



In December 2020, Governor Roy Cooper made \$30 million available for broadband expansion through the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant program.

NORTH CAROLINA

POPULATION: 10.70 MILLION
COUNTIES: 100

North Carolina residents have the best of both worlds, with the eastern part of the state coasting on the Atlantic Ocean and some of the highest elevations of the Appalachian mountains spread across the state's westernmost regions.

Residents also enjoy [a lower cost of living](#) compared to the rest of the country, with housing, health care, utilities, groceries, and transportation priced below the national average. Unfortunately, the same is not true for broadband prices. In North Carolina, [BroadbandNow](#) found that less than half the state has access to a wired Internet plan that costs less than \$60 a month. The lack of affordable pricing options may be one reason that Microsoft's data show that around [5.4 million people](#) in North Carolina do not use the Internet at broadband speeds.

Despite the lack of affordable options, North Carolina's broadband infrastructure is well on its way to reaching all parts of the state, rural and urban. The FCC evaluated 10.5 million residents and found that 10 million (95.5%) had access to a fixed broadband connection at minimum speeds of 25/3 Mbps. In rural North Carolina, it found that 3.0 of 3.5 million residents (87%) have fixed broadband access. In urban areas, the agency concluded that 99.7% of the 7 million people evaluated had fixed access broadband at minimum speeds.

The [NC Broadband Infrastructure Office](#) makes a map available that shows both the data and a map version of the data set that includes

layers for Form 477 data and ACS broadband availability data, as well as a layer showing grant eligible locations and locations that have been awarded federal or state funding. Additionally, the [NC Broadband Survey Dashboards](#) present information on broadband availability and adoption that has been gathered from households and businesses across the state through the North Carolina Broadband Survey.

In 2019, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 91, which [established a task force on broadband expansion](#). When announcing the task force, Governor Cooper said,

In today's schools and workplaces, high-speed Internet is not optional. Too many North Carolinians lack Internet access they need to apply for jobs, do homework or run a small business. We must address this digital divide to give every community in North Carolina an equal opportunity to thrive using today's technology.

The task force is currently [soliciting feedback](#) from residents and businesses on broadband availability in partnership with the Friday Institute.

Governor Cooper originally sought to use CARES Act funding to improve broadband in the state, announcing that \$30 million would be made available. In November 2020, North Carolina's [providers received](#) an email from the governor's office that the funding would be reallocated

NORTH CAROLINA

POPULATION: 10.70 MILLION
COUNTIES: 100



to other purposes since the CARES Act originally required that funding be spent by December 30, 2020. Then, in December 2020, Governor Cooper [made \\$30 million available](#) for broadband expansion through the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology grant program. In a press release announcing the funding, Governor Cooper said:

“This pandemic is shining a light on the need for better high speed Internet access in rural communities. These projects will make sure the Internet can connect people to the education, health care and jobs they need.”

Additional Resources:

- [How States Use Broadband Surveys to Fight for Better Funding](#)
- [Working from home? North Carolina’s new site maps Wi-Fi, ISP deals](#)
- [Rural North Carolinians are sicker with worse access to broadband](#)