

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**Communications Division
Consumer Programs Branch**

**RESOLUTION T-17770
October 6, 2022**

RESOLUTION

Resolution T-17770. Administration of the Digital Divide Grant Program, Application Process, Selection, Funding, Deployment and Progress Reports.

SUMMARY

This Resolution sets forth the eligibility criteria and administrative processes for the Digital Divide Grant Program, pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 280.5 and Decision 21-10-020.

The proposed pilot program will award four grants of up to \$250,000 each to eligible Community-Based Organizations on a competitive basis. Grant recipients will deploy projects to bridge the digital divide, which may include addressing physical gaps in local broadband networks,¹ affordability, access to personal devices, and digital skills training.²

¹ Physical gaps in local broadband networks may include a lack of adequate fixed wireline facilities, wireless facilities, last mile facilities, middle mile facilities, right of ways, poles and pole attachments, spectrum, and end user terminals.

² D.21-10-020, pp. 20-21, 30.

BACKGROUND

Public Utilities Code Section 280.5,³ enacted in 2003 by AB 855 (Firebaugh, Chapter 820, Statutes of 2003), established the Digital Divide Grant Program (DDGP) and requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) to award grants to fund digital divide programs.⁴

Section 280.5(b) states, “Revenues...shall be deposited in the Digital Divide Account, which is hereby established in the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee Fund...to be used only for digital divide pilot projects.” Section 280.5(c)(2) further directs the Commission to award grants to community-based nonprofit organizations⁵ “on a competitive basis subject to criteria to be established by the commission and in a way that disburses the funds widely, including urban and rural areas...for the purpose of funding community technology programs.”

The DDGP is funded by a percentage of fees collected from the lease of certain state-owned property to wireless telecommunications service providers for wireless telecommunications facilities, pursuant to Govt. Code Section 14666.8. Currently, the Digital Divide Account maintains a balance of about \$1.2 million dollars that can be used to fund projects.

On September 18, 2020, the Commission initiated Rulemaking (R.) 20-09-001 (the “Broadband for All” proceeding) to set the strategic direction and changes necessary to expeditiously deploy reliable, fast, and affordable broadband. Phase One of the

³ All statutory references refer to the Public Utilities Code, unless otherwise stated.

⁴ Pub. Util. Code § 280.5 states, in relevant part:

(d) For purposes of this section, “community technology programs” means a program that is engaged in diffusing technology in local communities and training local communities in the use of technology, especially local communities that otherwise would have no access or limited access to the Internet and other technologies.

(e) For purposes of this section, “digital divide projects” means community technology programs involved in activities that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Providing open access to and opportunities for training in technology.
- (2) Developing content relevant to the interests and wants of the local community.
- (3) Preparing youth for opportunities in the new economy through multimedia training and skills.
- (4) Harnessing technology for e-government services.

⁵ CBO grant recipients must be exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Pub. Util. Code § 280.5(c)(2).

proceeding concluded on October 25, 2021, resulting in Decision (D.) 21-10-020. The decision delegated to the Communications Division (CD) staff the authority to approve grants from the Digital Divide Account that meet the criteria set forth in Ordering Paragraph 7 and Pub. Util. Code § 280.5.

The Commission set a maximum of \$250,000 per grant, with no more than 10 percent of the awarded grant allocated to administrative expenses.⁶ Grant recipients must be a CBO non-profit with a demonstrated record of work to address the digital divide.⁷ Grants will fund digital divide projects that serve a beneficiary school located in an urban or rural low-income small school district.⁸ The beneficiary school must have a free lunch participation rate of at least 50 percent. Projects may address physical gaps in local broadband networks, affordability, access to personal devices, and digital skills training.⁹

Projects must provide a holistic solution including, but not limited to:

1. Student home broadband connection;
2. Student required hardware including laptop, Notebook and/or hotspots;
3. Student curriculum focused on the use of technology;
4. Software to enable distance learning for student and teacher; and
5. Training for teachers in the use of technology for distance learning.¹⁰

DISCUSSION

This Resolution sets forth CD's proposed eligibility criteria and administrative processes for the DDGP in compliance with Section 280.5 and Decision (D.) 21-10-02. The intent of CD's proposal is to ensure that the inaugural digital divide pilot projects have an excellent chance of ongoing success and are supported by the community and the students they will serve.

⁶ D.21-10-020, OP 7(e) and 7(i).

⁷ *Id.* at OP 7(d).

⁸ *Id.* at OP 7(a)-(b).

⁹ *Id.* at 20-21, 30.

¹⁰ *Id.* at OP 7(f).

Funding Grants

The Department of General Services (DGS) reports a balance of approximately \$1.2 million as of August 11, 2022, in the Digital Divide Account. These funds will support up to four grants, at a maximum of \$250,000 each, as approved in D.21-10-020. Additional grant application opportunities under this program may be considered as funds become available.

