



Federal Communications Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Option for CASF Infrastructure Applicants

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To: California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Distribution and Service Lists; CASF Infrastructure Applicants and Potential Infrastructure Applicants

Re: **Federal Communications Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Option for CASF Infrastructure Applicants**

On May 4, 2020, the Communications Division (CD) received 54 applications requesting approximately \$533 million in total funding from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account. While CD is pleased with the overwhelming response by service providers, the requested amount of funding is more than three times the balance of the remaining CASF funds. Therefore, not all proposed projects will be funded even if all CASF rules and requirements are met.

To address the issue of limited CASF funding, CD strongly urges current and potential CASF infrastructure applicants to apply for funding from the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF).

The FCC will award up to \$20 billion in RDOF support over a ten year period for broadband services in eligible areas throughout the United States. The funding will be distributed in two phases using a reverse auction process.

Phase I auction (Auction 904) bidding is expected to start October 29, 2020; the FCC is expected to adopt the May 19 draft order at their June 9 meeting. Phase 1 available funding totals \$16.4 billion. Phase 2, which is expected to start in March 2021, will have \$4 billion available. It is possible that California's share could be as high as \$1.6 billion.^[1]

The FCC's proposed Auction 904 Dates and Deadlines are:

Auction Application Tutorial Available (via Internet)	By June 15, 2020
Short-Form Application (FCC Form 183) Filing Window Opens	July 1, 2020; 12:00 noon EDT
Short-Form Application (FCC Form 183) Filing Window Closes	July 15, 2020; 6:00 p.m. EDT
Auction Bidding Tutorial Available (via Internet)	By October 14, 2020
Mock Auction Begins	October 26, 2020
Auction Begins	October 29, 2020

[2] Submitting a short-form application does not obligate the entity to participate in Auction 904, but failure to submit a timely application will prevent an applicant from participating in the auction. **CD encourages that all current and potential CASF applicants submit a short-form application to the FCC before the July 15 deadline in order to maximize funding for eligible California areas.**

The FCC provides additional information on the Phase I Auction 904 timeline, eligible areas, support term, deployment requirements, and other topics at <https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904/factsheet>. Further, the FCC released the initial Auction 904 eligible areas on March 17, 2020 at <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/auction-904-preliminary-eligible-areas/>. [3]

CD has developed the following map to identify RDOF census blocks that currently overlap with CASF proposed project census blocks.

- **California RDOF Eligible Map:** Identifies all RDOF eligible areas in California based on the FCC's initial eligible areas list released on March 17, 2020.

On June 10, 2020, CD will host an interactive online presentation from 10:00AM to 12:00PM (Pacific Time) on RDOF Phase I Auction 904. Michael Janson, the Director of the FCC's Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force will give the presentation and answer questions. The topic is how Internet Service Providers can apply for funding through Auction 904. For information on how to participate, please go to: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/broadbandfederalfunding/>.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact CASF_Application_Questions@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ ROBERT OSBORN

Robert Osborn

Director, Communications Division

California Public Utilities Commission

cc: Selena Huang, Program Manager, Communications Division, CPUC

Louise Fischer, Program and Project Supervisor, Communications Division, CPUC

Enrique Gallardo, Legal Counsel, Legal Division, CPUC

[1] Estimate by CostQuest Associates, February 24, 2020.

[2] The Auction 904 and short-form application dates are proposals but will be finalized at the FCC's June 9 Open Meeting. See <https://www.fcc.gov/document/establishing-procedures-rural-digital-opportunity-fund-auction>.

[3] The FCC will release revised eligible areas after processing challenges received on the initial eligible areas list.