

# Broadband Challenges and Opportunities in Whitman County—And Beyond

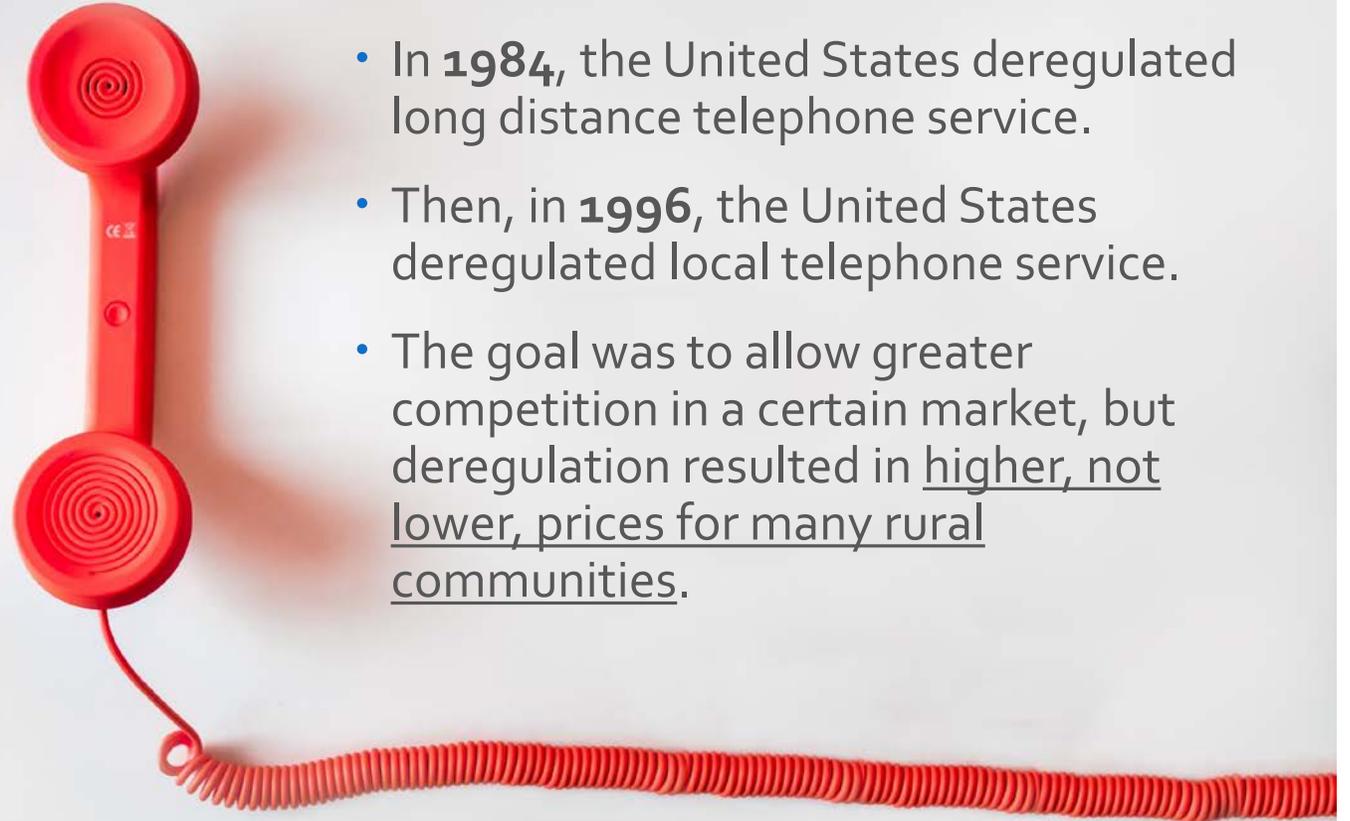
*Washington State Transportation Commission  
September 16, 2020*

