Chatham County Digital Inclusion

Feb 25th, 2025

Joint Chatham County Board
of Commissioners and Board of Education
Meeting

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Overview – Broadband

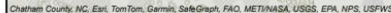NC DIT | NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Center for Geographic Information and Analysis

CHATHAM COUNTY BROADBAND PROFILE
Summary of broadband status in the county based on FCC reported service compared with currently obligated funding programs focusing on improving broadband in the county.

Unserved & Underserved CAB Eligible Locations***

Count of CAB Eligible Locations

Percent of CAB Eligible Locations

***CAB Eligible Unserved & Underserved Locations from the FCC Broadband Data Collection have been aggregated into hexagon-shaped bins to show both the count and percent of unserved & underserved locations within each bin. Locations that have had funds obligated through previous Federal, State or Local broadband expansion programs have been removed from the hexagonal aggregations and county estimates. Darker shades of pink indicate higher total counts of unserved & underserved locations. Darker shades of blue indicate a higher percentage of locations within a bin are unserved & underserved locations. Darker shades of purple indicate both a higher total of unserved & underserved locations locations and a higher percentage of total locations within a bin are unserved & underserved locations .

Unserved locations for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded programs in NC are defined as locations without access to fixed terrestrial internet service, through Fiber, Cable, or non-mobile Licensed Fixed Wireless technologies, of at least 25mb/s Download and 3mb/s Upload speeds. Underserved locations are defined as locations without access to fixed terrestrial internet service of at least 100mb/s Download and 20mb/s Upload speeds, but greater than 25mb/s Download and 3mb/s Upload speeds.

- ○ Local Award Locations (ARPA Funded)
- ○ GREAT Award Locations (ARPA Funded) - Contracted
- ○ GREAT Award Locations (ARPA Funded) - Contingent
- ○ CAB Award Locations (ARPA Funded) - Contingent
- ● GREAT Award Locations (State Funded)
- GREAT Award Areas (State Funded)
- FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Grant
- Other Federal Grants

CHATHAM COUNTY ESTIMATES

Percent Unserved Eligible *
(No Service 25mb/s Download and 3mb/s Upload or Greater and currently no funding obligated)

| 10.8% | 4,012 Total Locations |

Percent Underserved Eligible *
(No Service 100mb/s Download or 20mb/s Upload or Greater and currently no funding obligated)

| 0% | 0 Total Locations |

Percent with Fiber Broadband Available *

| 46.39% | 17,227 Total Locations |

Percent with DSL or Fixed Wireless Only *

| 26.17% | 9,718 Total Locations |

Percent with Broadband Subscription **

| 69.55% |

Percent with No Internet Access **

| 11.4% |

Percent with No Internet Devices **

| 7.8% |

DATA SOURCES:
*FCC BDC - Federal Communication Commission Broadband Data Collection
Version 4 Published December 2023 (Provider Reported as of June 30, 2024)
Previously funded Unserved & Underserved locations have been removed.
**ACS - U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2017-2021
5-Year Estimates

