

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

**HENDERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

MEETING DATE: February 7, 2022

SUBJECT: Broadband Infrastructure

PRESENTER: Bill Lapsley, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

ATTACHMENTS: Yes
1. Press Release

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

On January 31, 2022, the State announced an application window for \$350 million in grants to expand broadband infrastructure in rural areas of the state. The application is for qualified internet service providers and electric membership cooperatives providing internet service.

The Board is requested to discuss, and direct Staff accordingly.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

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Suggested Motion(s):

No motion suggested.

Application Window Open for \$350M to Expand Internet Access in Rural N.C.

Internet Service Providers encouraged to apply for GREAT Grants by April 4

Raleigh

Jan 31, 2022

Qualified internet service providers and electric membership cooperatives providing internet service can now apply for up to \$350 million in grants to expand broadband infrastructure in North Carolina and get more people connected to high-speed internet. Funds from the federal American Rescue Plan are being used to provide the largest ever round of Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grants available in North Carolina.

"High-speed internet is critical for North Carolinians to be able to work, learn, run a business or access healthcare," Governor Roy Cooper said. "We want all communities in our state to have these opportunities and this round of grants is an important step toward closing the digital divide, especially in rural areas."

The grants are part of Governor Cooper's plan ([https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=40982586&msgid=497086&act=GMP1&c=1346310&destination=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncbroadband.gov%2Fdigital-divide&cf=13425&v=9dbe5aab043a6242544a05adc9c02426d05b1b955b9130cfd409d9cb32272b65_.JSULUQ!!HYmSTool!NUKXLmLcZ3TuV0EpJfwoT6alCBgdcIgh2fy-oalOtHqyApUeWLErQAqv0CdXXr4Hifu_\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=40982586&msgid=497086&act=GMP1&c=1346310&destination=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncbroadband.gov%2Fdigital-divide&cf=13425&v=9dbe5aab043a6242544a05adc9c02426d05b1b955b9130cfd409d9cb32272b65_.JSULUQ!!HYmSTool!NUKXLmLcZ3TuV0EpJfwoT6alCBgdcIgh2fy-oalOtHqyApUeWLErQAqv0CdXXr4Hifu_$)) to give 95% of North Carolina households access to broadband of 100/20 Mbps by expanding access and addressing issues of affordability and digital literacy.

Applications for the spring 2022 award period will be accepted through April 4. An information session for applicants will be held Feb. 10. Additional details can be found at www.ncbroadband.gov/grants/great-grant-federal ([https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=40982586&msgid=497086&act=GMP1&c=1346310&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncbroadband.gov%2Fgrants%2Fgreat-grant-federal&cf=13425&v=0e6bd40d2af2aed17ea670e39f356ad2d9e43100f60d5c78750cb824fe6dbca_.JSULUQ!!HYmSTool!NUKXLmLcZ3TuV0EpJfwoT6alCBgdcIgh2fy-oalOtHqyApUeWLErQAqv0CdXXimHrug1S\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=40982586&msgid=497086&act=GMP1&c=1346310&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncbroadband.gov%2Fgrants%2Fgreat-grant-federal&cf=13425&v=0e6bd40d2af2aed17ea670e39f356ad2d9e43100f60d5c78750cb824fe6dbca_.JSULUQ!!HYmSTool!NUKXLmLcZ3TuV0EpJfwoT6alCBgdcIgh2fy-oalOtHqyApUeWLErQAqv0CdXXimHrug1S$)).

Administered by the N.C. Department of Information Technology's (NCDIT) Division of Broadband and Digital Equity, the GREAT Grant program provides matching grants to broadband providers and electric membership cooperatives that compete for funding to expand access to high-speed internet service to unserved areas of all counties across the state.

"Since the GREAT Grant program launched in 2018, the state has invested nearly \$56 million matched by more than \$35 million from private investors to connect more than 40,000 households and businesses to broadband," said NCDIT Secretary and State Chief Information Officer James Weaver. "We look forward to expanding those partnerships to extend high-speed internet access to more households in unserved areas."

For more information about the NCDIT Division of Broadband and Digital Equity and the GREAT Grant program, please visit <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/> ([https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=40982586&msgid=497086&act=GMP1&c=1346310&destination=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncbroadband.gov%2F&cf=13425&v=22995b8707ff557b1efc68347d1ac32637a585bce98534fb38a3a215f4de3a17_.JSULUQ!!HYmSTool!NUKXLmLcZ3TuV0EpJfwoT6alCBgdcIgh2fy-oalOtHqyApUeWLErQAqv0CdXXkUTbwX3S\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=40982586&msgid=497086&act=GMP1&c=1346310&destination=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncbroadband.gov%2F&cf=13425&v=22995b8707ff557b1efc68347d1ac32637a585bce98534fb38a3a215f4de3a17_.JSULUQ!!HYmSTool!NUKXLmLcZ3TuV0EpJfwoT6alCBgdcIgh2fy-oalOtHqyApUeWLErQAqv0CdXXkUTbwX3S$)).

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