CONNECTING
FRANKLIN COUNTY

FRANKLIN COUNTY BROADBAND ACCESS PLAN

MARCH 2025

Franklin County
NORTH CAROLINA
A Research Triangle Region Community

Kerr-Tar
Regional Council
Of Governments

Table of Contents

Introduction

Located in the northeast Piedmont region of North Carolina and formed in the midst of the American Revolutionary War, Franklin County was carved out of the abolished Bute County and established in 1779. The County's name is attributed to Benjamin Franklin, a politician, statesman, and iconic founding father of the United States.

Franklin County leadership understands the need for high speed internet connectivity and digital literacy training in todays ever-evolving world. Franklin County is committed to facilitating the expansion of broadband infrastructure towards the future goal of 100% high speed internet service availability and working to expand digital technology training throughout the County.

THE FOUR KEY ELEMENTS OF DIGITAL LITERACY

Access to digital literacy training

Access to high-speed, reliable broadband

Affordable internet and user devices

Access to internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user

Acknowledgements

Franklin County would like to thank the efforts of our community partners, the Kerr-Tar Region Council of Governments, each of our municipalities and our citizens who have all provided insight and information towards this Broadband Access Plan.

A special thank you to the Franklin County Board of Commissioners for their continued support of broadband infrastructure expansion, digital literacy training and various other digital technology to improve the accessibility of County services to our citizens.

Interim County Manager Ryan Preble

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED THEIR TIME AND KNOWLEDGE TO THIS PLAN

Facilitation & Planning

Ryan Preble – *Franklin County Government*
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William Doerfer – *Town of Youngsville*
Dottie Taylor – *Town of Bunn*
Zach Steffey – *Town of Franklinton*
Sean Medlin – *Town of Louisburg*

Community Partners

Franklin County Services: Board of Elections, Cooperative Extension, Economic Development, Emergency Communication, Emergency Management, Emergency Services, Health Department, Libraries, Planning and Inspections, Public Utilities, Register of Deeds, Senior Centers, Social Services, Tax Department, Veteran's Services, Triangle North Executive Airport

Franklin County Sheriff's Office

Franklin County Fire Districts: Bunn, Castalia, Centerville, Central, Epsom, Franklinton, Gold Sand, Hopkins, Justice, Kittrell, Mitchiners, Pilot, White Level, Youngsville

Education: Franklin County School District, Charter and Private schools, Vance Granville Community College, Louisburg College

Health Systems: Maria Parham Franklin, individual community physicians

Municipalities: Town of Louisburg, Town of Youngsville, Town of Franklinton, and Town of Bunn

Municipal Police Departments: Louisburg Police, Youngsville Police, Franklinton Police, Bunn Police, Lake Royale Police

Vision, Mission, & Values

VISION STATEMENT: To close the Digital Divide by reducing obstacles to utilizing digital technologies for all members of the community.

MISSION STATEMENT: To expand Digital Technology efforts to improve access to digital tools, technologies and education which provide the community the opportunity to improve their lives.

VALUES

RESPECT	HONESTY	TRANSPARENCY
ADVANCEMENT	ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNICATION
	EDUCATION	

Definitions

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP): A federal program administered by the FCC that reduced the cost of internet for eligible households by $30 per month and $75 per month on tribal lands. This program ended in 2024.

American Communities Survey: The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people including internet and data use.

Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program: The North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) received $5 million in Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) planning grants from the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to support broadband and digital inclusion planning. NCDIT intends to subgrant funds to support broadband and digital equity projects in North Carolina.

Community Anchor Institution: The NCDIT division of Broadband and Digital Equity defines Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) to mean a school, library, health clinic, health center, hospital or other medical provider, public safety entity, institution of higher education, public housing organization (including any public housing agency, HUD-assisted housing organization, or tribal housing organization), or community support organization that facilitates greater use of broadband service by covered populations.

Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Program: 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.

Definitions

Digital Equity: Digital equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

Digital Champion Grant: A state grant program to expand digital equity programming and address key barriers to digital inclusion, such as affordability, access, quality training and support and accessible online content for North Carolinians.

Digital Inclusion: Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes five elements:

- Affordable, robust broadband internet service;
- Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user;
- Access to digital literacy training;
- Quality technical support; and
- Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.

Digital Navigator: Digital navigators are trusted guides who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices. Digital navigation services include ongoing assistance with affordable internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support.

Definitions

FCC: The Federal Communications Commission – an independent U.S. government agency overseen by Congress. The Commission is the federal agency responsible for implementing and enforcing America's communications law and regulations.

Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grant: A federal competitive grant program administered by NCDIT that provides funding to private sector broadband providers to deploy last-mile broadband infrastructure to unserved areas of North Carolina.

NCDIT: The North Carolina Department of Information Technology, which facilitates state and federal Broadband infrastructure grant programs (GREAT, CAB, Stop-Gap, BEAD) and initiatives.

NC One Map: A NCDIT Broadband Infrastructure Office initiative to map FCC broadband service and adoption data to identify gaps of unserved and underserved areas of North Carolina.

NTIA: National Telecommunications and Information Administration, an agency of the United States Department of Commerce that are awarding the Digital Equity Act and Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) funding.

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF): A broadband initiative by the Federal Communications Commission that awards funds to support the construction of broadband networks in rural communities without current (or already funded) access to adequate broadband internet service.

Stop-Gap Program: The Stop-Gap Solutions program provides funding for areas unserved or underserved with broadband following investment from the GREAT grant program and the CAB program.

About Franklin County

Geography: Franklin County covers 491.8 square miles and is the 44th largest county in North Carolina by total area[1]. Located within the Research Triangle Region of North Carolina, home of The Research Triangle Park and one of the most globally competitive regions of the world, Franklin County hosts science and technology industry alongside over 100,000 acres of agricultural farmland[2]. Residents enjoy easy access to big-city amenities of nearby Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill while benefiting from the many diverse areas of the County to live, work and play ranging from rural to urban.

Economy: Thriving life sciences and technology clusters, and three world-class research universities within an hour's drive, fuel a vibrant Franklin County economy. Increased business and industrial interest and development remains strong and is diversifying the County tax base. As of December 2023, 13,971 individuals were employed within Franklin County across 10 industries and 1,664 businesses[3]. The unemployment rate as of March 2024 was 3.7%.[4]

Home to: Novonesis North America, Captive-Aire Systems, K-Flex USA, Palziv North America and several other bio-tech and bio-industrial manufacturing companies.

The **Triangle North Executive Airport**, located in Louisburg, has an annual economic impact of more than $28 million.

1. Franklin County US Census Profile
2. 2022 US Census of Agriculture Franklin County Profile
3. Bureau of Labor and Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages - Franklin County 4th Quarter
4. Bureau of Labor and Statistics county table

About Franklin County

Demography: The latest Census update distributed in March 2024 estimates the Franklin County population at 77,001.[1] In the County population tables published by the NC Office of State Budget and Management (NC OSBM), Franklin County's projected population for 2045 is 125,131.[2] Based on the March 2024 Census data, Franklin County remains the fastest growing county in the Triangle area with an annual growth rate of 3.5% and ranks third in growth percentage compared to other counties across North Carolina.[1]

The population density in Franklin County is 157 persons per square mile. The population is varied with 20.5% under the age of 18, 8.2% from 18-24, 24.9% from 25-44, 27.4% from 45-64 and 19% who are 65 or older as of year end 2023. The median age was 42 years in 2023.[1]

As of the 2022 Census American Community Survey, the median household income for a Franklin County family was $73,182, 8% above the NC median household income. There were 27,803 households and 32,924 housing units in Franklin County in 2022.[3]

1. US Census 2023 County Population Estimates, 2. NC OSBM Vintage 2023 County Population Projections, 3. Franklin County US Census Profile,
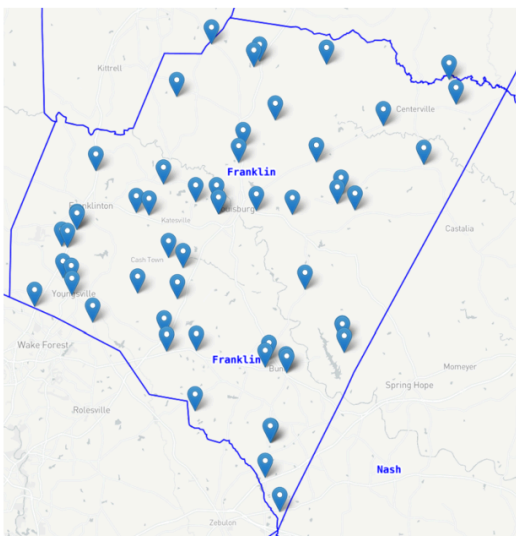
Broadband Availability

Within Franklin County, there are currently nine fixed internet service providers (ISPs) available for subscription to residences in various parts of the County. Of those, five providers also extend fiber to businesses and institutions.