*Kara Riebold, Chief Operating Officer  
Joe Poire, Executive Director*



**Port of  
Whitman  
County**

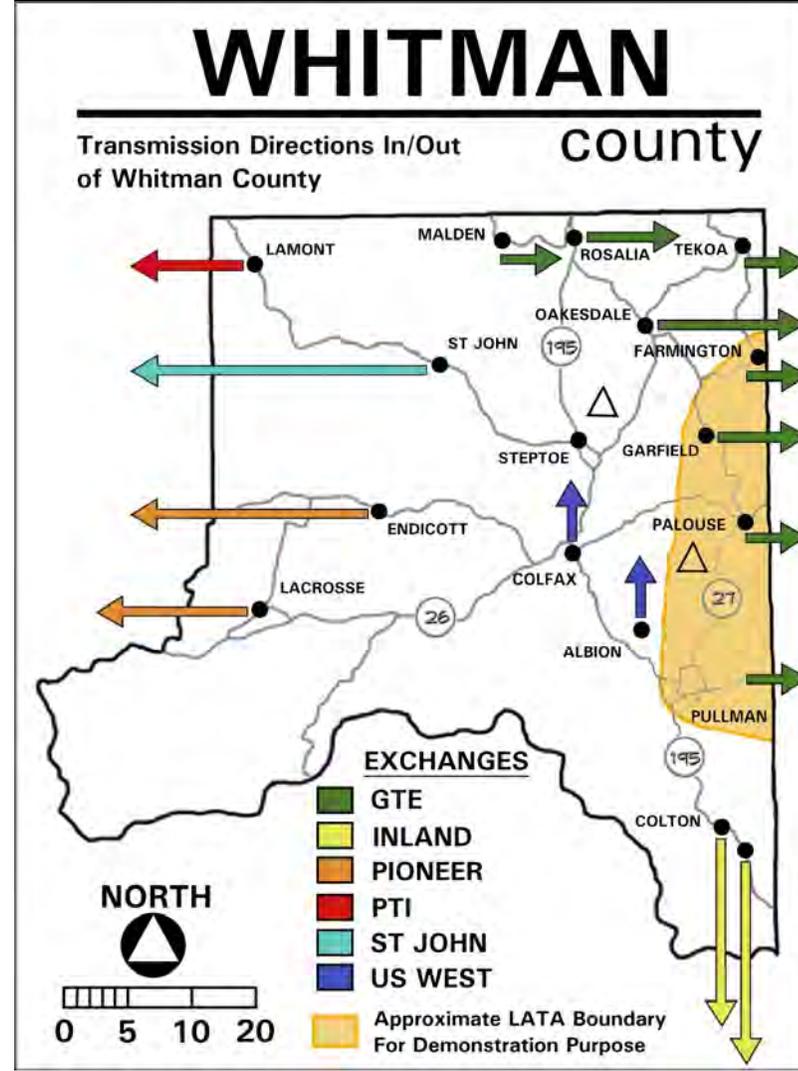
# The Challenge: A History of Deregulation



- In **1984**, the United States deregulated long distance telephone service.
- Then, in **1996**, the United States deregulated local telephone service.
- The goal was to allow greater competition in a certain market, but deregulation resulted in higher, not lower, prices for many rural communities.



# Unintended Consequences of Deregulation



- The unintended consequences of deregulation can be seen in this map of transmission directions in Whitman County.
- This system serves the high-cost company, rather than the high-cost customer.



