



PARTNERS FOR RURAL WASHINGTON
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS¹
2016 - 2023

Partners for Rural Washington (PRWA) was formed in 2015 as Washington's State Rural Development Council (SRDC). SRDCs were originally authorized by Congress in 1990 and are uniquely positioned to expand community, economic, and social opportunities for America's rural communities, their residents, and businesses. PRWA staff coordinate with other community and economic development organizations to maximize our effectiveness. We work to improve water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure as well as public safety and healthcare facilities and strengthen communities in preparation for economic growth. Congress does not provide ongoing financial support for SRDCs, which must raise their own operating funds at the state and local level. *PRWA is an IRS recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and contributions to support its work are deductible under IRS guidelines.*

- **During 2016:**
 - PRWA's website, www.partnersruralwa.org, was developed.
 - PRWA convened a Tri-State Summit involving the WA, OR and ID Rural Development Councils in Boise Idaho to discuss the work of these regional RDC's and exchange ideas and information.

- **In 2017:**
 - PRWA held a day long Rural Summit in Olympia, WA attended by more than fifty people to collect information and ideas about the needs of Washington's rural communities.
 - Commissioned Washington State University (WSU) to develop a statewide directory of rural community development programs.
 - Met with community leaders from approximately twenty-five rural communities in Eastern and Western Washington to discuss their development needs.
 - Formed a working partnership between PRWA, the State Department of Commerce, the Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service, and the T3 Tribal

¹ These are the major accomplishments that were achieved. Many other meetings and discussions were held during this period with communities, organizations and potential funders that are not included here.

Technology Training group, to provide technical assistance to help meet local needs for rural broadband in Washington State.

- **In 2018:**

- PRWA convened a broadband forum in Port Angeles.
- Met with Lummi Tribal leaders and held a "Tech Jam" on the peninsula.
- Completed the plan to use the Lower Elwha Heritage Center as a Tribal Technology and Training Center.
- Helped develop a business partnership with the Emerald Coast Opportunity Zone for broadband development with the Jamestown (Tribal) Networks (JNET).
- Helped the Lummi Tribe secure a CERB Rural Broadband Planning Grant for broadband expansion.
- Helped create a Broadband Action Team (BAT) in the Methow Valley of Okanogan County, developed a draft broadband action plan and developed a preliminary application to the CERB Board for a broadband project in the Methow Valley.
- Worked with Stevens County, the Spokane Tribe BAT, and the WSU Extension Service staff, to secure funding for the Two Rivers Resort Pre-positioned Fire Camp project to assess the communication needs of public safety responders and start an engineering study for the expansion of broadband to the camp.

- **In 2019:**

- PRWA expanded its online website at www.partnersruralwa.org for use by small cities, counties and interested organizations.
- Produced the Rural Resource Directory developed by WSU, which was posted on PRWA's website and marketed in cooperation with the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) to rural areas and communities.
- Completed a report on the Two Rivers Resort Pre-Positioned Fire Camp in Stevens County, in cooperation with Stevens County/Spokane Tribe BAT.
- Developed the Rural Advancement Project to seek additional funding from public and private sources to provide technical assistance to rural communities under 5,000 population in several counties in Eastern Washington.

- **In 2020:**

- PRWA received a \$75,000 grant from the Ballmer Group to address specific Eastern Washington needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Entered a partnership with Innovia Foundation to provide technical assistance for two projects: the development of a Telemedicine Health Clinic in the town of Garfield WA (Whitman County), and the expansion of broadband in Lincoln County.

- **In 2021:**

- PRWA brought together the manager of the Garfield Farmington Health District (GFHD) and the CEO of Whitman Hospital and Medical Clinics (WHMC) which resulted in an agreement to re-open the Health Clinic in Garfield, WA, which had closed in 2014, with the added online telehealth capacity in the future. PRWA committed \$16,000 it raised for the rehabilitation of the clinic to supplement the \$4200 already in hand from a grant awarded to GFHD.
- PRWA held a preliminary meeting with the economic development director of Lincoln County regarding technical assistance to prepare a broadband application, however, an application had been prepared with assistance from Petrichor and PRWA's assistance was not needed.
- PRWA then contacted the Adams County Commissioners about broadband expansion opportunities. As a result of this contact and a PRWA referral to Petrichor, the county avoided a significant fee for the development of applications to the Public Works Board and State Broadband Office. Although the PWB application was contested by an ISP and therefore not funded, the application to SBO for just over \$10 million to provide service to multiple areas throughout the county was selected for funding. PRWA also helped Adams County secure \$20,000 from Better Health Together to put toward matching funds for this or other broadband expansion costs.
- In mid-September PRWA met with the Petrichor staff about their willingness to help prepare applications for broadband projects in PRWA's service area without charging for Petrichor's assistance. In addition, Petrichor offered to manage the contract work for funded expansions for only a small fee and provide a revenue stream to the local government from the completed project based on the number of ISP customers it connected. This was after another entity had requested \$20,000 to help Ritzville prepare such an application.