Chatham County, NC, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USFWS
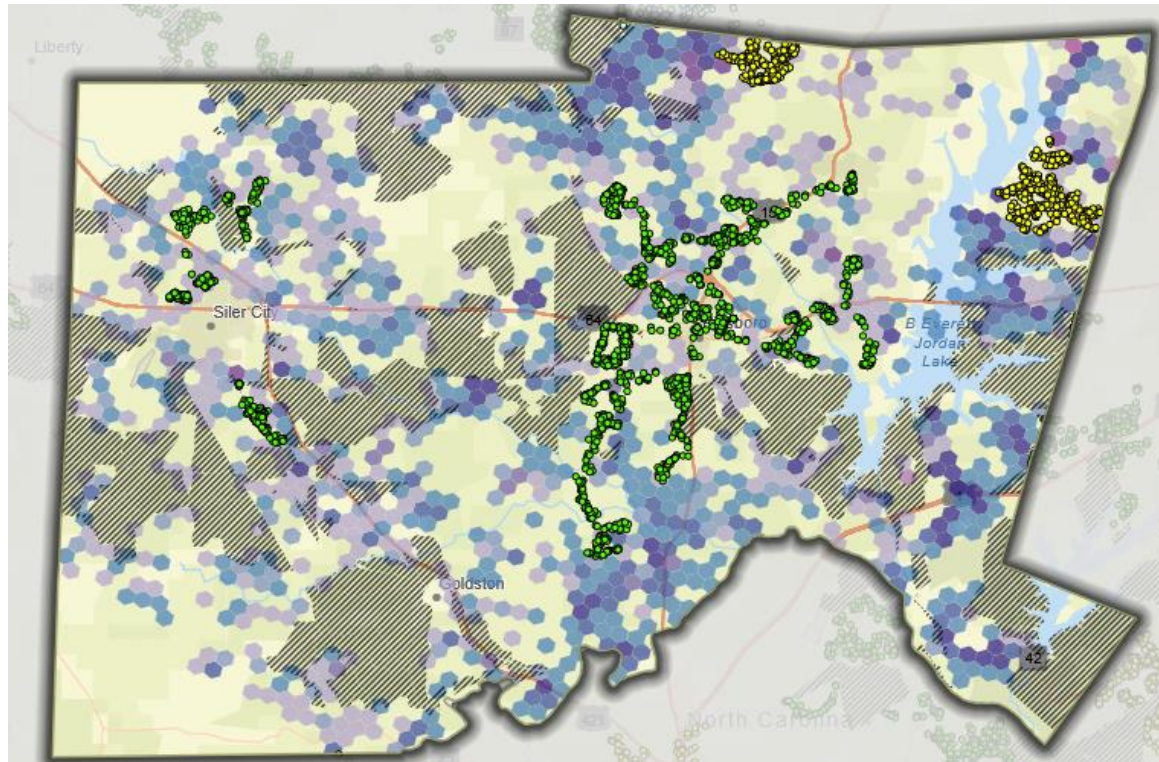
Map Date: 9/10/2024

Legal Information

- Counties are unable to provide high-speed Internet broadband service directly to residents.
- Counties may provide grants to ISPs for the purpose of expanding service in unserved areas. (SL 2012-86)
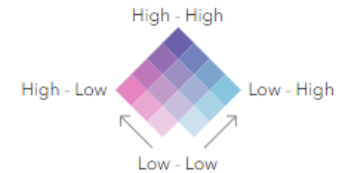
Unserved Locations

Unserved Location Funding – RDOF

The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund will provide $20.4 billion in funding over a ten-year period to support the construction of broadband networks in rural communities across the country.

Eligible areas include those without current (or already funded) access to adequate broadband service, defined as 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream (25/3).

Additional Info:

- Chatham County RDOF grant is through Charter Communications (Spectrum).
- 6 Year Build Window. (Entering 3rd Year of Grant)
- Additional federal funding unable to be used in these areas.
- Estimated Locations to be Served: 3,448

Unserved Location Funding – GREAT Grant

The **Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grant** is a competitive grant program that provides funding to private sector broadband providers to deploy last-mile broadband infrastructure to unserved areas of North Carolina. The original GREAT Grant program was initiated in 2018 and launched in 2019 and subsequently became a recurring state-funded grant program within the NCDIT Broadband Infrastructure Office.

