



California
Teleconnect
Fund

CTF Service Provider Webinar

Presented by CTF Staff



California Public
Utilities Commission

January 16, 2025



California Teleconnect Fund

The program aims to bring every Californian direct access to advanced communications services in their local communities, particularly those with lower rates of internet adoption and greater financial need. – *California Teleconnect Fund*

Agenda Items

- ❖ CTF Updates
- ❖ Processes
- ❖ Payments
- ❖ Concepts and Best Practices
- ❖ Participant Report
- ❖ Audits and Compliance
- ❖ Feedback/Discussion
- ❖ Conclusion



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CTF Updates

Legislative and Policy Updates

Federal Communications Commission Includes WiFi Hotspots for Public Schools, CTF Adapts Requirements

- ❖ On July 18, 2024, the FCC, in the Wi-Fi Hotspot Report and Order, granting schools and libraries the ability to utilize E-Rate resources to loan out Wi-Fi hotspots which will provide internet access for those individuals without a reliable connection at home.
- ❖ Resolution T-17848 revises CTF's eligible services list and reflects the FCC's adoption of the Wi-Fi Hotspot Report and Order making eligible the off-premises use of Wi-Fi hotspots and mobile wireless Internet access services.

Legislative and Policy Updates

Federal Communications Commission Includes WiFi Hotspots for Public Schools, CTF Adapts Requirements

1. The CTF's eligible services list shall be modified to include mobile broadband services for public and private schools, as well as community-based organizations and healthcare community-based organizations.
2. Mobile broadband services shall be included in the CTF eligible services list, CBOs may access mobile services without needing to demonstrate fixed broadband unavailability to better meet community needs.
3. We modify the qualifying services list to include Telehealth services for healthcare community-based organizations to meet program eligibility
4. We delegate to CD staff the authority to make discrete modifications to the qualifying services and technologies list adopted in Appendix A, as needed, in the event the FCC adopts subsequent changes to the E-Rate program.
5. Service providers must implement the changes by July 1, 2025.



CTF Funding Sources

The CTF program is funded by California ratepayers through surcharges based on the number of active access lines that a telephone corporation operates in California

- Updated Surcharge Mechanism- Effective April 1, 2023, assessed on a per access line basis (D. 22-10-021)
- Telecommunications carriers were required to begin collecting a flat rate surcharge of \$1.11 for every active access line (telephone line) in California to support California's six Universal Service programs, known as Public Purpose Programs.
- CTF's allocation of the \$1.11 surcharge is approximately \$0.25, or 22.46%.



