



**California Emerging Technology Fund  
 Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) Summary: 1<sup>st</sup> Round  
 Public Computer Centers and Sustainable Broadband Adoption**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to outline important application material from the combined Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) and the United States Department of Commerce (DOC) National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). The programs with funds available were enacted into law via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

This document will only outline the BTOP Public Computer Centers and Sustainable Broadband Adoption NOFA application language and requirements.

Page listings following each headline refer to the specific pages for the respective material within the Broadband Deployment and Infrastructure NOFA.

**Background**

The first round NOFA, released July 1, 2009, for federal broadband deployment grant, loan, and loan/grant programs can be found at the following Uniform Resource Locator (URL):

[http://broadbandusa.sc.egov.usda.gov/files/BB%20NOFA%20FINAL%20with%20disclaimer\\_1.pdf](http://broadbandusa.sc.egov.usda.gov/files/BB%20NOFA%20FINAL%20with%20disclaimer_1.pdf)

The total amount available for this first round is \$4 billion leaving \$3.2 billion for subsequent rounds. The \$4 billion is allocated as follows:

|   | <b>RUS</b>           | <b>NTIA</b>          |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Grants for Remote Areas</b>  | <b>\$400 million</b> |                      |
| <b>Loans and/or Grants for Non-Remote Areas</b>   | <b>\$800 million</b> |                      |
| <b>Loans and/or Grants for Middle Mile Projects</b>                                     | <b>\$800 million</b> |                      |
| <b>National Reserve to Augment NOFA</b>   | <b>\$325 million</b> | <b>\$200 million</b> |
| <b>Broadband Infrastructure Projects (Not Rural as defined by RUS or denied by RUS)</b> |                      | <b>\$1.2 billion</b> |
| <b>Public Computer Center Projects</b>  |                      | <b>\$50 million</b>  |
| <b>Sustainable Broadband Adoption</b>   |                      | <b>\$150 million</b> |
| <b>Total for Round 1</b>  | <b>\$2.4 billion</b> | <b>\$1.6 billion</b> |

BIP is to extend loans, grants and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment to unserved and underserved rural areas.

BTOP is to make available grants for deployment of broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas, enhance broadband capacity at public computer centers, and promote sustainable broadband adoption projects.

### **Definitions (p. 17-23)**

**Broadband:** Two-way data transmission with advertised speeds of at least 768 kilobits per second (kbps) downstream and at least 200 kbps upstream to end users, or providing sufficient capacity in a middle mile project to support the provision of broadband service to end users.

**Community anchor institutions:** Schools, libraries, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income, unemployed and the aged.

**Public computer center:** A place, including but not limited to community colleges, libraries, schools, youth centers, employment service centers, Native American chapter houses, community centers, senior centers, assistive technology centers for people with disabilities, community health centers, and Neighborhood Network Centers in public housing developments, that provide broadband access to the general public or a specific vulnerable population, such as low-income, unemployed, aged, children, minorities and people with disabilities.

### **High Level Goals (p. 2)**

1. Facilitating the expansion of broadband communications services and infrastructure.
2. Spur job creation.
3. Stimulate long-term economic growth and opportunity.

### **NOFA Submission and Options (p. 2-3)**

Paper and electronic applications will be accepted between July 14, 2009 at 8:00 AM and August 14, 2009 at 5:00 PM, Eastern Time.

Paper submissions are permitted under the following conditions:

- Applicants are requesting less than \$1 million in total assistance if filing electronically would impose hardship on the applicant; and/or
- Applicants whose authorized representatives are individuals with disabilities.

Paper submissions must be postmarked no later than August 14, 2009 or hand-delivered no later than the window deadline.

Unless an applicant meets the above criteria and elects to submit a paper submission, electronic submission is required and must be received prior to the window deadline.

## **Program Priority and Process (p. 11-14)**

### BTOP Objectives:

- Provide access to broadband service to consumers residing in unserved areas.
- Provide improved access to broadband service to consumers residing in underserved areas.
- Provide broadband access, education, awareness, training, equipment, and support to community anchor institutions, or organizations and agencies serving vulnerable populations, or job-creating strategic facilities located in state- or federally-designated economic development areas.
- Improve access to, and use of, broadband service by public safety agencies.
- Stimulate the demand for broadband, economic growth, and job creation.

