modification in the future the formula and allocation would be modified only after notice and an opportunity for public comment.

8. How did you decide which applications to award?

Applications were holistically evaluated. Staff reviewed required and supporting documentation, compared the merits of the applications, and assessed on a county basis. Staff sent a data request to applicants requesting additional information. Evaluation included project engineering, technical feasibility, network design, financial viability, applicant capacity, community need, compliance with program rules, and other factors. Staff assessed overlapping applications and applications planning to include some already-served areas in their project area. Staff also evaluated and compared competing applications within the same county. [Decision 22-04-055, Appendix A](#) describes criteria informing staff evaluation of applications including scoring criteria for comparing applications within a county.

Public comments were considered including comments on the Federal Funding Account Public Map in the application project area and the county or counties in which an application was submitted. Served and unserved location data in light of the latest Federal Communications Commission and Federal Funding Account unserved data (as of June 30, 2023 and as of December 31, 2023 as applicable) was evaluated along with objections.

9. We missed the deadline to apply for this program – are there other funding sources available?

Please consider future rounds of the last mile Federal Funding Account if funding remains available within the county allocation. In addition, other broadband infrastructure and funding programs, each with their own program rules and deadlines, are available:

- [BEAD Program \(ca.gov\)](#)
- [CASF Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account](#)

Programs to support service in public housing and low-income communities, and to support the adoption or use of available internet service:

- [CASF Public Housing Account](#)
- [CASF Adoption Account](#)

If you would like help navigating these programs and determining which programs may fit your jurisdiction's needs, consider contacting the Broadband Caseworkers at BroadbandCaseworkers@Cpuc.Ca.Gov.

10. Where can I get more information on permitting for my project?

Different federal, state, and local permits may be required. Environmental reviews are generally conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), where the CPUC is a lead or responsible agency, and as

further specified by the CPUC's CEQA-related rules. For more information see the CPUC [California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\)](#) page. Additionally, this page contains [resources for broadband projects](#) including information on permitting and rights-of-way

FAQ Versions

Version	Date
1.0	June 6, 2024
2.0	January 23, 2025