



Chatham County Digital Inclusion Plan & Grant Review

June 12th, 2024

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Broadband Grant Overview



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)



Definitions



Unserved

Unserved locations are areas with speeds less than 25 megabits per second (mbps) download, and 3 mbps upload.

Underserved

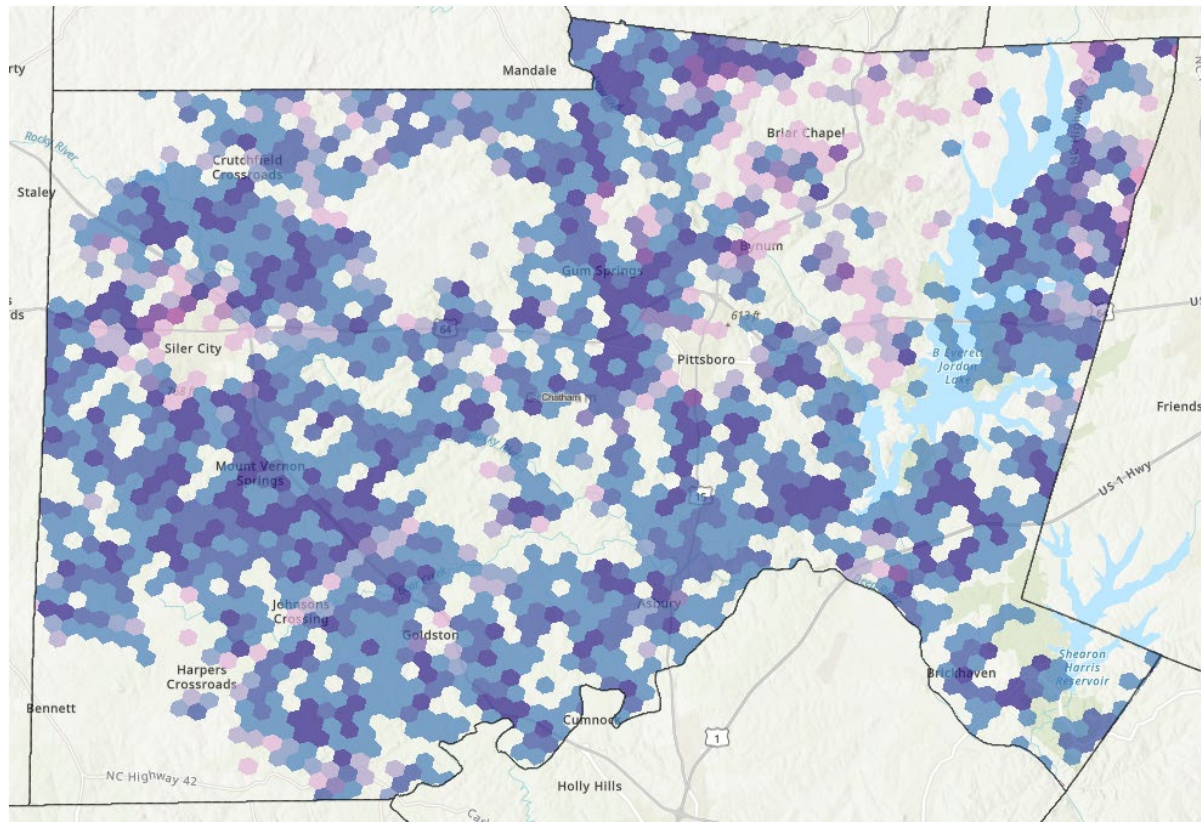
Underserved locations are areas with speeds between 25 mbps download/3 mbps upload, and 100 mbps download and 100 mbps upload.

