Washington's Broadband expansion efforts

House Innovation, Community and Economic Development and Veterans Committee

Janea Stark, Executive Director, Community Economic Revitalization Board

Sheila Richardson, Programs Director, Public Works Board

Mark Vasconi, Director, State Broadband Office

Lisa Heaton, Managing Director, Digital Equity Unit

12/5/23

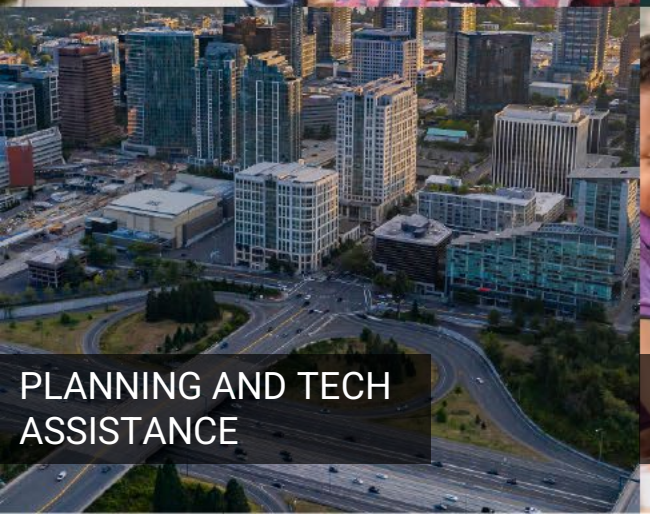
We strengthen communities



















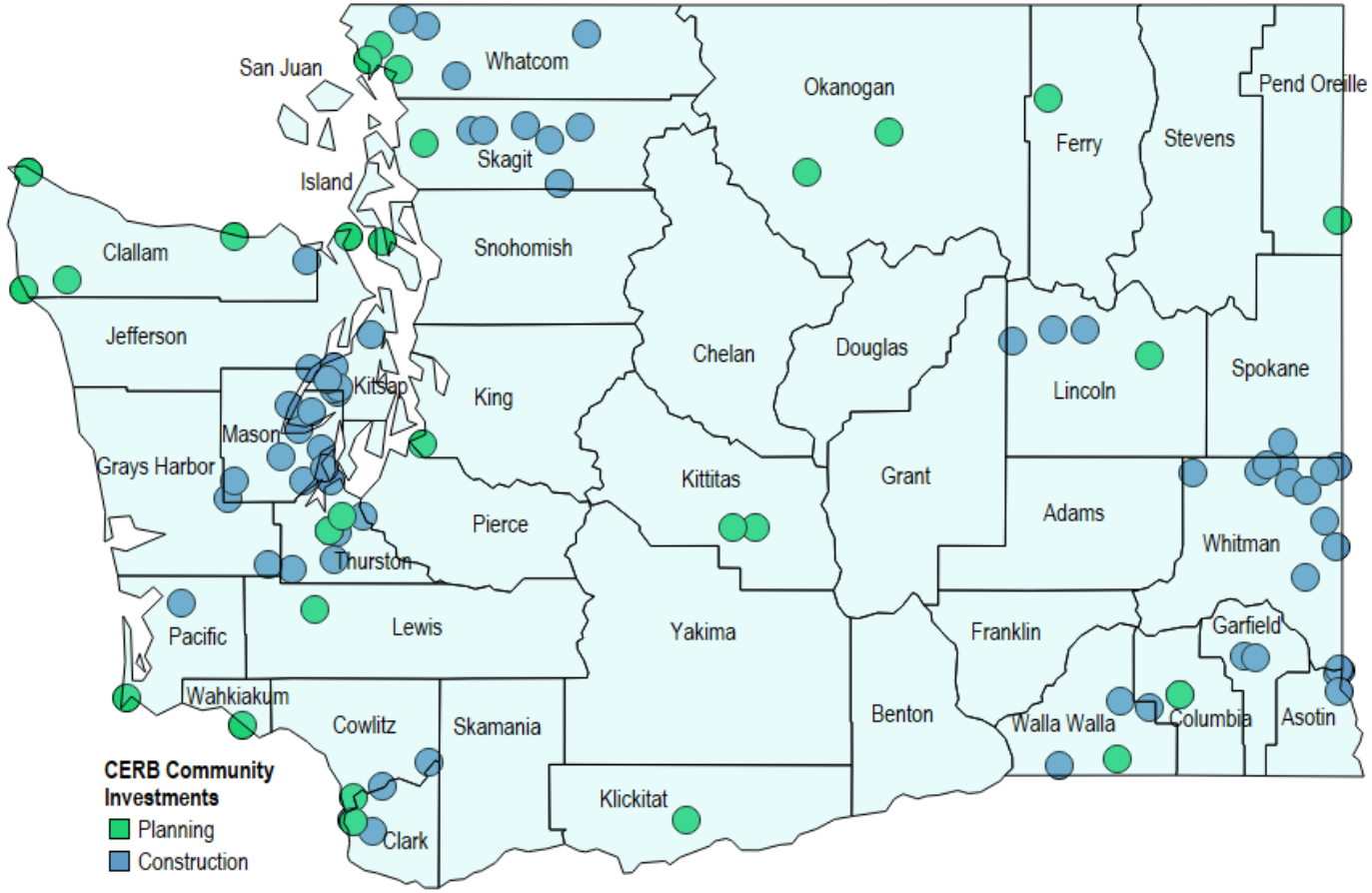
Community Economic Revitalization Board

CERB Rural Broadband investment 2018-2023

$37,819,319 Invested

27 Projects
~71 Communities
~15,087 Connections
~121 ISPs
5 Towers
~520 miles of fiber

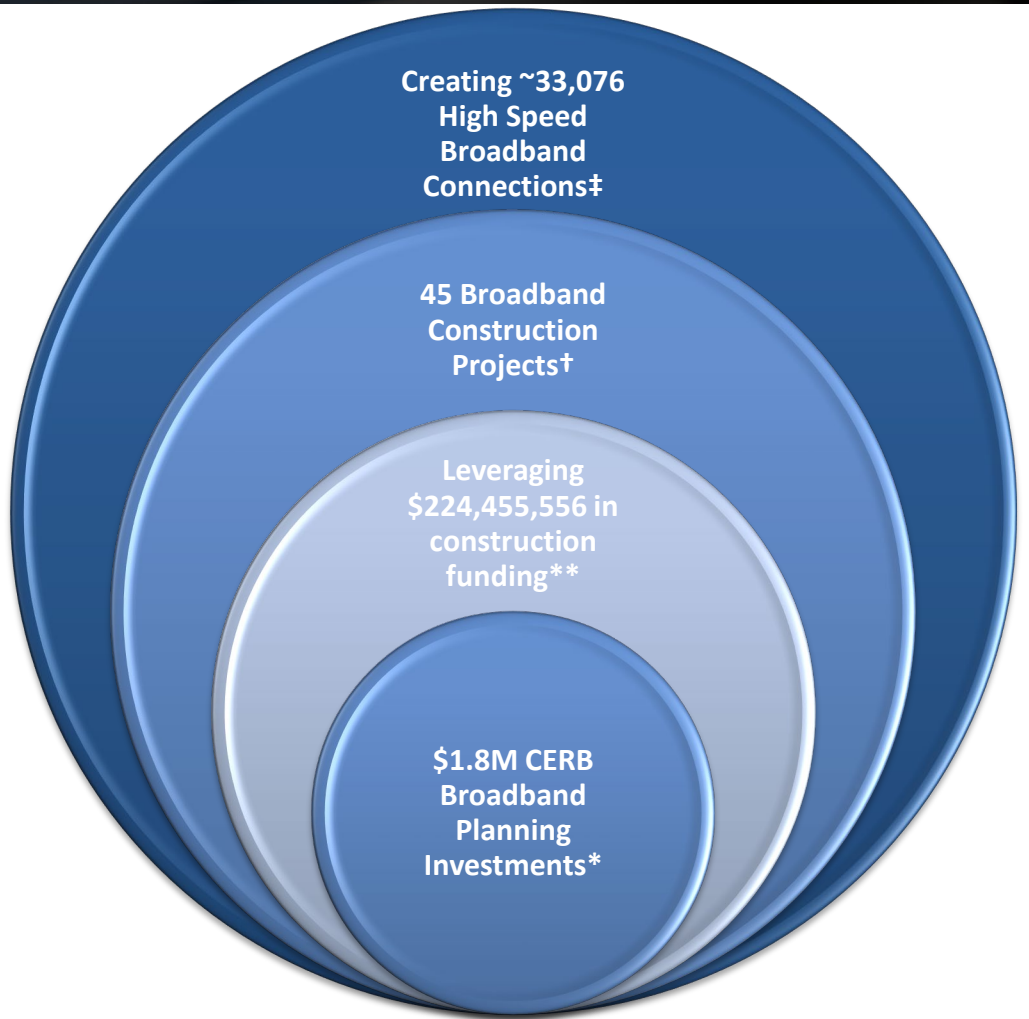
$2,507 Cost per Connection