The Commission designated three grants for projects benefiting low-income rural schools within small school districts, and one grant for a project benefiting a low-income urban school within a small school district.¹¹ For each grant, a maximum of ten percent is available to fund the administrative costs necessary for the deployment of a project.¹² After the term of a grant-funded project ends, discounts on the cost of eligible services may be available to schools that participate in the California Teleconnect Fund.¹³

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Eligible nonprofit CBOs may submit applications for grant funding. Applicants must have a demonstrated record of successful and satisfactory work deploying community technology projects and/or projects to bridge the digital divide. Applicants must have a project established/active with a beneficiary school(s), or, at minimum, an agreement with a beneficiary school to execute a proposed project.

Eligible applicants must be organized and operate exclusively for one or more of the purposes described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and none of its earnings inure to the benefit of a private shareholder or individual. All applicants must be in good standing with the California Franchise Tax Board.

Project Eligibility Criteria

Eligible digital divide projects must deploy community technology programs to benefit eligible public schools. The beneficiary school(s) must belong to a small public school district and have a Free or Reduced-Price Meal participation rate of at least 50 percent, as

¹¹ Decision 21-10-020 at 22.

¹² Decision 21-10-020 at Ordering Paragraph (OP) 7.

¹³ Decision 21-10-020 at OP 7.

identified by the California Department of Education.¹⁴ A list of eligible public schools meeting these requirements is available at www.cpuc.ca.gov/ddgp. Additionally, beneficiary students must be current enrollees in the public school served by the digital divide project grant.

Eligible projects must provide a holistic solution to bridging the digital divide, including, but not limited to, the items listed below:

- Student home broadband connections;
- Student required hardware, including end-user devices (e.g., computers, laptops, tablets, etc.) and/or devices to enable a broadband connection (e.g., modems, routers, hotspots, etc.);
- Student curriculum focused on the use of technology;
- Software to enable distance learning for student and teacher; and
- Training for teachers in the use of technology for distance learning.

Pilot grants will fund a maximum project term of one school year.¹⁵ CBOs and beneficiary schools are encouraged to continue projects beyond the term of the pilot grant and one school year. The Commission will evaluate each digital divide project at the conclusion of the grant-funded term and may choose to make additional funding available through a second round of grants. After the conclusion of a pilot project, the beneficiary school may also be eligible to receive subsidies from the Commission's California Teleconnect Fund to subsidize the cost of advanced communication services.

Application Process

A CBO in partnership with one or more eligible public schools, may apply to request funding for an established or proposed digital divide project. Detailed application instructions are attached to this resolution at Appendix A and are also available for download at the DDGP webpage at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/ddgp>. A CBO will submit its

¹⁴ Due to modifications to the Free or Reduced-Price Meal eligibility criteria during the COVID-19 pandemic, CD staff will use data from the 2018-2019 school year to assess eligibility instead of data from the most recent school year. The 2018-2019 Free or Reduced-Price Meal data is available at the California Department of Education's website: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesesp.asp>.

¹⁵ Decision 21-10-020 at Ordering Paragraph 7.

completed application, including all required documents, by email to DigitalDivideGrantProgram@cpuc.ca.gov.

The CD will begin accepting applications for the DDGP seven days after adoption of this resolution. The application window will conclude 90 days after. Once the application window is closed, staff anticipates completing review and selecting awardees within 90 days. Staff will subsequently draft a Resolution proposing adoption of its recommendations subject to Commission approval, applicants will receive a notice of award upon adoption of the Final Resolution.

The table below lists important dates and activities for the DDGP and will be posted at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/ddgp>. Staff will update the website and provide notice to the Service List of this Resolution, applicants, and other interested parties, if there are changes to the adopted schedule.

Activity	Date
Resolution setting forth the DDGP adopted	October 6, 2022
Application period begins	October 13, 2022
Application period ends	January 11, 2023
Staff review and scoring of grant applications completed	on or about April, 2023
Awardees announced via Notice of Draft Resolution	on or about May, 2023
Notice of Award provided upon adoption of Final Resolution	on or about June, 2023

The application for the DDGP is organized into five sections. Applicants must respond in full to each section by providing the requested information, forms, attachments, and/or narrative responses.

Section 1: Basic Information

Section 1 requires the applicant to provide basic information about the CBO and their partner school(s).

Section 2: Scope of Work

Section 2 requires the applicant to provide information on their proposed digital divide project, including details on the project's functions, activities, schedule, and deliverables.

Section 3: Experience

Section 3 requires the applicant to provide information on its background and work history to demonstrate its ability to successfully execute the proposed project and meet the requirements of the DDGP.

