# Broadband equity, access, and deployment

Washington State Broadband Office

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*Erika Henry, Deputy Director*

*JUNE 2023*

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## 2023 Legislative Action

- *$50M in match for BEAD projects '24-'25 biennium*
  - *$150M earmarked for future biennia*
  - *available to projects with public entity as lead applicant*
- *Secondary scoring criteria must include:*
  - *open access and demonstration of support from County and Tribal govs*
- *5-year Plan must consider:*
  - *wireless technology*
  - *use of existing infrastructure and dig-once*
  - *streamlined permitting*
  - *access to poles*
    - *consider establishment of pool of funds dedicated to pole costs*
- *$300,000 for staff position to deploy new and emerging technologies*
- *$30M ($15M/year for continuation of Digital Navigator Programs)*

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## ARPA CPF Awards

- *$121.5M in total*
  - *14 entities in 19 grants of 52 applications*
    - *5 PUDs*
    - *2 electric co-ops*
    - *4 county organizations*
    - *1 Tribal entity*
    - *2 Ports*
- *Broad geographic dispersion*
- *Challenge process*
  - *2 required WSBO decision to deny challenges*
    - *middle mile*
    - *timely performance with scalable technologies*
- *Awards are contingent upon Treasury Department approval of funding*

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## BEAD Activities

- *Success will be driven by partnerships across entities and interests*
  - *https://techconnectwa.org/*
- *Funding Allocation due from NTIA on June 30*
  - *WA stepped up to the plate! State Broadband Office and other efforts (QR code, social media, press releases, crowd sourcing) added 71,000 unserved locations to FCC map through Jan 13th on a base of 167,000; 42% increase is top 10 in nation*
  - *Fabric location challenges added 20,000 locations*
- *Preparation of 5-year Plan (Due on Aug 13)*
  - *working with Guidehouse (contractor) to formulate plan*
  - *WSU-Ext local planning workbooks submitted June 15; currently in review*
  - *19 public listening/focus group sessions though mid-June*
  - *formal consultation with Tribal Governments*
  - *engagement with Digital Equity Forum*
- *Public engagements will inform 5-year Plan and State DE plan*
  - *broad outline of strategic plan and community needs*
  - *continuing input on scoring criteria*
    - *affordability*
    - *cybersecurity*
  - *project area identifications*
- *Detailed planning will create Initial Proposal, due late Dec*
  - *NTIA guidance on IP yet to be published*

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# BEAD Activities 'cont.

- *NTIA-required State Challenge process*
  - *initial draft published April 24*
  - *comments filed on May 5$^{th}$*
- *Process focused on classification of "unserved and underserved" by location*
- *State will need to adopt a challenge process*
  - *model challenge process developed by NTIA*
  - *possible state-defined modifications to model process*
  - *customer process or modified challenge process will need to be approved by NTIA*
  - *challenge process needs to be completed prior to applications*
- *Comments focused on clarification re: timing and speed tests*

# USDA ReConnect awards

- *$78M in awards to 4 projects*
- *Congratulations to the local partners of:*
  - *Dan Kilmer, Jefferson County*
  - *Dan Newhouse, Klickitat County*
  - *Mari Gluesenkap Perez, Lewis County*
  - *Rick Larson, Snohomish County*

Washington state has kicked off Internet for All in Washington, building off a strong foundation of pre-existing work related to local and state efforts in broadband infrastructure and digital equity.

*What you should take away from this presentation:*

What is "Internet for All in Washington?"

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Who is responsible?

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How can I be involved?

# What is "Internet for All"?

The goal of "Internet for All" is to connect all communities to reliable high-speed internet (broadband), which is defined by the FCC as a minimum of 25/3 Mbps (download/upload speed), and to increase digital equity.
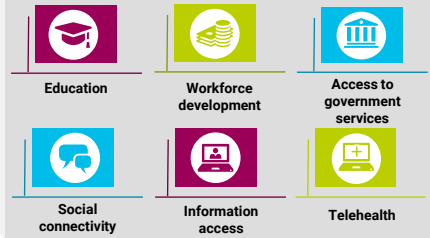
The **"digital divide"** refers to the gap between those who have access to high-speed Internet and its benefits, and those who have limited or no access, driven by three key barriers.

