

California Public Utilities Commission

ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

for the

Tribal Technical Assistance Grant Program

October 2023, v.4

To all Tribal Technical Assistance Applicants and Grant Recipients:

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission or CPUC) thanks you for your interest in Tribal Technical Assistance grants to support Tribes on their reservations, trust lands, and surrounding areas to leverage non-CASF broadband deployment funding in California. We welcome you to the California Advanced Service Fund (CASF) Program and look forward to working with you.

Respectfully,

CPUC Communications Division

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this Administrative Manual is to provide guidance for applicants applying for the Tribal Technical Assistance grant program. It describes the requirements, processes, and necessary documentation for submitting applications and requesting reimbursements for projects approved for Tribal Technical Assistance grants. This Administrative Manual also provides the templates for project reporting and outlines the Communications Division's (CD) expectations for performance oversight of the individual programs applicable to grant recipients. This document is intended for Tribal Technical Assistance grant recipients, and prospective applicants who wish to better understand the regulatory processes and reporting requirements for applications, as well as post grant approval.

Please review pertinent information by which the Tribal Technical Assistance grant program operates, including the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) [Decision 20-08-005, Appendix 1](#), which establishes the guidelines for applying, reviewing, approving, and administering Tribal Technical Assistance grants. We also encourage recipients to familiarize themselves with the Tribal Technical Assistance operations in relation to the four other CASF programs including:

- [Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account](#)
- [Broadband Public Housing Account](#)
- [Broadband Adoption Account](#)
- [Broadband Consortia Account](#)

For more information, please visit the [Tribal Technical Assistance](#) grant program website, or send an email to Tribal_Tech_Assist@cpuc.ca.gov.

II. CASF Program Contacts

For questions related to all CASF programs, please send an email to:

- **Tribal Technical Assistance:** Tribal_Tech_Assist@cpuc.ca.gov
- **Infrastructure Grant Account:** CASF_Application_Questions@cpuc.ca.gov
- **Public Housing Account:** CPUC_Housing@cpuc.ca.gov
- **Adoption Account:** CASF_Adoption@cpuc.ca.gov
- **Consortia Account:** CASF_Consortia_Grant_Administrator@cpuc.ca.gov
- For questions related to the CPUC's broadband mapping efforts, please send an email to: broadbandmapping@cpuc.ca.gov

III. Applying for a Grant

For additional information on how to apply for Tribal Technical Assistance grants, please review [Decision 20-08-005, Appendix 1](#) also in Attachment 1 on page 10, and the Tribal Technical Assistance grant program webpage (<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/california-advanced-services-fund/tribal-technical-assistance>). Tribal Technical Assistance grants help tribes in developing market studies, feasibility studies, and/or business plans which support Tribes in their pursuit of improving communications. The grants may be used to assess communication assets or spectrum and wireless coverage studies, locating nearby fiber optic internet routes, pricing, and various other studies are also eligible costs. Grants are available up to \$150,000 per Tribe per fiscal year. The grants may subsidize up to 100% of the cost of technical assistance for Tribes in California.

An eligible applicant is a California Tribe, with or without federal recognition, that demonstrates Tribal leadership support. Tribal support is established, for example, by the furnishing of a letter from the Tribal administrator, chair, or council.

IV. Application Checklist and Requirements

Appendix A-1, A-2, and A-3, Application Package, in this Manual provides Tribal Technical Assistance Grant application form templates illustrating key informational requirements and documents that must be properly completed and submitted with the application to be considered for approval. The Application Package forms are as follows and are available in Excel format:

- **Appendix A-1**
 - **Item - 1** – Name and Details of Tribal Applicant
 - **Item - 2** – Contact Information for Tribal Person Managing the Consulting Contract
 - **Item - 3** – Proposed Tribal Technical Project Description
 - **Item - 4** – Endorsement Letter(s) from Tribal Administrator, Chair, or Council Support
 - **Item - 5** – Proposed Contract or Written Estimate

- **Item - 6** – Proposed Total Project Budget
- **Item - 7** – Name of Tribal Entity or Organization to Receive Payment
- **Item - 8** – Certification and Affidavit
- **Item - 9** – Electronic Signature
- **Appendix A-2** - PROPOSED TRIBAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUMMARY
- **Appendix A-3** - PROPOSED BUDGET PLAN

The Tribal Technical Assistance Grant Application Checklist lists the required information items, with references to Decision 20-08-005, Appendix 1. The Tribal applicant must provide a proposed contract (“the contract”) or written estimate with scope of work from the Tribe’s approved contractor for the purpose of the Technical Assistance. This contract or estimate must state details of the proposed work, including a statement of work, detailed cost estimate and proposed timeline for completion.