Section 4: Proposed Budget Plan

Section 4 requires the applicant to provide a narrative description of their proposed budget plan and a proposed budget that aligns with the format of the sample budget in Appendix B. The program will not fund more than \$250,000 of eligible project expenses. If, however, the total scope of the program's budget does exceed \$250,000, the applicant should still identify and describe in the budget how the additional funds will be spent as well as any additional funding sources that will ensure project completion. Expenses within \$250,000 should be directly related to bridging the digital divide or as permitted by the DDGP guidelines.

CD encourages all applicants to leverage additional funding sources to improve their digital divide project.

Section 5: Partnership Agreement

Section 5 requires applicants to sign a Partnership Agreement, confirming both the CBO applicant and the beneficiary school(s) have reviewed the application prior to its submittal. If awarded a grant, the Partnership Agreement also states the CBO and beneficiary school(s) agree to execute the proposed project under the terms and conditions of the DDGP, Section 280.5, D.21-10-020, and this resolution. A Partnership Agreement Form is attached to this resolution at Appendix C. Applicants must complete a separate Partnership Agreement Form for each beneficiary school.

Application Evaluation and Scoring

Pursuant to D.21-10-020 and Section 280.5, the DDGP will award grants on a competitive basis. Additional criteria for evaluation and scoring are established herein.

The CD will convene a Scoring Panel consisting of analysts to review the DDGP applications in three stages: Baseline Review, Individual Scores, and Final Scores and Determination. Panelists will first review applications independently and then convene to determine the final composite scores and rankings, as further discussed below.

In the first stage of review, panelists will evaluate the baseline requirements to determine if the CBO's application can progress to the second stage of review. The baseline requirements include:

1. The application must be complete and timely submitted. Information and documents submitted must be sufficiently responsive to the application requirements.
2. The applicant is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
3. The applicant must be active and in good standing with the California Franchise Tax Board.
4. The applicant must submit at least three letters of recommendation. The letters of recommendation must be from entities unrelated to the beneficiary school, and can include state or local government agencies, public schools or school districts, county offices of education, persons holding public office, trade associations or groups, community groups, and/or anchor institutions.
5. The applicant must have a project established/active with a beneficiary school(s), or, at minimum, an agreement with a beneficiary school(s) to execute a proposed project.
6. The applicant must submit at least two letters of endorsement per beneficiary school supporting the digital divide project. One letter is required from each of the following: the beneficiary school's district office and the beneficiary school's Parent Teachers Association.¹⁶

¹⁶ Letters of endorsement from the beneficiary school's district office and Parent Teacher Association are due by the application deadline of January 11, 2023. An additional letter of endorsement from the beneficiary school's school board is also required. However, to allow for additional time to procure the letter of endorsement from the school board, that letter is due by March 11, 2023, and is not included as part of the baseline requirements noted above.

7. The beneficiary school(s) must be located within the boundaries of an urban or rural small school district, as identified by the California Department of Education.
8. The beneficiary school(s) must have a Free or Reduced-Price Meal participation rate of at least 50 percent.

If panelists cannot verify one or more of the baseline requirements, the application will be eliminated from consideration. A notification letter will be sent to eliminated applicants. If panelists verify that the application meets all the baseline requirements, the application will progress to the second evaluation stage.

In the second evaluation stage, panelists will review the remaining applications to assign scores on each of the following categories: Scope of Work, Experience, Budget, and Overall. The point allocation for each category is as follows:

Category	Points (Maximum)
Scope of Work	40
Experience	30
Budget	20
Overall	10
Total	100

Scope of Work: The Scoring Panel will evaluate the extent to which the proposed project would bridge the digital divide. The project plan should be clear, comprehensive, detailed, and thoroughly explained. The project should be feasible, realistic, reasonable, and straightforward. The project will extend beyond a single school year, despite the funding limitations of the grant to a single school year. The proposed project provides a holistic solution including, but not limited to, the following: (1) Student home broadband connection; (2) Student required hardware including laptop, Chromebook and/or hotspots; (3) Student curriculum focused on the use of technology; (4) Software to enable distance learning for student and teacher; and (5) Training for teachers in the use of technology for distance learning. The proposed project will increase access for students that are low income, disabled, rural, or belong to disadvantaged communities. The

proposed project is in a location that lacks access to high quality broadband services, either due to insufficient service availability, socioeconomic factors, or other factors.

Experience: The Scoring Panel will evaluate the applicant's and its personnel's experiences of successfully deploying grant-funded projects and projects to bridge the digital divide, as well as their experiences of collaborating with schools, students, teachers. Experiences may include working with students with special needs. Applicant provides at least three letters of recommendation from government agencies, school board members or school administrators, community partners, local parent-teacher associations, or a constituent of the community that the CBO serves. Applicant also provides at least three letters of endorsement supporting the digital divide project. One letter of endorsement is required from each of the representative groups: (1) the beneficiary school's district office, (2) the beneficiary school's school board, (3) the beneficiary school's Parent Teachers Association.¹⁷ Applicant's narrative of experiences is clear, comprehensive, detailed, and thoroughly explained. The experiences described are considerably relevant to the purpose and goals of the Digital Divide Account.

