



**Cumulative Report  
For  
2015, 2016 and 2017**

Partners for Rural Washington (PRWA) was created in 2015 by Mario Villanueva, the Washington State Director of the USDA Rural Development Service. The invited organizers spent the latter part of the year organizing PRWA's board, adopting its Mission, Vision, and Values, developing its Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, and applying for recognition from the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)3 of the code, which was approved in March of 2016.

During 2016, the Board of Directors hired Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) to help develop their work plan and begin planning their operations. With this assistance, they developed a website, [www.partnersruralwa.org](http://www.partnersruralwa.org), discussed their obligations under their initial funding from the USDA Rural Development Service, and convened a Tri-State Summit involving the WA, OR and ID Rural Development Councils in Boise Idaho. In early 2017 PRWA held a day long Rural Summit in Olympia, WA attended by more than 50 people, and commissioned Washington State University to develop a statewide directory of rural community development programs.

For the Balance of 2017, PRWA worked with the State Department of Commerce and the Association of Washington Cities to hold rural listening sessions around the state and met with community leaders from approximately 25 rural communities in Eastern and Western Washington. The need for high speed broadband in rural areas emerged as one of the top priorities for the communities who attended. As a result of this, PRWA was able to:

- Form a working partnership between PRWA, the State Department of Commerce, the Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service and T3 Tribal Technology Training, to work collaboratively to provide needed technical assistance capacity to help meet local needs for rural broadband in Washington State.
  
- Form a 2018 plan to assist the Olympic Peninsula and the Lummi Tribe, Okanogan County and the towns of Winthrop and Twist, in the Methow Valley, and Stevens County and the Spokane Tribe, with planning assistance to help met local broadband needs, and identify and secure funding to help with planning assistance for rural broadband expansion projects in these areas.