### BTOP Priorities:

- Advance one or more of the BTOP objectives.
- Extend broadband access to unserved areas.
- Improve access to underserved areas.
- Expand access to a wide range of institutions and individuals including vulnerable populations.
- Serve the highest priority needs for federal investment, particularly project that offer the potential for economic growth and job creation, and provide benefits to education, health care and public safety.
- The program will support viable, sustainable and scalable projects.

### BTOP Preferences:

- Proposal that satisfy the public-interest objective specified in the statute and detailed in the NOFA.
- Applicant is a socially and economically disadvantaged small business concern as defined under section 8(a) of the Small Business Act (SBA).
- Applications that propose to provide matching funds of greater than 20% and that are all cash will be given additional favorable consideration in step one of the application review process.

## **Two-Step Application and Review Process (p. 14-17)**

NTIA has developed a two-step application process.

Prior to step one, NTIA will require an initial screen of applications to determine whether it means the mandatory threshold requirements, such as application completeness, set for in section V.C. of the NOFA. Applicants that fail to meet any of the eligibility factors will be rejected. Applicants that pass this screen can proceed to step one.

Step one consists of at least three peer/expert reviewers that independently score the application. All scores are averaged, and the applications that are considered the mostly highly qualified will advance to the “due diligence” step two. All other applicants will be rejected.

Step two consists of applicants submitting additional information, as appropriate, such as more detailed plans or supporting documents. The information will be reviewed by NTIA staff, with support of external engineering, business and subject-matter experts to evaluate the consistency of the application with the supporting documents and ensure applications merit awards. NTIA staff

will assign a rating (1 through 5) with five representing the highest consistency and conformity with information already provided, especially on technical and budget considerations.

Each state will be provided an opportunity to make recommendations concerning the allocation of funds for qualifying projects in or affecting the individual states during step two of the process. The states are strongly encouraged to provide mapping and planning data to support their recommendations and will have 20 calendar days to submit the information to NTIA.

NTIA senior executives will review and approve proposals based on:

- Evaluation criteria review score.
- Due diligence review rating.
- Satisfaction of the program's purpose and priorities.
- Geographic distribution of the proposed grant awards and diversity of populations served.
- Range of technologies and uses of the technologies employed by the proposed grant awards.
- Avoidance of redundancy, conflicts with the initiatives of other federal agencies and avoidance of unjust enrichment.
- Availability of funds.
- Recommendations of the state, if applicable.

### **Program Eligibility (p.26-27)**

The following entities are eligible to apply for BTOP:

- States, local governments, or any agency, subdivision, instrumentality, or political subdivision thereof.
- The District of Columbia.
- A territory or possession of the United States.
- An Indian tribe.
- A native Hawaiian organization.
- A non-profit foundation, a non-profit corporation, a non-profit institution, or a non-profit association.
- Other non-profit entities.
- For-profit corporations.
- Limited liability companies.
- Cooperative or mutual organizations.

### **Eligibility Factors (p. 27-28)**

BTOP eligibility factors include:

- Fully Completed Application.
- Timely Completion.
  - Project can be substantially completed within two years of the date of the grant, loan or loan/grant award and finished within three years of the date of award.
    - BTOP: substantially complete when an awardee has met 67 percent of the project milestones and received 67 percent of its award funds.
- Matching funds of at least 20 percent
- Demonstration that Project Could not be implemented but for Federal Grant Assistance
- Reasonableness of Project Budget

## **Eligible Cost Purposes (p. 37-38)**

### Eligible Costs for Public Computer Centers

- Acquiring broadband-related equipment, instrumentation, network capability, hardware and software, and digital network technology for broadband services.
- Developing and providing training, education, support and awareness or web-based resources.
- Facilitating access to broadband services, including, but not limited to, making public computer centers accessible to the disabled.
- Undertaking such other projects and activities as the Assistant secretary finds to be consistent with the purpose for which the program was established.

