

# Fast, Affordable, Modern Broadband: Critical for Rural North Carolina

While urban centers get superfast Internet networks, rural regions of North Carolina depend on sluggish DSL, ancient dial-up, or have no connectivity at all. Rural access to modern, broadband Internet is more important than ever in North Carolina, where **80% of the counties are rural**.

## Essential for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

### The Rural Economy, Jobs, and Growth



- Over 80% of Fortune 500 companies require online job applications.
- Telecommuting keeps rural town populations strong.
- Fiber connections **increase home values**.
- Companies seek rural areas for **data centers**, distribution centers, and other large facilities.
- Small businesses need high upload speeds for services such as cloud computing and offsite backup.

### Rural Schools and Colleges



- Printed public schoolbooks will not be funded after 2016 (per **H.44/S.L. 2013-12**); high-speed connectivity is essential to complete student homework.
- Rural schools need broadband for digital learning initiatives on par with schools in urbanized areas.
- **College distance learning** overcomes barriers of income and geography.

### Healthcare

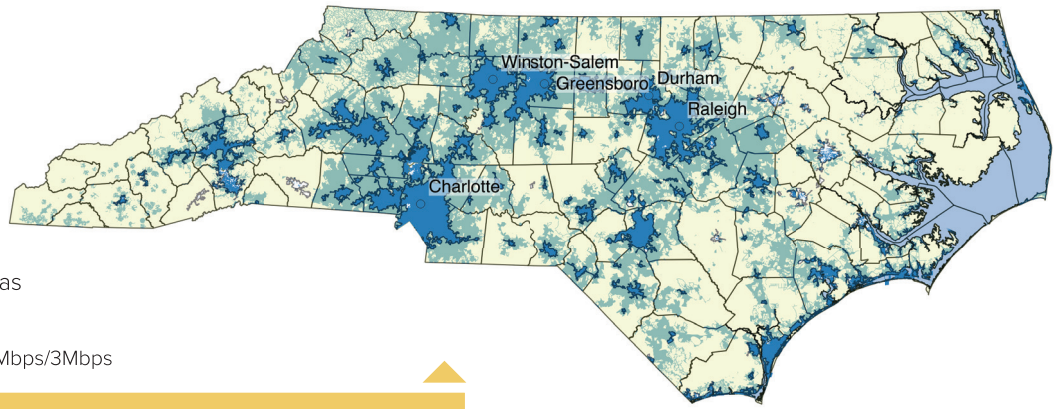


- Telemedicine **removes distance barriers** to cutting-edge medical technology for those that cannot travel safely, are in emergency situations, or cannot afford to visit urban clinics.
- Elderly, military veterans, and other patients can be diagnosed, treated and monitored from home.
- Elderly can live at home longer, reducing the cost of eldercare and improving quality of life in later years.

## Remove Barriers to Modern Rural Broadband Internet

Rural North Carolina municipalities need the authority to expand, partner, and invest in gigabit fiber networks to participate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

# There is a deepening urban-rural broadband divide:



- Urban Areas with 25Mbps/3Mbps
- Rural Areas with 25Mbps/3Mbps
- Unserved and Underserved Rural Areas

Map based on NTIA data from June 2014  
 FCC minimum definition of broadband: 25Mbps/3Mbps

**This map is the best case scenario. NTIA data may overstate coverage. It is based on census blocks with data supplied by incumbent providers.**

Large cable and telephone companies have avoided modernizing Internet services in rural North Carolina. They think rural areas cannot produce enough profit to justify the investment.

Rural communities in North Carolina are being left behind. As economies transition from agriculture to information-based, there is little to no infrastructure to support that change.



**Farmers need modern broadband connections** to track crop yields, soil nutrition, and crop prices.

Modern Broadband Internet means fiber networks—high capacity, fast upload and download speeds—perfect for 21<sup>st</sup> century homework, medical files, business needs, or crop information.

In the U.S., **39% of rural households** v. 4% of urban households do not have access to modern broadband.

## Remove Barriers to Modern Rural Broadband Internet

The 2011 H.B. 129 law effectively prohibits communities who deploy gigabit networks from serving their rural neighbors and NC municipalities from joining together or partnering to bring fiber to their communities.