Unserved < 25/3

Underserved = Between 25/3 and 100/100

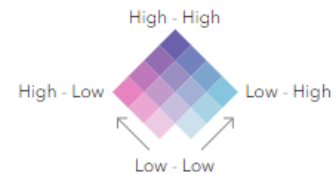
Served > 100/100

Unserved Locations

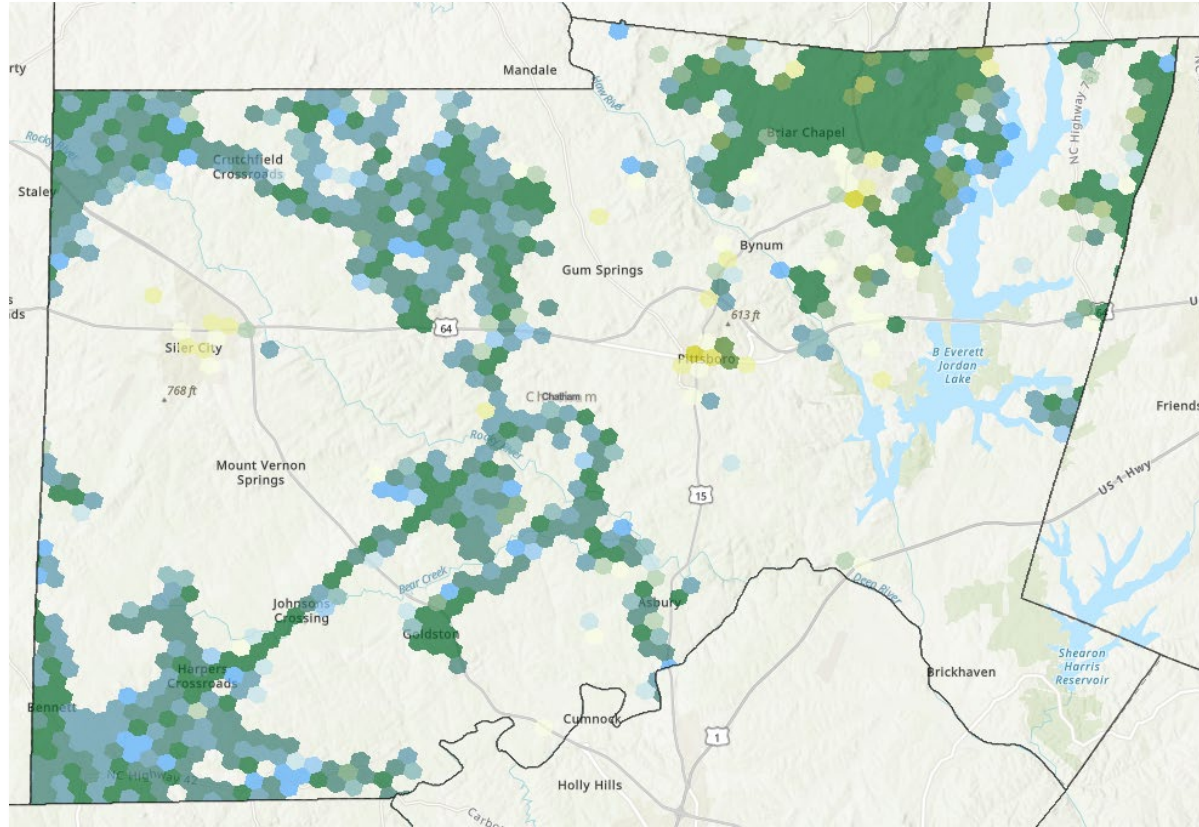


↖ Count of Unserved Locations
(Less Than 25/3)