| *Access* | *Affordability* | *Adoption and Digital Literacy* |

**States will be applying for federal funding to help close the digital divide** focusing on "unserved" (<25/3 Mbps) and "underserved" (<100/20 Mbps)* locations.
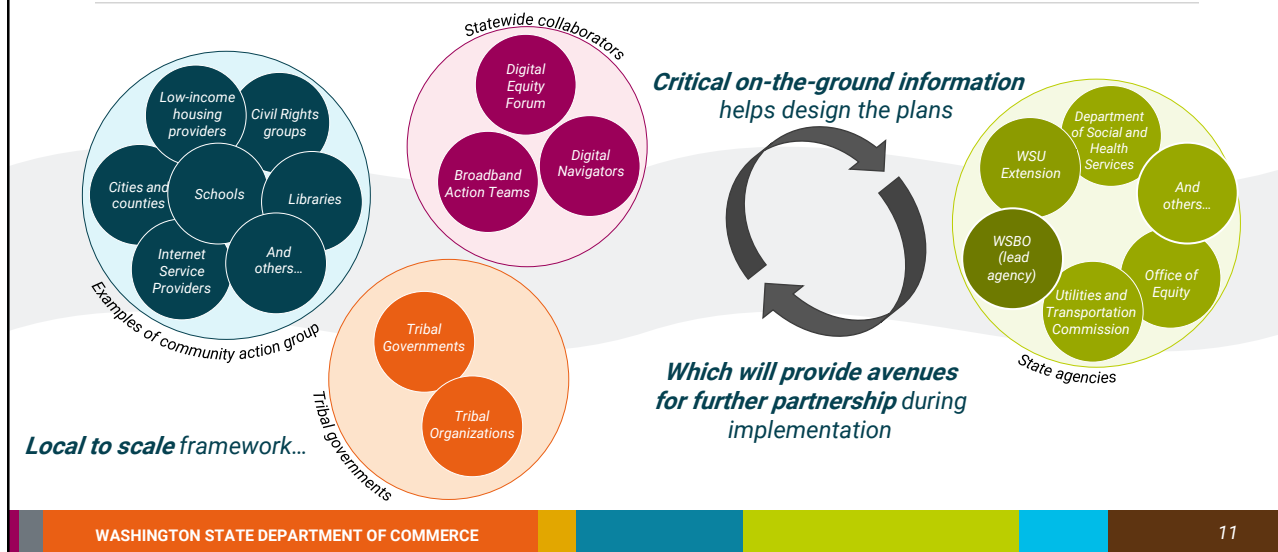
*Speeds defined by NTIA guidelines*

Benefits of high-speed Internet can include:

| Education | Workforce development | Access to government services |
| Social connectivity | Information access | Telehealth |

# Who is doing the work?

We recognize many stakeholders in the State are active in this space. Our intent is to listen and amplify ideas as we draft the BEAD and Digital Equity Plans that enable the state to apply for federal funding.
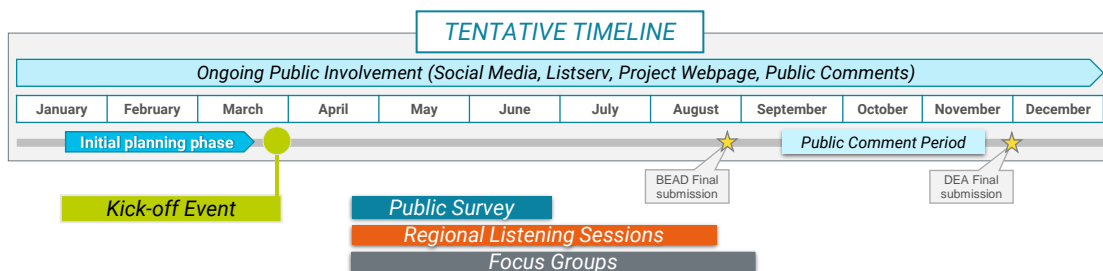


*Examples of community action group*

- Low-income housing providers
- Civil Rights groups
- Cities and counties
- Schools
- Libraries
- Internet Service Providers
- And others…

*Statewide collaborators*

- Digital Equity Forum
- Broadband Action Teams
- Digital Navigators

*Tribal governments*

- Tribal Governments
- Tribal Organizations

**Critical on-the-ground information** *helps design the plans*

**Which will provide avenues for further partnership** during implementation

*State agencies*

- WSU Extension
- Department of Social and Health Services
- And others…
- WSBO (lead agency)
- Office of Equity
- Utilities and Transportation Commission

**Local to scale** framework…

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# How can I be involved?