CTF Funding Limits & Activities

- **Funding Limits**

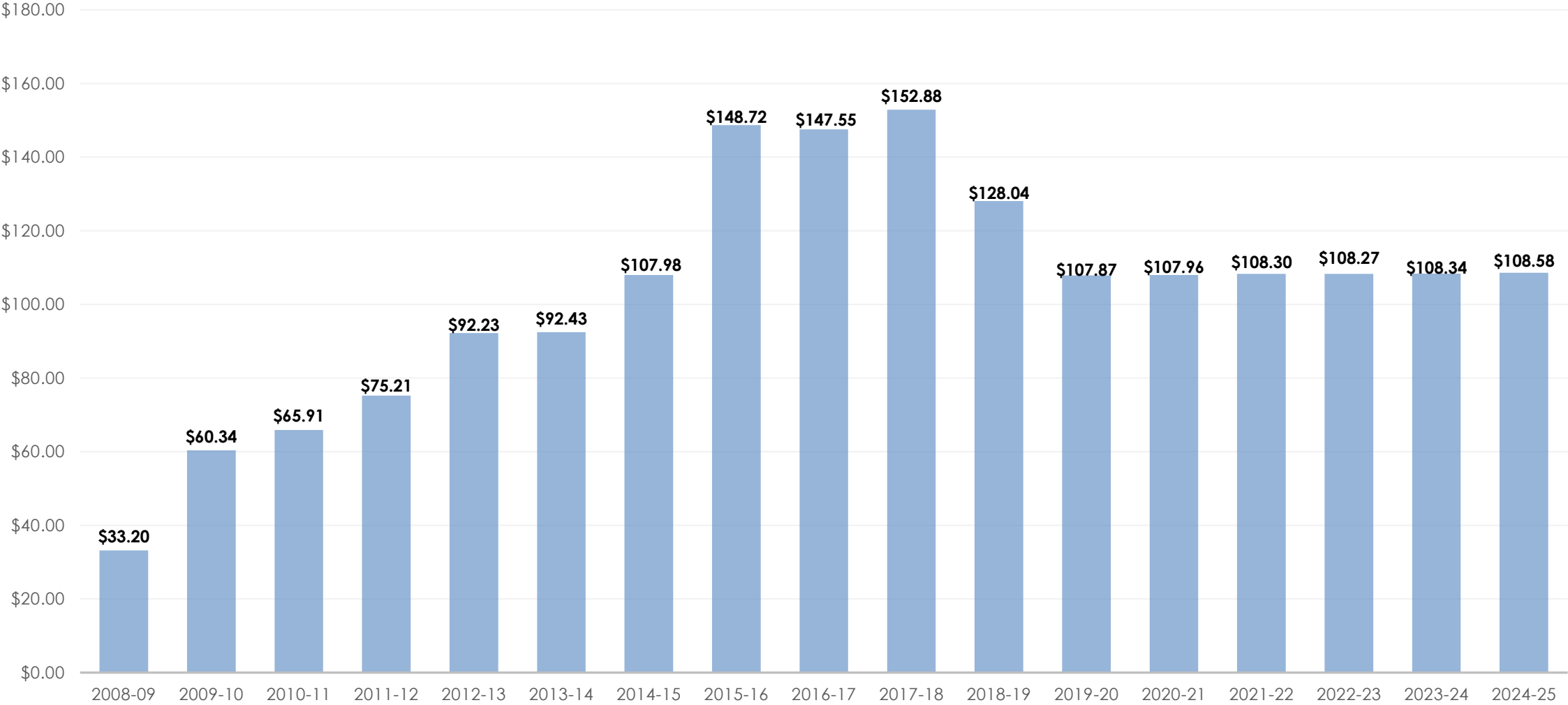
- Standard Budgetary appropriation limits per year (Annual CA Budget Act)
- Continuous annual Funding is based on first come, first served until funding runs out

- **CTF Activities**

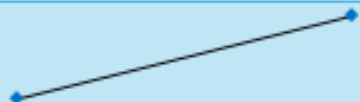
- Aside from the main goal of the CTF program, which is to administer a program to advance universal service by providing 50% discounts to qualifying entities, CTF funding was also used for various sub-programs and projects such as
 - Distance Learning Project
 - Senate Bill (SB)1212 / 2-1-1 project
 - Digital Divide Grant Program (DDGP)