Budget: The Scoring Panel will consider and rate the reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of the budget and its itemized descriptions of services offered by the project, itemized descriptions of administrative expenses, and estimated costs associated with each service or expense. The applicant's budget plan narrative and proposed budget worksheet should be feasible, realistic, and reasonable. They should provide clear and detailed descriptions of services and devices offered by the digital divide project. The costs of services and devices are broken down in detail, including the number of students and teachers benefiting from such services. The leveraging of other sources of funding should be thoroughly explained.

Overall: The Scoring Panel will evaluate the project proposal on a holistic level, and will consider and rate, among others, the estimated impact the project will have in bridging the digital divide.

¹⁷ Applicants must submit all three letters of endorsement to meet the requirements of a complete application. Letters of endorsement from the beneficiary school's district office and Parent Teacher Association are due by the application deadline of December 31, 2022. The letter of endorsement from the beneficiary school's school board is due by February 28, 2023.

For each application, panelists will independently evaluate the narrative responses to each section and proposed budget using consistent project-related rating and scoring criteria, with a maximum possible total score of 100 points per panelist. After individual panelist review, the Scoring Panel will convene to discuss discrepancies and determine a final composite score based on the average. Finally, the Scoring Panel will rank order the applications by score to determine the winning projects.

Applications with the highest total scores may be selected for funding, although the panel may select the next highest scoring applications to account for a wide distribution of funds.¹⁸ The Scoring Panel will recommend grants to the three highest scoring projects benefiting low-income rural schools within small school districts, and one grant to the highest scoring project benefiting a low-income urban school within a small school district. If multiple CBO applicants apply to serve the same school, only the application with the highest score will be recommended for funding. Staff will prepare a Draft Resolution recommending the four projects for Commission adoption.

After the Commission adopts the grant award selection resolution, CD will send a Notice of Award letter to the CBO recipients and beneficiary schools. Selected CBOs will be required to complete a Payee Data Record Form, Standard (STD) 204 in order to receive funding. A notification letter will also be sent to all applicants that are not awarded a grant.

Reporting Requirements

As a condition of receiving funding, grant recipients must submit two project reports to the Commission. An example template for the project reports is attached hereto at Appendix E. Staff will produce a final report template and post the document to the program website (www.cpuc.ca.gov/ddgp) ahead of each due date. The CBO should submit the reports to DigitalDivideGrantProgram@cpuc.ca.gov via email or using the Commission's secure file transfer tool Kiteworks (<https://kwftp.cpuc.ca.gov>).¹⁹ Grant recipients shall submit the following:

¹⁸ Pub. Util. Code section 280.5 requires the Commission provide grants "in a way that disburses the funds widely."

¹⁹ A user guide containing instructions on how to use Kiteworks is available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/about-cpuc/employee-information/kiteworksftpeexternalusersquickstartguide.pdf>.

- **Progress Report:** In this report, grantees will submit information on the progress of the project, including on the status of milestones, for the first four months of implementation. The progress report is due five months into the term of the project.
- **Completion Report:** In this report, grantees will report on the completion of the overall project, milestones met, and metrics to assess outcomes. The completion report is due one month after the end of the project's term. Projects funding may not exceed 12 months.

Payment of Grant Funds

Payment of grant funds will be made through a monthly reimbursement process. Ten percent of the monthly reimbursement will be held back until the project is successfully completed.

Applicants will submit claims monthly to request reimbursement of eligible project expenses. Requests for reimbursements will require documentation of expenses incurred. Qualifying expenses must be directly related to bridging the digital divide. Payments will be based upon approval of receipts, invoices and other supporting documents showing the expenses incurred for the project are in accordance with the grant recipients' projection application, D.21-10-020, Pub. Util. Code Section 280.5, and this resolution.

The DDGP will not reimburse ineligible expenses (including administrative costs in excess of 10% of the approved project budget) or expenses that lack sufficient documentation.

Goods or services purchased using grant funds (via the expense reimbursement process) will become property of the beneficiary school upon completion or termination of the project.

In the event an applicant cannot complete the agreed upon project, the Program is not obligated to reimburse any expenses incurred.

Other Items for Consideration

Although the Commission only authorized grant funding for four pilot projects at this time, the CD estimates that at least \$200,0000 will still be available in the Digital Divide Account and ongoing collections by the Department of General Services are estimated at

\$100,000 per year.²⁰ Therefore, staff will conduct an evaluation of the grant application process and the success of digital divide projects and may recommend the Commission adopt program modifications and additional funding opportunities.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no safety considerations associated with this Resolution.

