



# Board Agenda Item 41

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DATE: January 27, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Mike Kerr, Director of Information Technology/Chief Information Officer

SUBJECT: Grant Agreement for Direct Mailings of Affordable Broadband Options

**RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

**Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute an Agreement with the California Emerging Technology Fund for direct notification mailings of low-cost broadband options, effective January 27, 2026 through June 30, 2026, total not to exceed \$180,000.**

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. Approval of the recommended action will allow the County to serve as the contracting lead for the low-cost broadband direct notification campaign on behalf of the five-county broadband region, which includes the Counties of Fresno, Kings, Madera, Merced, and Tulare (Region). This item is countywide.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):**

If your Board does not approve the recommended action, the County will not receive reimbursement funds and will be unable to participate in the direct mailing notification campaign, informing households throughout the region of available low-cost broadband offerings, which could hinder successful broadband adoption.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. Costs for performing the direct notification campaign will be reimbursed by the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) grant. There is no County match requirement. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Information Technology Services Department Org 8905 FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget.

**DISCUSSION:**

CETF is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to close the digital divide by accelerating broadband deployment and adoption to unserved and underserved communities. In December 2023, CETF was awarded a grant from the California Public Utilities Commission California Advanced Services Fund Adoption Account, to support outreach to low-income households through direct notification campaigns, with a goal of achieving 99% adoption statewide and 90% for low-income households. CETF partners with public agencies throughout the state for direct notification campaigns to inform eligible low-income households of available affordable internet service plans. Each "Direct Notification" partner is assigned a unique interactive voice response telephone line for the CETF "Get Connected Call Center". Recipients who contact the Call Center screen themselves for eligibility and receive assistance in enrolling in an affordable internet plan to increase broadband adoption.

On April 8, 2025, your Board approved an inter-county regional broadband memorandum of understanding

with the Counties of Kings, Madera, Merced, and Tulare to facilitate regional broadband applications for grant funds and other funding opportunities.

The Region is collectively seeking to collaborate with CETF on their direct notification campaign in order to raise awareness of affordable broadband offerings. CETF is offering a non-competitive award to the Region of up to \$180,000 to reimburse the County for the broadband regional outreach. This outreach includes the production and mailing of 6x9" postcards containing information on affordable internet plans in both English and Spanish to an estimated 258,402 eligible households throughout the region. As the leading agency for the Region, the County will manage the funds and act as the fiscal agent for the Region to receive and disburse the funds for actual project costs. On behalf of the Region, the County will utilize Tone Consulting Group LLC to perform these outreach activities under Agreement No. A-24-550 approved by the Board on October 22, 2024 and Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement (A-25-299) approved by your Board on June 24, 2025.

Approval of the recommended Agreement with CETF will reimburse up to \$180,000 in costs to perform direct mailing services within the region.

**REFERENCE MATERIAL:**

BAI #58, June 24, 2025

BAI #27, April 8, 2025

BAI #32, October 22, 2024

**ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:**

On file with Clerk - Agreement with CETF

**CAO ANALYST:**

Amy Ryals