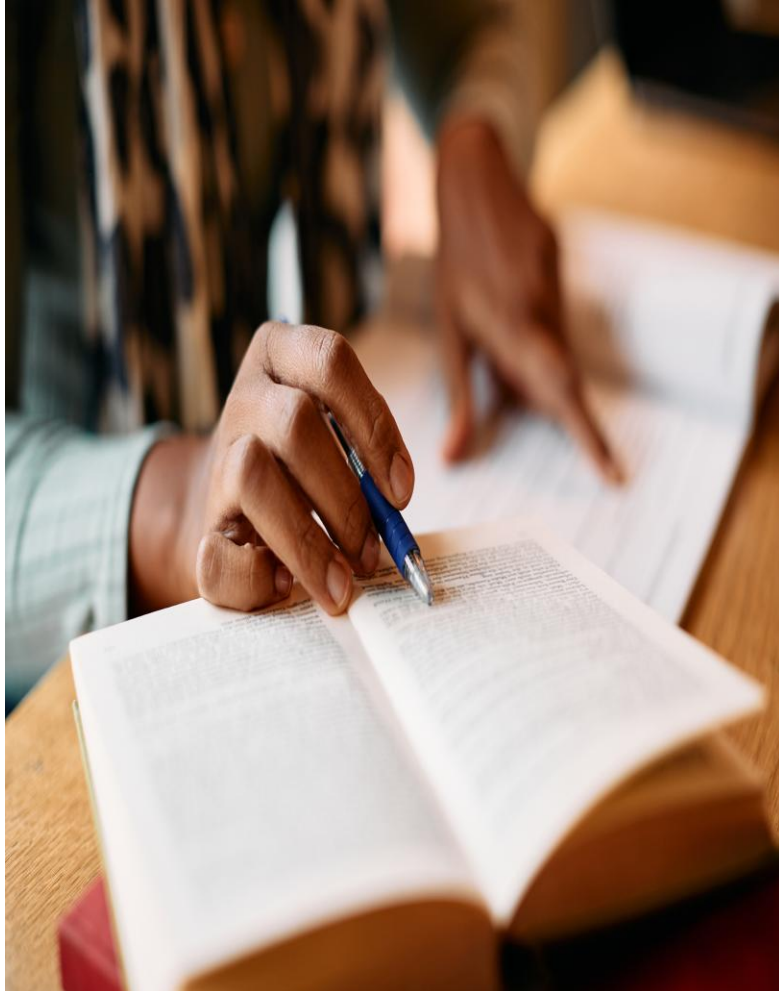
California Teleconnect Fund Approved Budget by Fiscal Year (Dollars in Millions)



CTF Participant Trends

Applicant Types	2023	2024	% Increase	Grand Total	Trendline
2-1-1 Providers	1			-	
CBO	44	69	36%	113	
Community College				-	
Gov Hospital	3	15	80%	18	
Healthcare CBO	116	125	7%	241	
Library		16	100%	16	
Private School	19	20	5%	39	
Public School	117	85	-38%	202	
Grand Total	299	330	9%	629	

CTF Claims Worksheet- Update



- Additional tab added for service providers to provide explanations regarding adjustment records.
- Purpose of the tab is for service providers to explain various adjustments to the CTF program at the same time as submitting a claim.
 - Increases review efficiency
 - Reduces amount of data requests
 - Ensures program compliance