COMMENTS

In compliance with P.U. Code § 311(g), the Commission emailed a notice letter on September 2, 2022, to the service list of the availability of this Resolution for public comments at the Commission's website www.cpuc.ca.gov. Comments were due within twenty (20) days of the Daily Calendar notification. The notice letter also informed parties that the final conformed Resolution adopted by the Commission will be posted and available at the same website.

The Commission received comments from one party, The Utility Reform Network (TURN), in its comments filed on September 21, 2022, "TURN urges the Commission to modify the predetermination to include at least one grant award for a rural school and another grant award for an urban school, without a pretermination for the remaining grant awards" TURN further elaborates that, "The draft resolution's proposed predetermination of the grant awardees based on rural and urban designations is not supported by the record of the underlying decision that gave rise to the grant program."

However, contrary to TURN's assertion the Resolution merely reiterates the requirements set forth by the Commission in D. 21-10-020. In that Decision the Commission specifically states that, "Following the definitions used by the California Department of Education, we intend to award three projects for small, rural schools and one project for urban because small rural districts are at the greatest disadvantage when it comes to obtaining funding." We do not find any reason to depart from the framework previously adopted in D.21-10-020 for the DDGP. We therefore make no changes to the draft Resolution in response to TURN's comments.

²⁰ Order Instituting Rulemaking Regarding Broadband Infrastructure Deployment and to Support Service Providers in the State of California; [R.20-09-001](#) at 4-5.

FINDINGS

1. Public Utilities Code Section 280.5 established the Digital Divide Grant Program (DDGP) and requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) to provide grants for the purpose of funding community technology programs for eligible public schools.
2. The DDGP is funded by fees collected from lease of certain state-owned property to wireless telecommunications service providers for location of wireless telecommunications facilities, pursuant to Section 14666.8 of the Government Code.
3. Decision (D.) 21-10-020 delegated to Communications Division (CD) staff the authority to approve grants from the Digital Divide Account.
4. Ordering Paragraph 7 of D.21-10-020 set forth conditions of the DDGP:
 - a. Three grants will be awarded for projects benefiting low-income rural schools within small school districts, and one grant for a project benefiting a low-income urban school within a small school district.
 - b. For each grant, a maximum of ten percent is available to fund the administrative costs necessary for the deployment of a project.
 - c. After the term of a grant-funded project ends, discounts on the cost of eligible services may be available to schools that participate in the California Teleconnect Fund.
 - d. Grant recipients must be a nonprofit CBO, exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
 - e. Grant recipients must have a record of successfully deploying community technology projects and/or projects to bridge the digital divide.
 - f. Beneficiary schools must belong to a small public school district and have a Free or Reduced-Price Meal participation rate of at least 50 percent, as identified by the California Department of Education.

- g. Eligible projects must provide a holistic solution to bridging the digital divide.
 - h. The term of an eligible project is limited to one school year.
 - i. Public Utility Code Section 280.5 requires grants to be awarded on a competitive basis subject to criteria established by the Commission.
 - j. Each grant shall not exceed \$250,000 per pilot project.
5. To implement the directives in D.21-10-020, it is reasonable to adopt additional eligibility criteria and to designate an administrative process that would award grants on a competitive basis.
6. There are no safety considerations associated with this Resolution.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

- 1. Communications Division shall evaluate Digital Divide Grant program applications based on the eligibility criteria as adopted in D.21-10-020 and this Resolution.
- 2. Applicants shall use the process detailed in Appendix A to apply to the Digital Divide Grant Program.
- 3. Communications Division staff shall evaluate and score applications to the Digital Divide Grant Program and award four projects to fund using the competitive process described in this Resolution.
- 4. Communication Division staff shall notice a draft resolution authorizing the payment of Digital Divide Account funds to grant recipients in a manner consistent with this Resolution. Staff shall issue a Notice of Award promptly after the Commission adopts the draft resolution.
- 5. Grant recipients shall submit at least two Project Status Reports to the Communications Division:
 - a. The CBO shall submit a Progress Report on the first four months of program implementation, including on the status of milestones, based on

the final template established by the Commission staff. The Progress Report is due five months after the start of the project's term.

- b. The CBO shall report on the completion of the overall project, milestones met, and metrics to assess outcomes. The completion report is due one month after the end of the project's term.

This Resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted at a conference of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California held on October 6, 2022, the following Commissioners voting favorable thereon:

/s/ RACHEL PETERSON

Rachel Peterson
Executive Director

ALICE REYNOLDS
President

CLIFFORD RECHTSCHAFFEN

GENEVIEVE SHIROMA

DARCIE L. HOUCK

JOHN REYNOLDS

Commissioners

Appendix A – Digital Divide Grant Program Application

An eligible Community Based Organization (CBO) is limited to one application per grant funding cycle. Applicants shall focus on a single proposed project, but the scope of the project may include more than one school.

