

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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SENATE BILL 627

Short Title: Expand GREAT Grant Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators deViere, Woodard, and Foushee (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 4, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ALLOW CITIES AND COUNTIES TO RECEIVE BROADBAND
INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS UNDER THE GROWING RURAL ECONOMIES WITH
ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 143B-1373 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143B-1373. Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program.

(a) As used in this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Agriculture. – Activities defined in G.S. 106-581.1.
- (2) Broadband service. – For the purposes of this section, terrestrially deployed Internet access service with transmission speeds of at least 10 megabits per second (Mbps) download and at least one megabit per second upload (10:1).
- (3) Coastal Plain Region. – The portion of the State lying east of the eastern boundaries of Franklin, Lee, Moore, Wake, and Warren Counties.
- (4) Cooperative. – An electric membership corporation, organized pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 117 of the General Statutes, or a telephone membership corporation, organized pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 117 of the General Statutes.
- (5) Eligible economically distressed county. – A county designated as a development tier one area, as defined in G.S. 143B-473.08.
- (6) Eligible project. – An eligible project is a discrete and specific project located in an unserved area of an economically distressed county seeking to provide broadband service to homes, businesses, and community anchor points not currently served. Eligible projects do not include middle mile, backhaul, and other similar projects not directed at broadband service to end users.
- (7) Eligible recipient. – Eligible grant recipients are cities, counties, private providers of broadband services, including cooperatively organized entities, or any partnerships formed between cities, counties, cooperatively organized entities, private providers, or any combination thereof, on or after January 1, 2018.

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(b) The Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Fund is established as a special revenue fund in the Department of Information Technology. The Secretary may award grants from the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Fund to eligible recipients for eligible projects. The funds shall be used by the recipient to pay for infrastructure costs associated with an eligible project. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a city



1 or county may utilize grant funds received under this section to partner with a private provider
2 of broadband services, including cooperatively organized entities in connection with an eligible
3 project. State funds appropriated to this Fund shall be considered an information technology
4 project within the meaning of G.S. 143C-1-2.

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6 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.