↗ Percent Unserved Out of All
Locations in Area

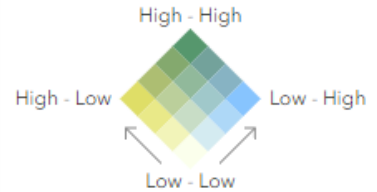


Served Locations Fiber

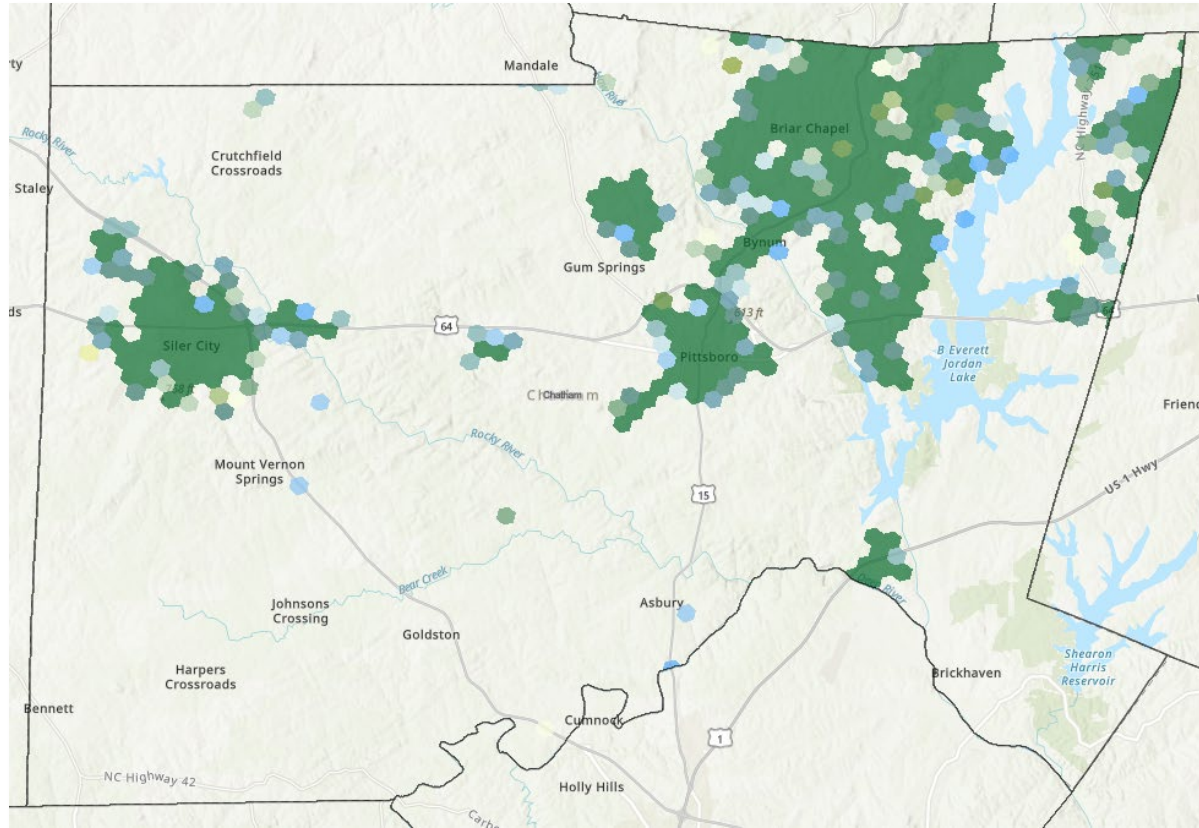


↙ Locations with Technology Reported

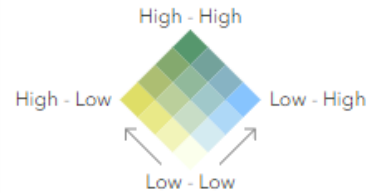
↗ Percent with Technology Reported



Served Locations Cable



- ↖ Locations with Technology Reported
- ↗ Percent with Technology Reported



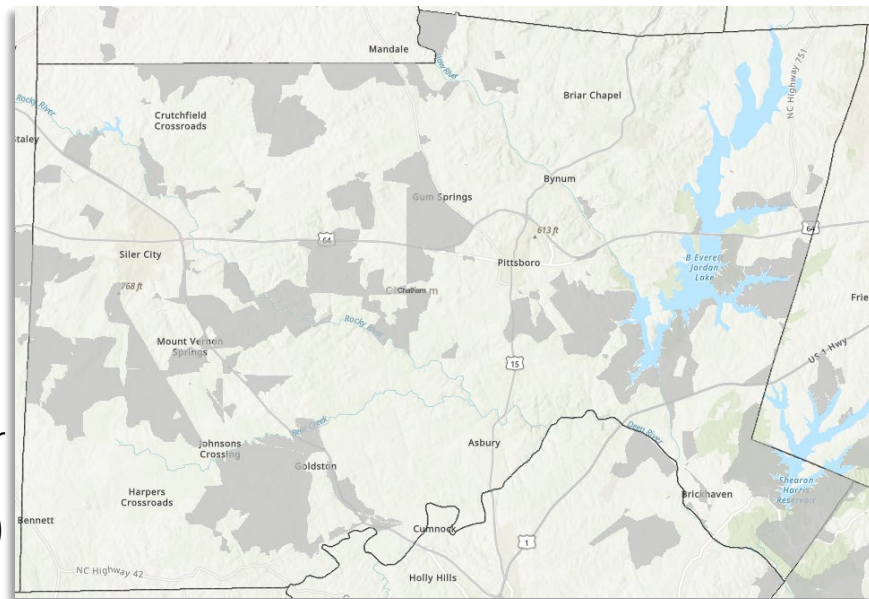
RDOF

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.
- Locations Served by Grant: 3,448

