

## Support Public Broadband Deployment

**WPUDA urges the legislature to fulfill their commitment to fully fund the 25% required match for public entity BEAD (Broadband, Equity, Access, Deployment) subgrantees to maximize the benefit of the federal dollars coming to Washington State for deployment of broadband to unserved and underserved areas.**

**The need:** Legislative spending authority in the 2025-2027 budget is needed in order for the State Broadband Office to fully fund the 25% required match for public entities seeking Federal BEAD grants for broadband deployment to unserved and underserved areas of the state.

The spending authority will ensure the state will be able to support broadband deployment by public utility districts and other public entities and ensure the State of Washington is able to achieve its broadband goals.

**Background:** In the 2023 legislative session, in response to the anticipated allocation of federal BEAD (Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment) funding to Washington State for broadband deployment, the legislature allocated \$50 million for use as matching funds for projects in which the lead applicant is a public entity.

Since the adjournment of the 2023 session, the federal government announced Washington State would receive more BEAD funding than originally anticipated (\$1.2 billion total).

After allocating the \$50 million, in the 2024 session the legislature committed to *fully funding* the remaining 25% match for public broadband providers. This commitment is necessary to ensure public broadband providers, including public utility districts, will be able to apply for BEAD funding and build infrastructure necessary to facilitate access to broadband service in all areas of the state.

**The solution:** Support the fulfillment of the legislature's commitment to contributing matching funds to leverage federal grant dollars, enabling public entities to build out publicly owned infrastructure to provide broadband to unserved and underserved areas.

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