
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5357

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, King, Wagoner, Wellman, and Wilson, L.)

READ FIRST TIME 02/18/21.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the capital broadband investment
2 acceleration program; and adding a new section to chapter 43.330 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.330
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) The capital broadband investment acceleration program is
7 created in the statewide broadband office as established in RCW
8 43.330.532. Funding appropriated for the program shall be used for
9 the statewide broadband office to establish a competitive grant
10 program to increase broadband access in unserved areas of the state,
11 as defined in RCW 43.330.530. Funding must be awarded to match funds
12 required to participate in the federal broadband infrastructure
13 programs. Priority for grants must be for projects that serve
14 distressed areas and rural counties as defined in RCW 43.168.020.

15 (2) Eligible applicants for grants awarded under this section
16 include:

17 (a) Local governments;

18 (b) Tribes;

19 (c) Nonprofit organizations;

20 (d) Cooperative associations;

21 (e) Multiparty entities comprised of public entity members;

1 (f) Limited liability corporations organized for the purpose of
2 expanding broadband access; and

3 (g) Incorporated businesses or partnerships.

4 (3) No more than three percent of the funds appropriated for the
5 program may be expended by the statewide broadband office for
6 administration of the program.

7 (4) No more than three percent of each grant may be expended by
8 the grant recipient for management or administration of the grant.

9 (5) The statewide broadband office must develop a project
10 evaluation process to assist in coordination among state broadband
11 infrastructure funders to maximize opportunities to leverage federal
12 funding and ensure efficient state investment in achieving the policy
13 objectives of RCW 43.330.536. The project evaluation process must
14 help standardize the assessment of proposed broadband projects so
15 that the state funders, soon after a project is identified, can
16 determine whether the project is a strong candidate for a known
17 federal funding opportunity. The statewide broadband office will use
18 the tool to identify whether a project can be packaged as part of a
19 regional or other coordinated federal grant proposal. The statewide
20 broadband office, public works board, and community economic
21 revitalization board are encouraged to enter into a memorandum of
22 understanding outlining how coordination will take place so that the
23 process can help with a coordinated funding strategy across these
24 entities.

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