



CPUC Fact Sheet

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARING

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Order Instituting Rulemaking Proceeding to Consider Rules to Implement the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (R.23-02-016)

Why Did the CPUC Open this Proceeding?

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) opened this Rulemaking to develop and adopt rules for implementing the Federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021.

The Federal Government created the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment ([BEAD](#)) Program to expand access to high-speed internet throughout the United States. The BEAD Program allocates \$42.45 billion to expand such access by funding infrastructure planning, deployment, and adoption programs in all parts of the United States and U.S. territories, with a focus on currently unserved areas. In California, which will receive approximately \$1.86 billion from this program, the Governor designated the CPUC to serve as the recipient of and administering agent for the BEAD.

Under Federal rules, after receiving BEAD funding, a state may award sub-grants competitively to subgrantees to carry out the following broadband deployment activities: 1) unserved service projects; 2) underserved service projects; 3) broadband data collection, mapping, and planning; 4) installing internet and Wi-Fi infrastructure or providing reduced-cost broadband within a multi-family residential building; 5) broadband adoption programs; 6) other activities determined by National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA); and 7) projects connecting eligible community anchor institutions;¹

The Federal rules for BEAD give overall rules for the program, while the CPUC will set-up the schedule for the competitive process of selecting subgrantees, and specific requirements those subgrantees must follow, to build robust, high-quality, broadband networks.

In California, the CPUC is required to gather public input in an open public proceeding to determine specifically how the BEAD funds will be offered to qualified “subgrantees.” These new networks will be built in Federally defined eligible areas that are “unserved” and “underserved” communities across the state. BEAD-funded subgrantees may also build to “Community Anchor Institutions” like schools and libraries, provided those locations also meet “unserved” eligibility standards and depending on availability of funding to serve unserved and underserved locations.

This rulemaking provides a venue for developing procedures, rules, and orders necessary to accomplish the goals of the BEAD program. Specifically, the CPUC expects to develop a competitive process that will allow the distribution of BEAD funding grants to subgrantees that propose viable projects that bring high-speed internet access to communities that currently lack true high-speed broadband.

¹ <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program/program-archive>

Who is Impacted?

Any California resident who believes that they currently lack the ability to receive high-speed broadband internet service.

Proceeding Schedule

So far, the CPUC and the California Department of Technology have partnered with local and regional organizations to hold 17 workshops throughout the state of California. These workshops focused on possible rules and procedures for implementing the BEAD program, including rules for potential subgrantees.

On August 28, 2023, the CPUC submitted a final Five-Year Action Plan to NTIA, including all party opening and reply comments.

As described below, the CPUC will be holding Public Participation Hearings to hear from members of the general public about the issues raised in this proceeding, including a lack of access to internet service that meets their needs.

Public Participation Hearings

The public participation hearings (PPHs) provide an opportunity for the public to communicate directly with the CPUC regarding their access to essential communications services and their service quality, especially on issues raised in this proceeding. Below are the date of two upcoming PPHs:

November 8, 2023 2 p.m.	1-800-857-1917	adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc/
November 8, 2023 6 p.m.	English Passcode: 1767567# Spanish Passcode: 3799627#	

Consistent with the PPHs' purpose of hearing from members of the public, representatives of parties already involved in this proceeding are not permitted to comment at the PPH. More information at www.cpuc.ca.gov/pph

How can Your Voice be Heard?

The CPUC wants to hear whether members of the public are satisfied with the quality and accessibility of high-speed broadband in your communities. You may address any topic related to your broadband service, but we are especially interested in knowing whether you have access to broadband that meets your needs for accessing information, as well as important services such as education, job search resources, and health care. We would also like to hear about any challenges with the quality and accessibility of your internet service.

Other Ways to Participate

Subscribe to receive documents in R.23-02-016 at: subscribecpuc.cpuc.ca.gov/fpss/Default.aspx

Submit comments electronically to the CPUC using the "Add Public Comment" button on the "Public Comment" tab of the Docket Card for R.23-02-016 at apps.cpuc.ca.gov/c/R2302016. You can also review other public comments related to this rulemaking. The public may submit multiple public comments throughout the proceeding.

Contact the CPUC's Public Advisor at:

- Phone: 1-866-849-8390 (toll-free) or 1-415-703-2074
- TTY: 1-866-836-7258 (toll-free) or 1-415-703-5282
- Mail: CPUC Public Advisor's Office, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
- Email: public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov

Please reference the BEAD Rulemaking (R.23-02-016) in any communication with the CPUC regarding this matter.

Other Reference Materials and Helpful Links

[Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program | BroadbandUSA \(doc.gov\)](#)
[BEAD Program \(ca.gov\)](#)