Responses and supporting documentation should be organized consistent with these instructions. For each document, applicants must include a cover page identifying the applicant's name, project name, date of submission, and the relevant application section, question, and/or item. Digital files should use a file naming convention that includes the following descriptive elements: project name, document name, and relevant application section, question, and/or item.

The DDGP will begin accepting applications seven days after the adoption of this Resolution. The window to submit applications will end 90 days later. Applicants must submit their completed application, including all required documents, to DigitalDivideGrantProgram@cpuc.ca.gov.

Applicants must identify the partner school(s) in their application. A list of eligible schools, as identified by the California Department of Education, is available at www.cpuc.ca.gov/ddgp. Applicants can apply for multiple partner schools in the same application. Each school must review the application, agree to be a partner in the program, and sign separate Partnership Agreements.

The application is organized into six sections. Applicants must respond in full to the following:

Section 1. Basic Information.

This section of the application requires that the applicant provide basic information about the CBO and their partner school(s).

- 1.1 Provide the following information for the applicant CBO: organization name, Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), location address, mailing address, website, contact person, contact phone number, and contact email.

- 1.2 Provide the applicant CBO's mission statement and other documents on the CBO and its activities, including charter, annual reports, brochures, etc.
- 1.3 Required document: Franchise Tax Board Entity Status Letter (FTB 4263A).
- 1.4 Required document: Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Letter.
- 1.5 If your organization files an IRS Form 990 or California Form 190, please submit the most recent copy.
- 1.6 Provide the following information for each beneficiary school(s): district, school name, county-school-district (CDS) code²¹, school address, mailing address, contact person name, contact phone number, contact email, low grade, high grade, number of students, year-round (Y/N), and charter (Y/N).
- 1.7 Provide a list of Board of Directors and Principal Officers. Include an organizational chart.
- 1.8 Submit resumes of personnel relevant and integral to the success of this project, especially those who have experience in deploying community technology programs, as well as resumes of those who have experience in collaborating with schools, students, and teachers.

Section 2. Scope of Work.

This section requires the applicant to present their digital divide project. The information provided must sufficiently demonstrate that the project meets all eligibility requirements. Applicants should provide a narrative description to the questions below.

²¹ The county-school-district (CDS) code is the CA Department of Education's method for tracking California schools. Refer to <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/ds/>. The data source, Unduplicated Student Poverty – Free or Reduced-Price Meals Data 2018–19, was used to identify eligible schools and school districts and can be found on <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesasp>.

2.1 Describe the digital divide project. Identify and describe project functions, activities, schedules, locations, and deliverables. How does/will the project provide a holistic solution to bridge the digital divide? For example, a response to this question can include responses to the following questions:

- Provide a detailed list of the technology the beneficiary school currently uses, such as software, devices, connections, or technical training. Also, describe what digital resources the beneficiary school or its students currently lack or what barriers to access the beneficiary school or its students are experiencing, and how will the CBO utilize the digital divide grants to procure the necessary digital resources or mitigate any barriers to access for the beneficiary school or its students.
- Will the project provide a broadband connection(s)? If so, where will end users utilize the broadband service? Who will be the end users of the broadband service? What type of broadband services? Who is the service provider? What are the costs of the broadband services (per connection and in total)? How many student homes will receive a broadband connection? How many students reside at those homes? Will the broadband service continue after the project term ends?
- Will the project provide hardware devices to students? If so, what type of hardware devices will the project provide to students? What is the cost of the devices (per device and in total)? What will happen to the devices after the project term ends? Who will be responsible for maintaining the devices during the project term and after term end?
- Does the project include an educational curriculum focusing on the use of technology that will be taught to students? If so, please describe that curriculum. What is the curriculum schedule? Who will teach the curriculum? What are the credentials of the teachers?

- Will the project deploy software installed on devices? If so, what software will be installed? What is the purpose of the software? Will the software enable distance learning? What is the cost of the software? Will use of the software continue after the project ends?
- Will the project provide training to teachers on distance-learning technology? If so, please describe the training. What is the training schedule? Who will provide the training? What are the credentials of the teachers?
- Describe any additional benefits, functions, activities, goods, and/or services provided as part of the project to help bridge the digital divide.

- 2.2 Provide a timeline identifying the term of the project and key milestones, including commencement and completion dates.
- 2.3 Describe the student population that the project serves. How many students will benefit from the project? Are the students from low-income households, disabled, or belonging to urban, rural, or disadvantaged communities? Do the students have special educational needs? Are the students living in a residence or area that lack access to high-speed internet? Describe the causes and effects of the digital divide experienced by the students.
- 2.4 Identify and enumerate specific target goals for the project's primary functions/activities.
- 2.5 Identify and describe methods of tracking outcomes and assessing results, including quantitative and qualitative metrics to measure accomplishments against target goals.
- 2.6 Explain whether (and, if so, how) the project benefits will extend beyond a single school year.

Section 3. Experience.

