



We strengthen communities

## What is the Washington State Broadband Office?

The SBO was formed by the WA State Legislature in response to the need to expand access to reliable, resilient, affordable, high-speed internet to all parts of our state. Initially envisioned as a small policy office, SBO quickly took on critical operations in engaging communities to invest state and federal funds in statewide broadband infrastructure projects, as well as directly advancing access and affordability work through a commitment to lead with equity. We look ahead now to the many opportunities before us in striving toward our goals to provide broadband access to all Washingtonians. Our goals: create access to all of at least 25/3MBps by 2024, 1GB/1GB at anchor institutions by 2026, and by 2028 to reach 150/150MBps for household connections.

### How you can advocate for your constituents

The WSBO receives occasional calls from individual internet users. Most often, they have questions about internet access at home. Many are struggling with working from home, accessing telehealth services, remote education, and more. We advise them to take these steps:

- Talk to their neighbors; what are others experiencing?
- Contact the providers in their area; shop around for plans, speeds, etc
- Reach out to the local Broadband Action Team; are they aware of your unserved/underserved location?
- Contact your local representatives; they want to understand impacts in their communities, help them to elevate your voice.

Some resources you can leverage:

- WSBO is building a digital equity dashboard we hope to launch in late summer 2023|
- FCC maps; version 2 was released in June 2023 at [bit.ly/WSBOFCC](https://bit.ly/WSBOFCC)
- Elevate and amplify: communicate with federal legislators who advocate for this work

Join the SBO mail list at <https://bit.ly/WSBOhome> to stay informed about BEAD and Internet for All Washington.

### Affordable Connectivity Program

**Application and eligibility** resources, including paper applications, can be found at <https://bit.ly/WSBOACP>

**Find more WSBO resources**

<https://bit.ly/WSBOhome>

**Help inform the broadband future!**

Take the speed test at:

<https://bit.ly/WSBOspeedtest>



**Questions?**

[wsbo@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:wsbo@commerce.wa.gov)

## How we connect

- Digital Navigators help Washingtonians navigate the internet, sign up for federal low-income internet assistance, connect with government and community services, acquire digital literacy skills, and more. They are available in all 39 counties to provide Washington State residents with free digital navigation, free digital literacy skills training, and connected device acquisition assistance in a culturally competent manner for eligible individuals. Over the last year, SBO has awarded over \$37M dollars to local and statewide digital navigator programs. A close-out report in July 2023 will detail how many individuals have been served with digital literacy skills and internet-enabled devices. Learn more here: <https://bit.ly/WSBODN>. NOTE: This program is at risk due to a reduction in state funding to \$30M over the 2023-25 biennium.
- Broadband Action Team (BATs) are community-driven collaborations that identify the connectivity and accessibility needs for their communities. A BAT can help a community:
  - Centralize the local broadband conversation and drive engagement with the SBO.
  - Assist statewide digital equity and inclusion efforts and represent community technology and accessibility needs.
  - Connect participants to collaborative project goals.
  - Bring early awareness of funding opportunities to community projects.
  - Find your BAT here: [bit.ly/WSBOBATS](https://bit.ly/WSBOBATS)
- Rapid Design Studies that scope project details, bringing them closer to shovel- and proposal-ready
  - Coordination with counties and tribal governments to assess current broadband assets and to develop strategies for addressing outstanding needs.

## Funding broadband work

- Broadband Infrastructure Funding
  - Infrastructure Acceleration Grants: Local governments, public ports, public utility districts, federally recognized Tribal governments, nonprofit organizations and public-private partnerships are eligible for awards for broadband infrastructure serving unserved and underserved communities.
  - To date, the Washington State Broadband Office has awarded over \$310M in state and federal funding to over 50 infrastructure projects planned through public-private partnerships. Through these projects, an estimated 30,000 connections will deliver household access to the resources to fully engage in the digital world.
- Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD)
  - May 2022: guidance released by NTIA. States must submit a statewide plan, informed by a robust public outreach effort, to achieve the BEAD program intent. SBO is working through Broadband Action Teams and other community groups to ensure that the statewide plan is comprised of local-level input and plans to execute the statewide broadband goals identified in RCW 43.330.536. SBO is leading an NTIA-reviewed tribal engagement plan to ensure that the 29 federally recognized tribes within Washington have ample opportunity to contribute to and benefit from this work.
  - June 20, 2023: NTIA expects to make the announcements for state allocations by June 30, 2023; Washington is anticipating close to a billion dollars over the next five years.
  - December 2023: SBO will have completed the comprehensive 5-year action plan and state digital equity plan, as well as an NTIA-approved funding application challenge process.