Additional Info:

- Chatham County has received two GREAT grants. (AT&T and Brightspeed)
- Total Project Cost: $8.1M
- Total Grant Amount: $5.9M
- Total Match Amount (State & County): $2.2M
- County Match: $519,228.20
- Locations to be served: 2,404
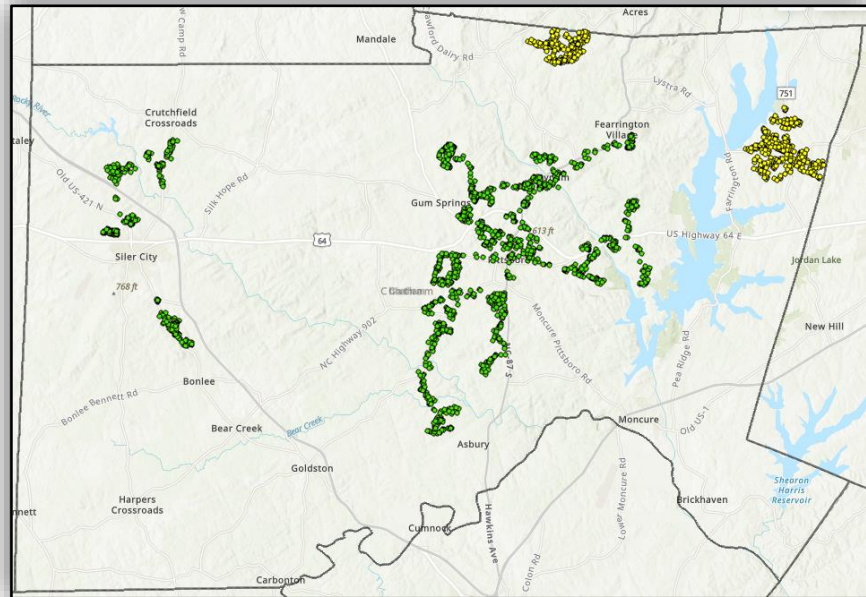
Unserved Location Funding – CAB Grant 1.0

The **Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Program** provides an opportunity for individual N.C. counties to partner with NCDIT to fund broadband deployment projects in unserved areas of each county. N.C. Session Law 2021-180 appropriates $400 million from the American Rescue Plan Act for this new program.
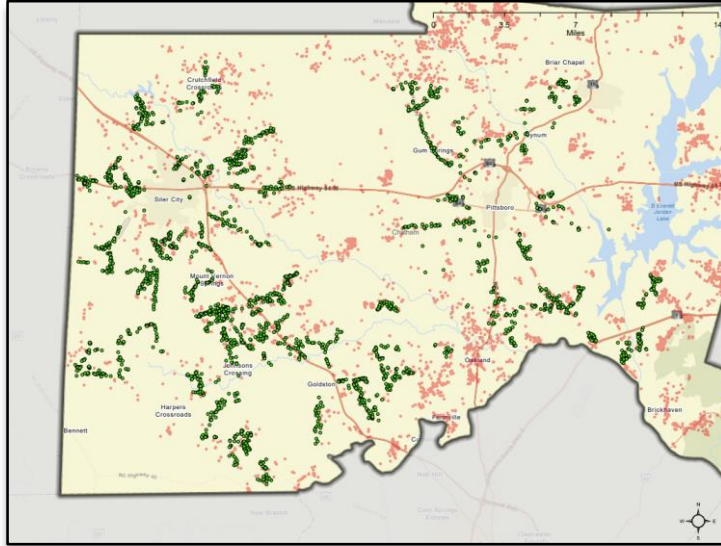
Additional Information:

- Counties must work with NCDIT to develop projects
- Chatham County Board of Commissioners directed 2.5M to this program. Will now be covered by NCDIT due to State law changes.
- Locations to be served: 2,555