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
CERB



Community Economic Revitalization Board



*Funded through CERB's Planning Program.
**Projects funded through State Administered Broadband Programs. Does not include match or direct Federal Funding.

†Average cost per project $498,790
‡*Cost per connection:*
Construction $6,786
Planning $55

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
CERB



Community Economic Revitalization Board

State funding

Nisqually Indian Tribe
Squally-Absch

People of the river, people of the grass

Nisqually Indian Tribe - March 2019, Received a $450,000 loan and a $150,000 grant the Nisqually Community Broadband Project.

- Construction of approximately 4.8 miles of above and below ground fiber to serve the Nisqually Indian Tribe reservation.

- CERB funds were matched by $200,000 in local resources.

Completed – Fall 2020

- 111 households with 1G/1G speed
- All students on the Reservation had broadband service and devices when school started in the Fall of 2020.

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
CERB



Community Economic Revitalization Board

Federal funding

Port of Columbia – March 2019, received a $50,000 planning grant for the Port of Columbia Broadband Planning Study.

- July 2021, Received a $2,000,000 grant for the Dayton Community Broadband Project.
- Engineering and construction of broadband infrastructure to serve the City of Dayton and outlying adjacent areas.
- CERB funds were matched by $500,000 in local resources and $808,333 from the State Broadband Office.