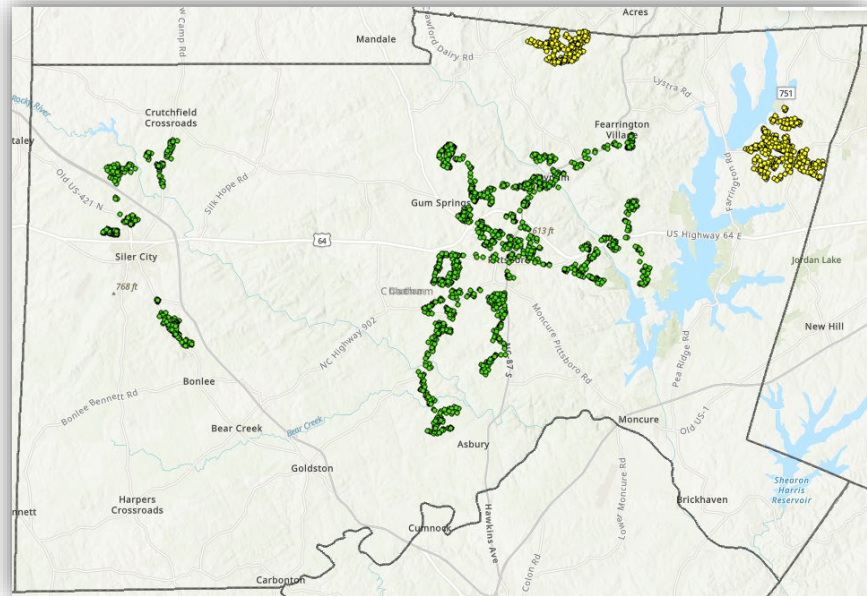


GREAT Grant

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.

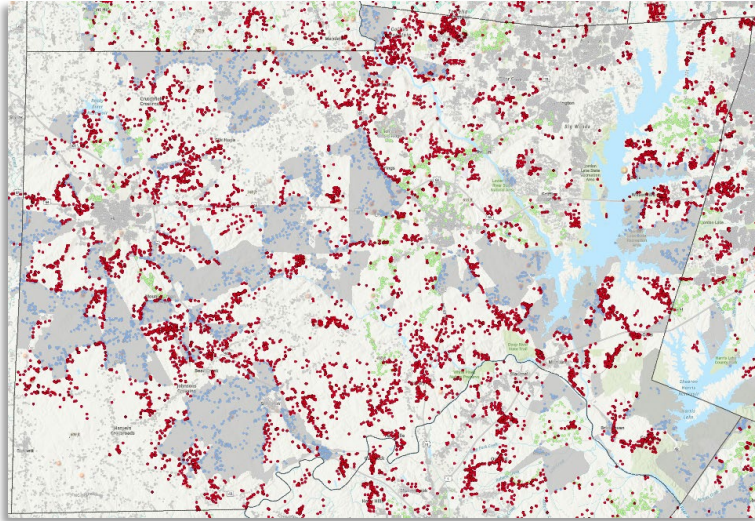
Additional Info:

- Chatham County has received two GREAT grants. (Yellow=AT&T and Green=Brightspeed)
- Total Project Cost: \$8.1M
- County Match: \$519,228.20
- Locations to be Served: 2,404



