

# Broadband Expansion Efforts in Granville County

March 2024



## Broadband Expansion Challenges

North Carolina counties are not authorized under general statute to build broadband infrastructure or provide Internet services. The only option available to county governments for expanding broadband is to partner with internet service providers by committing to a funding contribution under state grant programs.

Absent grant funding restrictions, decisions regarding where to deploy services are solely at the discretion of for-profit providers who cite a need to improve equipment in existing markets to remain competitive and limited return on investment as obstacles to providing service in rural areas (higher density populations provide a greater return).

## Federal and State Grant Programs

Federal and state funding has become available in recent years to internet service providers who agree to provide high-speed service, defined as a minimum of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload (NCDIT requires the service to be scalable to symmetrical 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload speeds), to unserved areas. Granville County has been aggressively pursuing providers who can take advantage of these opportunities. A map of grants awarded to providers through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and State of North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) is shown on page 2.

## ONGOING EFFORTS

Granville County government officials have been actively pursuing opportunities to expand broadband into all areas of the county through advocacy efforts at the federal and state levels.

As the federal and state government continue to provide funding through legislative action, more areas of the county will be eligible for these projects. Granville County government officials recognize this vital infrastructure need and are committed to current and future funding for broadband expansion.

## NCDIT Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grant

- Providers are eligible to receive up to \$4M per project.
- Only **unserved** areas are eligible (legislation defines unserved as “a geographic area without access to broadband with transmission speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload”).
- Counties may partner with providers on GREAT applications by committing to a funding contribution that enhances the possibility of award.
- Brightspeed project awarded for approx 1914 locations with a Granville County partnership commitment of \$1.3M using a portion of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) infrastructure funds.
- Brightspeed will pass approx 600 ineligible locations in order to build-out eligible areas and intends to also serve those locations for a total of approx 2500.
- The agreement was executed in May 2023. Brightspeed has up to two years from the contract date to complete the build-out.

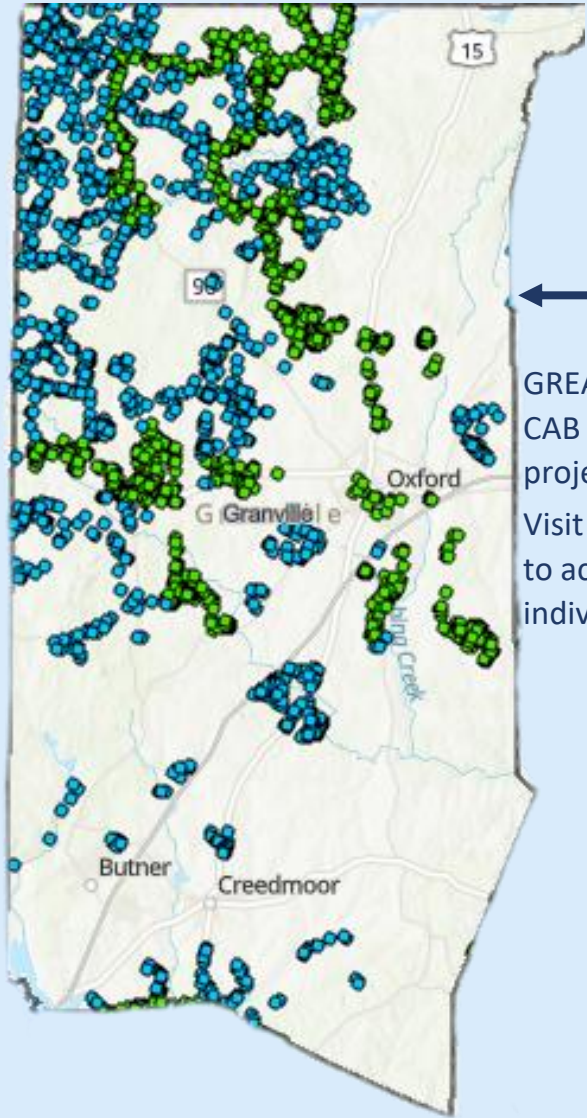
## NCDIT Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Grant

- Providers are eligible to receive up to \$4M per project.
- **Unserved** areas are given priority (definition above).
- **Underserved** areas *may be* considered, provided that all identified eligible **unserved** locations are included in the overall project as the primary priority. Underserved is defined as “locations that do not have access to terrestrial broadband service of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds”.
- Spectrum project awarded for approx 1530 locations with a Granville County partnership commitment of \$10K using unrestricted General Fund revenue.
- The agreement was executed in January 2024. Spectrum has up to two years from the contract date to complete the build-out.

## FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF)

- 2020 reverse auction where only **unserved** areas defined by entire census blocks were eligible.
- Charter Communications (aka Spectrum) won census blocks in Granville County for approx 1100 locations.
- Charter Communications commenced work in Granville County in December 2023. They are actively installing infrastructure in RDOF award areas and also connected areas that were not included in the grant funding (see map on page 2).

# GRANVILLE COUNTY BROADBAND EXPANSION Projected 2-4 Year Build-Out



- GREAT Contracted Project
- CAB Contingent Project

GREAT grant locations awarded to Brightspeed and CAB approved locations awarded to Spectrum. Both projects are summarized on the reverse side.

Visit <https://www.nconemap.gov/pages/broadband> to access the online version and view details for individual address points.

■ RDOF Award Areas →

Federal RDOF census blocks awarded to Charter Communications (aka Spectrum) as summarized on the reverse side.

