



Inland Empire Regional Broadband Consortium (IERBC) Summary Report March 6, 2018

Counties: Riverside County and San Bernardino County

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Key outcomes of consortium achievements in 3 years:

- **Action Plan Goals:**

1. Identify unserved priority areas to help close the Digital Divide in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.
2. Foster and support CPUC California Advanced Services (CASF) applications in the Inland Empire.
3. Implement the [Inland Empire Broadband Infrastructure and Access Plan](#), including outreach to cities and county leaders, regional planning and transportation agencies, professional engineering associations, and collaboration with Inland Empire Economic Partnership (IEEP).

- **Accomplishments:**

1. **5 out of 8 Inland Empire Priority Areas adopted in CPUC Resolution T-17443 are now served, or in the process of being served through CASF Grants.**
2. **Over \$40 Million in CASF Broadband Grant Applications for the Inland Empire have been submitted.**

Awarded: \$35.4 Million CASF Inland Empire Broadband Infrastructure Grants:

- \$1.3 Million – UIA: Helendale, 2,279 Households, San Bernardino County (May 2015)
- \$1.9 Million – UIA: Wrightwood, 1,857 Households, San Bernardino County (May 2015)
- \$2.6 Million – Anza Electrical Cooperative: 3,751 Households, Riverside County (Dec. 2015)
- \$2 Million – Race: Red Mountain area, 202 Households, San Bernardino County (Jan. 2016)
- \$27.6 Million – Race: “Gigafy Phelan”, Phelan, Pinon Hills, Oak Hills, & Hesperia 7,606 Households, San Bernardino County (July 2017)

Pending: \$4 Million CASF Inland Empire Broadband Infrastructure Grants

- \$2.2 Million – Anza Electrical Cooperative: Connect Anza Phase 2, Riverside County (submitted June 2017)
- \$1.8 Million – Frontier: Lytle Creek, 339 Households (submitted Nov. 2017)

Pending: \$604K CASF Inland Empire Public Housing Adoption Grants

- \$519K, San Bernardino County Housing Authority (submitted Jan. 2015)
- \$85K, San Bernardino County Housing Authority (submitted April 2015)

3. **The [Inland Empire Broadband Infrastructure and Access Plan](#) was adopted November 6, 2014 and has been implemented over the past three years.**



Best Practices Achieved:

1. The Consortium brought, and continues to bring, elected officials, policy makers, city and county leaders, IT professionals, internet service providers (ISP's), telecoms, planners, engineers, business leaders, and key community stakeholders together to address broadband needs, unserved areas, and closing the Digital Divide in the Inland Empire.
2. The Consortium fostered over \$40 million of CASF grant applications through regular broadband forums that attract high-level regional leaders, and by reaching out to ISPs/telecoms to address unserved areas in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, as well as providing technical support and assisting with garnering strong regional support for applications.
3. Regional leaders are starting to connect the level of broadband service to quality of life, including improvements for disadvantaged communities, fostering economic development, and as needed infrastructure to address existing and future technology needs in education, workforce and business development, government services, and healthcare.
4. The Consortium is implementing the Inland Empire Broadband Infrastructure and Access Plan, which provides contextual framework for addressing broadband issues, including the need for smart community policies, and the importance of closing the digital divide. Work has included:
 - IERBC has met with key leaders at both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and has met with over 12 cities regarding broadband needs.
 - IERBC is continuing to meet with regional transportation and planning agencies
 - IERBC is providing outreach to planning, IT, and civil engineering associations.
 - The Consortium participated in the Caltrans AB1549 Working Group and provided input on the Guidelines for Broadband in Caltrans Rights-of-Way released in January 2018.
 - The Consortium helped provide outreach and information for the Riverside County "RIVCOconnect" initiative which aims to provide gigabit level service throughout the county.
 - IEEP established the Smart City/Smart County Award program in collaboration with IERBC.
 - IEEP is including Broadband in key meetings throughout the region.
 - IERBC partnered with the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) and IEEP to hold a local government leader roundtable focusing on Broadband issues and closing the Digital Divide.
 - IERBC partnered with CETF and IEEP to support two technology fairs featuring information about local tech careers and availability of low-cost internet programs.
 - IERBC partnered with CETF to hold an affordable housing collaborative meeting in the Inland Empire focusing on low-cost internet programs, which featured AT&T, Frontier, and Spectrum.
 - IERBC promoted SmartRiverside as a model Digital Inclusion/Adoption Program for the region.
 - IERBC featured the UC Riverside Center for Broadband Policy and Digital Literacy at meetings.