CAB Grant

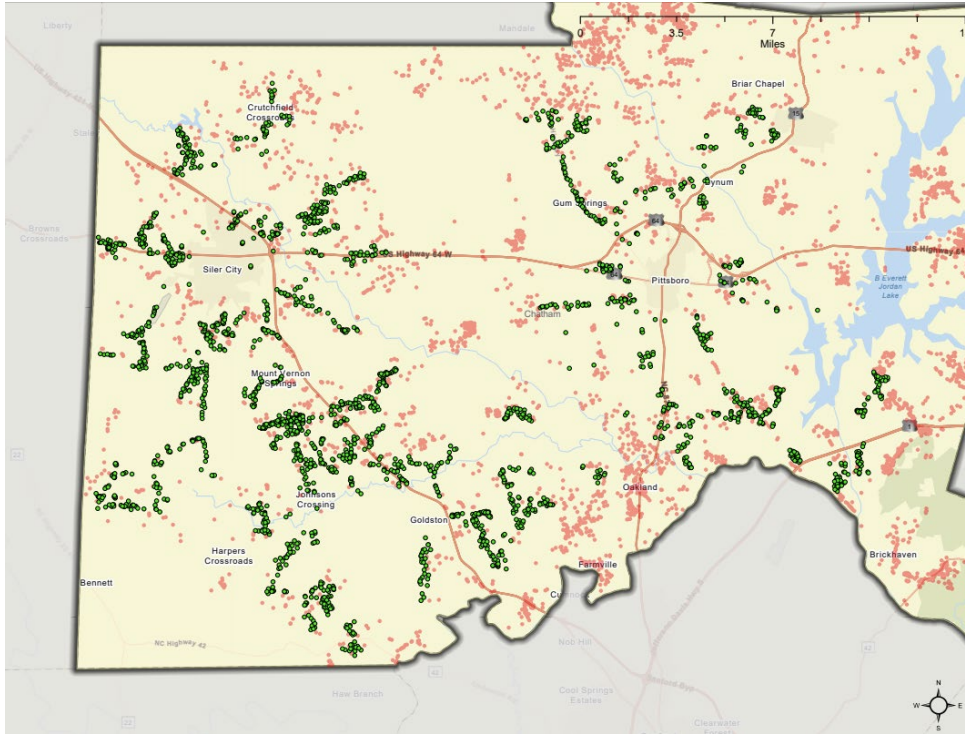
The **Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Program** provides an opportunity for individual N.C. counties to partner with NCDIT to fund broadband deployment projects in unserved areas of each county. N.C. Session Law 2021-180 appropriates \$400 million from the American Rescue Plan Act for this new program.



Additional Information:

- Counties must work with NCDIT to develop projects
- 35% County Match
- Chatham County Board of Commissioners directed 2.5M to this program.
- Locations to be served: 2,555

Chatham CAB Grant



Info:

- Total Project Cost: \$6,474,134.00
- \$2,500,000 allocated by BOC to Project.
- Average Cost Per Location: \$2,533.91
- Locations to be served: 2,555
- Will serve 40% of 6,400 unserved locations in Chatham County.

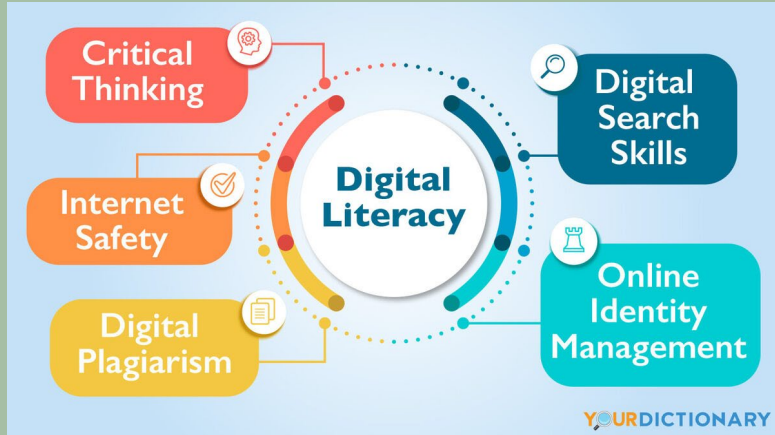


Broadband Grant Totals



- Total Locations Served through broadband grant programs: 8,407
- Estimated percentage of **total** locations served by these programs: 27%

- Total Cost of CAB and GREAT Projects: \$14,574,134.00
- Total County Allocation to CAB and GREAT Projects: \$3,019,228.20



Digital Inclusion Grant

Central Pines Grant

- Announced on June 18th – Central Pines Regional Council received Digital Literacy Grant from NCDIT
- \$800,000 grant to establish regional digital literacy effort in Chatham and Durham Counties.
- The Grant will do the following:
 - Establish classes that will provide digital literacy training and a free laptop (post-training) for around 500 Chatham County Residents and 500 Durham County Residents.
 - Allocate computer carts and laptops to use for digital literacy training in:
 1. Wren Memorial and Goldston Public Libraries
 2. Siler City and Pittsboro Centers for Active Living
- More information to come!