# Ports See Legislative Success in Broadband

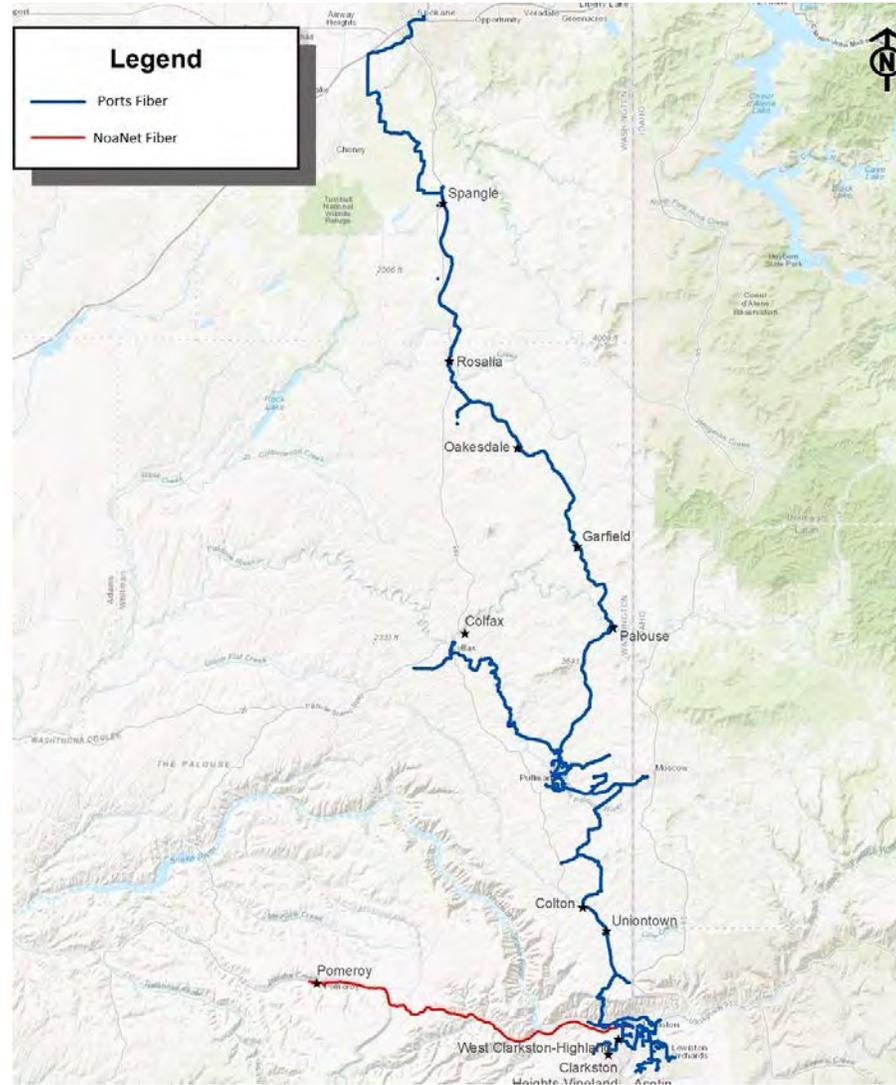


Former Washington Governor Gary Locke and Former Port of Whitman County Commissioner John Love pose at the bill signing of Substitute Senate Bill 6675 in 2000.



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# The Port Model in Action



- The Port of Whitman County has built out over 300 miles of dark fiber in a network ranging from the City of Spokane in the north to the City of Clarkston in the south.
- As a result, the city of Pullman, WA alone has:
  - 14 carriers
  - Open access network
  - Free trade environment