This section requires the applicant to provide information on their ability to execute the project and meet the requirements of the DDGP. The applicant should provide a narrative description to the questions below.

- 3.1 Describe the applicant CBO's existing or past efforts in providing and implementing community technology projects and/or projects to bridge the digital divide. Provide documentation on previous or past efforts.
- 3.2 Describe the applicant CBO's experience collaborating with schools, school districts, school administrators, students, and/or teachers.
- 3.3 Describe the applicant CBO's experience deploying grant-funded projects.
- 3.4 Provide at least three letters of recommendation endorsing the ability of the CBO. The letters of recommendation must be from entities unrelated to the beneficiary school, including: state or local government agencies, public schools or school districts, county offices of education, persons holding public office, trade associations or groups, community groups, and/or anchor institutions.
- 3.5 Describe the relationship between the applicant CBO and the partner school(s). How did the relationship start? Have the CBO and school(s) previously worked together on other projects? Confirm that the partner school(s) has reviewed the application and agrees to execute the project if selected.
- 3.6 Provide at least three letters of endorsement per partnership school supporting the digital divide project. One letter is required from each of the following: (1) the beneficiary school's district office, (2) the

beneficiary school's school board, (3) the beneficiary school's Parent Teachers Association.²²

- a. If your project proposal requires that your staff be present at school and interact with school children and/or teachers, the letter of endorsement from the district office must confirm and explain that you have discussed this with the school district and school and have met all school requirements for fingerprints and/or background checks. Explain how you plan to meet those requirements.

3.7 Is the CBO sustainable? How do you get your funding? Do you have other government funding?

Section 4. Proposed Project Budget.

This section requires the applicant to provide information on the project's proposed budget.

- 4.1 Provide a narrative description of the project's proposed budget plan. The maximum narrative length for this item is three pages.
- 4.2 Submit a proposed budget for the project. A sample budget is attached to Resolution T-17770 at Appendix B or available for download at www.cpuc.ca.gov/ddgp.
- 4.3 Will the project be funded by additional funding sources? Provide a description of other funding sources and amounts. Include documentation verifying those secured sources and funding amounts.
- 4.4 Will the project continue to provide benefits or services beyond the grant's one school year funding cycle? If so, explain how the CBO and partner school(s) plan on sustaining the program for future years.

²² Applicants must submit all three letters of endorsement to meet the requirements of a complete application. Letters of endorsement from the beneficiary school's district office and Parent Teacher Association are due by the application deadline of December 31, 2022. The letter of endorsement from the beneficiary school's school board is due by February 28, 2023.

Section 5. Partnership Agreement.

- 5.1 Review and complete the Partnership Agreement form, attached to Resolution T-17770 at Appendix C or available for download at www.cpuc.ca.gov/ddgp. Each beneficiary school is required to sign a separate form.

Appendix B – Sample Proposed Budget and Administrative Expenses

Budget Line Item	Price Per Item	Number of Units	Total Amount
Student home broadband connection;	\$200.00	120	\$24,000.00
School hardware A	\$300.00	10	\$3,000.00
School hardware B	\$100.00	10	\$1,000.00
Student hardware C	\$300.00	120	\$36,000.00
Student hardware D	\$50.00	120	\$6,000.00
Student curriculum E	\$300.00	120	\$36,000.00
Student curriculum F	\$600.00	120	\$72,000.00
Teacher curriculum G	\$800.00	20	\$16,000.00
Software H - Teachers	\$15.00	10	\$150.00
Software I - Students	\$100.00	120	\$12,000.00
Administrative Costs *	n/a	n/a	\$9,550.00
Total			\$215,700.00

*Administrative expenses related to the digital divide project are limited to those incurred by CBOs and not by schools served by the digital divide project. The Digital Divide Grant Program will only reimburse up to 10% of the total awarded grant amount for administrative expenses. Administrative expenses of CBOs exclude costs associated with services and goods used by students, teachers, or schools served by the digital divide project. Administrative expenses of CBOs include, but are not limited to, costs associated with the following:

- Administrative activities of the CBOs;
- Project planning, technical project management, oversight work, program execution and reporting, and procurement of goods and services;
- Wages, benefits, and payroll taxes of administrative staff (including accounting, human resources, etc.), legal staff, and management;
- Ongoing operating expenses such as rent, utilities, IT, and other similar costs;
- Travel: Transportation, lodging, and meal costs associated with staff travel;
- Supplies and Materials: Office supplies, equipment, and other materials;
- Contracted Services: Third-party services including consulting, legal or technical support for proposal evaluation, data subscriptions to supplement benefits analysis, and augmentation of internal staff for project oversight and program coordination;

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- Event Fees for Hosted and Attended Events: Costs associated with sponsoring, hosting, or attending events – including consortia, memberships, conferences, venue rentals, and other similar costs;
- Insurance;
- Audit fees and costs;
- Costs usually included within GAAP General and Administrative Expenses and Overhead.

