



**Snohomish County**  
**Dave Somers**  
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## **Snohomish County Invests \$1.5 Million in Digital Equity and Broadband Access**

*Funds Will Add 750 Loanable Computers With Hot Spots and Expand Sno-Isle Libraries Digital Navigator Program*

**Snohomish County, Wash., September 18, 2023** – Executive Dave Somers announced that Snohomish County is investing \$1.5 million of its federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation into a digital equity initiative operated by Sno-Isle Libraries. This funding will increase the capacity of their loanable computer with hot spots by 750 devices and will expand their digital navigator program, which helps library patrons connect to the internet, troubleshoot tech issues, learn about online safety, and understand the process to sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a federal discount broadband program for income-qualified households.

According to the Washington State Broadband Office, as many as 15 percent of households do not have a desktop or laptop computer. Additionally, Washington’s ACP enrollment rate is 26 percent, well below the national average of 33 percent. Of the 1,125,000 eligible households in the state, less than 290,000 are enrolled in the ACP.

“As we address the lack of broadband access in our community, a lot of attention is rightly paid to increasing infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas, a vital goal,” said Executive Somers. “However, other major barriers that exacerbate broadband inequities are lack of access to computers and the high price of internet services. We’re using our federal recovery dollars to make important progress in addressing these barriers, and I’m grateful to our partners at Sno-Isle Libraries for their commitment to advancing digital equity.”

“This partnership with Sno-Isle Libraries will build on our efforts to bridge the digital divide in our communities. Sno-Isle has been a great partner and these digital navigators will get more of our community members connected to technology and resources. I am proud to support these investments as we continue to invest in broadband access throughout Snohomish County,” said County Council Vice Chair Nate Nehring ([District 1](#)).

“At Sno-Isle Libraries, we are committed to connecting more residents to vital internet access. A library card connects our communities to job interviews, Telehealth appointments, online tutoring, and experiences they value. Our libraries bring people together through digital connections and community experiences,” said Lois Langer Thompson, executive director, Sno-Isle Libraries.

Sno-Isle Libraries provides critical access to the internet and technology, along with library staff to assist. Residents can check out laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots with a library card. All 23 Sno-Isle Libraries locations provide free Wi-Fi access for communities to browse and stream the internet.

Executive Somers established the Office of Recovery and Resilience 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 <https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/Recovery>.

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