Franklin County Internet Service Providers				
Provider	**Fiber**	**Cable**	**Copper**	**Fixed Wireless**
AT&T	✓		✓	✓
Brightspeed	✓		✓	
Charter Communications	✓	✓		
ERC Broadband	✓			
OpenBroadband LLC				✓
Ting	✓			
T Mobile US				✓
United States Cellular Corporation				✓
Verizon Wireless				✓

*Source: NC One Map FCC Broadband Data Collection map 3 version 8 as of April 2024

Alternative sources of internet are offered through cellular providers and satellite providers. In addition to providing cell service, the above providers offer fixed-wireless broadband services to individual residences. Two additional internet providers offer satellite internet service, Hughes Net and Starlink.

The FCC Antenna Structure Registration Search is able to geographically display the physical locations for the structures that support the communities throughout the County.

*Source: FCC Antenna Structure Registration Search as of June 2024

Broadband Availability

In 2017, NCDIT created a Broadband Availability Index using the 7 variables shown below to provide a more comprehensive picture of broadband availability in North Carolina than what is reported by the FCC. As of 2021, Franklin County has a **69% Broadband Availability Index score**.

However, internet providers report to the FCC their advertised speeds, not actual speeds, and also include advertised wireless availability. Due to this, the FCC reports 99% broadband availability at 25 Mbps and 100 Mbps in Franklin County, which is used in this Index.
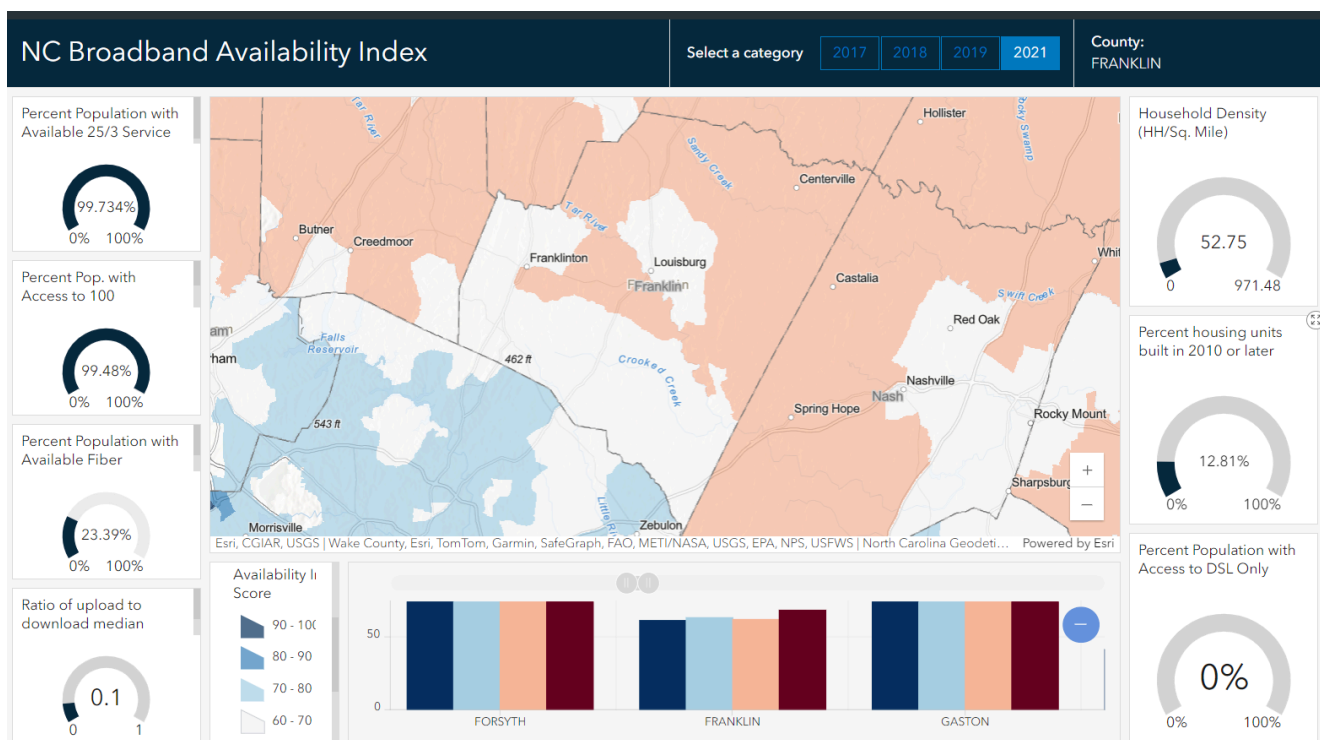
Variables That Increase A Score:	Variables That Decrease A Score:
• % Access to 25Mbps/3Mbps • % Access to 100Mbps/10Mbps • % Access to Fiber service • % Symmetrical Service • % Housing units built in 2010 or later • Households per square mile	• % Population with no access to providers • % Population with access to DSL only

*These variables are weighted according to research from Purdue University.

*Source: NC Broadband Availability Index as of 2021

Broadband Availability

NCDIT now utilizes the NC One Map to combine FCC reports with Broadband Survey data for a more accurate picture of availability. **As of September 2024, it is estimated that 71% of Franklin County serviceable locations have broadband service available**. Another 21% are pending broadband service through grant programs and 7% have no broadband internet availability and have not been funded under any grant programs.
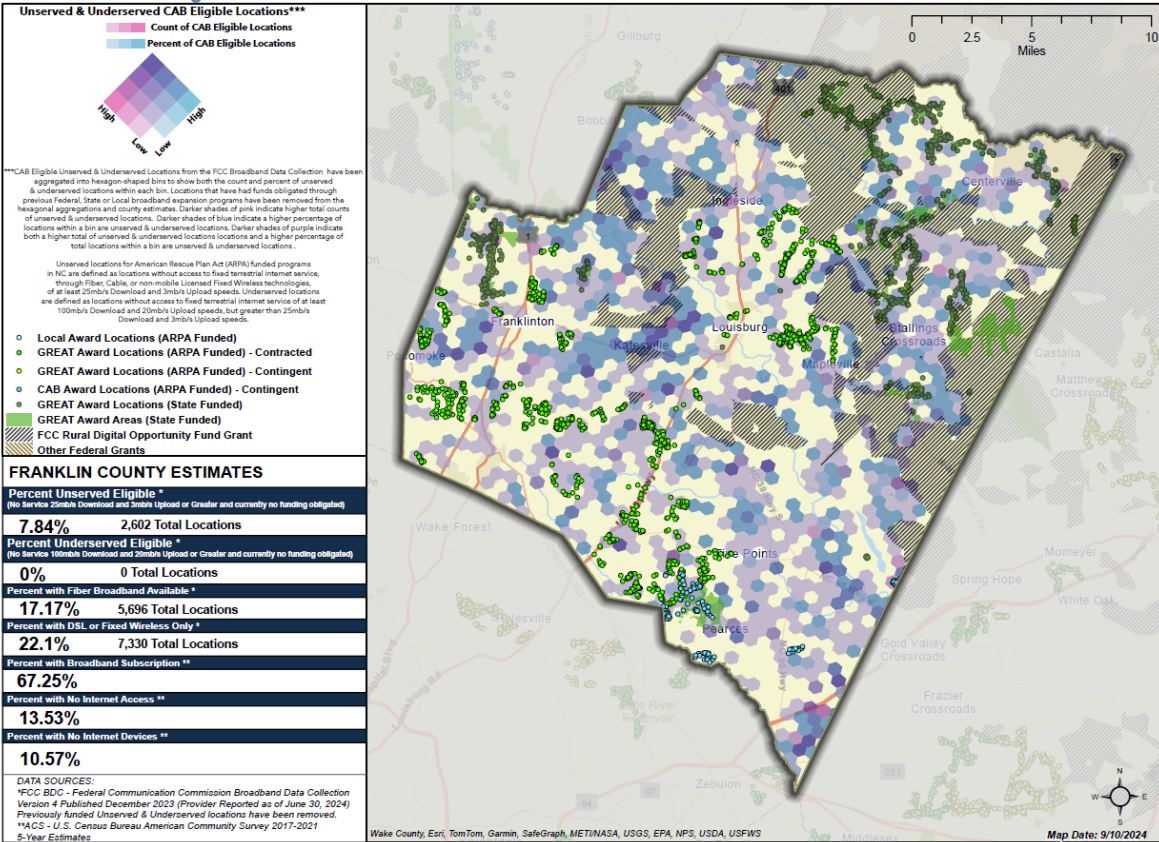
Franklin County Broadband Service Location Estimates [1]		
Total FCC Reported Serviceable Locations [2]	35,507	100%
Total Unserved and Unfunded Locations [3]	2,602	7%
Total Funded Locations Pending Service [4]	7,598	21%
Total Fiber	5,696	16%
Total Cable [2]	12,281	35%
Total DSL or Fixed Wireless Only	7,330	21%