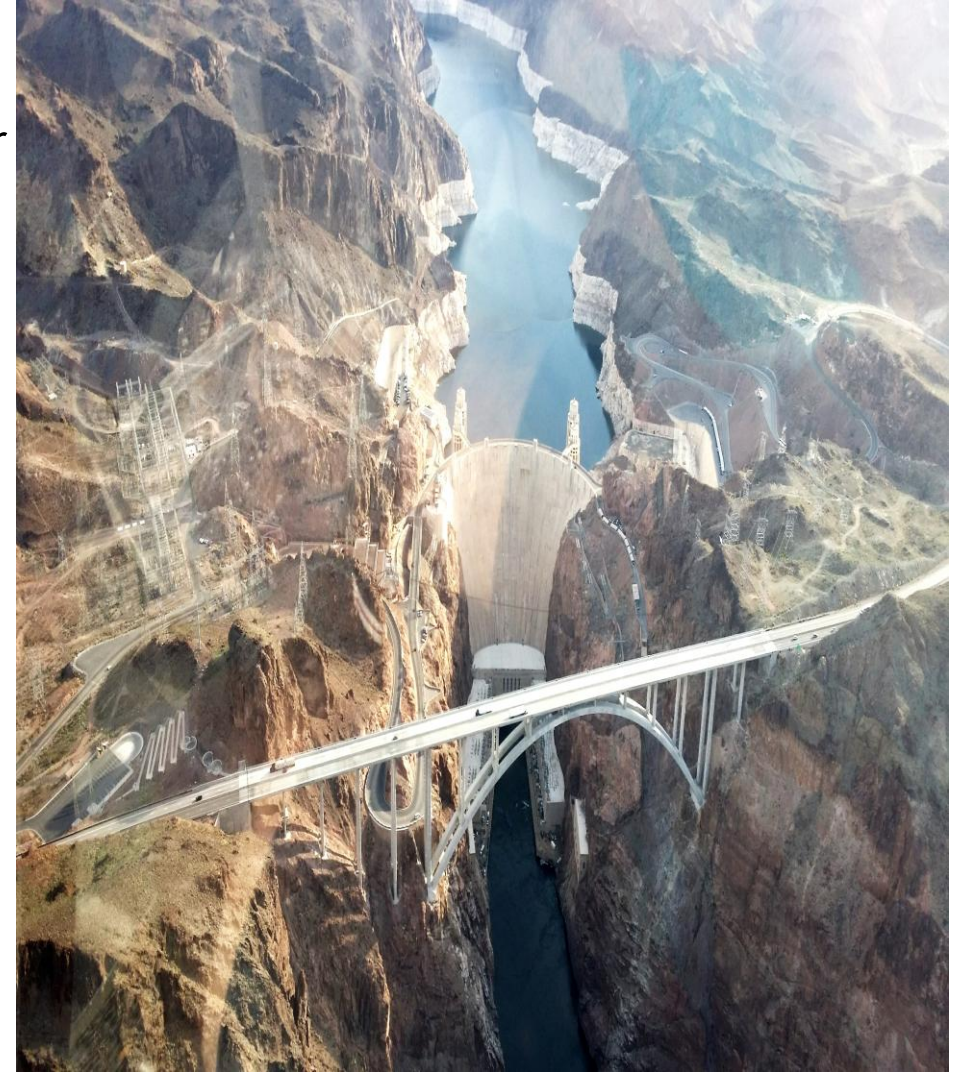
Claims Worksheet Update- Example

[Claim Data](#) | **Adjustments Explanation** | [+](#)

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Digital Divide Grant Program

- T-17842 to award CBOs and public schools' grants for reducing the digital divide in schools and communities located in low-income urban and rural areas by providing necessary resources and access to digital technology.
 - \$100,000 to projects for low-income rural and urban schools
 - Two \$50,000 awards for CBOs
- The DDGP will begin accepting applications seven days after the adoption of this Resolution.
- Applicants must submit their completed application, including all required documents, to DigitalDivideGrantProgram@cpuc.ca.gov.
 - See T-17842 Appendix A for Application Instructions



eCAP Updates



School Annex



Library Annex



CTF Outreach



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Processes

Service Provider Program Requirements



- ❖ Must have a Certificate Of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) on file with the Communications Division to receive reimbursements.
- ❖ Service Providers that do not have a CPCN can partner with a CPCN holder to participate and to file claims for reimbursement on their behalf.
- ❖ Payments are addressed to the CPCN holder and are passed on to the partner.
- ❖ CTF does not arrange or facilitate partnerships.
- ❖ The Service Provider filing the claim is responsible for the veracity of the entire claim, including any amounts for a partner.

Service Provider Program Requirements (cont.)

- ❖ Must maintain a public webpage that includes information on CTF, a link to www.cpuc.ca.gov/ctf, a list of eligible services and contact information.
- ❖ If a Service Provider discounts tariffed services, they must have the tariffs on file with the CPUC.
- ❖ Must submit and update their CTF contacts to the Communications Division with a Carrier Information Update Request Form.
- ❖ Must have an accurate Payee Data Record on file with the CPUC's Fiscal Department.

Service Provider Program Requirements (cont.)

- ❖ Must provide any documentation or data requested by Communications Division.
- ❖ Must remain compliant and current on surcharge fee collections and remittances.
- ❖ Service Providers must comply with all applicable state laws, CPUC requirements and rules.

Service Provider Program Enrollment

- ❖ Once a Service Provider is approved for CTF, they will receive a welcome email from e-Cap with instructions on how to log in and can add primary and additional contacts. Service Providers cannot create their own account. If you do not receive a welcome email, contact:

CTFclaims@cpuc.ca.gov.



