

## News Release

# Brightspeed Awarded an Additional ~\$12M in GREAT Grants to Connect More North Carolinians to High-Speed Internet

*Company's multi-million-dollar investment in North Carolina augmented by ~\$103M in county, state and federal funding over the past year will help expand its fiber broadband network in 33 counties*

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — July 27, 2023 — Brightspeed has been awarded another \$12.1 million through the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grant Program to help deliver high-speed fiber internet to approximately 4,839 households and businesses in four North Carolina counties. These most recent grant awards bring the total county, state and federal grant dollars awarded to Brightspeed through North Carolina's GREAT grant program to approximately \$103 million.

Brightspeed — the nation's fifth largest incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) focused on empowering more homes with ultrafast, reliable internet — previously announced that it will build a significant portion of its planned fiber optics network in North Carolina, adding nearly 800,000 fiber-enable locations in the state over the course of its planned build. The GREAT grant funds awarded to Brightspeed over the past year would augment the plan by nearly 43,000 new fiber passings.

"Expanding access to faster, more reliable, and user-friendly internet has never been more important, whether for work, education, telemedicine, entertainment or simply staying connected," said Steve Brewer, Brightspeed director of state and local government affairs. "We are looking forward to introducing customers in our home state to our innovative Brightspeed products and services that will help these communities' residents and businesses thrive in today's highly connected world."

The GREAT grant program was established in 2018 as part of North Carolina's plan to close the digital divide across the state's counties. The program aims to fund the deployment of broadband by providing matching grants to internet service providers working to expand internet access to areas of North Carolina that lack quality options for connectivity. In a highly competitive process, service providers were evaluated based on the number of households and businesses they propose to serve, the average cost to serve those locations, and the speeds offered.

"The work of Brightspeed and our other GREAT grant partners is helping to bring affordable, reliable high-speed internet access to unserved North Carolinians," said Gov. Roy Cooper. "By using American Rescue Plan funding, we've now invested \$350 million in these grants that will help us build out the internet across North Carolina so more families and businesses will be able to connect for learning, health care, business and more."

GREAT grant award recipients have two years to complete the build plan from the date contracts are signed. These latest grant awards are for fiber network builds in Halifax, Nash, Person and Wake counties.

"We live in a digital world, and our board is committed to making high-speed internet access easy, affordable and equitable for everyone in Wake County," said Shinica Thomas, chair of the Wake County Board of Commissioners and its representative on the statewide Connecting Counties Task Force, which is dedicated to expanding high-speed internet access in North Carolina. "This grant will allow Brightspeed to provide broadband access to more than 1,100 households and businesses in Wake County, which is a big step forward in leveling the digital playing field for our residents."

For more information about Brightspeed, visit the company's website, [www.brightspeed.com](http://www.brightspeed.com).

### About Brightspeed

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C. and with assets and associated operations in 20 states, Brightspeed provides broadband and telecommunications services through a network platform capable of serving more than 6.5 million homes and businesses. Our more than 4,000 employees are committed to building a future where more communities benefit from a more connected life, deploying a state-of-the-art fiber network and a customer experience that makes being connected as simple as it should be. For more information, please visit [www.brightspeed.com](http://www.brightspeed.com).

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