1. As of September 2024 NCDIT Franklin County Broadband Profile
2. As reported in the FCC BDC version 4 December 31, 2023 dataset
3. NCDIT considers Unserved as no access to 25 Mbps Down / 3 Mbps Up
4. State and Federal RDOF Grant funded locations as of 07/01/2024.
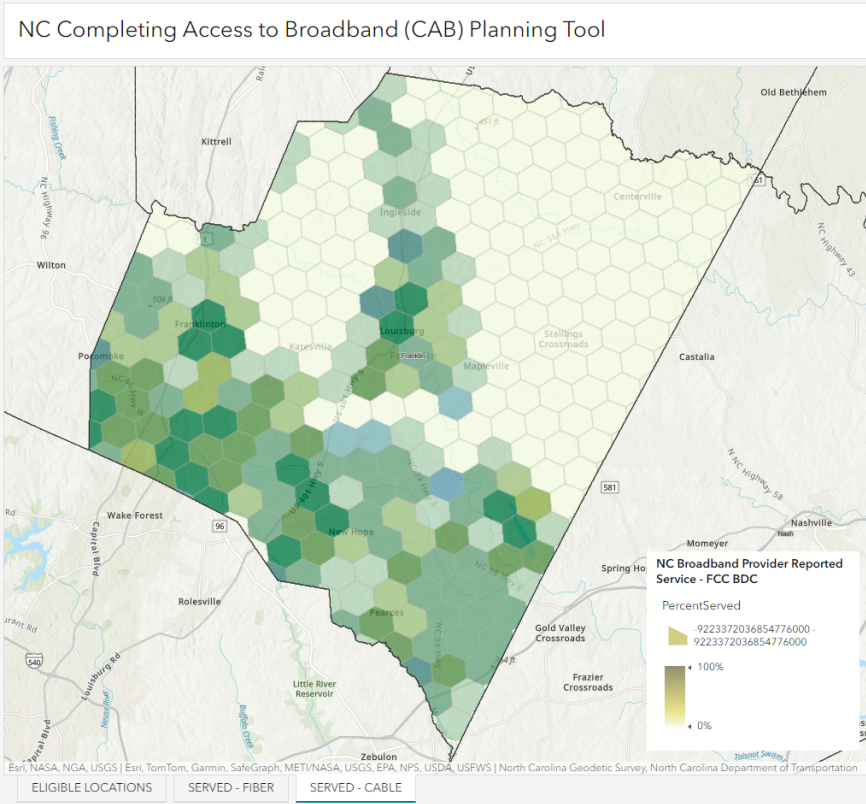

*Source: NCDIT County Broadband Profile September 2024

Broadband Availability

NC Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Planning Tool
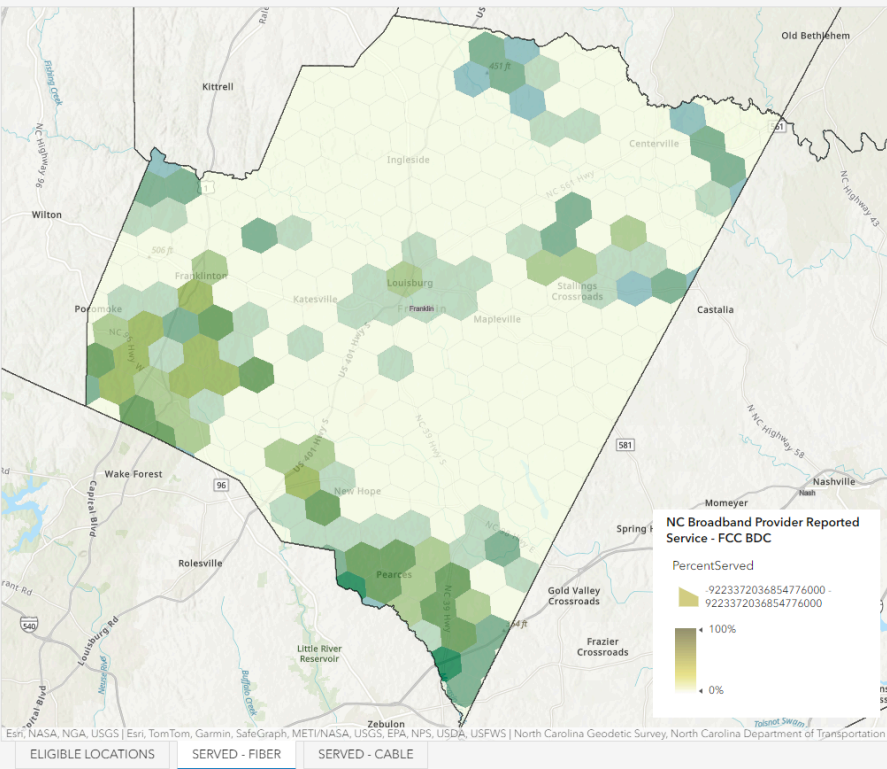

