

# Broadband

## April 2024

### Team Members

- Kate Fosburgh, Digital Access Analyst
- Katherine DiPasqua, Director

### Infrastructure & Deployment

#### Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Funding

- The BEAD program requires each state to submit a State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) to access funding for digital equity capacity building. In April 2023, the EDB and the NBNCBC hosted a Regional Digital Equity event in Santa Rosa to gather feedback from stakeholders and community members to inform California's SDEP. The resulting plan was accepted by the NTIA on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, unlocking \$70.2 million in Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding. The grants will be used to support regional and local digital equity, affordability, and literacy training initiatives. The application process for this funding has yet to be determined, and broadband staff will continue to track progress.

#### CALED Conference: Broadband for All 2024 Session

- The Broadband Team attended a session lead by representatives from the California Public Utilities Commission, California Department of Technology, and Governors Office of Business and Economic Development.
- Presenters provided updates on the California State Digital Equity Plan, State Middle Mile Network, and resources for local government broadband planning, including a discussion around permitting best practices.
- Staff had the opportunity to speak with State leaders and learn more about the function of the proposed State Middle Mile, as well as strategies for adopting permit streamlining practices locally.

#### Meetings with Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

- T-Mobile requested EDB support for construction of four new wireless towers in unincorporated Sonoma County. After analysis of the proposed locations and conversations with Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services, we decided not to take a formal position of support for the projects. While we support expansion of wireless infrastructure overall, we are most interested in supporting projects that address connectivity issues in the areas most in need. That includes low-income communities, rural and coastal communities, areas with high fire danger, and areas that show a high density of unserved and underserved locations. The locations of the four projects proposed do not align with the priority areas for County broadband and digital equity efforts. We extended an invitation to T-Mobile to have a conversation about partnership around projects within County priority areas.
- We will continue to research opportunities to partner with ISP's as it aligns with broadband plans, priorities, and funding opportunities.

### Advanced Adoption

#### CA Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) Regional Broadband Consortia Leadership Grant

- Kate Fosburgh was elected as the new Manager of the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

- CETF is hosting a series of meetings for local government leaders around Digital Equity Best Practices. Participation in the series allows local governments the opportunity to apply for \$20,000 of grant funding for Digital Equity initiatives. We are doing outreach to Sonoma County cities to promote this opportunity to engage in digital equity planning and receive grant funding.