Digital Inclusion Plan

CHATHAM COUNTY

DIGITAL INCLUSION
PLAN

2024 - 2025





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.

Availability

Availability in the context of digital inclusion refers to digital broadband infrastructure.

Access

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

Adoption

“Broadband adoption” means adopting broadband internet in everyday life, or in essential ways such as for government services, schooling, or work.

Chatham County Digital Inclusion Plan

1. Began as Innovate Chatham Draft Plan using community input.
2. Partnered with County Government to work to facilitate further plan development.
3. Engaged Digital Inclusion Plan Coalition partners.
4. Internal Chatham County Government review and edits.
5. Presented Draft plan for review by community partners and non-profits.
6. Digital Coalition Draft review.
7. Edits Post Digital Coalition review.
8. Present to Board of Commissioners ← **We are here**
9. Solicit community input on plan through Chatham Nexus
10. Make edits based on community feedback
11. Present to Board of Commissioners for Adoption

Chatham County Digital Inclusion Plan Coalition

- Chatham County Government
- Chatham County Public Libraries
- Chatham County Schools
- Central Carolina Community College
- Innovate Chatham
- Right Here Right Now Project
- Chatham Literacy
- Cooperative Extension



CHATHAM COUNTY CENTER

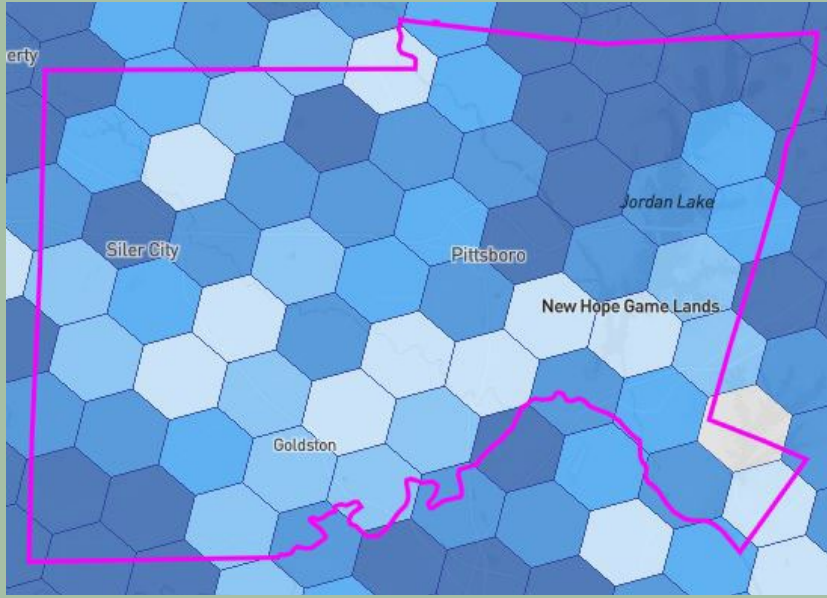


Sections of Digital Inclusion Plan

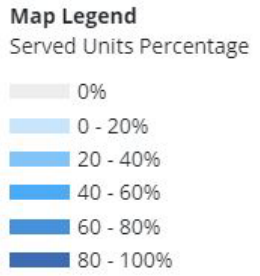
1. Definitions
2. Preface
3. Introduction
4. Mission, Vision, Values
5. About Chatham County
6. Availability
7. Access
8. Adoption
9. Partners
10. Goal Breakdown
11. Continuing the Work
12. Community Voices