Completing - Winter 2023

- 1,139 households with 1G/1G speeds
- 140 businesses 1G/1G speeds



Community Economic Revitalization Board

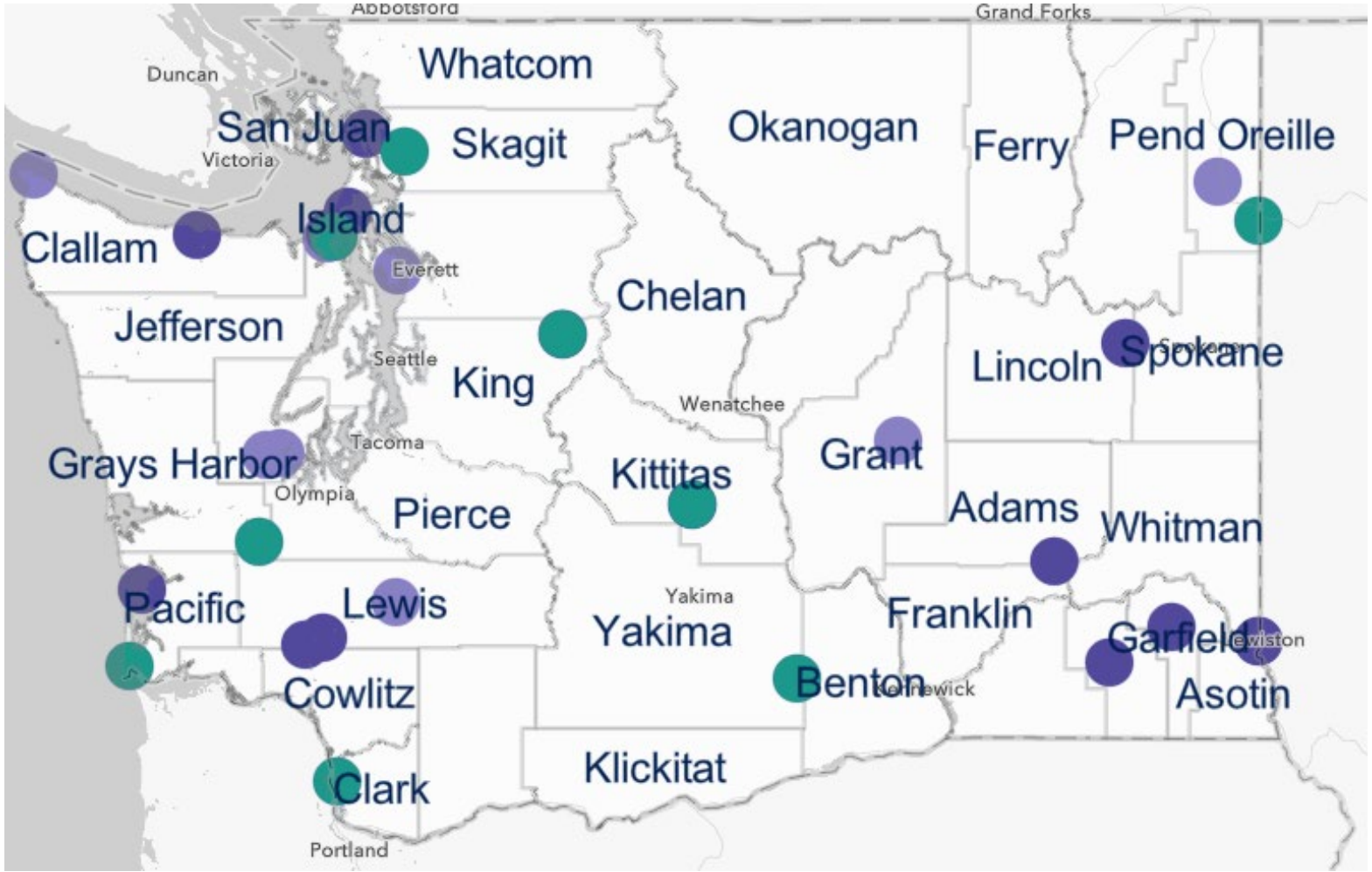
2024 proposed broadband legislation

- **Legislation:** Codification of CERB's Rural Broadband Program into RCW 43.160.
- **Funding:** No additional funding. Projects will be funded from CERB's biennial appropriation.
- **Staffing:** No additional staffing. CERB has administered this program since 2018, CERB has also funded broadband planning through Core CERB funding.

Codification: Gives CERB the authority to permanently administer the current Broadband Program within Core CERB programming. This will provide local governments and Tribes a sustainable funding partner for their community broadband needs.

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
CERB

PWB Broadband Program and awards history



Broadband Program	Awards	Funds
FY20 Planning	9	$450K
FY21 Construction (state grant/loan)	6	$8.11M
FY22 Construction (federal - grant)	15	$44.7M
FY22 Construction (state loan)	1	$1.8M
FY23 Construction (state loan)	1	$3.7M

www.pwb.wa.gov

Statewide impact – connecting unserved



2023 PWB Broadband ribbon cutting in Grant County

Awarded Projects Since 2019 - Metrics

Total Award Amount	$58,726,411
Total Estimated Project Costs	$65,193,778
Miles of Fiber	594
Total Passings (possible service locations)	11,454
Broadband Projects Funded	32
Rural/Distressed	28
Tribal	2
Eastern Washington Project Area	13
Western Washington Project Area	19