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This project includes multiple opportunities for public involvement in order to integrate the diverse voices of community members into our BEAD and Digital Equity Plans.

**TENTATIVE TIMELINE**

Ongoing Public Involvement (Social Media, Listserv, Project Webpage, Public Comments)

| January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December |
|---------|----------|-------|-------|-----|------|------|--------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|

Initial planning phase

Public Comment Period

BEAD Final submission

DEA Final submission

*Kick-off Event*

*Public Survey*

*Regional Listening Sessions*

*Focus Groups*

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# How you can be involved today.

*In-person engagement:* **Listening sessions** *regionally distributed across Washington state and* **community-based locations where the public can share their insights, experiences and feedback.**

*Other forms of engagement: Subscribe to our* **Listserv** *for the most up-to-date information on in-person and virtual events,* **share your insights** *on our webpage, share and engage with Department of Commerce* **social media.**

➢ *Email us: internetforall@commerce.wa.gov*
➢ *Visit our website: www.broadband.wa.gov*

*Do you have an organization, an individual, or* **other community collaborators** *whose work on digital equity or broadband access we should be plugged into?*

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## How you can be involved today.

*Incoming! 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, telehealth, 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:*
- *Equity in Education Coalition has useful dashboards*
- *Goodwill does as well*
- *WSBO is building a digital equity dashboard we hope to launch in the fall*
- *FCC maps*
- *Some things roll uphill; communicate to our federal legislators who advocate for this work*

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## Technical listening sessions

*The WSBO recognizes several areas of state-level technical focus that must be addressed in order to support local efforts in the same areas. We need the help of subject matter experts to convene the right voices to inform the scope, breadth, ownership and intended outcomes in these areas:*
- *Fair labor practices*
- *Affordability (beyond ACP)*
- *Project area definition*
- *Workforce development*
- *Asset mapping: soft and hard assets*
- *Digital equity*
- *Digital navigation/literacy: skills, cybersecurity, etc*

*There's a LOT to consider in each of these areas. The roles of providers across topics, the roles of community organizations, actions we can take to remove the need for some legislative appropriations. Let's put our heads together! If you have expertise, please contact me directly:*
*Erika.henry@commerce.wa.gov*

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**Q&A**

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# Thank you!

**Washington State Department of Commerce**

*Contact us at*
internetforall@commerce.wa.gov

*www.broadband.commerce.wa.gov*
*www.commerce.wa.gov*

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## The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a once-in-a-generation investment in infrastructure and competitiveness

### Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

- $1.2T bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021
- Largest ever investments in high-speed Internet, rail and transit, clean energy, and water
- Allocated funding to over 350 distinct programs across more than a dozen federal departments and agencies

### This historic legislation will:

- Deliver clean water to all families and eliminate the nation's lead service lines
- **Ensure every American has access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet**
- Repair and rebuild roads and bridges
- Improve transportation options and reduce greenhouse emissions
- Upgrade our nation's airports and ports to strengthen our supply chains
- Make the largest investment in passenger rail since Amtrak's creation
- Build a national network of electric vehicle chargers
- Upgrade power infrastructure to deliver clean, reliable energy
- Make infrastructure resilient against the impacts of climate change, cyber-attacks, and extreme weather events
- Deliver the largest investment in tackling legacy pollution in US history

Please see Build.gov for more details on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Source: NTIA

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## NTIA will administer ~$48B through four programs that drive high-speed Internet access, affordability, and adoption

### NTIA will administer ~$48B of funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

| BEAD | DIGITAL EQUITY | TRIBAL | MIDDLE MILE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **$42.45B** | **$2.75B** | **$2.00B** | **$1.00B** |
| **Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment Program** | **Digital Equity Act** | **Tribal Connectivity Technical Amendments** | **Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure** |
| A program to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it to and increase adoption of high-speed Internet. | Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed Internet to meet their needs and improve their lives. | A program to help tribal communities expand high-speed Internet access and adoption on tribal lands. | A program to expand middle mile infrastructure, to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas. |

