

Broadband May 2024

Team Members

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

Infrastructure & Deployment

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

- In the coming months, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will host a Challenge Process to accurately identify internet service levels for locations around the state of California. Challengers, including local governments, tribal nations, nonprofits, and internet service providers, can submit evidence to have the status of a location changed (e.g. from served to unserved). This process will ultimately decide which locations are eligible for BEAD funding and which are not. The Sonoma County Broadband Team is participating in webinars to learn how we can support the challenge process.

Local Agency Technical Assistance Grant

- Tilson Technology, the Telecommunications Services firm contracting with Golden State Connect Authority, has confirmed Power Hut site locations for our four priority areas (Jenner, Walsh Landing, SE Santa Rosa, and East Cloverdale). We expect low-level design to be conducted in Q3 2024.

AT&T Application: Relief of Carrier of Last Resort Obligation- Rejected

- In February, we provided an update that AT&T applied to the CPUC to be released from their “Carrier of Last Resort” (COLR) obligation for over 99% of their service territory where AT&T determines another provider exists. Since landline service remains an important and reliable safety tool and this change could impact rural Sonoma County residents, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors sent a letter to the CPUC requesting that they reject AT&T’s application. On May 10th, 2024, the CPUC issued a proposal rejecting AT&T’s application and indicating that the CPUC intends to initiate a new Rulemaking process to address COLR telecommunications service obligations.

Advanced Adoption

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

- The North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) submitted a revised workplan and budget for the CETF Grant extension through the end of June. The budget allocates approximately \$16,000 to each of the four member counties to put towards digital equity initiatives. Sonoma County intends to use these funds to build out a Broadband GIS Hub, allowing us to make fast, informed decisions with the best available data regarding digital equity and infrastructure needs in the County.
- 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. As a Regional Broadband Consortia Leadership Grantee, NBNCBC is supporting this effort through outreach and by presenting best practices at the webinars. Kate presented at the first meeting on the benefits of partnering with your local libraries on digital equity initiatives.

Collaboration with Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

- Marin County Information Services & Technology (IST), the Marin County Free Library (MCFL), Marin Housing Authority (MHA), and Xfinity Comcast, are partnering on a project to provide internet service, digital devices, skills training, and technical support to older adults and people with disabilities living in five subsidized housing sites in Marin County. Our team is meeting with our Marin partners in the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium to learn more and consider whether there is the potential for a similar project in Sonoma County.