# Economic Impacts in Whitman County

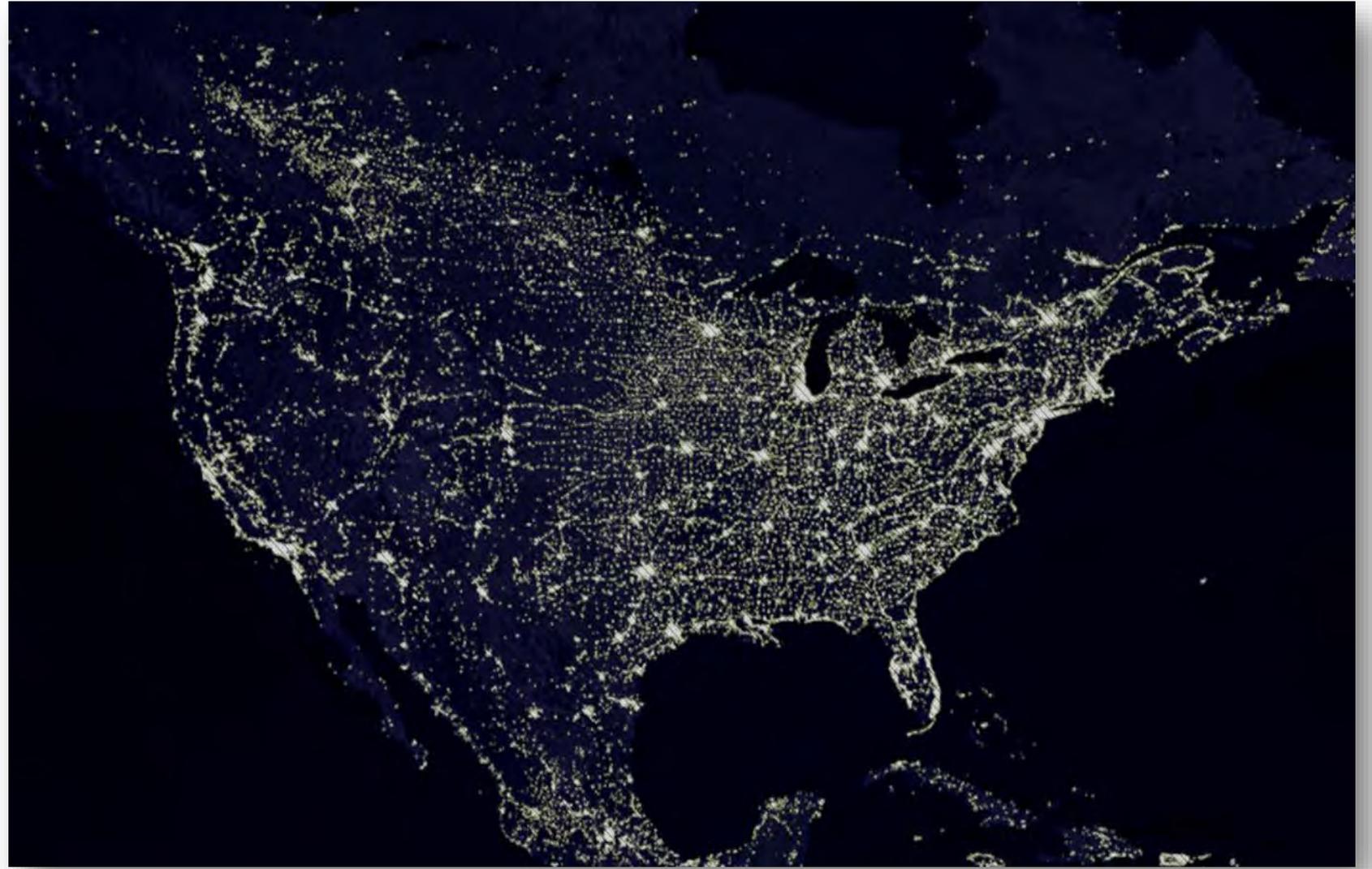
- 132 Jobs
- \$5.6M Labor Income Payroll
- \$29.4M Output Sales Transactions
- \$10.9M Gross Regional Product
- \$759K State/Local Taxes

*Source: Steve Pedersen, University of Idaho Economist*



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What would it take for 90% of US households to have broadband?