Current funding timeline
Nov 6, 2023 – May 3, 2024

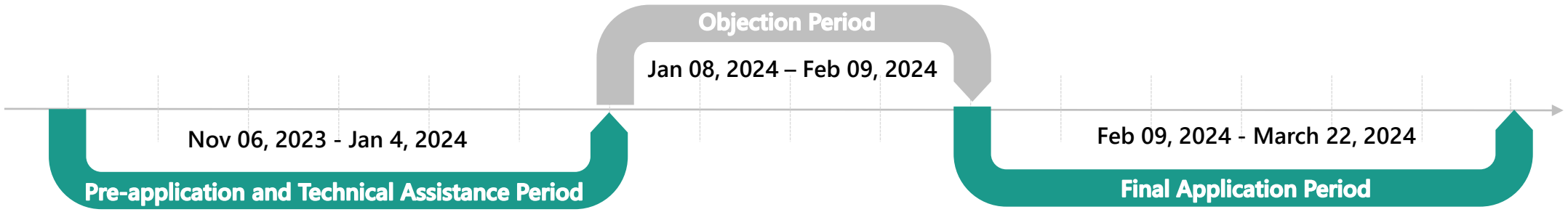
$15.7 million in state funding available

30% Grant & 70% Loan - Distressed or Tribal

Loan Only – Non-distressed

Cycle opened:
November 6, 2023

Board awards funds:
May 3, 2024



PWB Broadband Program Opportunities and challenges

Challenge:

- Limited demand for loan funding and need for authority to determine grant and loan allocations

Opportunities – positioning for the future:

- Funding distressed project areas in urban areas
- Funding future unmet need

PWB Broadband legislative request

2024 legislative Session:

Update capital budget provisos to authorize the Public Works Board to award state resources as grants and loans.

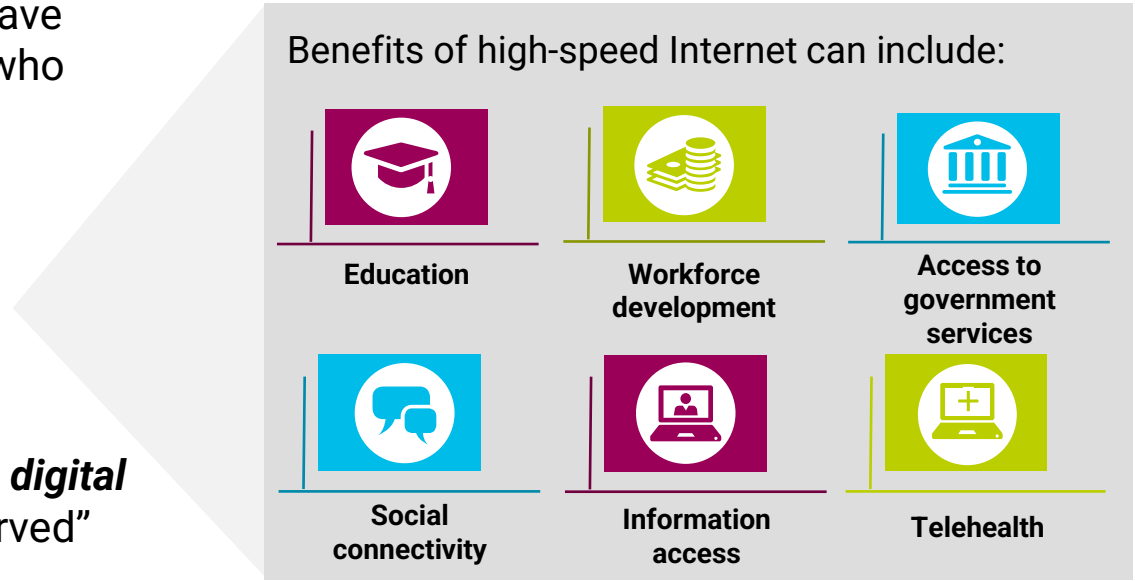
Internet for All goals

- 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.