Availability



FCC National Broadband Map - Wired



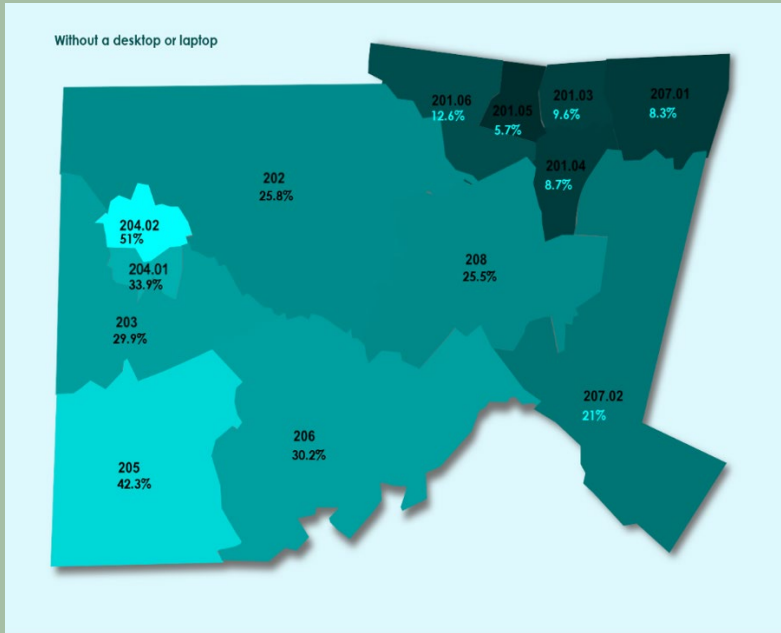
Availability

- Broadband Availability:
 - Asset Inventory
 - Mobile and Cellular
 - Wired
 - Satellite
- Challenges:
 - Mobile and Cellular Service
 - Wired Service
 - Satellite Service
 - Fixed Wired Service
- On-Going Efforts:
 - GREAT Grants
 - Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF)
 - CAB Grants
 - BEAD Grants
 - Stop-Gap Grant

Availability Goals & Strategies

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Create better broadband mapping across Chatham County. | Strategy 1.1: Encourage residents to request elected representatives change laws, and solicit for more accurate, timely, and useful maps of internet availability. |
| | | Strategy 1.2: Promote partnerships with internet service providers and state initiatives to improve broadband mapping. |
| Goal 2 | Coordinate increased connectivity for underserved areas. | Strategy 2.1: Utilize state and federal funding to expand availability of broadband to underserved areas based on new comprehensive mapping. |
| | | Strategy 2.2: Prioritize rural and impoverished areas in advocating for increased broadband. |
| | | Strategy 2.3: Advocate for increased availability in known cellular dead-zones. |
| Goal 3 | Promote improved connectivity and stability of broadband connections. | Strategy 3.1: Encourage residents to advocate for more fiber services across the county through their internet service providers and legislative representatives. |
| | | Strategy 3.2: Advocate for more stability and upgraded infrastructure for broadband networks to prevent outages. |
| | | Strategy 3.3: Advocate for additional internet service provider plan types and availability. |
| | | Strategy 3.4: Encourage legislative engagement requiring internet service providers to provide their services as advertised (sometimes providers advertise and sell coverage at higher levels than they provide or that they can provide.) |

Access



BI Driven Percent of Residents Without a Desktop or Laptop



Lifeline Discount Program

Access

- Challenges:
 - Availability of Broadband Infrastructure
 - Internet Access and Affordability
 - Computer and Device Access

- On-Going Efforts:
 - Public Broadband Access Points
 - Digital Devices
 - Public Computer Access Points
 - Discount Programs

Access Goals & Strategies

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Goal 4 | Increase equitable communications for high need communities around affordability services. | Strategy 4.1: Advertise state and federal discount programs to assist in-need residents to afford internet subscriptions (Affordable Connectivity Program). |
| | | Strategy 4.2: Provide translated communications and information surrounding broadband affordability programs. |
| | | Strategy 4.3: Provide support to residents who are not eligible for grant money due to residency status but are in-need. |
| Goal 5 | Expand access to digital devices. | Strategy 5.1: Expand device ownership within the county. |
| | | Strategy 5.2: Expand public computer access points. |
| | | Strategy 5.3: Use the Chatham County School system to survey and assist homes with little or no computer access. |
| Goal 6 | Increase access to internet connectivity in public spaces. | Strategy 6.1: Provide free exterior Wi-Fi at designated facilities. |
| | | Strategy 6.2: Complete the mapping of organizations that provide free Wi-Fi access across the county. |
| Goal 7 | Increase hotspot availability. | Strategy 7.1: Address gaps in hotspot funding. |
| | | Strategy 7.2: Create a program to allow hotspots to be loaned out by the Chatham County Public Libraries. |

Adoption

Adoption

- Challenges:
 - Digital Literacy
 - Cyber-Security
- On-Going Efforts:
 - Digital Literacy Programs



A poster for a Microsoft Excel Basics course. It features a white laptop icon on a green background. The laptop screen shows a green checkmark and a menu icon. To the right of the laptop, the text reads: "Microsoft Excel Basics", "Part 1: July 25 @ 3 pm", "Part 2: August 1 @ 3 pm", and "Chatham Community Library".