Before Providing CTF discounts:

- ❖ Service providers must verify participant eligibility. This is done by obtaining a copy of the participants CTF Approval Letter. The Approval Letter will have the participants CTF-ID or Application number and the eligibility dates.
- ❖ You can further verify participant eligibility through the Participant Report at <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/ctf-participants>

CTF Approval Letters



- ❖ **New** participants to the program must submit their CTF Approval Letter to the carrier to initiate their discounts. The participant must keep a copy for their records.
- ❖ **Existing** participants do not need to submit copies of CTF Approval Letters, service providers can verify their eligibility through the Participant Report.
- ❖ Participants may request a copy of their Approval Letter for their records at CTFHelp@cpuc.ca.gov.

Handling Claims ---- Service Provider Manual

<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/search#q=CTF&sort=relevancy>

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CTF Service Provider Manual

CTF Discount IMPORTANT NOTE: In the example above, the participant does not receive the statewide average E-rate ... CTF program must assign funds to the appropriate fiscal year appropriation.

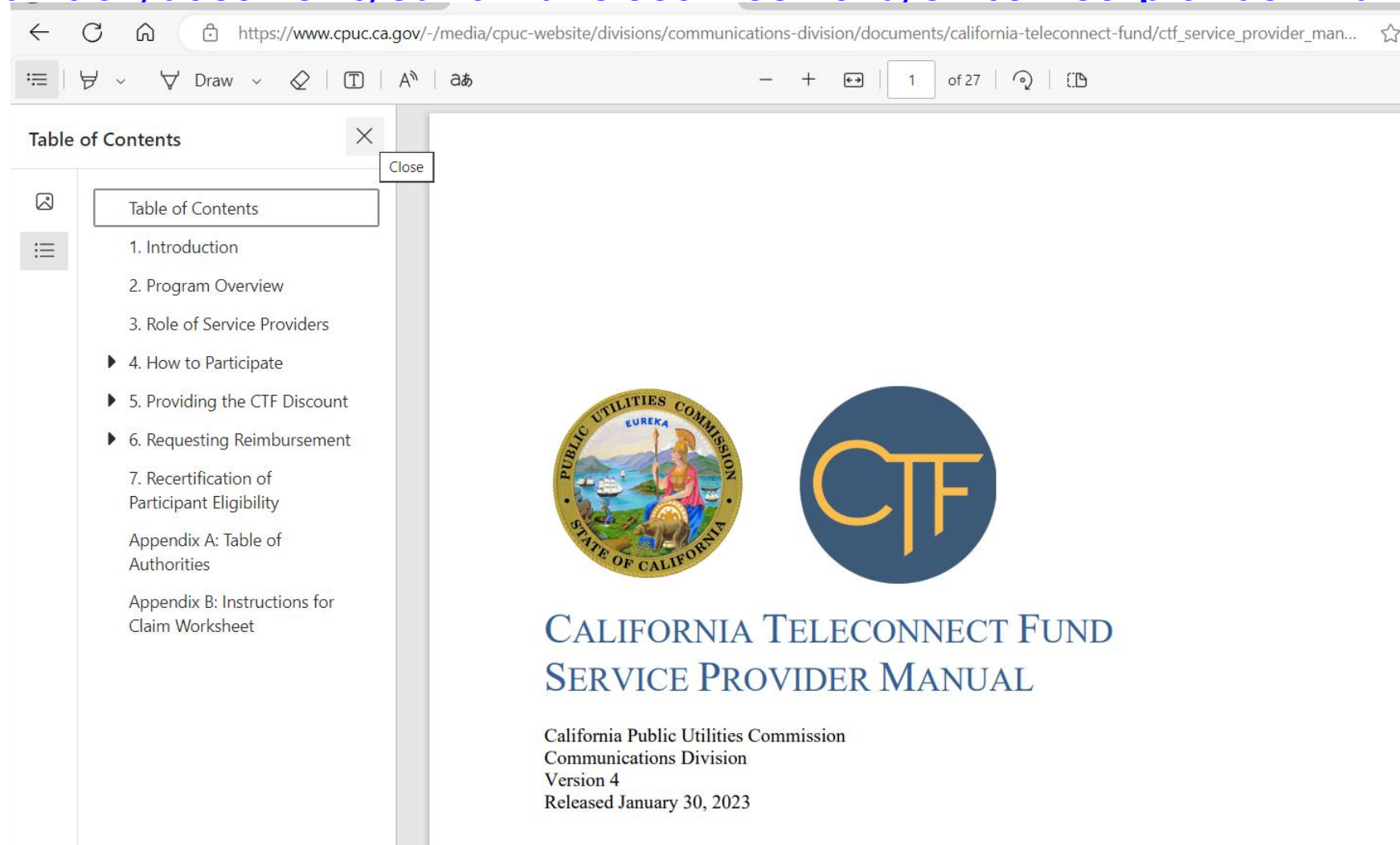
News Type

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☐ Press Release (6)

Handling Claims ---- Service Provider Manual

https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/communications-division/documents/california-teleconnect-fund/ctf_service_provider_manual.pdf



Handling Claims ---- Frequently Asked Questions

<https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/help-faqs>



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Handling Claims ----

CA Teleconnect Fund Webpage

<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/consumer-support/financial-assistance-savings-and-discounts/california-teleconnect-fund>

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California Teleconnect Fund

Providing discounts on advanced communications services to qualifying organizations.



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

