

Increasing Education Equity by Closing the Digital Divide

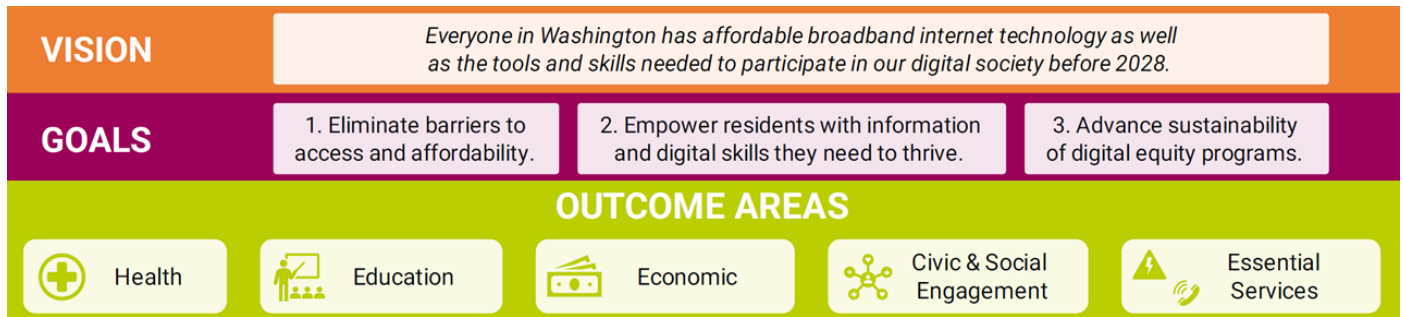
2025-2026 Legislative Priority

WSPTA recognizes that to be successful in the 21st century, ALL students must have access to the communication tools and technology needed to facilitate learning and post-secondary opportunities.

Background

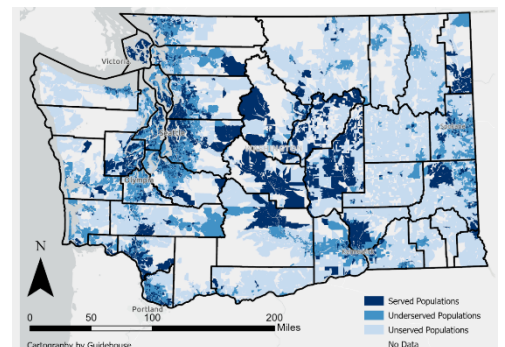
Providing high-speed internet access and technology to effectively use internet-based resources for education is a diversity, equity and inclusion issue. The Washington State Legislature has recognized this, establishing the Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO) (1) and enacting the Digital Equity Act (2) to promote digital equity among unserved and underserved communities.

The WSBO has developed the Internet for All in Washington Five-Year Action Plan (3) and Digital Equity Plan (4). These plans establish the state's vision for digital equity, goals and strategies for achieving it, and eligibility for federal funding to for expanding broadband access to close the digital divide in Washington.



Washington has made great strides toward achieving this vision. Yet there are certain regions of Washington that are less connected than other parts of the state, as illustrated in the map. Disparities in access are caused by the inability to pay, the inability to navigate resources for the adoption of services, the actual lack of broadband infrastructure in certain areas, the lack of access to digital devices, the lack of digital literacy, or a combination of barriers prohibiting certain individuals from achieving digital access (4).

To meet the ambitious goal of closing the digital divide by 2028, Washington must continue to implement the strategies and programs outlined in the Five-Year Action Plan, and leverage federal funding under the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program.



Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA shall support legislation, policies, and funding that ensure equitable digital inclusion and access for all students, families, and staff by implementation of a statewide digital equity plan, including adoption of best practices and strategies for use of technology to improve student education and behavioral health outcomes.

For More Information

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For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our [website](#).

Citations

- (1) 2SSB 5511, Chapter 365, Laws of 2019.
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/BillSummary/?BillNumber=5511&Year=2019&Initiative=false>
- (2) E2SHB 1723, Chapter 265, Laws of 2022.
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1723&Year=2021&Initiative=false>
- (3) Washington State Department of Commerce. Internet for All in Washington Five Year Action Plan - Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program.
<https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/yr03ll1kw1rpd7x4w4wk0z5g6gdah90n>
- (4) Washington State Department of Commerce. Internet for All in Washington Digital Equity Plan.
<https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/u2z9y6tux2z9ypsvbsuomn0ka85w3p8w>