Broadband
May 2025

Team Members
- Kate Fosburgh, Digital Access Analyst
- Katherine DiPasqua, Director

Free Internet Program
- EDC is partnering with Comcast to provide 556 low-income households in Sonoma County with free internet at a speed of 100/20 mbps for a period of one year.
- On March 11th the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved the housing sites listed below as priority for the free internet program.
- We are coordinating with MidPen and Burbank on outreach, which began the week of May 13th.
- We are hosting events for Q&A and enrollment support at each priority site throughout May and June. The first event was held at Springs Village on May 19th.
- Devices:
    - EDC aims to provide a device to each family with school aged children in priority sites (apx. 300 total)
    - EDC has a $21,000 digital equity grant to contribute to device procurement and we are negotiating match/contribution from Comcast

Priority Sites

Name of Property	City	Housing Type	No. of Units	District
Springs Village	Sonoma	Family + Low-Income Worker	80	1
Celestina Garden Apts.	Sonoma	Senior	40	1
414 Petaluma	Petaluma	Supportive + Low-Income Worker	44	2
Logan Place	Petaluma	Family	66	2
Crossroads Apts.	Santa Rosa	Family	79	3
Carrillo Place Apts.	Santa Rosa	Family	68	3
Larkfield Oaks	Santa Rosa	Family	56	4
Harvest Grove Apts.	Healdsburg	Family + Low-Income Worker	44	4
Fife Creek Commons	Guerneville	Family	48	5
Elderberry Commons	Sebastopol	Supportive	31	5

Federal Funding Cut - NTIA Digital Equity Capacity Grant (CalDEP)

- The CalDEP grant program is part of a $1.44 billion awarded to states and Tribes for digital equity planning; California was meant to receive $70.2 million.

- Sonoma County was expected to receive about $530,000. EDC intended to partner with the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) and use the funding to develop a digital equity plan, partner with the Library and pay for a Digital Literacy Librarian, train staff at community partners as Digital Navigators, distribute devices and subscription subsidies, and other digital equity activities.

- Unfortunately, the California Digital Equity Program (CalDEP) application process has been terminated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, effective May 9, 2025. All activities related to this opportunity are on pause indefinitely.

Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program

- BEAD is a $42.45 billion program to expand broadband; California's allocation is approximately $1.86 billion.

- EDC allocated $1.2 million of our Broadband ARPA allocation to low-level/shovel ready engineering design to support BEAD projects.

- EDC ran a solicitation for "BEAD Local Match Assistance" to identify qualified Internet Service Providers or Non-Profits for EDC support of broadband services deployment projects throughout unserved and underserved areas of the county, especially those in rural and unincorporated communities where need for connectivity is high. The winning bidder(s) would receive support of up to $2.3 million in low-level/shovel ready engineering design for their BEAD project area, which could also be used as the required local match for their application.

- The winning bidder was Etheric Networks, who proposed to serve the West Sonoma Valley/Glen Ellen area with a fiber-to-premises network, including 997 unserved/underserved locations and up to 20 miles of Middle Mile backbone into the Sonoma Valley.

- The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors provided a letter of support and commitment of up to $1.2 million of matching funds to Etheric's application, which was submitted to the CPUC on May 9th. We expect the CPUC to make recommended awards late summer or early fall.