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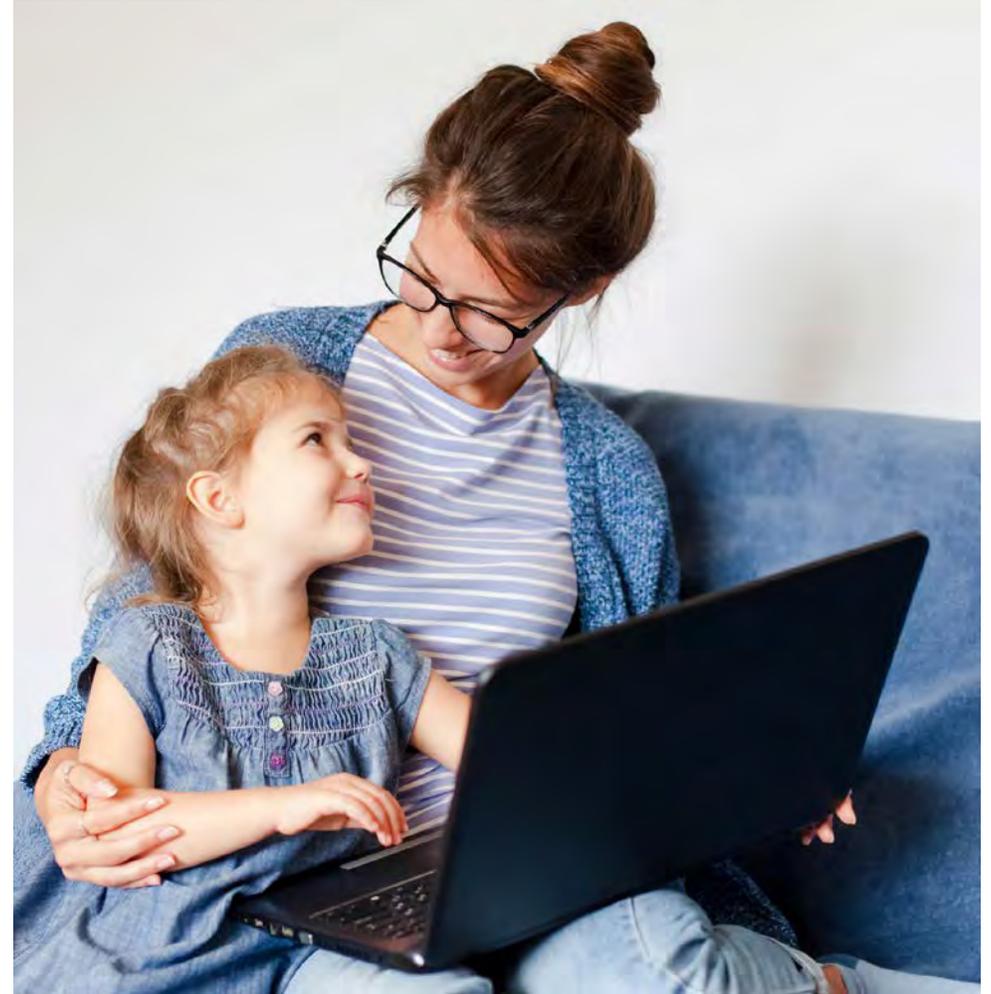
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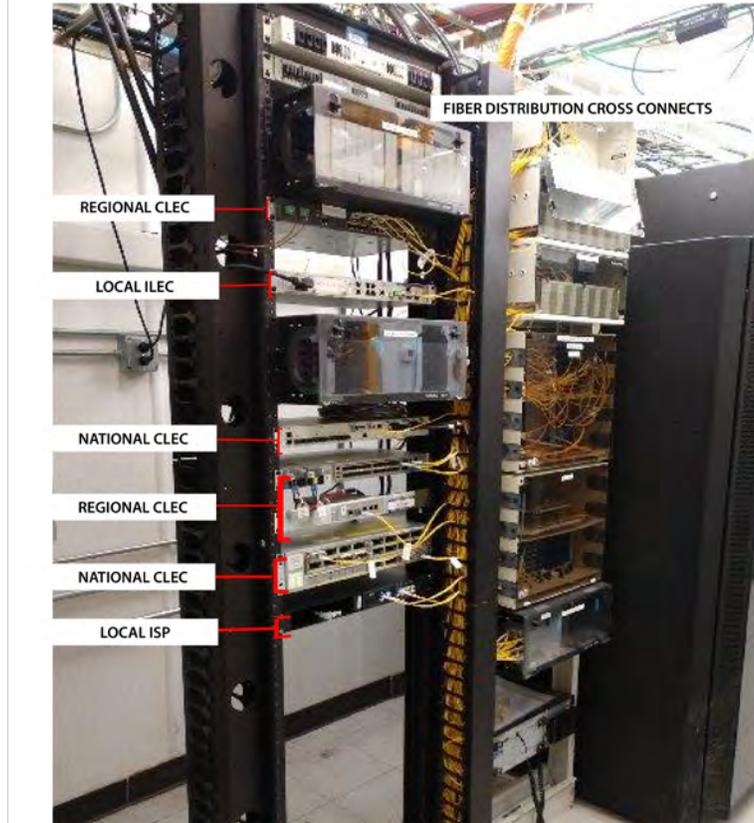
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# The Opportunity: A Unified Response

- We need a unified state and federal response to address the unique broadband challenges of today.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that our nation's telecommunications infrastructure fails to meet the needs of online learning, business and telemedicine in many communities.



