

Broadband

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Team Members

- Brad Johnson, Department Analyst
- Kate Fosburgh, Digital Access Project Coordinator
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Infrastructure & Deployment

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

- The Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program is a \$42.5 billion national funding opportunity for broadband infrastructure deployment and is administered nationally by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The State of California has been allocated \$1.86 billion under the BEAD program and will be administered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on the state level. We are currently working with the most up-to-date data to inform BEAD application project prioritization, and plan to bring this information to the Board of Supervisors in August 2024. We anticipate the application window to open sometime in the Fall of 2024.

Low-Level Design / Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA)

- Tilson Technology anticipates conducting low-level design in Sonoma County in the third quarter of 2024. The order of priority for low-level design is as follows: Jenner, Walsh Landing, East Santa Rosa, and East Cloverdale. The first 40 miles of low-level design will be paid for by the Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) Grant. The remainder will be paid for through ARPA funding allocated to low-level design by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in August 2023. We are preparing a new MOU to execute with GSCA to allow for use of ARPA funds to expand low-level design.

Meetings with Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

- Over the past few weeks, the Sonoma County Broadband Team has met with Comcast and T-Mobile to discuss potential partnerships to support broadband deployment and digital equity in Sonoma County.
 - The meeting with Comcast focused on creative solutions to serve High-Density Housing Communities with affordable and high-speed broadband.
 - The meeting with T-Mobile focused on their plans for expansion of wireless service with new towers in unincorporated Sonoma County.
- 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 Regional Broadband Consortia Leadership Grant

- The Broadband Team attended the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) Policy Forum and Reception in Sacramento on March 6th. Topics of discussion included:
 - Updates on Broadband for All, Digital Equity Plan, and Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative.
 - Updates on bills and efforts proposed to extend the Affordable Connectivity Program.
 - Discussion of the California Utility Commission's accomplishments, obstacles, and opportunities for broadband deployment.
 - California Emerging Technology Fund Digital Equity Partnerships and action with Next Gen Policy and

California State Association of Counties.

- Discussion with private Internet Service Provider (ISP) company representatives on how they are and can fill the gap of 3 million households currently being served by ACP.
- Network with other California Consortia and discuss best practices and uses for state funding and planning efforts.
- The North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium has received approval from CETF to extend their grant through June 2024. The extension comes with an additional \$25,000 to conduct work related to digital equity and in alignment with the Work Plan set forth by CETF.