

RCW 43.330.534 Broadband office—Powers and duties. (1) The office has the power and duty to:

(a) Serve as the central broadband planning body for the state of Washington;

(b) Coordinate with local governments, tribes, public and private entities, public housing agencies, nonprofit organizations, and consumer-owned and investor-owned utilities to develop strategies and plans promoting deployment of broadband infrastructure and greater broadband access, while protecting proprietary information;

(c) Review existing broadband initiatives, policies, and public and private investments;

(d) Develop, recommend, and implement a statewide plan to encourage cost-effective broadband access and to make recommendations for increased usage, particularly in rural and other unserved areas;

(e) Update the state's broadband goals and definitions for broadband service in unserved areas as technology advances, except that the state's definition for broadband service may not be actual speeds less than twenty-five megabits per second download and three megabits per second upload; and

(f) Encourage public-private partnerships to increase deployment and adoption of broadband services and applications.

(2) When developing plans or strategies for broadband deployment, the office must consider:

(a) Partnerships between communities, tribes, nonprofit organizations, local governments, consumer-owned and investor-owned utilities, and public and private entities;

(b) Funding opportunities that provide for the coordination of public, private, state, and federal funds for the purposes of making broadband infrastructure or broadband services available to rural and unserved areas of the state;

(c) Barriers to the deployment, adoption, and utilization of broadband service, including affordability of service and project coordination logistics; and

(d) Requiring minimum broadband service of twenty-five megabits per second download and three megabits per second upload speed, that is scalable to faster service.

(3) The office may assist applicants for the grant and loan program created in RCW 43.155.160, the digital equity opportunity program created in RCW 43.330.412, and the digital equity planning grant program created in RCW 43.330.5393 with seeking federal funding or matching grants and other grant opportunities for deploying or increasing adoption of broadband services.

(4) The office may take all appropriate steps to seek and apply for federal funds for which the office is eligible, and other grants, and accept donations, and must deposit these funds in the statewide broadband account created in RCW 43.155.165.

(5) The office shall coordinate an outreach effort to hard-to-reach communities and low-income communities across the state to provide information about broadband programs available to consumers of these communities. The outreach effort must include, but is not limited to, providing information to applicable communities about the federal lifeline program and other low-income broadband benefit programs. The outreach effort must be reviewed by the office of equity annually. The office may contract with other public or private entities to conduct outreach to communities as provided under this subsection.

(6) In carrying out its purpose, the office may collaborate with the utilities and transportation commission, Washington technology solutions, the department of commerce, the community economic revitalization board, the department of transportation, the public works board, the state librarian, and all other relevant state agencies. [2024 c 54 s 53; 2022 c 265 s 303; 2021 c 258 s 3; 2019 c 365 s 4.]

Effective date—2022 c 265 ss 101, 102, 301-305, and 401: See note following RCW 43.330.530.

Short title—Findings—Intent—2022 c 265: See notes following RCW 43.330.539.

Findings—Intent—2021 c 258: See note following RCW 47.44.160.

Findings—2019 c 365: See note following RCW 43.330.532.