- **In 2022:**

- PRWA completed the rehabilitation of the Garfield Health Clinic in cooperation with the Whitman Hospital and Medical Clinics and the Communities of Concern. The clinic expanded the number of days it is open to three days each week to serve people both in person and via telehealth services in the future.
- The board voted to expand the PRWA service area to include ten counties north and south of Spokane on the recommendation of PRWA's Director of Development.
- PRWA responded to a request from The Ballmer Group to outline the need for broadband expansion in the ten county service area. This involved working with Petrichor to identify the unserved communities in the service area and resulted in the submission of an application to The Ballmer Group for \$500,000 to help prepare applications for broadband expansion grants over a four year period.
- PRWA assisted the city of Harrington to submit a grant application to Innovia Foundation to complete their Town Square upgrade project, which resulted in a \$6,200 grant being approved.

- PRWA helped the Garfield Farmington Health District get \$85,000 of federal ARPA money for the LaDow Court nursing home in Garfield, to train and retain staff and provide COVID tests and PPE equipment through 2024.
- PRWA is currently responding to a request from the mayor of Garfield to help the city find the resources to build a new fire station and upgrade their community center.
- PRWA is assisting volunteers in the town of Garfield to help establish a nonprofit community association so the group can host town events (especially May Day and Harvest Festival which bring out-of-town guests and vendors), apply for grants, and take on community improvement projects.
- In May, PRWA was approved for a \$20,000 grant from the Innovia Foundation to support general operations in our Eastern Washington service area for twelve months.
- The PRWA President and Director of Development met with the newly appointed USDA State Director, Helen Price Johnson, to talk about PRWA's work in rural Washington.
- PRWA received \$5,000 to support our operations from Banner Bank.
- PRWA met with the Broadband Action Team (BAT) from Okanogan County to discuss their efforts to expand broadband to unserved areas in their county. Several weeks later, PRWA's Director of Development held follow-up meetings with Okanogan County and Petrichor to discuss how PRWA can help them with their broadband expansion efforts. PRWA also connected the BAT with Tracey Blackburn, NTIA program officer for Washington state.
- PRWA helped the Whitman County Rural Library District write a grant for a Digital Navigator Program through the State Broadband Office (SBO), which resulted in a grant of \$500,000 to significantly increase the number of people in Whitman county who are comfortable performing common tasks on computing devices through the provision of 20 one-on-one training sessions per-month per-library; the 'gifting' of laptops to 19 income-qualified families in each community; adding 25 trained 'Digital Navigators' in the county to continue to help residents after the grant period ends; and, to increase the number of households signed up for the Affordable Connectivity Program by approximately 75% over the grant period. The program is expected to benefit a total of 390 households. It also increases the hours each of the 14 library locations is open to the public during the grant period.
- PRWA worked with the Colfax community to secure partial funds for a new forty-seat daycare center, including the preparation of a request to Whitman County for \$250,000 to use as matching funds for an application to a regional foundation, and helped to secure a fundraising consultant to raise the additional funds needed from community members and businesses.
- We helped the town of Malden administer their CDBG grants and prepare an application to EPA for their large on-site sewer system (LOSS), which is the next step after their multimillion-dollar state appropriation request, which PRWA assisted with, was approved. PRWA has helped submit a second appropriations request to the State Legislature that will complete the funding for the LOSS system, if approved.
- PRWA also helped administer a \$750,000 American Red Cross grant to build new houses in Malden following the major fire in the city.
- PRWA successfully moved its website to a new software platform.

- PRWA submitted a letter in August to support an application from the nonprofit organization, Rural Development Initiatives (RDI), for a successful Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge Grant from USDA for the town of Othello.
- PRWA's Vice President attended the annual meeting of Partners for Rural America, the national organization for Rural Development Councils, and participated in their discussions as PRWA's representative.
- PRWA's President attended the Innovia Foundation Emeriti and Donor Reception in Spokane.
- **In 2023:**
 - PRWA partnered with Petrichor Broadband to assist Washington State University (WSU) Extension with its work on behalf of the State Broadband Office (SBO) to stand-up BATs in every county and some tribes that did not have an existing BAT; assisted many BATs in Eastern Washington with development and writing of their broadband and digital equity plans. These plans were used by the SBO to create the State's 5-year Plan, a requirement to obtain \$1.2 billion in funding through the federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program.
 - Assisted the city of Ritzville with the submission of a successful planning grant for a solar plus storage facility.
 - Assisted the Tri-County Economic Development District and NoaNet with a successful application for just over \$12 million to the State Broadband Office (SBO) for broadband improvements in Stevens County.
 - Secured a \$397,000 two-year grant from the Ballmer Group to create a joint effort between PRWA and Petrichor Broadband to apply for BEAD funding to expand broadband in unserved and underserved counties in rural areas of PRWA's 10-County target area in Eastern Washington.
 - Participated on the planning committee for the development and presentation of the USDA Rural Investment Summit for Oregon, Washington and Alaska in Skamania, WA on November 1st and 2nd, which was attended by more than 150 persons.
 - Applied for \$267,000 to the WA State Legislature in cooperation with the Communities of Concern for the rehabilitation of public swimming pools in Rosalia, Palouse and Oakesdale.