

# CONNECTING OREGON FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## HB 4092 – Broadband Governance, Availability & Equity

The State of Oregon and the US government are currently poised to make unprecedented capital investments to address deficiencies in broadband deployment in rural and urban areas and to promote digital equity and literacy. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and spotlighted significant broadband gaps existing across the state—Oregonians without broadband service miss opportunities for work, education, religious services, medical care, social connection and more.

Fortunately, help is on the way. With American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, and the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) allocating broadband funding directly to States, Oregon is poised to receive more than \$200 million to invest in building services.

This sea change in public investment provides a rare opportunity for Oregon—if we are prepared. Due to federal spending timelines, there is urgency to act now.



### WHAT DOES HB 4092 DO?

This legislation would ensure that a system of robust, sustainable and statewide broadband services connect Oregonians into the future. It prepares the Oregon Broadband Office (OBO) for the work ahead:

**Governance & Oversight:** Updates membership of the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council (OBAC) and gives new authority for them to work more directly with OBO. Provides oversight and gives recommendations and guidance to implement broadband goals. Gives authority to create a subcommittee that oversees and make recommendations on grants awarded through the OBO.

**Strategic Framing & Mapping:** Sets a strategic framework for state and federal broadband investment. Creates criteria for Oregon to work with providers to collect appropriate information and develop accurate statewide maps for identifying gaps and implementing broadband goals.

**E-rate for Libraries:** Creates a State E-rate fund for libraries similar to the School E-rate fund. Redrafts language from HB 3256 (2021).

**OTAP:** Creates a PUC study on modernizing the Oregon Telecommunication Assistance Program (OTAP). Redrafts language from HB 3256 (2021).

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