



For Immediate Release

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Millions in federal funds headed to Wasco County to boost internet access

The \$10.4M grant will help QLife Network expand reliable, affordable broadband to rural families, schools and businesses

The Dalles/Wasco County, Ore. — September, 15, 2025 — [QLife Network](#), a broadband service provider in Wasco County, is one step closer to its goal of connecting every household, school and business in Wasco County to affordable, reliable internet service.

Last week, QLife was one of several internet service providers in the state to be recommended by the [Oregon Broadband Office](#) to receive federal [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\)](#) funding. If approved, the award to QLife, totaling \$10.4M, will allow the organization to build the necessary infrastructure to deliver broadband internet to just under 1,000 currently unserved and underserved residents, businesses and schools in Wasco County.

"We appreciate the leadership and support of the Oregon Broadband Office," said Liz Lance, executive director of QLife Network. "For too long, rural families and small businesses have been left behind. Thanks to this historic investment in 30-year infrastructure, QLife will help Wasco County residents connect, work, learn and thrive in the digital age—no matter where they live."

A once-in-a-generation investment in our digital future

The BEAD program represents the largest single federal investment in high-speed internet in U.S. history—over \$42 billion allocated to states and territories. Administered by the [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) (NTIA), the program targets unserved and underserved locations, ensuring every household has access to reliable and affordable internet. Oregon received a total of \$689 million from the federal program aimed at ensuring every household has access to reliable and affordable internet.

QLife lays the groundwork, expands broadband access

In the early 2000s, as internet use surged, rural areas like Wasco County struggled to attract investment from large telecom companies. Without reliable broadband, communities risked losing out on new businesses, jobs and innovation. To fill this gap, the City of The Dalles and Wasco County created QLife—short for the QualityLife Intergovernmental Agency—in 2002.

QLife's first project was a 17-mile fiber optic backbone in The Dalles. Today, in partnership with other local service providers, QLife provides reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband to residents, businesses, municipal buildings and [Columbia Gorge Community College](#). Like a

municipal electric utility, all revenues are reinvested locally to strengthen and expand the network. In late 2024, Northern Wasco County People's Utility District joined QLife, playing a critical technical role as the organization prepares for this era of expansion.

"Expanding broadband in Wasco County is one of the most important investments our region has seen since the rural electrification in the 1930s," said Lee Weinstein, QLife board president. "Thanks to the NTIA and Oregon Broadband Office, this investment will not only boost our economy—it will improve opportunities for students, attract more businesses and jobs, make health care more accessible, and strengthen community connections."

What's next?

As a final step in the BEAD awards process, the [Oregon Broadband Office has opened a public comment](#) period for 7 days. Community input will be reviewed and incorporated into the state's Final Proposal before it is submitted to NTIA.

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About QLife

QualityLife Intergovernmental Agency (QLife) delivers fast, reliable and affordable internet to Wasco County. Established in 2002, QLife operates a 17-mile fiber optic network in The Dalles, Ore., to support local businesses, schools, public agencies and families. With a goal to connect every household, school and business in Wasco County to affordable, reliable internet service, QLife is helping residents thrive in a digital age. Learn more: qlife.net