

November 01, 2022

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

Accepting a Local Agency Technical Assistance Grant from the California Public Utilities Commission to Accelerate Digital Equity

The lack of affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service impedes access to many essential aspects of life, including economic; educational; social; and healthcare services. This aspect of the digital divide is especially pronounced in our low-income communities and our communities of color. The Board of Supervisors (Board) is committed to accelerating digital equity through investments to meaningfully address the digital divide. One such investment includes the establishment of demonstration projects throughout the County of Los Angeles (County) to provide residential broadband internet services to unserved and underserved communities.

On November 16, 2021, the Board passed a motion titled, "Investments to Accelerate Digital Equity," which included a directive to the Chief Executive Office, in consultation with the Internal Services Department (ISD) and the Department of Public Works to identify Federal, State, and/or County sources to support a five (5) year proof of concept model for what is now the Community Broadband Network (CBN) initiative. In its August 11, 2022, update to the Board, ISD reported on the State's Local Area Technical Assistance (LATA) grant program and indicated it had applied for the grant.

Senate Bill 156, signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom on July 20, 2021, included \$50 Million in grant funding, administered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), to assist local jurisdictions and tribes in certain pre-construction work for last-mile broadband projects. These projects are meant to provide high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved households and businesses, and due to the underlying Federal funding, must be designed to reliably meet or exceed symmetrical speeds of 100 megabits per second (both

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upload and download). The LATA grant program is open only to California local government agencies and tribes and will award grants on a first come, first served basis until funding is exhausted. Each jurisdiction is limited to grant awards of up to 100 percent reimbursement for technical assistance costs, up to a maximum of \$500,000 per fiscal year. The LATA grant program opened for applications on August 1, 2022.

On August 8, 2022, ISD applied to the CPUC for a LATA grant for pre-construction activities in the South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles areas of the County. The application includes contracted subject matter expertise critical to future Work Order Solicitations under CBN Services Master Agreements approved by this Board on September 13, 2022, as well as technical assistance in applying for upcoming Federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment grants. The LATA grant application included three letters of support from overlapping jurisdictions to demonstrate collaboration between the jurisdictions: The City of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

On October 6, 2022, the Communications Division of CPUC notified ISD that its LATA grant application had met the criteria for Ministerial Review and that the County is approved for a grant up to \$320,000 for technical assistance for the “Community Broadband Networks to Deliver Residential Broadband Services” project. This is the first LATA grant awarded in the County and one of 12 projects statewide to be included in the first group of LATA approvals announced by the CPUC

(<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/news-and-updates/all-news/cpuc-awards-grants-to-local-governments-to-support-closing-the-digital-divide>).

To accept this LATA grant, the County must:

- a. Submit a Consent Form and a Payee Data Record within 30 calendar days from the date of award, October 6, 2022. The Consent Form binds the County to the terms, conditions, and requirements of CPUC’s approved Decision 22-02-026 and the October 6, 2022, award letter. The Payee Data Record is the State of California standardized form STD 204 and is required for tax purposes.
- b. Submit a Federal compliance form, “Assurances of Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act,” and meet the legal requirements related to non-discrimination and non-discriminatory use of Federal funds prior to payment.

- c. Follow Prevailing Wage rules and requirements.
- d. Abide by requirements in CPUC Decision 22-02-026, including but not limited to applicable reporting, completion of reimbursable work product within 24 months, and providing copies of the final reimbursable work product to the CPUC.

Failure to comply with these requirements will deem the LATA grant null and void.

It is imperative that the County take advantage of every available State and Federal grant to defray the significant costs associated with providing reliable, affordable, high-speed internet access to the unserved and underserved in the County.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Authorize the Director of the Internal Services Department, or his designee, as an agent of the County of Los Angeles, to accept the Local Area Technical Assistance (LATA) grant funds of up to \$320,000 awarded on October 6, 2022 from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).
2. Authorize the Director of the Internal Services Department, or his designee, as an agent of the County of Los Angeles, to complete and submit any required forms and documentation according to the terms and conditions of the LATA grant as specified in CPUC Decision 22-02-026 and the LATA Grantee Administrative Manual, and to seek reimbursement for applicable costs pursuant to this grant award.

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