### Eligible Costs for Sustainable Broadband Adoption

- Acquiring broadband-related equipment, hardware and software, and digital network technology for broadband services.
- Developing and providing training, education, support and awareness programs or web-based content.
- Conducting broadband-related public education, outreach, support and awareness campaigns.
- Implementing innovative programs to facilitate greater access to broadband service, devices and equipment.
- Undertaking such other projects and activities as the Assistant Secretary finds to be consistent with the purpose for which the program was established.

## **Ineligible Cost Purposes (p. 38)**

BTOP grant funds may not be used to fund purchases that are not used predominantly for the provision of broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment and support.

## **Application Checklist (p. 49-54)**

Step one in the application process will be to present detailed information on the following items:

### Public Computer Center Application

- Identity of applicant and general project information including:
  - Descriptive title of project.
  - Congressional districts affected.
  - Dollar amount requested.
- Verification that application meets certain eligibility requirements:
  - Submission of a complete application.
  - Commitment to substantial completion within two years and completion within three years.
  - Demonstration that project advances one of five BTOP purposes.
  - Commitment to or a waiver of match requirement.
  - Demonstration that but for Federal funding this project could not be completed.
  - Demonstration that the project is technically feasible.
  - Demonstration that the budget is reasonable and costs eligible.

- Executive Summary:
  - Identification of the problem or need the project addresses.
  - Approach to addressing the need.
  - The area and population served and demographics of target area.
  - Estimated number of potential users of the public computer centers.
  - Qualifications of the applicant.
  - Jobs created and saved.
  - Overall cost of the project.
  
- Description of the project purpose:
  - Significance of the problem.
  - Degree to which the solution addresses the problem and could be replicated.
  - Degree to which the problem and solution advance one or more of the five BTOP purposes.
  - How the project incorporates more than one BTOP program category or statutory purpose.
  
- Description of any collaboration with Recovery Act or other state or federal development programs that leverage the impact of the proposed project.
  
- Description of how the program would enhance service for health care delivery, education, or children.
  
- Evidence of collaboration with any Economically Disadvantaged Small business concern (SDB) as defined by section 8 (a) of the Small Business Act.
  
- Capacity of the center and population served:
  - Will the facility be available to the general public or specific populations.
  - Whether the center charges membership fees and how these fees consistent with public interest.
  - Restrictions on use of center.
  - How the center will be accessible to people with disabilities.
  - Location and hours of the center.
  - Current and proposed number of broadband workstations.
  - Current and proposed speed of the broadband connection.
  - Size and scope of the target population and population to be served.
  - Outreach strategy.
  - Equipment and software
  - Training and educational programs offered.
  
- Summary of the project viability:
  - Overall technology strategy.
  - Qualifications of the organization and management team.
  - Description of organizational readiness and organizational chart.
  - List of community organizations, partners, vendors or contributors of in-kind resources.
  - Project timeline.
  - Potential challenges that could pose delays.
  - List of needed licensing and regulatory approvals.
  - Legal opinion addressing the applicant's ability to enter into the award agreement.

- Proposed budget and sustainability information:
  - Narrative explaining the budget.
  - Explanation of why costs are reasonable.
  - Demonstration that the project could not have been undertaken but for federal funding.
  - Financial statements for the last two years.
  - Explanation of how a project will be self sustaining.
  - Description of planned matching funds.
  - Whether the project is receiving or has applied for federal funds for non-recurring costs.
  - Disclosure of other federal or state funding.
  - Whether asking for waiver of Buy American provision.
  
- Completion of an environmental checklist.

### Sustainable Broadband Application

- Identity of applicant and general project information including:
  - Descriptive title of project.
  - Congressional districts affected.
  - Dollar amount requested.
  
- Verification that application meets certain eligibility requirements:
  - Submission of a complete application.
  - Commitment to substantial completion within two years and completion within three years.
  - Demonstration that project advances one of five BTOP purposes.
  - Commitment to or a waiver of match requirement.
  - Demonstration that but for Federal funding this project could not be completed.
  - Demonstration that the project is technically feasible.
  - Demonstration that the budget is reasonable and costs eligible.
  
- Executive Summary:
  - Identification of the problem or need the project addresses.
  - Approach to addressing the need and how it is innovative.
  - The area and population served and demographics of target area.
  - Estimated number of potential broadband subscribers.
  - Qualifications of the applicant.
  - Jobs created and saved.
  - Overall Cost of the Project.
  