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.



State Broadband Office investments, 2019-23

Funding source	Awarded funds	Anticipated connections**
State ARPA SLFRF	$138,836,515	18,697
State ARPA CPF	$121,523,711	15,677
Federal NTIA BIP	$30,000,000	6,189
State Match***	$22,013,770	1,053
Total	**$312,373,996**	**41,616**
Total broadband investments since 2018 (SBO, PWB and CERB)	**$408,919,726**	**68,157**

**Awarded funds and connections fluctuate as projects complete.
***WSBO state match funds were also used to match ARPA Capital and SLFRF projects funded by PWB and CERB.

State Broadband Office legislative proposals

- **Broadband planning (operating):** Requested $5 million to assist counties and tribes in Broadband planning as they work to secure BEAD program funding.
- **BEAD authority (capital):** Requested the authority for $1.2 billion in federal resources.
- **BEAD state match resources (capital):** Requested $256,936,000 to ensure Washington leverages the full federal BEAD allocation.

Washington's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) activities

$1.2 Billion BEAD funding allocation from NTIA

- State Broadband Office outreach campaign added 71,000 unserved locations to FCC map on a base of 167,000
- That is a 42% increase and was top 10 in the nation!
- Fabric location challenges also added 20,000 locations.

Contracted with Guidehouse for community engagement and to complete all required planning documents

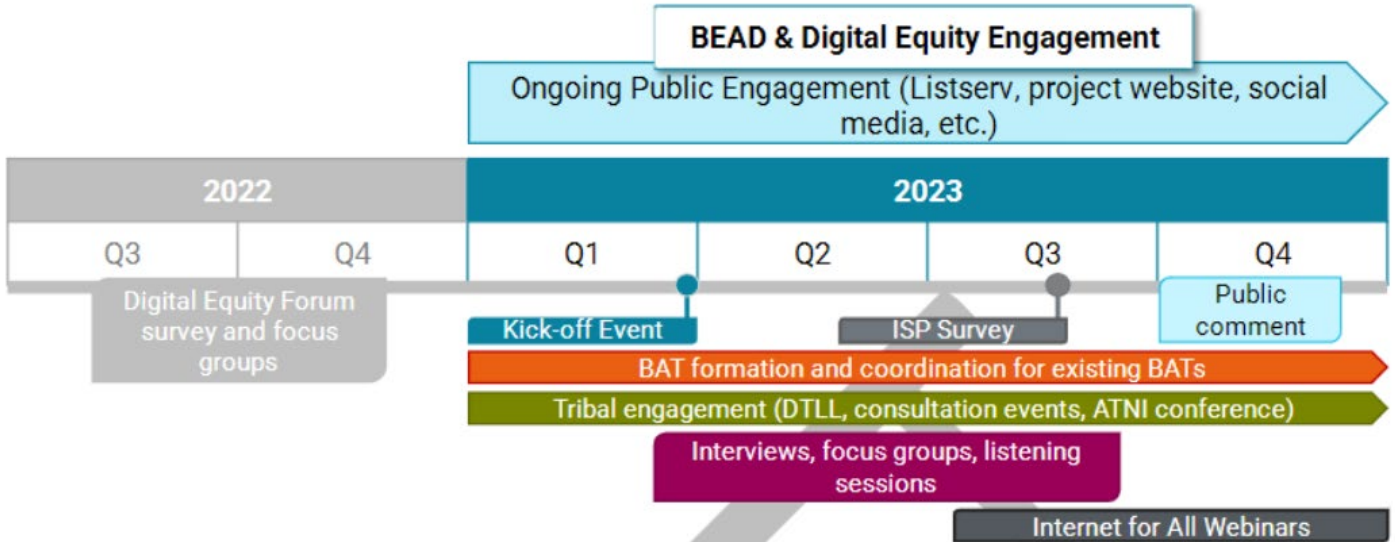
Washington's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) activities

