



Washington State
Department of
Commerce

WA State Broadband Office

Association of Washington Cities –Panel

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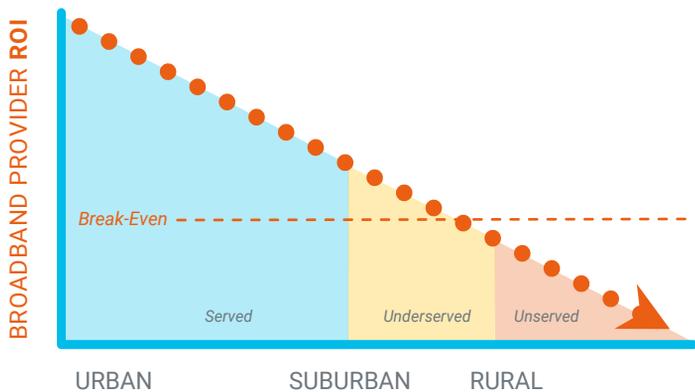
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1

The Broadband Delivery GAP

Solutions

- State and federal grants to incentivize investment in difficult-to-serve areas
- Mapping to define unserved and underserved areas
- Rallying communities to engage in and advocate conversation for
 - Speed Tests
 - Broadband Action Teams
- Digital equity work to ensure affordability, access, and skills



2

Enhancing interagency coordination



Washington Broadband Resources and Funding

Commerce, the Community Economic Revitalization Board, and the Public Works Board are dedicated to closing the digital divide. From mapping to planning and construction, we have the resources and technical support to realize the state goal of connecting every household and business.

Connecting the state to high speed broadband is a key goal for these three agencies because broadband fosters economic development and vitality, job creation, and supports Washington businesses in local, regional, and global markets. It allows students to access educational opportunities, fosters telemedicine and is a key component in public safety.



What are we doing about it?

- **WSBO, PWB and CERB have awarded nearly \$270M since 2021**
 - 48 projects
 - 60,000 additional connections
- **Collaborating with Office of Equity**
 - Digital Equity Forum
 - Community outreach
 - Recently distributed survey regarding impediments to digital equity
 - Recommendations to legislature in Dec. 2022

What are we doing about it?

- **Digital Navigators**
 - Investing additional resources with partners to provide devices, subscriptions, technical support services, and skills training (digital literacy, staying safe online, etc.)
- **Broadband Action Teams**
 - A BAT can help a community:
 - Centralize the local broadband conversation drive engagement with the SBO.
 - Determine community technology and accessibility needs.
 - Connect user groups and providers to collaborative project goals.
 - Partnership with Washington State University
 - Facilitation of individual BATs at Tribal and county levels
 - Funding to support local-level digital equity planning
 - Ongoing networking, sharing promising practices across BATs

What are we doing about it

- **Rapid Design Studies (feasibility study)**
 - Scope project details, bringing them closer to shovel- and proposal- ready
 - Assess current broadband assets and to develop strategies for addressing outstanding needs
- **Grant-writing services**
 - Support to governments, public-private partnerships, and tribal governments to support applications for federal funding
- **Digital Equity Forum**
 - Co-convening in partnership with the Governor's Office of Equity
 - Listening to community perspectives and recommendations
 - access, affordability, digital literacy, etc

Current Funding and Call for Comments

- **Infrastructure Acceleration Grants: Nov 2022, Approximately \$120M**
 - Projects must reliably meet or exceed 100 Mbps download and 20 to 100 Mbps upload speeds while being scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical.
 - Projects must provide broadband connectivity for a minimum of 25 years
 - Requires participation in the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program
- **Call for Comments to prepare for next NoFO**
 - WSBO has not had organized stakeholder input to form policies
 - Comments were due Oct 4 with stakeholder roundtable on October 28th
 - Addresses five areas:
 - Open access: Fixed Requirement? Optional but used as a scoring element? Tie-breaker?
 - Match requirement: Must have? How do smaller jurisdictions provide match?
 - Challenge process: Any possible improvements?
 - Digital Equity considerations in applicant project selection?
 - Suggestions for a checklist (non-scored): Thought about Poles, ROW, Dig Once, Possible Tax Impacts?

Future Funding

*ETA for Funding:
Fall 2023?*

- **BEAD program – Each State receives a Minimum is \$100M**
 - WSBO a sent a budget and project narrative to NTIA on Aug 11 for \$5M planning grant.
 - WSBO will develop a five year action plan by summer 2023 that targets projects for funding
 - Based on FCC maps (late 2022)
 - Robust public input and community outreach (Digital Equity assessments and BATS)
 - Nationwide BEAD funding is \$42.5B: WA share is based on relative % of unserved locations
- **Digital Equity State Planning Grant - \$1.1M**
 - WSBO submitted a proposed budget and project narrative on July 11
 - Expect approval in November, 2022
 - Funding will be used to conduct more outreach to create digital equity plan
 - DE Plan will be used in BEAD 5 year action plan
 - Eventual share of Digital Equity grant is unknown (\$2.75B nationwide over 5 years)

Thank you!

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<https://bit.ly/WSBOspeedtest>