CURRENT AREAS WITH CABLE
BROADBAND SERVICE

*Source: NC One Map CAB Planning Tool as of June 2024

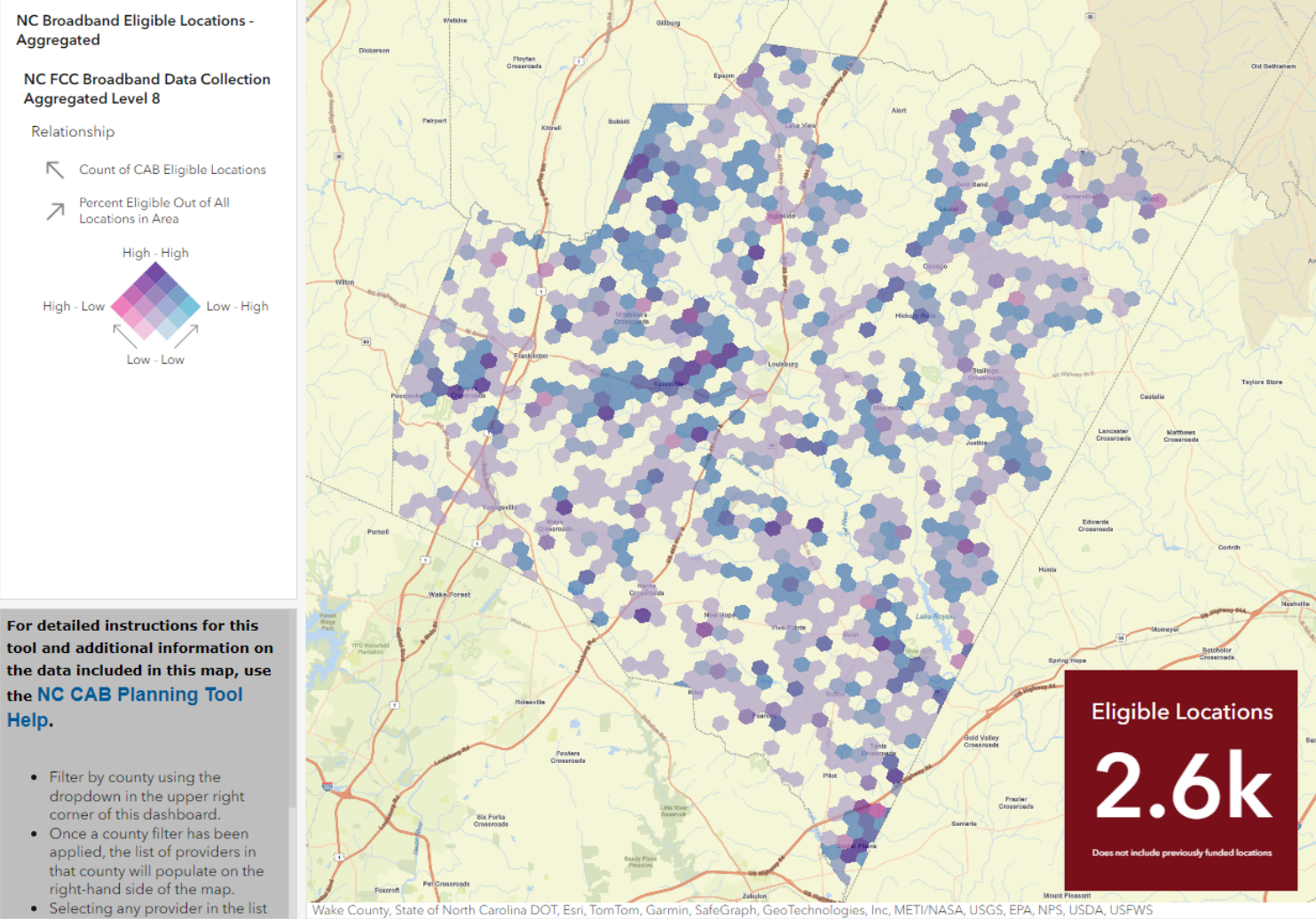## NC Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Planning Tool

CURRENT AREAS WITH FIBER
BROADBAND SERVICE

*Source: NC One Map CAB Planning Tool as of June 2024

Broadband Availability

UNSERVED LOCATIONS

As of September 2024, there were 2,602 unserved and unfunded locations in Franklin County without access to at least 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload.

NC Broadband Eligible Locations - Aggregated

NC FCC Broadband Data Collection Aggregated Level 8

Relationship

↖ Count of CAB Eligible Locations

↗ Percent Eligible Out of All Locations in Area

High - High

High - Low   Low - High

Low - Low

For detailed instructions for this tool and additional information on the data included in this map, use the NC CAB Planning Tool Help.

- Filter by county using the dropdown in the upper right corner of this dashboard.
- Once a county filter has been applied, the list of providers in that county will populate on the right-hand side of the map.
- Selecting any provider in the list

Eligible Locations

2.6k

Does not include previously funded locations

Wake County, State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

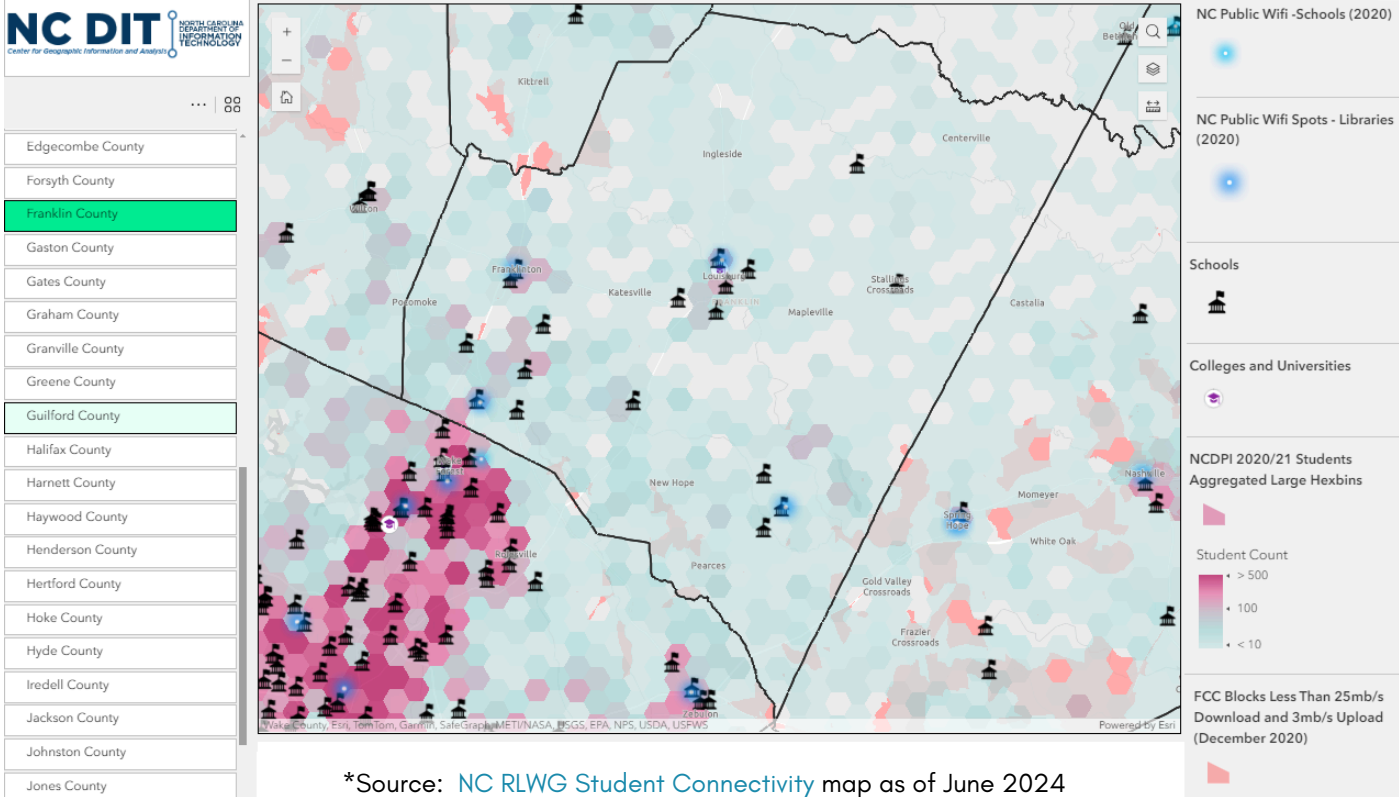*Source: NC One Map CAB Planning Tool as of September 2024

Student Connectivity

Franklin County offers lifelong learning opportunities through its public schools, Vance-Granville Community College, Louisburg College, and close proximity to many other colleges and universities in the Research Triangle Region.

Franklin County traditional public schools utilize two student connectivity initiatives to ensure students have the ability to connect to the internet to complete their schoolwork.

- <u>1:1 Devices:</u> Every traditional k-12 public school student is issued a tablet or Chromebook for the duration of the school year.

- <u>Hotspots:</u> Any student that cannot reliably connect to the internet at home can also be issued an cellular internet hotspot device to connect.

Free public Wi-Fi is available at each of the library locations, to include the parking lot areas, in Louisburg, Franklinton, Youngsville and Bunn.