BEAD 5-year Plan was submitted on August 11 and considered:

- Wireless technology
- Use of existing infrastructure and dig-once
- Streamlined permitting
- Access to poles

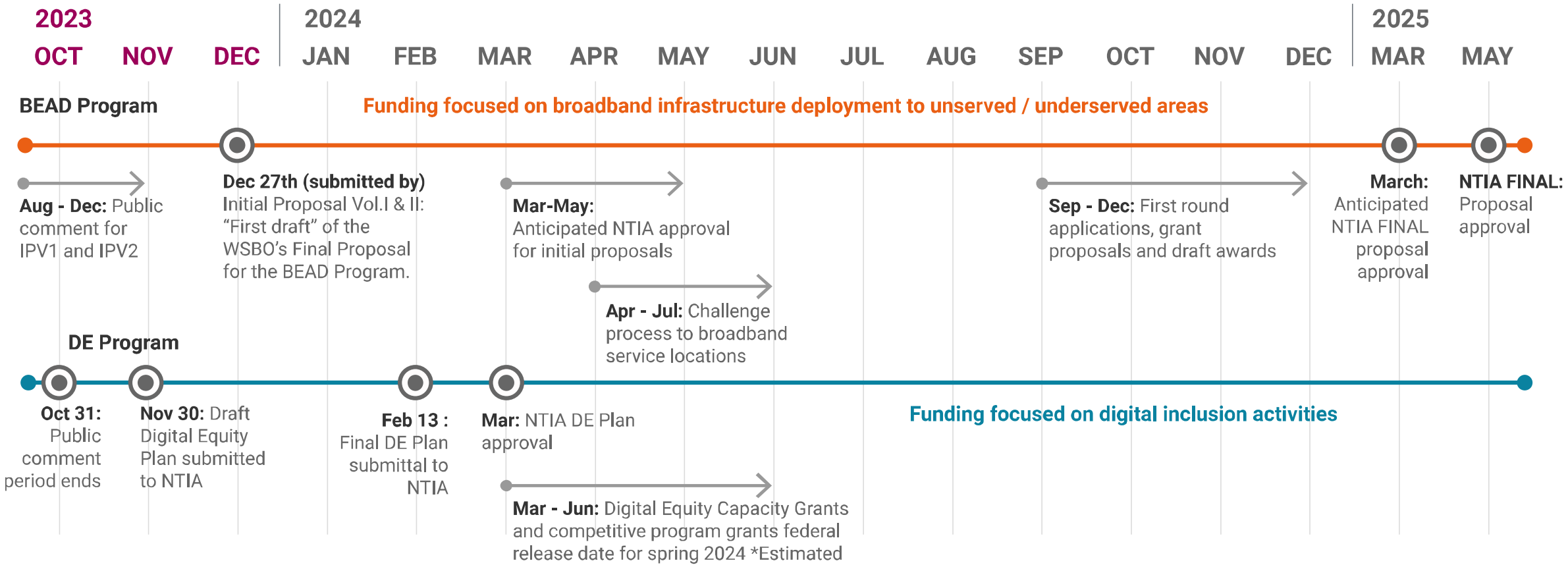
Draft Digital Equity Plan

- Draft Digital Equity Plan originally due to NTIA Nov. 30
- NTIA approved extension request for a Feb. 13, 2024 submission date



Federal submission requirements and timeline

Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program and Digital Equity (DE) Program – complementary programs running in parallel



Washington's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) activities

Initial Proposal Volume 1

- NTIA-required State Challenge process
  - State challenge process is required to enhance the accuracy of served and unserved locations and to improve the FCC's national broadband map
- Challenge process needs to be completed prior to applications
  - Draft Volume 1 published on Oct. 9 with 30-day comment period ended Nov. 10
  - Challenge process will begin April 2024 with an approximate 120-day period
- State modifications to NTIA model process
  - Speed tests
  - Tribal consent
  - Expansion of Community Anchor Institutions (CAI)