On Monday, January 30, 2023, the CTF program launched [a new website called eCAP](#) (electronic Claim and Application Portal). Organizations must utilize eCAP to manage their participation in the CTF program, including for submitting applications, maintaining contact information, and completing eligibility recertifications. Service providers must utilize eCAP to submit their claims for reimbursement and maintain their program enrollment information. Organizations and service providers that participated in the CTF program prior to January 30, 2023 will receive an email invitation to access their eCAP account or, if necessary, can contact the program for assistance in accessing their eCAP account. Organizations (but not service providers) applying to the CTF program for the first time should create a new eCAP account. Please refer to the following for information on using eCAP:

- eCAP website: <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/pcms/s/>
- General eCAP Help and FAQ: <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/help-faqs>
- CTF program Help and FAQ for eCAP: <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/help-faqs?tabset-139ec=1>
- Participants and applicants can contact CTFHelp@cpuc.ca.gov for additional help or inquiries regarding eCAP.
- Service providers can contact CTFClaims@cpuc.ca.gov for additional help or inquiries regarding eCAP.

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[Administrative Committee](#)

[Administrative Letters](#)

[CTF-Distance-Learning-Discounts](#)

[CTF Fact Sheet](#)

[CTF Program - Statewide Average E-rate](#)

[Participant Recertification](#)

[Decisions and Resolutions](#)

[Digital Divide Grant Program](#)

[Entity Eligibility Status](#)

[Implementation of Adopted Rules](#)

[Program Budget](#)

[Program Outreach and Education](#)

When To Submit A Claim



- Only submit a claim after the participant has been billed.
- Claims Cannot be submitted before the participant has been billed.

Claim Adjustment Demo

Claim Adjustment Demo

Correction

Example Type	Srv_Month	Srv_Year	Provider_DBA	Affiliate	App_Number	CTF_ID	Part_Cat	Srv_Name	Srv_Cat	Quantity	Full_MRC	Eligible_MRC	Erate_Support	Erate_St_Avg	RHCP_Support	CTF_Discount	Orig_Discount	Claim
Correction Record A		2021	Awesome Broadband N			100099 CBO	Fast DSL	DSL		1						\$		
Record from June-2021 claim:																		
Previous Record A	6	2021	Awesome Broadband N			100099 CBO	Fast DSL	DSL		1	\$	\$20.00	\$	20.00		\$	10.00	\$ 10.00

Claim Adjustment Demo

E-rate True-Up

Example Type	Srv_Month	Srv_Year	Provider_DBA	Affiliate	App Number	CTF_ID	Part_Cat	Srv_Name	Srv_Cat	Quantity	Full_MRC	Eligible_MRC	Erate_Support	Erate_St_Avg	RHCP_Support	CTF_Discount	Orig_Discount	Claim amount
E-rate True-up Entry		2021	Awesome Broadband	N		400235	Private School	Speedy Fiber	Fiber	1	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00				\$		