- Description of the project purpose:
  - Significance of the problem.
  - Degree to which the solution addresses the problem and could be replicated.
  - Degree to which the problem and solution advance one or more of the five BTOP purposes.
  - How the project incorporates more than one BTOP program category or statutory purpose.
  
- Description of any collaboration with Recovery Act or other state or federal development programs that leverage the impact of the proposed project.

- Description of how the program would enhance service for health care delivery, education, or children.
- Evidence of collaboration with any Economically Disadvantaged Small business concern (SDB) as defined by section 8 (a) of the Small Business Act.
- Description of project benefits;
  - Explain how the approach is innovative.
  - Number of new homes, business, and institutional broadband subscribers.
  - People reached by proposed educational or training program.
  - Hours of training per person.
  - Number of instructors to be employed.
  - Planned equipment purchases and cost.
  - Strategies and expected number to be reached by awareness program.
  - Impact of the proposed awareness campaign.
  - Organizations experience with this type of campaign.
- Summary of the project viability:
  - Explanation of innovative solution proposed and how it will create sustainable adoption in the target and feasible in other situations.
  - Qualifications of the organization and management team.
  - Description of organizational readiness and organizational chart.
  - List of community organizations, partners, vendors or contributors of in-kind resources.
  - Project Timeline.
  - Potential challenges that could pose delays.
  - List of needed licensing and regulatory approvals.
  - Legal opinion addressing the applicant's ability to enter into the award agreement.
- Proposed budget and sustainability information:
  - Narrative explaining the budget.
  - Explanation of why costs are reasonable.
  - Demonstration that the project could not have been undertaken but for federal funding.
  - Financial statements for the last two years.
  - Explanation of how a project will be create sustainable increases in subscribership.
  - Explanation of how the project itself could be sustained beyond the grant period.
  - Description of planned matching funds.
  - Whether the project is receiving or has applied for federal funds for non-recurring costs
  - Disclosure of other federal or state funding.
  - Whether asking for waiver of Buy American provision.
- Completion of an environmental checklist.

Step two consists of applicants submitting additional information, as appropriate, such as more detailed plans or supporting documents.

## **Evaluation Criteria (p. 63-72)**

### BTOP Public Computer Center Projects

- Project purpose, 30 points.
  - Fit with statutory purpose.
  - Recovery Act and other governmental collaboration.
  - Enhanced services for health care delivery, education and children.
  - Socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses.
  
- Project benefits, 25 points.
  - Availability to the Public.
  - Training and educational programs offered.
  - Availability and qualifications of consulting and teaching staff.
  
- Project viability, 25 points.
  - Technical feasibility of the project (comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the technical solution, level of detail, coherence of system designs and demonstration. that the project includes developments that will be feasible in other situations)
  - Organizational capacity.
  - Level of community involvement.
  - Ability to promptly start project.
  
- Project budget and sustainability, 20 points.
  - Reasonableness of the budget.
  - Sustainability of the project (e.g. business plans, market projections, third-party funding commitments).
  - Leverage of outside sources.

### BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption

- Project purpose, 30 points.
  - Fit with statutory purpose.
  - Recovery Act and other governmental collaboration.
  - Enhanced services for health care delivery, education and children.
  - Socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses.
  
- Project benefits, 25 points.
  - Number of new users
  - Cost per new users
  - Innovation
  
- Project viability, 25 points.
  - Technical feasibility of the project (mechanics and operational details, clarity and detail of project plan, how convincing the rationale behind the plan is , demonstration that the plan involves innovative solutions that will be feasible in other situations).
  - Organizational capacity.
  - Level of community involvement.
  - Ability to promptly start project.

- Project budget and sustainability, 20 points.
  - Reasonableness of the budget.
  - Sustainability of the project (Both the project and adoption rates).
  - Leverage of outside sources.

### **Helpful Links**

NTIA Broadband Grants Website

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/>

Federal Recovery Website

<http://www.recovery.gov/>

State Recovery Website

<http://www.recovery.ca.gov/>

State CPUC CASF Program Website

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/Information+for+providing+service/announcingcasf.htm>

CETF Website

<http://www.cetfund.org/>