# Possible Solutions: Forging a Path Forward



Fund open-access public networks, leveraging public-private partnerships

There are companies ready to invest in underserved markets, showing that the problem of broadband services can be solved by working together.

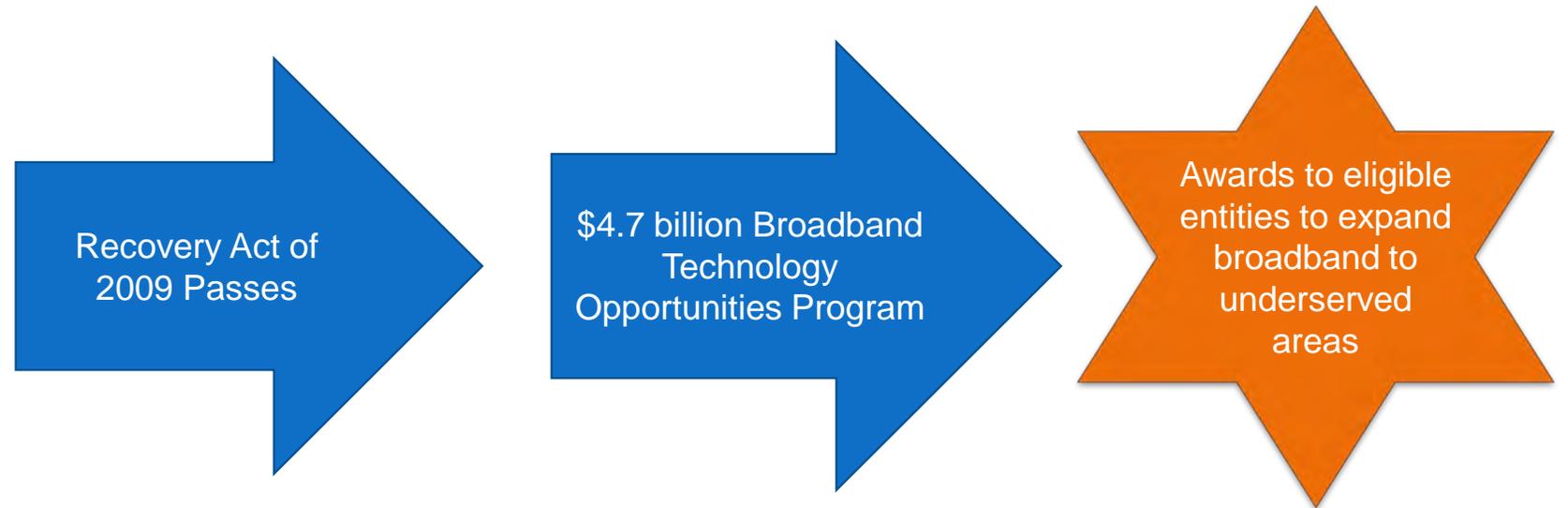


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# Possible Solutions: Forging a Path Forward

Direct broadband stimulus infrastructure funds to the states, for rapid deployment and distribution

- Follow the model of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) stimulus funding for broadband, which created open-access, publicly owned fiber infrastructure



# Possible Solutions: Forging a Path Forward



Plan for right-of-way use that opens markets

- The map at left shows the markets along the I-5 corridor



# An Example of Public-Private Partnerships



**ZiPLY Fiber** @ZiPLYFiber · 4h

We're excited to announce our partnership with the Port of Whitman County to increase fiber access in southeastern Washington, especially now that it's needed more than ever. [spr.ly/6014GW34M](https://spr.ly/6014GW34M) #ruralWA



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# Questions?

Thank you!

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