Claim Adjustment Demo

Correction with A Refunded Amount

Example Type	Srv_Month	Srv_Year	Provider_DBA	Affiliate	App_Number	CTF_ID	Part_Cat	Srv_Name	Srv_Cat	Quantity	Full_MRC	Eligible_MRC	Erate_Support	Erate_St_Avg	RHCP_Support	CTF_Discount	Orig_Discount	Claim Amount
Correction Record B Records from June-2021 claim:		2021	Awesome Broadband	N		102354	CBO	Fast DSL	DSL	1								
Previous Record B	6	2021	Awesome Broadband	N		102354	CBO	Fast DSL	DSL	1	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00				\$ 50.00		\$ 50.00

Claim Extensions

If you need more than 60 days to submit your claim, you can request an extension by contacting the CTF analyst processing the claim. You must do this within the 60-day window. The request will be forwarded to the CTF Supervisor for review and determination.



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Payments

Instruction on how Service Providers Need to Submit a Claim Before They Receive Payment

- Service providers apply CTF discounts within participant's monthly bills.
- Submit a claim for reimbursement to eCAP.
- Download the claim worksheet template, then complete and submit one claim worksheet per month.
- Each claim worksheet is due 60 days from the last day of the month.

Timeline for SP to Receive Payment from CTF

- CTF analysts reviewed the claim in eCAP and submitted to supervisor for approved within 30 days.
- CTF supervisor reviewed and approved the claim.
- Fiscal office processed the claim and created a voucher in FI\$Cal.
- State Controller Office will approve or deny the claim in FI\$Cal.
- The warrant check will issue approximately 30 days after a claim is approved in eCAP.



Returning Funds to CTF

- The adjustments and corrections can sometime necessitate a service provider to return the funds.
- If the subtotal for any fiscal year listed is negative, the service providers must send a refund check.
- The refund check can be either a physical check or e-check.
- A physical check need to mail and make payable to “California Public Utilities Commission- CTF program”.
- E-check is an electronic check that can be mail to our CTF claims email.
- A claim is considered incomplete if the associated check has not received.



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Concepts and Best Practices

Best Practices

- **Multiple Locations:**

- CTF discount is location-based, each location (address) must receive its own Approval Letter to be eligible for CTF discount. Verify each location's eligibility before adding the customer.
 - Verify existing multiple-location customer for each location's CTF eligibility.
 - Verify each CTF participant location's eligibility expiration date before submitting a claim since each location may have different CTF eligibility end date.

- **Record Retention:**

- CTF service provider must keep claim-related records for 10 years and make them available in the event of a state audit.

Common Errors and How to Avoid Them – and Get Reimbursed Faster

- **Location eligibility for multi-location CTF participants.**
 - CTF eligibility is location-based, please confirm each location's CTF eligibility before adding the location to customer account.
- **Confirm CTF participant eligibility for each claim month.**
- **Name change.**
 - When there is a legal name change. Please submit updated Std. Form 204 and IRS letter approving the name change.
- **Claim Submission Deadline**
 - Service Providers must submit one claim for each service month. Claim is due 60 days from the end of the month and is not eligible for reimbursement if received after the due date.

Common Errors – cont.

- **CTF payments are reimbursements:**
 - Do not include in submitted claim prior to providing the discounted bill to the CTF participant.
- **eCAP claim worksheet input errors:**
 - Enter the appropriate information for claim worksheet columns.
 - Service month vs. billed month.
 - E-rate state average vs. E-rate support.
- **Adjusting past claim(s):**
 - Adjust past claims by including the adjustments in the most recent claim month instead of adjusting past claims.
 - **Not an error: but please include screenshot(s) when reporting eCAP errors.**

