

NC Healthcare Broadband Coalition (NCHBC)

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Regular Communication

As part of this effort, NCHBC will send you regular communications about NC's broadband funding opportunities, activities on local/state/federal levels, and lessons learned on a monthly basis.

NC's Broadband Gap

As we noted in our earlier edition, the digital divide is a major issue in North Carolina, particularly in rural North Carolina. A **quarter** of NC residents don't have internet access. **40%** are underserved with antiquated and slow connections, and telehealth adoption is hamstrung with limited patient connectivity and digital literacy.

Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities

The federal and NC state governments have recognized these broadband gaps and have responded with several programs, the most ambitious being the federal government's *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*. This Act includes **\$65 billion** for broadband expansion. The largest part of the funding, about \$42 billion, will go to a competitive grants program that will address a number of broadband-related needs like the build out of circuits, planning, and mapping. Other allocations will **address service affordability, digital equity, and supplementation of other, existing broadband programs like the Tribal Connectivity program**. Substantial funds from the American Rescue Plan can also be made available to address these digital divide issues.

JOIN US for the NC Division of Broadband & Digital Equity PRESENTATION

The Presentation will cover:

- An introduction to Division Leadership
- A review of Division objectives and programs
- An update on their funding activities and status
- A Q&A for you to ask them any NC broadband questions you may have



North Carolina's Broadband Funding Opportunities

The Role of NC Division of Broadband and Digital Equity

In North Carolina, the NC Division of Broadband and Digital Equity is the key state agency charged with developing and implementing the state's broadband plan and acting as an intermediary for federal funding. At present the state is pursuing a coordinated, multilayered approach. The Division will allocate about \$1 billion for broadband investment using American Rescue Plan and some state funds. Their larger objective is to ensure availability of internet service at 100/20 Mbps (scalable to 100/100Mbps) for more than 98% of the state's households. They also plan to enhance affordability, and to improve digital literacy. In addition, the Division will leverage the funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, estimated to be about \$1 billion for North Carolina. It will supplement the work already proposed to **build out infrastructure, promote digital equity and literacy, promote affordability and importantly, enhance North Carolina's digital maps** so we know where the money can be spent most effectively.

For more information on the role of NC Division of Broadband & Digital Equity, join us for a **webinar** on Monday, October 10, 2022, 1pm,

(copy and past link below into browser)

<https://ncgov.webex.com/ncgov/onstage/g.php?MTID=ea978a0505b86fe196ec0925c979e579b>

NC Funding Programs

The NC funding programs include the GREAT grants program (funding to broadband service providers to introduce broadband infrastructure to eligible counties), the CAB program (partnerships between the Division and counties to provide service to unserved and underserved areas), the Make-Ready Accelerator Grant (to underwrite eligible pole replacement costs), the Stop-Gap Solutions program (to address service gaps from other NC broadband programs), and the Awareness and Digital Literacy program (an awareness campaign for digital literacy offerings) among others.



What's Next?

Our next edition will cover:

- Specific federal and state funding programs
- Update on Division's allocation of funds

Contact

Thank you for taking the time to read this bulletin.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please let us know at: nchealthcarebroadbandcoalition@nc tna.org