*Source: NC RLWG Student Connectivity map as of June 2024

Broadband Adoption

In 2017, NCDIT created a Broadband Adoption Index using the 10 variables shown below to provide a more accurate picture of broadband adoption by residents in North Carolina. These variables are weighted according to research from Purdue University.
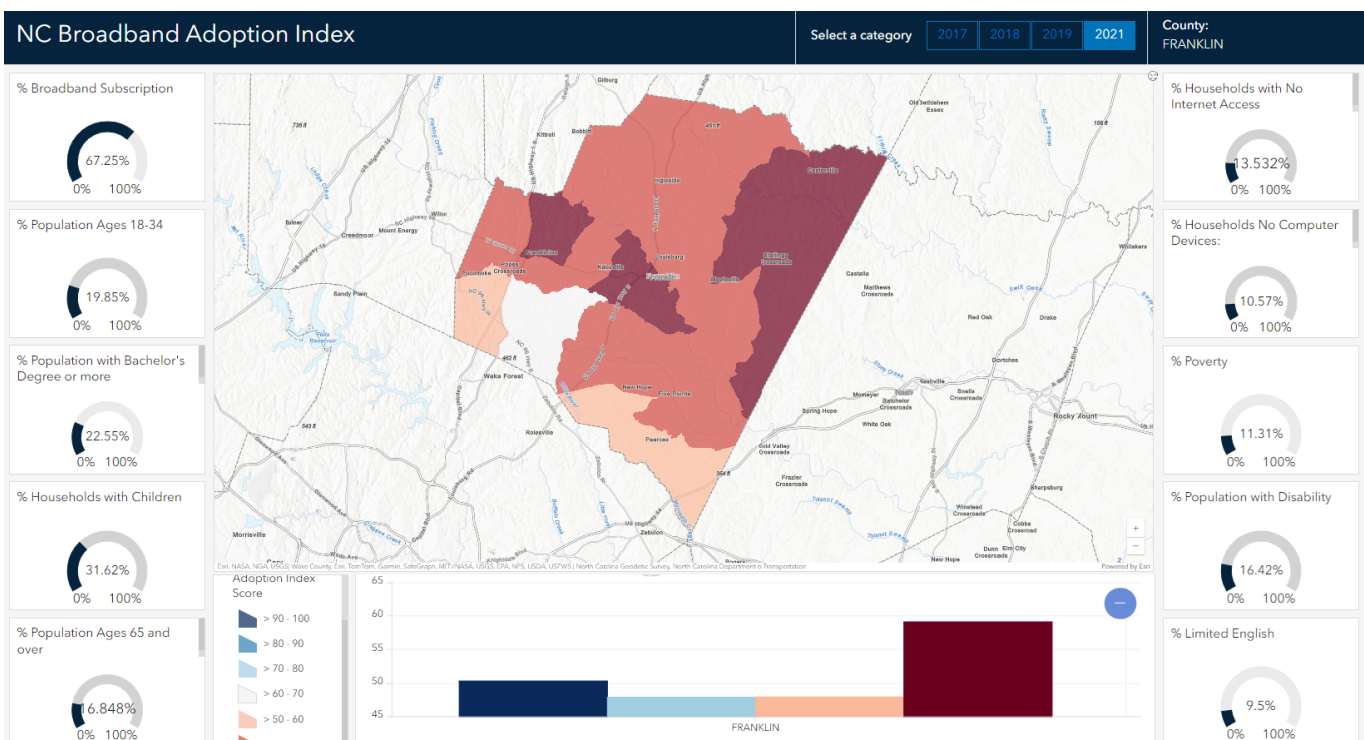
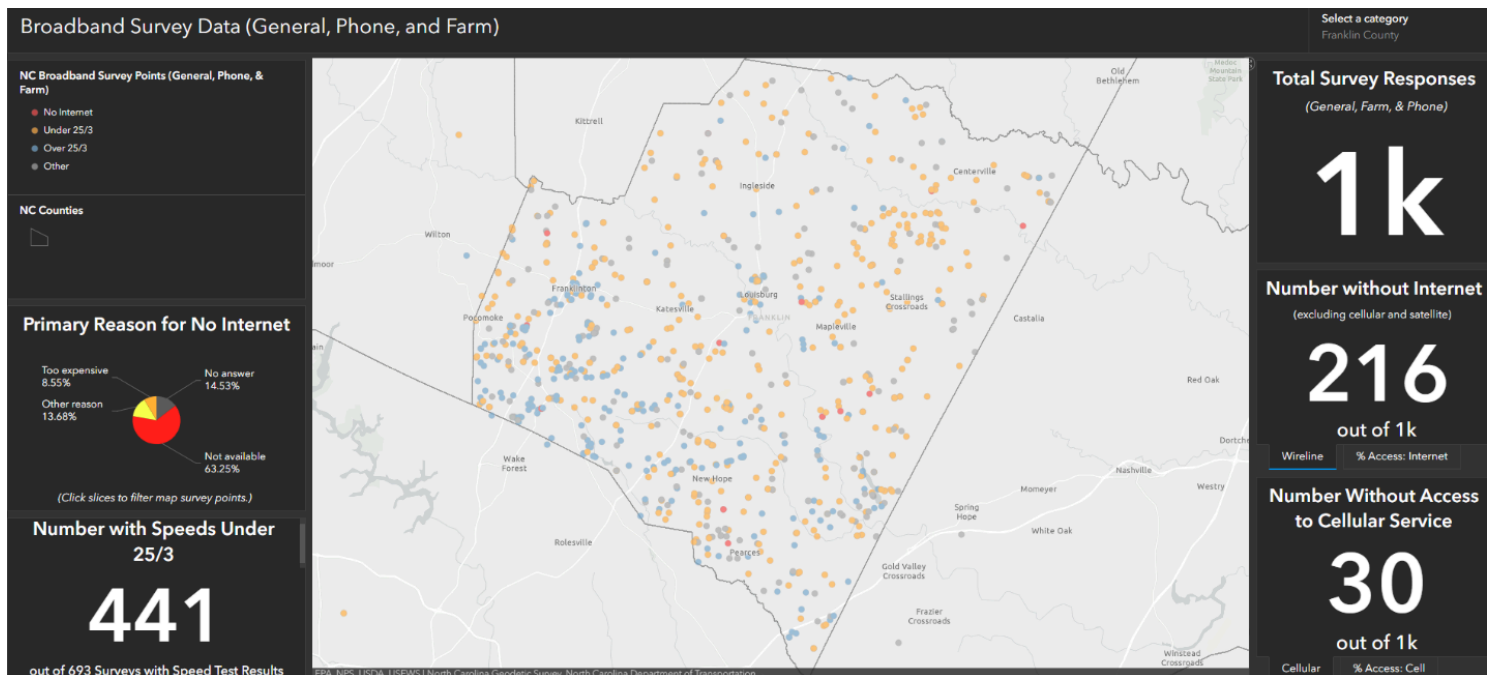| Variables That Increase A Score:	Variables That Decrease A Score:
• % Households with DSL, cable or fiber subscription • % Population ages 18 to 34 • % population age 25+ with a bachelor's degree or more • % Households with children	• % Population ages 65 or over • % Households with no internet access • % Households with no devices • % Population in poverty • % Non-institutionalized population with a disability • % Households with limited English

Franklin County scored 59.23% out of 100 on the Broadband Adoption Index as of 2021. Based on the March 2024 FCC data, 67.25% of serviceable Franklin County locations subscribe to broadband service.

*Source NC Broadband Adoption Index as of 2021

Broadband Survey Data

NCDIT created a Broadband Survey to gather information on locations in the state without adequate internet access and speeds from residents independent of ISP provided data.

*Source: NCDIT Broadband Survey as of June 2024

Franklin County Results:
- Total Broadband Survey Responses as of June 2024: 1,009
- Limited number of responses compared to serviceable locations
- 62.5% do not have internet because it is not available (at time of survey)
- 8.6% do not have internet because it is too expensive (at time of survey)

Needs Identified:
- Updated surveys are needed – most responses are old (2020-2022) and may not reflect new service from grant funding.
- More phone or in-person surveys needed – most responses coincide with areas that already have internet service.
- Focus efforts in northern half of the County to verify speeds for newly serviced grant funded locations.

Digital Equity Survey Data

NCDIT created a Digital Equity Survey in 2023 to gather information on the accessibility and affordability of digital devices and internet subscriptions for North Carolina residents. The survey was open from April to November 2023.