CTF Workbook Column Title Definitions

- **Service_Month**- The Month which the participant received the service.
- **Service_Year**- The year which the participant received the service.
- **Provider DBA**- The service providers “do business as” Name. This will normally be the name of the company that submitted the claim however if an affiliate provided the service then they will need to be listed here instead.
- **Affiliate**- This is anyone except the filing carrier that provided services. Refer to chapter 6 section C of the service provider manual for additional information on submitting claims on behalf of affiliates.
- **App_Number**- The programs identification number for CTF applicants approved before July, 2019.
- **CTF ID**- A unique identifier for each eligible service address approved or recertified after July 1, 2019.
- **Part_Cat**- Participant Category. This is the category of the eligible CTF participant. The eligible categories are Private School, Public School, Public School-Annex, Library, Library-Annex, Community College, Gov. Hospital, CBO, and Healthcare CBO

Service_Month	Service_Year	Provider_DBA	Affiliate	App_Number	CTF_Id	Part_Cat
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Column Title Definitions Continued

- **Service_Name**- The marketed name of the service.
- **Service_Cat**- The CTF eligible Category of the service. For a list of eligible services please see the eligible services list in the service provider manual appendix B.
- **Quantity**- The quantity of the service purchased by the participant.
- **Full_MRC**- The full and undiscounted monthly recurring cost of service without any adjustments for credits or prorations.
- **Eligible_MRC**- The portion of the full monthly recurring cost remaining after adjustments for time-based proration, service provider credits or discounts, and/or cost allocation of bundles containing ineligible services.
- **Erate_Support**- The participant's support level commitment from the federal E-rate program.
- **Erate_ST_Avg**- The E-rate statewide average.

Service_Name	Srv_Cat	Quantity	Full_MRC	Eligible_MRC	Erate_Support	Erate_Support_Avg
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Column Title Definitions Continued

- **RHCP_Support**- The amount of Rural Healthcare Program Support the participant receives.
- **CTF_Discount**- The CTF discount received by the participant.
- **Orig_Discount**- The original CTF discount amount previously given to the participant on a previous claim.
- **Claim_Amount**- The amount being reimbursed on the claim.
- All of this information can be found in the CTF Service Provider Manual on our website-
- <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/consumer-support/financial-assistance-savings-and-discounts/california-teleconnect-fund>

RHCP_Support	CTF_Discount	Orig_Discount	Claim_Amount
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Participant Report

CTF Participant Report



What is it?

A report of all CTF participants, that can be viewed in your browser or exported to Microsoft Excel, that includes:

CTF ID/Application Number

Participant Name

Eligibility Start Date

Eligibility End Date

Number of Approved Onsite & Offsite Mobile Connections

Service Address

Participant Category*

**The Participant Category field is included in the downloadable Participant Report only.*



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CTF Participant Report

How is it used?

Service Providers:

To determine if, and when, a participant is eligible to receive the CTF discount.

Participants:

To verify their eligibility dates, service addresses or other information.

Applicants:

To verify their organization does not have an existing eCAP account and avoid creating duplicate accounts.



CTF Participant Report

Where is it located?

A link to the CTF Participant Report can be found on CTF's homepage website, in the CTF Service Provider Manual and in the CTF Applicant & Participant Guidebook.

<https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/ctf-participants>



Participant Report Demonstration



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Audits and Compliance

Utility Audits Branch

- How to Prepare for an Audit
- Common Issues
 - CTF Participant's Eligibility
 - [CTF Participants](#)
 - Statewide Average E-rate
 - CTF Discount
 - Internal Controls





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Feedback Discussion



Feedback from the Service Providers

- How can the CTF Program better assist you with the claims process?
- Latest Technology in the Industry

Conclusion

- ❖ The CTF Has updated the eligible services list to include mobile broadband services.
- ❖ The Digital Divide Grant Program has become a permanent program.
- ❖ Only submit claims after the participant has been billed
- ❖ Service Providers can access the CTF Participant Report at this link <https://ecap.cpuc.ca.gov/s/ctf-participants>
- ❖ Thank you for being a part of the CTF program.



Questions and Answers