Appendix C – Partnership Agreement

**DIGITAL DIVIDE GRANT PROGRAM
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

This Partnership Agreement formalizes the agreement between the community based organization, _____ (a non-profit corporation), and _____ (a school, or “Partner School”) (collectively, the “Grant Partners”) for the purposes of implementing the Digital Divide Grant Program (DDGP) _____ (the “Project Proposal” or “Project”), as described in the accompanying application.

If selected to receive a grant by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Grant Partners agree to execute the approved Project in good faith, with the Partner School as the sole beneficiary of all assets, interests, and/or and services funded by the DDGP. **The Grant Partners understand that it may be necessary for the parties to execute a separate agreement to further define the parties’ respective roles and responsibilities, especially if the Project is expected to continue beyond the DDGP one-year funding term and/or exceeds the CPUC approved budgets.** By participating in the DDGP, the Grant Partners agree to comply with the terms, conditions, and requirements of the California Public Utilities Commission, the Digital Divide Grant Program, California Public Utilities Code § 280.5, Decision 21-10-020, and Resolution T-17770, and any successor decisions.

We, the undersigned, have reviewed the application and supporting documents and are duly authorized to execute this Partnership Agreement.

CBO Representative:

Partner School Representative:

Signed this ___ day of _____, 20__

Signed this ___ day of _____, 20__

Signature

Signature

Name:

Name:

Title:

Title:

Organization:

Organization:

Address:

Address:

Email:

Email:

Phone:

Phone:

Appendix D – Terms and Conditions of the Digital Divide Grant Program

By signing this application, I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that I am authorized to act on behalf of the applicant, that the information submitted with this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand and acknowledge that if selected as a grant award recipient, the organization and any of its officers, employees, agents will carry out the approved project in good faith and shall adhere to terms and conditions of the California Public Utilities Commission, the Digital Divide Grant Program, California Public Utilities Code § 280.5, Decision 21-10-020, and Resolution T-17770, and any successor decisions.

Signed this ___ day of _____, 20__.

By: _____

Name:

Title:

On behalf of:

Address:

Phone:

Appendix E – Project Status Report

Each project status report should include a cover page with the following table:

Grant Recipient (CBO Name):	
Project Name:	
Beneficiary Public Schools:	
Report Type (Progress or Completion):	
Report Submission Date: (MM/DD/YY)	
Payments Received to Date: (\$)	
Project Completion Date: (MM/DD/YY)	
Attestation: I certify that all statements and representations made in this report are true and correct under penalty of perjury.	Name: Signature: Report submission date:

The two project status reports must respond to each of the items enumerated below. Organize and label responses in a manner consistent with the list of items below.

1. What are the total project expenses incurred to-date?
2. Are the expenses incurred during this reporting period consistent with the approved project budget? If not, please explain and provide justification for the difference.
3. Describe progress on the approved Scope of Work. Using both qualitative and quantitative terms, describe accomplishments made during this reporting period.

Identify and organize accomplishments according to the approved Scope of Work. For each item within the approved Scope of Work, identify whether all the milestones/goals set for this reporting period were achieved. If any of the goals or milestones set for this reporting period were not met, explain why.

4. Are the accomplishments described consistent with the approved project plan? If not, please explain.
5. Describe any additional project accomplishments for this reporting period that were not part of the approved Scope of Work.
6. Identify, describe/explain, and provide justification for any changes or diversions from the approved Scope of Work during this reporting period. How will the changes and diversions during this reporting period affect project completion (e.g., delays, set goals that cannot be accomplished, etc.)? Was CPUC notified of these changes or diversions, and if so, were the changes or diversions approved by the CPUC? If not, please explain why CPUC was not notified.
7. Identify, describe/explain, and provide justification for any changes or diversions from the approved project budget during this reporting period. How will the changes and diversions during this reporting period affect project completion (e.g., delays, set goals that cannot be accomplished, etc.)? Was CPUC notified of these changes or diversions, and if so, were the changes or diversions approved by the CPUC? If not, please explain why CPUC was not notified.
8. Are additional changes or diversions anticipated to the approved Scope of Work during the remainder of the project period? If so, please describe and provide justifications, and explain how the changes or diversions will affect project completion or project goals.
9. Are additional changes or diversions anticipated to the approved project budget during the remainder of the project period? If so, please describe and provide justifications, and explain how the changes or diversions will affect project completion or project goals.
10. Identify challenges to the project experienced during this reporting period and described the course of action taken to address the challenges.

11. Identify future challenges anticipated during the remainder of the project. For each challenge identified, what is the planned course of action to address the challenge. Will the challenges affect project completion? If so, please explain how project completion will be affected.
12. Identify and describe any unexpected benefits that resulted from the project during this reporting period.