Franklin County Results:
- Total Equity Survey Responses as of March 2024: **103**
- Median Age of Responding Individuals: **64**
- Most Identified Ethnicity: **White/Caucasian**
- Most Identified Language: **English**
    - **66%** consider their home internet "somewhat affordable" or "affordable"
    - **$50** was the most frequent choice for highest affordable price for home internet and mobile internet
    - **$500** was the most frequent choice for highest affordable price for a device
    - Individuals were **44% to 63%** "very confident" with device use, email, Microsoft software, applying for jobs and online banking.
    - Roughly **20%** were "not confident at all" in their ability to find educational content, using video applications or staying safe online.

Needs Identified:
- More phone or paper surveys are needed – online surveys assume a basic level of internet access and technological ability.
- Additional ISPs could create competition, lower subscriber costs and improve the quality of service available.
- Add or enhance training for video applications and online safety.
- Offer digital content in additional languages when possible.
- Investigate additional areas for free public Wi-Fi – the third most frequent way the public connects to the internet.

Digital Equity Survey Data

Service & Digital Skills
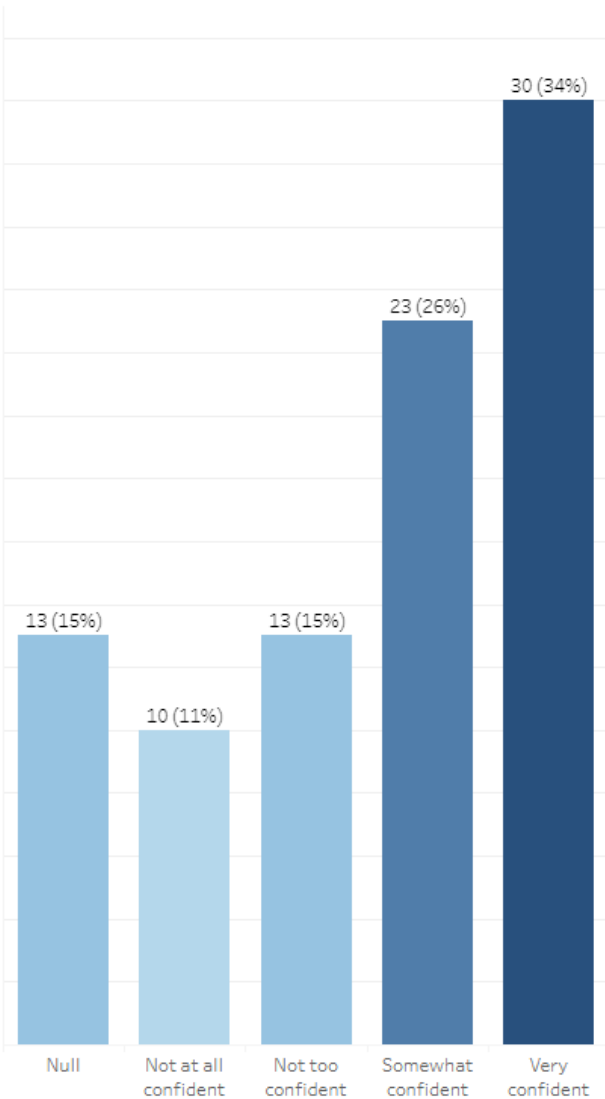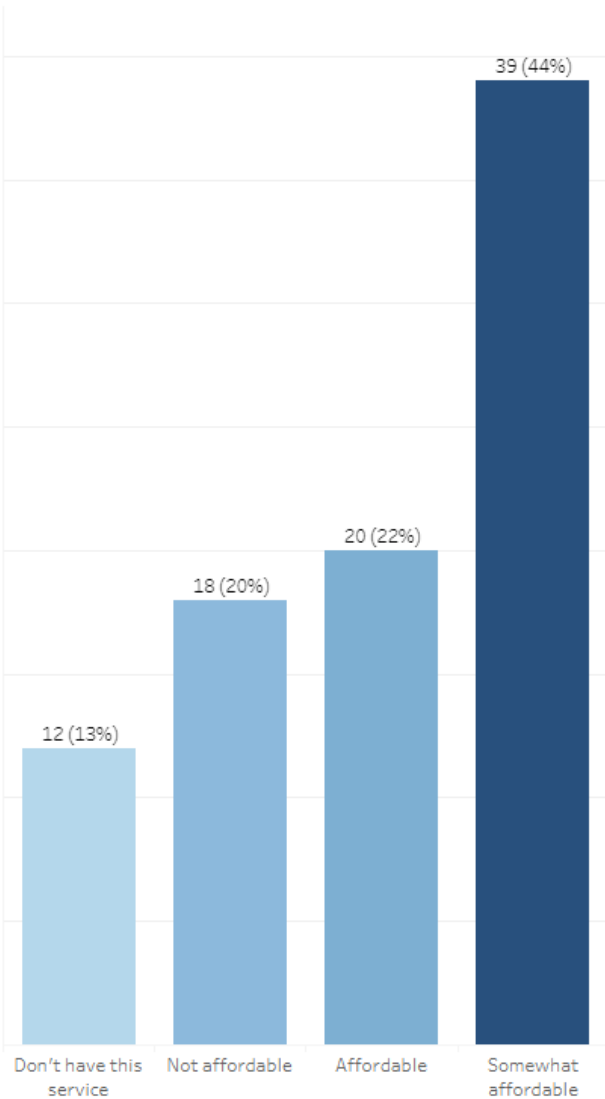(Select 👇 from the question dropdown)

103 responses as of **March 7, 2024**

County Name
Franklin ▼

Question - Service
Q4.1 - Home Internet ▼

Question - Digital Skills
Q6.1 - Accessing or applying for government services ▼

Zipcode
(All) ▼

Age
23 ──────── 83

Language Spoken
(All) ▼

Veteran Status
(All) ▼

Race/Ethnicity
(All) ▼

Education Level
(All) ▼

Income Level
(All) ▼

Identity - Specific
(All) ▼

Service chart:
- Don't have this service: 12 (13%)
- Not affordable: 18 (20%)
- Affordable: 20 (22%)
- Somewhat affordable: 39 (44%)

Digital Skills chart:
- Null: 13 (15%)
- Not at all confident: 10 (11%)
- Not too confident: 13 (15%)
- Somewhat confident: 23 (26%)
- Very confident: 30 (34%)

Response Percentage
13% ▭ 44%

*Source: NCDIT Digital Equity Survey Dashboard as of March 2024

Digital Literacy Skills & Opportunities

Franklin County currently has the following digital literacy skills training and device opportunities:

Franklin County Libraries:

- Online Digital Literacy Training Library – Available to everyone for free on the Library website are a series of digital technology training videos to help citizens get started with digital devices and common software programs and tools.

- Northstar Digital Literacy Training – Franklin County Libraries will utilize a Digital Champion Grant to offer new proctored digital literacy training courses from Northstar, which provide certification in different digital literacy areas.

- New Computers and Technology – New devices and additional devices for lending will be added to library locations utilizing a Digital Champion Grant. A noise-canceling booth for personal video calls, such as tele-health appointments and interviews, will be added in the near future.

- Digital Navigator Librarian – Dedicated Library staff to assisting community members with accessing affordable devices and appropriate digital skills training.

- STEAM Programs for Children – Franklin County libraries will utilize the STEAM Powered Learning Grant to offer additional science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) programing to school-aged children at County library branches.

- Free Public Wifi – Available at each library location, including the parking lots and at locations the Voyager Bookmobile visits.

- Cellular Internet HotSpots – HotSpots can be checked out from each library location for citizens that do not have reliable internet at home and need to attend virtual interviews, virtual doctors appointments, etc. from their homes.

Digital Literacy Skills & Opportunities

Franklin County Louisburg and Franklinton Senior Centers:

- <u>Digital Technology Classes</u> – Free Digital technology and software classes are offered at both Senior Center locations, as well as safe internet use classes for seniors.
- <u>Computer Lab</u> – A computer lab is available to all seniors at the Louisburg Senior Center location.