V. Submission and Timeline

To be considered, applicants must submit the CPUC-provided application form. Applicants may electronically file their completed application, along with required documentation including a Signed Affidavit by email or file hardcopies by mail.

- Tribal Technical Assistance program email address at Tribal_Tech_Assist@cpuc.ca.gov or
- Mail a hard copy to: Communications Division, Attn: California Advanced Services Fund, Technical Assistance Grant, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
- Emails must be Dated, and Mail must be Postmarked by the quarterly application deadline:

Applications may be submitted at any time. However, Communications Division will consider applications submitted on or before each application deadline listed below as a batch, quarterly and ongoing, until the funding is exhausted.

- January 1
- April 1
- July 1
- October 1

Any deadline which falls on a holiday or a weekend will be extended to the following business day.

VI. Consent Form and Payee Data Record

Upon an application's approval, the grantee will receive an email from the CPUC requesting the grantee to complete and submit a Consent Form and a [Payee Data Record \(STD 204\)](#) if one is not already on file with the CPUC. All grantees are required to sign the Consent Form binding the grant recipient to the terms, conditions, and requirements of both the Decision 20-08-005, Appendix 1 and the Award Letter or Resolution that awards the grant. A completed Payee Data Request is required when receiving payment from the State of California and information provided in this form will be used by the CPUC to prepare Information Returns, i.e., Internal Revenue Service, Form 1099. The CPUC will not process payment requests for the Tribes until Staff receives the Consent Form and Payee Data Record (if applicable).

VII. Electronic Claims and Applications Portal (eCAP)

After the CPUC receives the Consent Form and Payee Data Record from the Tribe, Staff will create an account for the Tribal contact in the CPUC's Electronic Claims and Applications Portal (eCAP). The Tribal contact will receive an email from eCAP and will need to verify their eCAP account using the link in the email. Tribal grantees will use eCAP to submit payment requests upon completion of work. eCAP allows Tribal grantees to submit, track, review and resolve Tribal Technical Assistance payment requests.

The eCAP is available at <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/> and the following webpage provides helpful guides and FAQs for eCAP: <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/help-faqs>

If a Tribe needs to update the contact in eCAP, set up a new account, or encounters issues using eCAP, please email: Tribal_Tech_Assist@cpuc.ca.gov.

VIII. Performance

All tasks and performances specified under the terms of any award shall be completed on or before the completion of the project. The CPUC may withhold or terminate grant payments if the grantee does not comply with any of the requirements set forth in its application and Decision 20-08-005. Should the grantee fail to complete the project within the 2-year period, the CPUC may terminate the award. In the event that the grantee fails to complete the project, in

accordance with the terms of approval ordered by the CPUC, the grantee will be required to reimburse some or all of the funds that it has received.

IX. Reporting a Completed Project – Completion Report

Upon completion of the project and prior to payment, Grantees must provide Staff with a copy of the final report(s), plan(s), studies, etc. The final report will be presumed confidential. A completion report form is available on the CPUC's web page titled [Completion Report Form](#). The report must be submitted no later than 3 months after completion of the project. In this report, grantees will report on the completion of the overall project, and deliverables obtained per the approved grant request. The completion report also needs to include the payment request for relevant expenses and a short description of the work suitable for posting on the CPUC's web page.

X. Payment Requests and Disbursement of Funds

Grantees must submit payment requests using the Completion Report to the CPUC's Electronic Claims and Applications Portal (eCAP) available at <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/>. (See Section VII above for information on account setup in eCAP).

