

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Federal Funding Account

December 2022

I. Priority Areas

1. **Q: What are priority areas? How were they developed?**

A: The priority areas contain unserved locations which were analyzed on a county basis. The priority areas are eligible for last mile broadband funding through the Federal Funding Account (see [Section 2.1 of Decision 22-04-055, Appendix A](#)). The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) developed the priority areas with CostQuest Associates using broadband data and modeling. For more information, see the *Priority Areas Fact Sheet, CA Broadband Investment Model 2022*, and the *CA Broadband Analysis - Priority Areas* documents provided at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/ffapriorityareas>.

2. **How are boundaries for the priority areas determined? Do they nest within counties?**

The priority areas are within county boundaries. See *CA Broadband Analysis – Priority Areas*, available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/ffapriorityareas>, for the priority areas methodology. Applicants will be able to add or subtract areas across county boundaries.

3. **Q: What does a “location” or “broadband serviceable location” mean?**

A: A structure that has or can receive broadband service. For example, a single-family housing unit, a multi-dwelling unit, a business building, or a commercial structure.

4. **Q: What is an “unserved” location?**

A: CPUC Decision 22-04-055, which sets Federal Funding Account rules, defines an “unserved location” as one lacking access to reliable broadband speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream and 3 Mbps upstream including areas with access to only legacy technologies (e.g., Digital Subscriber Line and DOCSIS 2.0 or older).

5. **Q: What is an “underserved” location? When will the CPUC consider underserved areas for funding?**

A: The CPUC has not yet adopted a definition of an underserved location for the Federal Funding Account. To model investment needs, the *CA Broadband Investment Model 2022*, available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/ffapriorityareas>, defines an underserved location as one with access to at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds but lacking access to at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

6. **Q: What is the Statewide Middle-Mile Network?**

A: The State of California will acquire, build, maintain and operate an essential open-access statewide middle-mile network, which will be overseen by the California Department of Technology. The middle-mile is the physical fiber optic infrastructure needed to enable internet connectivity. It is made up of high-capacity fiber lines that carry large amounts of data at high speeds over long distances. Please visit [State of California Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative](#) for more information.

7. **Q: Who can apply for funding through the Federal Funding Account?**

A: Appendix A of Decision 22-04-055, section 5 defines the following types of organizations as eligible to apply for funding:

- Entities with a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) that qualify as a “telephone corporation” as defined under Public Utilities Code section 234
- Non-telephone corporations that are facilities-based broadband service providers
- Local governmental agencies
- Electric utilities
- Nonprofits
- Cooperatives
- California tribes (Eligible California tribal entities include California tribal governments, their wholly owned tribal corporations, and tribal nonprofits.)

II. Priority Areas Public Map

1. **Q: How do I leave feedback on the map?**

A: In the map, click on an area where you would like to provide comments. A window will pop-up in which you will see an “Add Comment” button. Click on this link and a feedback form will appear where comments can be provided and submitted. All comments submitted will appear on the map and will be considered with any applications that include areas for which a comment was submitted. Comments will also be evaluated as part of any priority area updates.

2. **Q: Where do I get the underlying priority areas data?**

A: The data is available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/ffapriorityareas>.

3. **Q: Whom can I contact for help with the map?**

A: Send an email with any questions to federalaccount@cpuc.ca.gov.

4. **Q: How do I view information on a priority area in the map?**

A: In the map, click on a priority area of interest. A window will pop-up in which you will click on the priority area. The Search and Give Feedback tab will open with the priority areas data displayed.

5. **Q: What does the “No Housing Units Flag” field mean in the priority area information?**

A: This represents the number of census blocks with no housing units. It is a flag for users viewing priority area information to show that there are census blocks with no housing units and funding may be potentially impacted for these census blocks.

6. **Q: What is the Socioeconomic Vulnerability Index (SEVI)?**

A: The SEVI provides a score that describes the relative socioeconomic characteristics of communities in terms of poverty, unemployment, educational attainment, linguistic isolation, and percent of income spent on housing. These factors are a subset of those used in the [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#). The higher the SEVI score means the more disadvantaged a community is. The top 25 percent of scores are considered the most disadvantaged.

7. **Q: How does the Priority Areas Public Map differ from the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Broadband Map?**

A: The maps rely on different data sources from different time periods. For information on the CPUC and FCC broadband data collection processes, see [Broadband Mapping Program \(ca.gov\)](#) and [Broadband Data Collection | Federal Communications Commission \(fcc.gov\)](#), respectively.