

## Governor Unveils Statewide Broadband Plan

By Administrator  
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Governor Pat McCrory has released a new State Broadband Plan which outlines recommendations for the state to increase internet access, focus on lowering infrastructure construction costs and expanding access for K-12 students at home.

“We have made significant progress to improve North Carolina's broadband infrastructure and increase access for affordable high-speed internet, especially for small businesses and in our classrooms,” Governor McCrory said in a statement. “This plan will build on our progress and further position North Carolina as a leader in ensuring that our infrastructure meets our growing demand.”

Governor McCrory has made connecting classrooms to robust Wi-Fi internet a top priority. When he entered office, just 22 percent of North Carolina classrooms had robust Wi-Fi. Today, nearly 65 percent of classrooms are connected, and the governor has committed to connecting 100 percent of classrooms by 2018. The comprehensive State Broadband Plan announced today builds on that progress in targeted areas and also looks at ways to support new health care technologies and provide the necessary tools to public safety responders to ensure North Carolinians' safety.

“This plan helps the state put in place the policies and tools needed to address the growing needs of our citizens,” said State Chief Information Officer Keith Werner. “Through the course of writing the plan, we found two common themes: active and engaged communities and their partnerships with private sector internet service providers are the biggest factors in bridging existing digital divides.”

The plan finds that new technologies, user demand, and greater reliance on internet access will require ongoing infrastructure upgrades within our state. Governments can ensure a healthier broadband ecosystem by encouraging competition through updated policies and laws. In areas where competition is lacking, policy makers must empower communities to form more equitable partnerships with service providers.

Developed by the Broadband Infrastructure Office within the North Carolina Department of

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Information Technology, the plan offers lawmakers and local officials specific recommendations to foster broadband deployment and adoption. A collaborative effort, the plan uses feedback gathered from more than a dozen stakeholder listening sessions, discussions with nearly 80 subject matter experts, and a survey of 3,500 local leaders.