Disbursements of grant funds will be made directly to the grantee. All requested payments must be allocated to activities/goals approved in the Work Plan and be supported by attaching relevant invoices. Please note the following additional requirements:

- Payment requests must be submitted with the Completion Report and must be submitted no later than 3 months after the completion of the relevant phase.
- Payment will be based upon receipt and approval of invoices and other supporting documents showing the expenditures incurred for the project are in accordance with their application.
- Grantees must notify the CPUC as soon as they become aware that they may not be able to meet project deadlines.
- Payment will be made in accordance with, and within the time specified in California Government Code § 927 et seq.
- The CPUC has the right to conduct any necessary audit, verification, and discovery

during project implementation to ensure that funds are spent in accordance with the terms of approval granted by the CPUC.

XI. Submission of the Completion Report and Payment Request

The Payment Request, Completion Report, and any supporting documents are to be submitted electronically using the CPUC's eCAP available at: <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/>. The following webpage provides helpful guides and FAQs for eCAP: <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/help-faqs>. If grantees experience issues using eCAP or need to set up an account in eCAP, contact Staff via email at Tribal_Tech_Assist@cpuc.ca.gov.

XII. Travel Reimbursement Limits and Criteria

Travel Reimbursement: Grantees may claim reimbursement for travel expenses related to performing work for the specific project if it is included in the approved grant. Travel expenses are limited to mileage, parking, tolls, and public transportation. Non-Reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to meals, food and travel related to working on proposed state legislation, lobbying, etc.

Travel Guidelines: Grantees must complete a Travel Expense Claim Form STD-262A when requesting travel reimbursement and follow the instructions and reimbursement guidelines therein. The allowable rates/costs are those negotiated and approved under the collective bargaining agreements that are in use by State employees.

XIII. Payment Processing

The Grant Administrator will review the payment requests in eCAP (see Section X), as compared to the grantee's approved budgets, as well as the deliverables received. Additional information may be requested regarding the report, expenses, and/or supporting documentation if needed. Upon approval, eCAP will send an email to the Grantee/Tribe advising that payment voucher documents are being submitted to the CPUC's Fiscal Office. The Fiscal Office will review all payment voucher submissions in accordance with the State Administrative Manual (SAM); and upon satisfactory review, will schedule payment with the State Controller's Office (SCO), which is responsible for issuing and distributing the check to the Grantee/Tribe.

XIV. Record Retention and Audits

Grantees must maintain files, invoices, and other related documentation for three years after final payment. Grantees shall make these records available to the CPUC upon request and agree that these records are subject to audit, verification and discovery by the CPUC at any time within three years of completion of the work.

XV. Publicity and Acknowledgment

Upon completion of the Technical Assistance and before payment, the applicant must provide a signed completion form stating the Technical Assistance work has been completed. This form should include a short description of the work suitable for posting on the CPUC's web page. Staff recommends 2 to 3 sentences briefly describing the overall work that was done.

Any publications, studies, or reports made possible or derived in whole or in part from the project, and any news articles, brochures, seminars, or other promotional materials or media through which the grantee publicizes the Project will acknowledge the program in the following manner:

“Funding for this project has been provided in part through a grant for Tribal Technical Assistance from a program administered by the California Public Utilities Commission.”

Attachment 1: Decision 20-08-005, Appendix 1

Tribal Technical Assistance

Application Requirements and Guidelines

1. Background

To advance the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) goal of Pub. Util. Code section 281(b)(1)(A) to increase broadband access, technical assistance grants will be made available support Tribes on their reservations, trust lands and surrounding areas to leverage non-CASF broadband deployment funding., The Commission authorizes Communications Division Staff (Staff) to approve applications for CASF administrative funds (for example, state operations) to provide technical assistance for Tribes. The following criteria details the process and guidelines for requesting, reviewing, and approving “Technical Assistance Grants.”

a. Amount Available for Grants

CASF administrative funds (for example, State Operations) will be available for communications technical assistance, including but not limited to, feasibility studies, market studies, and/or business plans, not to exceed \$150,000 per Tribe, per fiscal year.

The aggregate amount available for awards is not to exceed \$5,000,000 until funds are replenished and/or exhausted.

1. Definition of Tribal Technical Assistance

For the purpose of Tribal Technical Assistance Grants, technical assistance means assistance in developing market studies, feasibility studies, and/or business plans which support Tribes in their pursuit of improved communications.

