

HB 1498 - DIGEST

Creates the governor's statewide broadband office to encourage, foster, develop, and improve affordable, quality broadband in order to: (1) Drive job creation, promote innovation, improve economic vitality, and expand markets for businesses;

(2) Serve the ongoing and growing needs of education, health care, and public safety systems, industries and business, governmental operations, and citizens; and

(3) Improve broadband accessibility for unserved and underserved communities.

Requires the public works board to establish a competitive grant and loan program to award funding to eligible applicants to promote the expansion of access to broadband service in unserved and underserved areas.

Expands the purpose of the state universal communications services program to include the provision of all communications services, including voice and broadband services.

Creates the statewide broadband account.

Delays, until July 1, 2025, the expiration date for the state universal communications services program.