Washington's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) activities

Initial Proposal Volume 2

- Volume 2 provides detail on:
  - Project area definition
  - Affordability (beyond ACP)
  - Application scoring criteria
  - Fair labor practices
  - Workforce development
  - Cyber security
  - Draft Volume 2 published Nov. 1 and the comment period ended Nov. 30.
- Final Volume 1 and Volume 2 will be submitted to NTIA by Dec. 27
- We expect the application process to open in the third quarter of 2024

Digital Equity Update

Digital Equity Unit Managing Director Lisa Heaton, (she/her)

Digital Equity planning and investment

The BEAD and the Digital Equity Plan are the foundation for how Washington can access historic federal investment to bring reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband to all Washington residents.

- The Digital Equity Plan is the state's vision, strategy and objectives related to availability, affordability, accessibility and inclusivity of services, digital literacy and internet adoption.
- Received $1,076,248 in federal resources for the Digital Equity Planning Grant.
- States must develop a statewide Digital Equity Plan to be eligible to receive federal resources for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program (~$26 million).

Additional Digital Navigator funding (operating)

- $15 million for FY 2025 to complement existing appropriation ($15 million)
- $30 million for FY 2026 and $30 million for FY 2027

Public engagement activities for Washington State's Digital Equity Plan: July 2022 – October 2023

Engagement Type (# of events)	Number of People Engaged	Covered Populations / Organizations Representing Covered Populations[277]
Interviews (22)	40	All
Focus Groups (33)	262	All
Community Events (mobile engagement) (5)	157	All except incarcerated individuals
Listening Sessions (12)	267	All
Public Comment Open Houses (3)	31	All
Surveys (2) *	2,745	Aging individuals, Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, and Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
Total	3,502	All

Digital Equity Forum – Partnership between Office of Equity and Commerce

- The Digital Equity Forum has held eight meetings, two listening sessions and smaller group meetings this year.
- Since June 30, 2023, the Forum has discussed next steps as a body and to provide comments and recommendations on the:
  - Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) 5-Year Action Plan
  - Draft Digital Equity Plan
  - BEAD Initial Proposal Volume I
  - BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II
  - HB 1723, Washington's Digital Equity Act (2022)
  - Digital Equity Dashboard currently in progress

Digital Equity Forum

- **Thirty-seven current members**
  - Federally Recognized Tribes – 4
  - Underserved and Unserved Communities – 11
  - State Agencies Involved in Digital Equity – 9
  - Subject Matter Experts (non-profit tech, county, municipal) – 3
  - Ex-Officio Legislators - 5
  - Ex-Officio Support Agencies: 5

- **Next step:**
  - The Office of Equity and the Commerce are collaborating on a 120-day plan to support the election of a chair/co-chairs and the development of this advisory body.
  - The Dept. of Commerce will be conducting additional outreach to inform the State Digital Equity Plan indicated in ESSHB 1723.

Digital Navigator outcomes (FY23)

Some interactions have not been captured because of reservations about sharing personal information from marginalized communities.

Services and/or devices provided	Approximate number of individuals and households served
Digital navigation services included: • Individual Case Management • Group Classes • Healthcare Increased Access • Social Services: Family Reunification, Housing, Transportation • Legal	**Total: 212,205** Individuals: 99,832 Households: 112,373
Digital literacy services included: • Navigating an Internet-Connected Device • Creating Email Account, Resume Building • Privacy and Security • Education and Skill Training	**Total: 32,540** Individuals: 28,177 Households: 4,363
Internet-connected devices distributed: • Laptops, • Tablets (ie: iPad, Surface Pro, etc) • Smart Phones • Operational Supporting Devices	**Total: 106,349** Individuals: 101,207 Households: 5,142
Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) assistance	**Total: 18,487** Individuals: 14,489 Households: 3,998

Thank you!

Questions?

Washington State Department of Commerce

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