



Snohomish County

Dave Somers
County Executive

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As Part of Ongoing Work to Expand Broadband, Executive Somers Launches Effort to Map Internet Connectivity and Affordability Gaps Across County

Mapping Study Will Guide Deployment of \$5 Million in Snohomish County American Rescue Plan Act Investments to Expand Broadband

Snohomish County, Wash., August 10, 2022 – Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers announced a new effort to expand access to high-quality broadband. Using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, Snohomish County will launch a comprehensive study to identify gaps in high-quality broadband access for households across the county. The study will specifically review and map gaps in broadband infrastructure, speed, and affordability to ensure programmatic solutions address an array of access challenges with a focus on understanding the least served areas from an access and affordability perspective.

“Lack of access to affordable, high-quality broadband poses a serious risk to the health and wellbeing of our residents, workers, and businesses. Closing gaps in access will have lasting economic, educational, health, and community benefits for Snohomish County communities,” said Executive Somers. “By mapping existing broadband gaps, we can ensure our upcoming investments are made swiftly and equitably. I appreciate the partnership with the Snohomish County Council and our Broadband Action Team, who spearhead our efforts to expand high-quality broadband access across the county.”

“The goal of our Broadband Action Team is to expand high-quality internet access to every area of Snohomish County. We have already seen early success in securing state grant funds, and this local investment will help move us closer to our goal,” said Councilmember Nate Nehring ([District 1](#)).

“The Broadband Action Team has already had early success, completing these gaps will help all of us here in Snohomish County,” said Councilmember Sam Low ([District 5](#)).

Snohomish County has released a Request For Proposals (RFP) to identify a partner entity to conduct the study. The partner will identify opportunities that will help to develop an implementation plan for high-quality broadband expansion that incorporates the following elements:

- Map of the public and private existing broadband infrastructure in Snohomish County;
- Map of broadband speeds throughout Snohomish County, including delivered speeds broken down by provider, and an identification of areas where infrastructure does not meet demand of current and/or planned population growth;
- Needs assessment to map where unserved and underserved areas are in the county, including identifying areas and households with limited or no problem service access and speed as well as identifying households, populations, and areas with affordability barriers that limit or prevent broadband access;
- Review of agencies with successful broadband networks, including a review of the economic benefits, additional funding sources beyond ARPA, and different types of technological models; and

- Coordination with broadband provider as well as broadband program managers locally to determine best practices for implementation and expanding access.

Addressing gaps in broadband access is a top priority for Snohomish County. Executive Somers proposed and the Snohomish County Council allocated \$5 million of the county's ARPA funds toward broadband expansion efforts. In addition, earlier in 2022, Snohomish County received a [\\$16.7 million grant](#) from the State of Washington to expand broadband access on the SR-530 corridor.

Interested entities can find the RFP [here](#), and have until September 1, 2022 to submit their proposal. The study will begin once a contracted partner is identified, with the goal of beginning to deploy the county's \$5 million in broadband ARPA investments by early 2023.

Executive Somers established ORR to guide the county's recovery work by ensuring federal pandemic relief is administered quickly, effectively, and equitably. Information on the County's recovery work can be found at www.snohomishcountywa.gov/recovery.

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