2. Eligible Applicants/Eligibility for Technical Assistance

Tribes are deemed to be eligible applicants for the Technical Assistance Grants. An eligible Tribe is a California Tribe, with or without federal recognition, that demonstrates Tribal leadership support. Staff shall consider Tribal support to be established, for example, by the furnishing of a letter from the Tribal administrator, chair, or council.

3. Subsidy Level

For projects that meet Ministerial Review criteria (Section 7 below), the Commission may subsidize 100 percent of the cost of Technical Assistance, not to exceed \$150,000 per assistance, study, or plan per Tribe, in any one fiscal year.

For projects that do not meet Ministerial Review criteria (Section 7 below), the Commission will conduct a reasonableness review and may adjust budgets via the Resolution Review (Section 8 below) process.

4. Information Required from Applicants

The Tribal applicant must provide a proposed contract (“the contract”) or written estimate with

scope of work from the Tribe's approved contractor for the purpose of the Technical Assistance. This contract or estimate must state details of the proposed work, including a statement of work, detailed cost estimate and proposed timeline for completion.

5. Submission and Timeline

To be considered, applicants must submit the Commission-provided application form to apply. Applicants may electronically file their completed application, along with required documentation, using the Commission's email address at CASF_Application_Questions@cpuc.ca.gov or mail a separate hard copy to (postmarked by the quarterly application due dates):

Communications Division
Attn: California Advanced Services Fund, Technical Assistance
Grant 505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Applications may be submitted at any time. However, Communications Division will consider applications submitted on or before each deadline listed below as a batch, quarterly and ongoing, until the funding is exhausted.

- October 1, 2020
- January 1, 2021
- April 1, 2021
- July 1, 2021 and so on.

Any deadline which falls on a holiday or a weekend will be extended to the following business day. Notice of applications received will be published on the Commission's website on a quarterly basis.

6. Ministerial Review

The Commission authorizes Communications Division Staff to approve applications that meet each of the following criteria:

- The requested amount per Technical Assistance does not exceed \$150,000 per fiscal year per Tribe.
- The application specifies that the technical assistance will advance the CASF program goal to "provide broadband access to no less than 98 percent of California households in each consortia region" where broadband access is defined as service at 6 megabits per second download and 1 megabit per second upload. (Public Utilities Code section 281(b)(1)(A)).
- If approved, the Technical Assistance must be completed within 24 months.
- The application meets all the other requirements of a Technical Assistance grant included in Sections 2, 3, 5, and 6 of this Appendix.

7. Resolution Review

8. **When an application does not meet the ministerial review criteria**, Staff may refer the application to the Commission for review and approval via the Resolution process.

9. Reporting and Public Posting

Upon completion of the Technical Assistance and before payment, the applicant must provide a signed completion form stating that the Technical Assistance work has been completed. This form should include a short description of the work suitable for posting on the Commission’s web page.

Upon completion of the work, Tribes should provide Staff a copy of the final report(s), plan(s), studies, etc. The final report will be presumed confidential.

Notifications of awards will be made by letter from the Communications Division Director. Award letters will be regularly posted to the Commission’s website. A short summary of the funds utilized for Tribal Technical Assistance will be posted on the Commission’s website.

10. Payment

Payment will be made directly to the Tribe. Payment will be based upon receipt and approval of the invoice submitted by the Tribe showing the expenditures incurred for the Technical Assistance along with the documents detailed in the Section 9 “Reporting.”

The invoice must be supported by documentation such as cost of labor and any other expense that will be recovered by the grant.

11. Execution and Performance

The Commission has the right to conduct any necessary audit, verification, and discovery for work proposed or completed under the Technical Assistance for Tribes to ensure that CASF funds are spent in accordance with Commission rules.

Invoices from the Tribe or its approved contractor will be subject to financial audit by the Commission at any time within 3 years of completion of the work.

In the event that the applicant or contractor fails to complete the work in accordance with the approval granted by the Commission, and as described in the contract, the Tribe must reimburse some or all of the funds that it has received.

All grantees are required to sign a consent form agreeing to the terms stated in the resolution or award letter authorizing the CASF award. The agreement will provide the name of person who is managing the consulting contract and must be signed by the grantee.