

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023**

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**SENATE BILL 897**

Short Title: Rural Broadband Initiative Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Smith, Batch, and Garrett (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 6, 2024

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE RURAL BROADBAND INITIATIVE FUND TO ADVANCE  
RURAL BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENHANCE TECHNOLOGICAL  
ACCESSIBILITY FOR RURAL COLLEGES IN THE STATE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** The Rural Broadband Initiative Fund (Fund) is established as a special fund in the General Fund to be administered by the Department of Information Technology. Monies appropriated to the fund shall be used by the Department of Information Technology for the purposes described in this act.

**SECTION 1.(b)** The Department of Information Technology shall utilize funds appropriated to the Fund for the purpose of enhancing broadband access at an eligible rural college in the State. An eligible rural college may request funding from the Fund for specific projects necessary to upgrade broadband infrastructure, including necessary technology, equipment, and related expenditures. The Department of Information Technology shall establish a system for awarding grants from the Fund that allocates funding to eligible rural colleges on a per-pupil basis and shall determine maximum grant award amounts. For the purposes of this act, the following are eligible rural colleges in this State:

- (1) Alamance Community College.
- (2) Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.
- (3) Beaufort County Community College.
- (4) Bladen Community College.
- (5) Blue Ridge Community College.
- (6) Brunswick Community College.
- (7) Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute.
- (8) Carteret Community College.
- (9) Catawba Valley Community College.
- (10) Central Carolina Community College.
- (11) Cleveland Community College.
- (12) Coastal Carolina Community College.
- (13) College of The Albemarle.
- (14) Craven Community College.
- (15) Davidson-Davie Community College.
- (16) Edgecombe Community College.
- (17) Fayetteville Technical Community College.
- (18) Gaston College.
- (19) Halifax Community College.



- 1 (20) Haywood Community College.
- 2 (21) Isothermal Community College.
- 3 (22) James Sprunt Community College.
- 4 (23) Johnston Community College.
- 5 (24) Lenoir Community College.
- 6 (25) Martin Community College.
- 7 (26) Mayland Community College.
- 8 (27) McDowell Technical Community College.
- 9 (28) Mitchell Community College.
- 10 (29) Montgomery Community College.
- 11 (30) Nash Community College.
- 12 (31) Pamlico Community College.
- 13 (32) Piedmont Community College.
- 14 (33) Pitt Community College.
- 15 (34) Randolph Community College.
- 16 (35) Richmond Community College.
- 17 (36) Roanoke-Chowan Community College.
- 18 (37) Robeson Community College.
- 19 (38) Rockingham Community College.
- 20 (39) Rowan-Cabarrus Community College.
- 21 (40) Sampson Community College.
- 22 (41) Sandhills Community College.
- 23 (42) South Piedmont Community College.
- 24 (43) Southeastern Community College.
- 25 (44) Southwestern Community College.
- 26 (45) Stanly Community College.
- 27 (46) Surry Community College.
- 28 (47) Tri-County Community College.
- 29 (48) Vance-Granville Community College.
- 30 (49) Wayne Community College.
- 31 (50) Western Piedmont Community College.
- 32 (51) Wilkes Community College.
- 33 (52) Wilson Community College.

34 **SECTION 1.(c)** The Department of Information Technology shall submit a report to  
35 the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology and the Fiscal Research  
36 Division every six months. The report shall include details on Fund utilization, project  
37 completion status, and any challenges faced during project implementation.

38 **SECTION 1.(d)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Rural  
39 Broadband Initiative Fund established in this act the sum of twenty-five million dollars  
40 (\$25,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be used for the purposes  
41 described in this act.

42 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2024.