**FCC to administer $14.2B**

For Affordable Connectivity Program, which replaced the EBB program

**USDA to administer $2.0B**

Via the Rural Utilities Service

**Private Activity Bonds $0.6B**

Authorizes State and local governments to use private activity bonds for rural broadband

Source: NTIA

## BEAD program will provide ~$42.45B for infrastructure planning and implementation

### Funding pool
**$42.45B**

*A program to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it and increase adoption of high-speed Internet.*

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

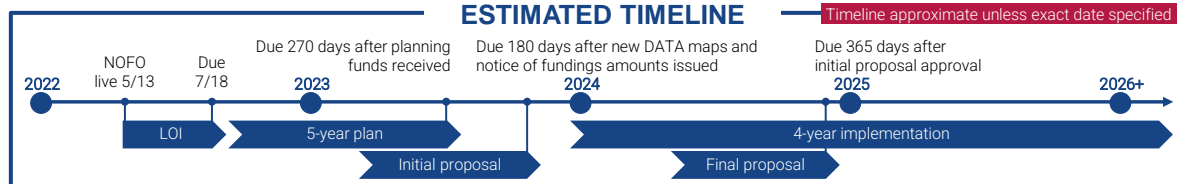**Entities eligible to apply for this program include:**
- All 50 States
- The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
- Other Territories: U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

**Example eligible uses of funds include:**

- *Planning for deployment of Internet*
- *Deploying or upgrading Internet*
- *Installing Internet in multi-tenant buildings*
- *Implementing adoption and digital equity programs*
- *Workforce and job training*

#### ESTIMATED TIMELINE
Timeline approximate unless exact date specified

| 2022 | NOFO live 5/13 | Due 7/18 | Due 270 days after planning funds received — 2023 | Due 180 days after new DATA maps and notice of fundings amounts issued — 2024 | Due 365 days after initial proposal approval — 2025 | 2026+ |

- LOI
- 5-year plan
- Initial proposal
- Final proposal
- 4-year implementation

Source: NTIA

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## Digital Equity Act created three programs to promote digital equity and inclusion

Source: NTIA

### Funding pool
**$2.75B**

*Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable and high-speed Internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.*

#### PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS
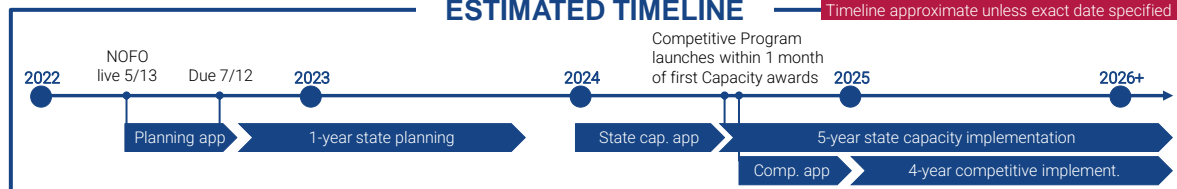
**The Digital Equity Act created three programs:**

*State Planning*
- *$60M formula funding program to develop digital equity plans*

*State Capacity*
- *$1.44B formula funding program to implement plans & promote digital inclusion*

*Competitive*
- *$1.25B to implement digital equity and inclusion activities*

**Example eligible uses of funds include:**

- *Developing digital equity plans; states must develop a plan to be eligible for state capacity grants*
- *Making awards to other entities to help make digital equity plans*
- *Improving accessibility and inclusivity of public resources*
- *Implementing digital equity plans and related activities*
- *Providing digital literacy and digital skills education*
- *Facilitating the adoption of high-speed Internet*

#### ESTIMATED TIMELINE
Timeline approximate unless exact date specified

| 2022 | NOFO live 5/13 | Due 7/12 | 2023 | 2024 | Competitive Program launches within 1 month of first Capacity awards — 2025 | 2026+ |

- Planning app
- 1-year state planning
- State cap. app
- 5-year state capacity implementation
- Comp. app
- 4-year competitive implement.

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