Microsoft Excel Basics

Part 1: July 25 @ 3 pm
Part 2: August 1 @ 3 pm

Chatham Community Library



A poster for Drop-in Computer & Tech Assistance. It features a dark blue background with several colorful gears (blue, green, yellow) and a dashed line. The text reads: "DROP-IN COMPUTER & TECH ASSISTANCE", "Chatham Community Library: 2nd Thursday of each month, 3:00 - 4:30 pm", and "Wren Memorial Library: 2nd Wednesday of each month, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm".

**DROP-IN
COMPUTER & TECH
ASSISTANCE**

Chatham Community Library: 2nd Thursday of each month, 3:00 - 4:30 pm
Wren Memorial Library: 2nd Wednesday of each month, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Adoption Goals & Strategies

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| Goal 8 | Increase digital literacy learning across the county. | Strategy 8.1: Communicate and expand the availability of existing digital literacy training and courses. |
| | | Strategy 8.2: Increase digital literacy training in all areas of the county. |
| | | Strategy 8.3: Improve accessibility services surrounding digital literacy. |
| | | Strategy 8.4: Increase partnerships to expand digital literacy education. |
| Goal 9 | Create a digital inclusion steering committee. | Strategy 9.1: Establish a digital inclusion program manager to oversee the digital inclusion process and plan throughout the county. |
| | | Strategy 9.2: Create a Digital Navigator Corps program that addresses the larger digital inclusion process — home connectivity, devices, and digital skills — with community members through repeated interactions |
| | | Strategy 9.3: Establish a Digital Literacy Training Coordinator. |
| Goal 10 | Establish workforce development programs in broadband-related fields. | Strategy 10.1: Work with schools, colleges, and other partners, to advertise or create more programs surrounding technology fields as it pertains to broadband and digital career opportunities. |
| Goal 11 | Create events celebrating digital inclusion. | Strategy 11.1: Develop and advertise a hackathon event to solve technology-based problems in the county. |
| | | Strategy 11.2: Create Chatham County App contest to encourage digital engagement in youth. |

Continuing the Work

Continuing the Work

- Once adopted, the plan will be reviewed by Chatham County annually for updating based on the following metrics:
 - Availability:
 1. The number of preexisting homes provided internet that year.
 2. Progress on Grant oriented project development within the year.
 3. Gross growth of networks within Chatham County.
 4. Annual surveys regarding student/resident internet availability.
 - Access:
 1. Change in the number of devices provided across the county.
 2. Usership of provided programs, and determination of communities most utilizing provided services.
 3. Change in surveys indicating students access to devices.
 - Adoption:
 1. Data on utilization of basic computing classes.
 2. Establishment and performance of programs that assist with adoption of broadband technologies.

Outreach Steps



Process



- Present plan to Chatham County Board of Commissioners.
- Receive community feedback (Next Slide).
- Use community feedback to review and edit plan.
- Bring edited and finalized Digital Inclusion Plan back to BOC for Adoption.
- Continue the work!

Community Input on Plan

- Utilize Chatham Community Nexus to receive public comments.
 - Open for 1 Month from launch date.
 - <https://chathamcommunitynexus.com/>
 - English and Spanish
- Physical copies (English and Spanish) for comment displayed in:
 - Chatham Community Library
 - Wren Memorial Library
 - Goldston Public Library
 - Pittsboro Center for Active Living
 - Siler City Center for Active Living
- Partner with Community Partners to receive comments from their served populations.
- Present at Upcoming Community Events.

Questions?

Resources for Residents

- **Chatham County Broadband Page** - <https://www.chathamcountync.gov/our-community/broadband-access-in-chatham-county>
- **Chatham Community Nexus** - <https://chathamcommunitynexus.com/>
- **North Carolina One Map** - <https://www.nconemap.gov/pages/broadband>
- **NCDIT Funding Programs** - <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/funding-programs>

Thank You!

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