02

Digital Inclusion Plan

CHATHAM COUNTY

DIGITAL INCLUSION PLAN

Chatham County
NORTH CAROLINA
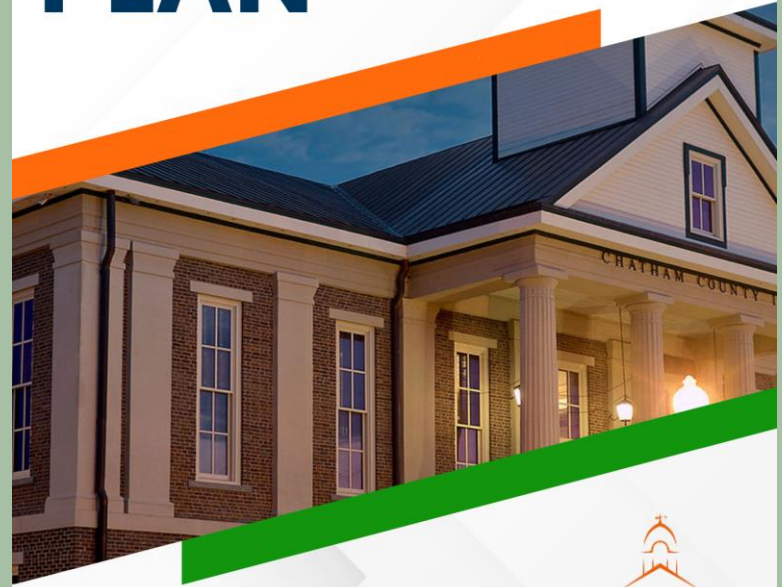
What is a Digital Inclusion Plan?

Digital inclusion plans assess:

- Tools and resources counties currently have.

- Areas and populations of people who do not currently have access to broadband service (or insufficient, slow connections).

- Resources or strategies needed to fully connect everyone in the region.

- How to make internet-enabled devices more accessible.

- How to increase availability of digital literacy training.

- Availability of technical support.

FCC National Broadband Map - Wired

Map Legend
Served Units Percentage
- 0%
- 0 - 20%
- 20 - 40%
- 40 - 60%
- 60 - 80%
- 80 - 100%
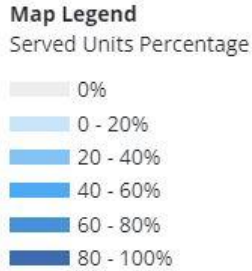
Availability

Availability in the context of digital inclusion refers to <u>broadband infrastructure</u>.

- **Goal 1:** Create better broadband mapping across Chatham County.

- **Goal 2:** Coordinate increased connectivity for unserved areas.

- **Goal 3:** Promote improved connectivity and stability of broadband connections.

Without a desktop or laptop

201.06 12.6%
201.05 5.7%
201.03 9.6%
207.01 8.3%
202 25.8%
201.04 8.7%
204.02 51%
204.01 33.9%
208 25.5%
203 29.9%
207.02 21%
206 30.2%
205 42.3%
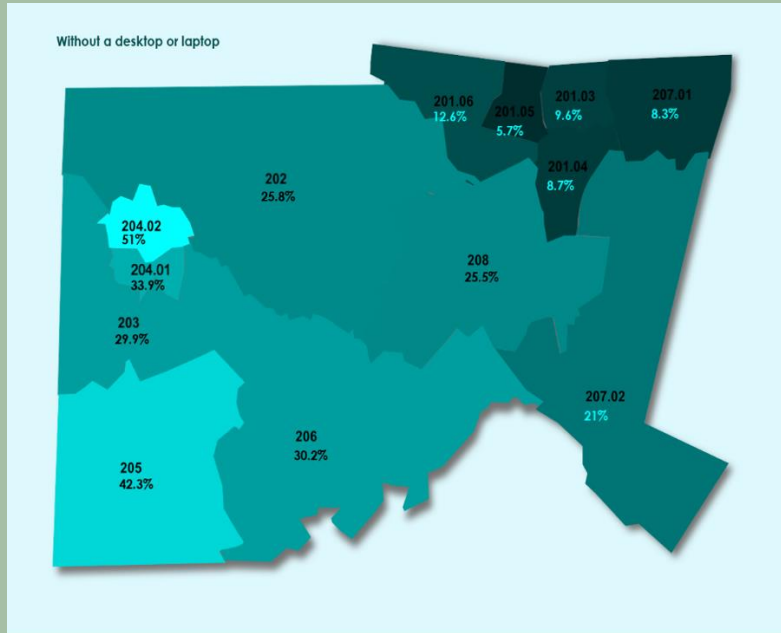
BI Driven Percent of Residents Without a Desktop or Laptop

Lifeline Discount Program

<u>Access</u>

Access refers to the ability for someone to gain <u>access to available broadband</u>. The barriers to access include affordability concerns and lack of access to computing devices.