Challenges Faced:

1. Continuing to identify and help foster Broadband service for more priority areas in the region.
2. Recent changes to the CASF program may limit the ability for the Consortium to continue its strong momentum in fostering CASF Grants in unserved areas, as many areas are blocked out due to CAF II areas and rights of first refusal activities. These areas preclude many ISP's from applying for CASF funding, including ISP's that have proven track records in applying for and implementing CASF Grant funded Broadband projects in unserved areas in our region. Targeted outreach will be needed to gain stronger relationships with incumbent providers who in the past were not actively pursuing CASF funds.
3. California has set the bar very low for the definition of being "served" by Broadband. For example, 6mbps down and 1mbps up is very low compared to the FCC standard of 25mbps down and 3mbps.
4. Areas identified as "served" by CPUC mapping, which rely upon ISP-provided data and standards, may in fact be unserved. The definition of the number of households served in a census block along with the time and resources required for field testing, may leave inaccurate data in place which create barriers to fostering CASF grant applications.
5. Over the years, local government has had little to no role in asking for or reviewing the type of broadband service provided in their community. However, the 2017 California General Plan Guidelines include Broadband and support "dig once" policies in the Circulation Element, as well as Broadband service as a policy consideration for Healthy Communities. These new General Plan Guidelines provides opportunity at the city and county level to include Broadband service as part of the Conditions of Approval for new housing, commercial and industrial development, as well as including Broadband in public transportation and infrastructure projects.

The challenge is that state law requires local government update their General Plans only *periodically* and does not specifically define how often. Many General Plans are out of date with limited funding and staff resources as a barrier to keeping them updated regularly.

6. Older urbanized areas in the region are not receiving regular service upgrades from incumbent providers, leaving them with less service, and seen as less desirable with higher costs (for residents and businesses) compared to newer developed areas, higher income areas, and areas in neighboring Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego counties.
7. The Inland Empire needs more investment in Broadband by ISPs, incumbent telecoms, and entrepreneurial companies. More funding sources are needed that support higher levels of Broadband service, so that the community has strong Broadband infrastructure not just for today, but also for the technological advancements on the horizon.



Outstanding Gaps/Needs:

1. Continued outreach efforts are needed that emphasize the importance of having a broadband policy regardless of the timing and funding of General Plan updates.
2. The Consortium is needed as it is the only forum in the Inland Empire engaging the leadership to address Broadband infrastructure, service, cost and adoption issues to close the Digital Divide.
3. CPUC needs to consider raising the Broadband served standard to the established FCC 25 down/3 up range and eliminate mobile in its definition of “served.”
4. Internet providers need to invest in more broadband infrastructure in the Inland Empire.
5. There are not enough digital literacy programs in the Inland Empire for the disadvantaged.

Future Sustainability Action Plan

1. IERBC will identify and apply for funding as available to support CASF grants in the Inland Empire, implementation of the Inland Empire Broadband Plan, and to continue to sustain its efforts to help close the Digital Divide in the region.
2. The Consortium will continue to collaborate with CPUC, CETF, IEEP, and its many supporters in the region.
3. IERBC will continue to emphasize working in partnership with elected officials, regional leaders, engineers, planners and local organizations.