Franklin County Social Services:

- <u>Discounted Mobile Device and Service</u> – Franklin County Social Services assists qualified applicants with applications for <u>SafeLink Wireless</u> and the federal <u>LifeLine Program</u> to receive discounted devises and wireless subscription service.

Vance Granville Community College:

- <u>DigitalBridge</u> – A new digital workforce training initiative at the Franklin County Louisburg Campus between the Wake Forest based Wireless Research Center (WRC) and Vance Granville to provide no-cost digital skills training and certifications to residents.
- <u>Information Technology Program</u> – Prepares students for entry-level positions in the IT industry with an Associate Degree, Diploma or specialized IT industry certifications.
    - Microsoft Office Specialist Certification
    - Microsoft Technology Associate Certification
    - IC3 Digital Literacy Certification
- <u>Ed2Go Online Learning</u> – Online learning courses for career readiness in multiple fields that prepare students for certification exams, such as Microsoft Office Specialist Expert certifications in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access and many more.

Digital Literacy Skills & Opportunities

Franklin County Business Initiatives:

- <u>PlanITROI and the Digital Dreams Project:</u> The new Center of Excellence for information technology company, PlanITROI, is based in Franklin County as of fall of 2024. PlanITROI's nonprofit Digital Dreams Project donates refurbished computers to local schools and community organizations.
  - https://planitroi.com/digital-dreams-project/

Local Affordable Device Resources Outside Franklin County
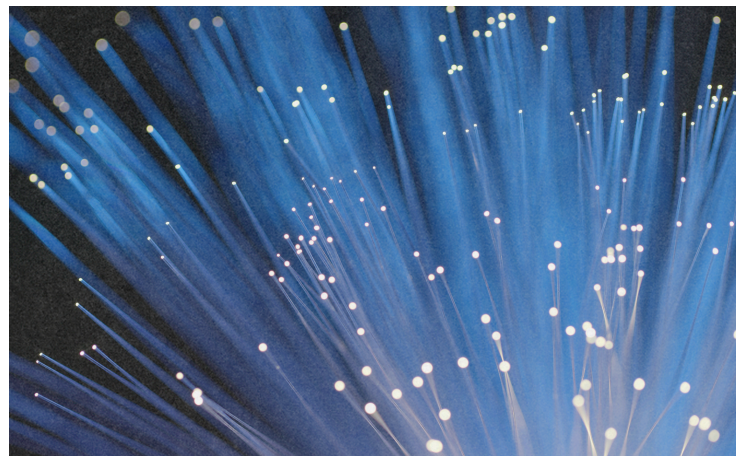
- <u>Hubzone Technology Initiative:</u> Henderson, NC based device refurbishment company offering low-cost computers to community members in need.
  - www.hubzonetech.org/
- <u>Kramden Institute</u>: Durham, NC based technology device recycling and refurbishment company that offers low-cost devices to community members and online technology training courses.
  - https://kramden.org/
- <u>Wireless Research Center (WRC):</u> Wake Forest, NC based private nonprofit research center dedicated to applied research and engineering that offers collaboration with experts, resources and office space to entrepreneurs navigating the hurdles of a business start up in a digital world.
  - https://wrc-nc.org/join-our-community/

Goal 1: Available Internet Connectivity

Continue to support the increase of broadband infrastructure in Franklin County towards the future goal of 100% broadband service availability for all citizens.

OBJECTIVES

1 Encourage the continued expansion of high-speed broadband service throughout Franklin County to areas with limited or no access.

2 Continue partnering with the North Carolina Department of Information Technology to offer grant opportunities to Internet Service Providers installing new broadband infrastructure.

3 Allocate funding for Broadband expansion grant opportunities that require matching funds from the County.

Goal 2: Digitally Literate Community

Expand the current digital literacy training opportunities available in Franklin County and ensure those materials are available and accessible to as many citizens as possible.

OBJECTIVES

1 Expand and promote current digital literacy training offered by Franklin County to all County employees and residents.

2 Develop digital literacy training and materials in additional languages and for all abilities.

3 Ensure all County staff are knowledge about and can direct community members to digital resources and training.

4 Promote self-discovery by ensuring all community members can quickly and easily locate digital training and information on the County website when they need it.

5 Support and promote community programs that provide digital literacy resources.

Goal 3: Access to Technology

Continue to support community programs and County programs that expand the public's access to low-cost digital devices in Franklin County.

OBJECTIVES

1 Investigate and promote new avenues for community members to find low-cost digital devices in Franklin County.

2 Expand access to loaner devices and free computer labs for community members.

3 Ensure all staff can direct community members to community partner resources for low-cost devices.

Goal 4: Continuous Re-evaluation

Continuously re-evaluate Franklin County digital access efforts and services to keep pace with the needs of Franklin County's growing and diverse population.

OBJECTIVES

1 Re-evaluate digital access efforts annually and update County programs when necessary as technology continues to advance.

2 Communicate all newly implemented digital literacy training and resources to all County staff and community members when they become available.

3 Update digital technology information on the County website as new programs and resources become available locally, statewide and nationally.
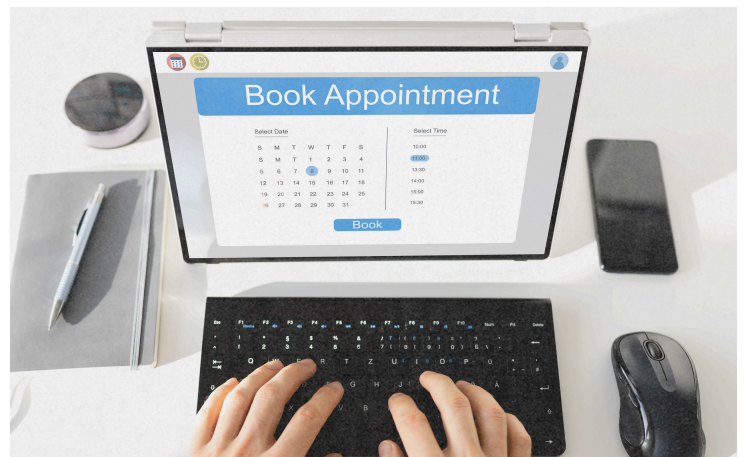
Goal 5: Advancement

Explore and support new ways to utilize digital technology to enhance the lives and ability of Franklin County citizens to connect with services throughout the County.

OBJECTIVES

1 Support the development and expansion of healthcare options in Franklin County with the use of digital technologies.

2 Expand opportunities for community members to participate in local government and their communities by utilizing digital technologies.

3 Partner with Vance Granville Community College to develop and maintain an adaptable workforce with the necessary digital skills.

4 Evaluate emergency response plans to consider the population areas with limited or no access to broadband, and investigate options to ensure all residents receive emergency communications and know how to properly respond.
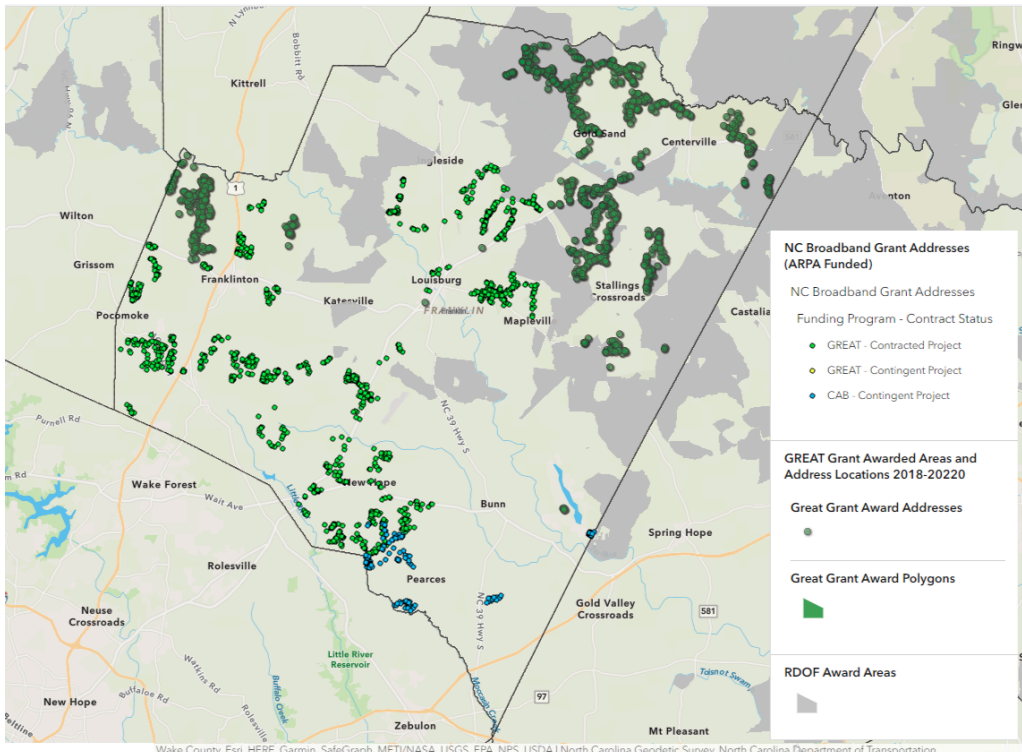
Continuing the Work