- **Goal 4:** Increase equitable communications for in-need communities around affordability services.

- **Goal 5:** Expand access to digital devices.

- **Goal 6:** Increase access to internet connectivity in public spaces.

- **Goal 7:** Increase hotspot availability.

Adoption

"Broadband adoption" means <u>adopting broadband internet in everyday life</u>, or in essential ways such as for government services, schooling, or work.

- **Goal 8:** Increase digital literacy learning across the county.

- **Goal 9:** Create a digital inclusion steering committee.

- **Goal 10:** Establish workforce development programs in broadband-related fields.

- **Goal 11:** Create events celebrating digital inclusion.

03

Digital
Champions
Grant

What is ODEL?

- ✓ NC Department of Information Technology awarded 25% of grant awards
  - $30M in funding (originally $14M)
  - American Rescue Plan dollars passed through NCDIT

- ✓ Who could apply?
  - Community services (local governments, local libraries, K-12 school systems), non-profit organizations, higher education institutions, and regional entities

- ✓ Eligible Uses:
  - Affordable, reliable high-speed internet
  - Provision of Internet enabled devices (computer, laptops, etc.) that meet users' needs
  - Provide access to digital literacy and skills training
  - Provide quality technical support

- ✓ Funding Range: $400,000 per county served, up to $1.5M total

Structure of the Award

✓ Recipient of funds – Central Pines Regional Council
  - Award amount: $800,000
  - Grant Award Period: September 1, 2024, to December 26, 2026

✓ Subrecipients
  - Kramden Institute
  - Chatham County
  - City of Durham
  - UR Restored Ministries
  - Chatham and Durham Literacy Centers
  - Chatham and Durham K-12 School Systems

✓ Partners
  - Innovate Chatham
  - Digital Durham

Structure of the Award

✓ **Purpose:** Expand _capacity_ to advance digital equity in Chatham and Durham counties, and the entire CPRC region.
- Digital literacy trainings
- Access to devices
- Multijurisdictional/regional coordination
- Community-Based Organizations
- Data Collection and Assessment

✓ **Populations Served:**
- Justice-impacted
- Rural populations
- Seniors (60+)
- Low-income
- Low literacy
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Racial or ethnic groups

Metrics

✓ Quantitative
- Number of educational opportunities offered to CPRC region (i.e. webinars)
- Number of devices distributed
- Participant demographics (age, race/ethnicity, gender)
- Class impact (percentage of students whose skills improved pre- to post-class).
- Participant feedback (program, instructor, and computer satisfaction)
- Additional funding opportunities pursued (geared towards furthering implementation of Chatham and Durham's digital equity plans and related regional projects)

✓ Qualitative
- Storytelling
- Feedback from clients at community-based organizations

04

Broadband Hub - Website

Chatham County
Broadband Access and Digital Inclusion
Hub

In today's connected world, having access to reliable internet and broadband is more important than ever. Chatham County is committed to ensuring that residents have the opportunity to benefit from digital connectivity. This hub site is dedicated to sharing information about broadband, Chatham County contributions, the Chatham County Digital Inclusion Plan, and other resources surrounding broadband in Chatham County.

By following our work you will receive important updates about Chatham County's broadband work, progress towards community broadband goals, and opportunities to get involved.

Follow

Resources for Residents

- **Broadband Access and Digital Inclusion Hub:**

- **Chatham County Broadband Page -**

- **North Carolina One Map -**

- **NCDIT Funding Programs -**

Thank You!

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