Franklin County currently has several Broadband Infrastructure grant projects in progress with Internet Service Providers and NCDIT to bring service to over 6,400 locations by 2028 and one completed project that brought service to over 1,900 locations in 2023.

- Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grant
- Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Grant
- Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Grant

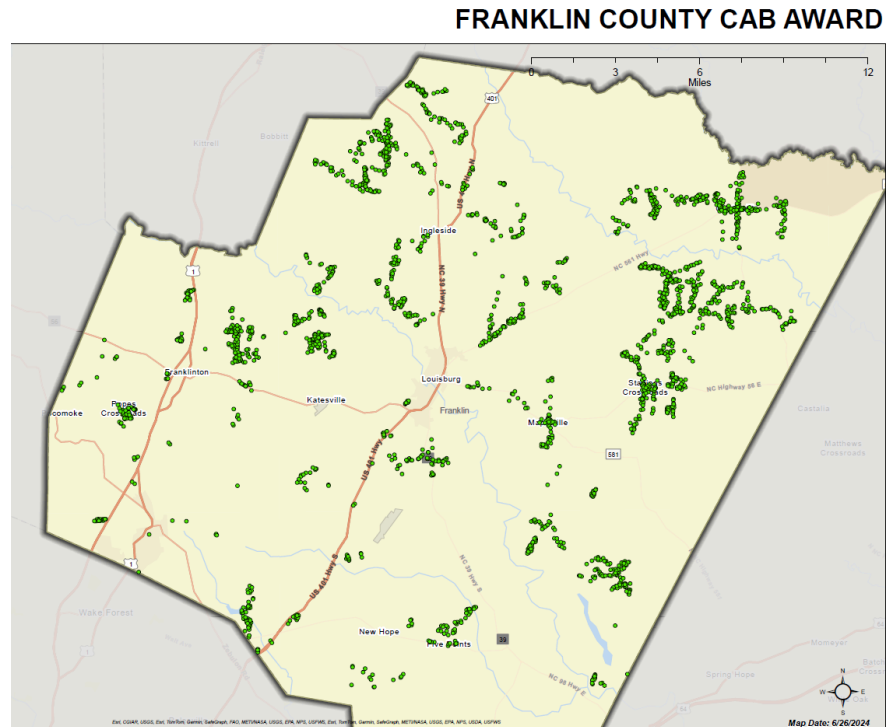| Franklin County Broadband Infrastructure Grant Projects				
Project	Company	Unserved Locations	Status	Expected Completion
GREAT Grant #1	Brightspeed	1,978	Complete	Complete 2023
GREAT Grant #2	Brightspeed	1,401	In Progrees	2025
GREAT/CAB Grant	Spectrum	233	In Progress	2025
RDOF Award Areas	Spectrum	2,400	Pending	2028
CAB Grant #1	Brightspeed	2,374	In Progress	2026

*As of July 2024

These projects utilize state and federal grant programs to require providers to bring a minimum level of service to unserved and under-served areas of North Carolina.

*Source: NC One Map CAB Planning Tool as of April 2024

Continuing the Work

FRANKLIN COUNTY CAB AWARD

The most recent grant project, the 2024 CAB Grant, was awarded on June 30, 2024 to Brightspeed to bring service to over 2,300 locations by year end 2026.

*Source: NC One Map CAB Planning Tool as of July 2024

Franklin County is now looking ahead to the Stop-Gap Program and the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program for broadband expansion opportunities. Franklin County will also monitor the CAB, GREAT and new grant programs for additional opportunities to partner with internet service providers to continue the push towards 100% broadband service coverage.

Franklin County will continue to evaluate broadband availability and adoption data, community feedback and survey data to inform future broadband and digital literacy efforts that will improve and meet the needs of the growing and changing population.

Continuing the Work

- Continue Broadband Survey Promotion:
    - Updated surveys are needed – most responses are old (2020-2022) and may not reflect new service from grant funding.
    - More phone or in-person surveys needed – most responses coincide with areas that already have internet service.
    - Promote the survey at library locations where citizens are in a location with public wi-fi.
    - Focus efforts on northern half of the County to verify speeds for newly serviced locations.

- Utilize Digital Equity Survey Data:
    - More phone or paper surveys are needed – online surveys assume a basic level of internet access and technological ability.
    - Promote the survey at library locations where citizens are in a location with public wi-fi.
    - Add or enhance training for video applications and online safety.
    - Offer digital content in additional languages when possible.
    - Investigate additional areas for free public Wi-Fi – the third most frequent way the public connects to the internet.

- Monitor Additional Grant Programs:
    - Monitor Digital Technology Grant Opportunities
    - Evaluate additional grant programs that may also have digital access or digital literacy benefits.

Resources

- Alliance For Technology Refurbishment & Reuse: https://aftrr.org/
- Digitunity Refurbished Device Locator: https://digitunity.org/our-programs/aftrr/
- FCC website: www.fcc.gov
- FCC Antenna Structure Registration Search: https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/AsrSearch/asrAdvancedSearch.jsp
- FCC National Broadband Map: https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home
- Franklin County Website: www.franklincountync.gov
- Franklin County Library: www.franklincountync.gov/county_services/library
- Franklin County Library Digital Literacy Library: www.franklincountync.gov/county_services/library/digital_literacy.php
- Franklin County Senior Center Events: www.franklincountync.gov/county_services/aging_department/calendar.php
- Franklin County Schools: www.fcschools.net/
- National Digital Inclusion Alliance: www.digitalinclusion.org/
- NCDIT website: www.ncbroadband.gov/
- NC Broadband Indices: www.ncbroadband.gov/data-reports/nc-broadband-indices
- NCDIT Broadband Surveys: www.ncbroadband.gov/surveys
- NCDIT Digital Equity Plan: www.ncbroadband.gov/Digital-Equity-Plan
- NCDIT Digital Equity Survey: www.ncbroadband.gov/surveys/digital-equity-survey
- NC One Map: www.nconemap.gov/pages/broadband
- NCDIT CAB Planning Tool: www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/0968e0d6753b4eb59b0b70ebb361f2cb
- NCDHHS Lifeline Program: www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/county-staff-information/other-programs/lifeline-and-link-programs
- NC211 Information Assistance: https://nc211.org/
- SafeLink Wireless: www.safelinkwireless.com/en/#!/aboutUs

Resources

- Town of Bunn: https://townofbunn.org/
- Town of Franklinton: www.franklintonnc.us/
- Town of Louisburg: https://townoflouisburg.org/
- Town of Youngsville: www.townofyoungsville.org/
- USAC Connect America Fund Broadband Map:
  https://data.usac.org/publicreports/caf-map/
- Vance Granville Community College Ed2Go Online Courses:
  https://careertraining.vgcc.edu/training-programs/
- VGCC and WRC Digital Bridge: www.vgcc.edu/digitalbridge-at-vgcc/
- The Wireless Research Center: www.wrc-us.org/