NC Association of County Commissioners
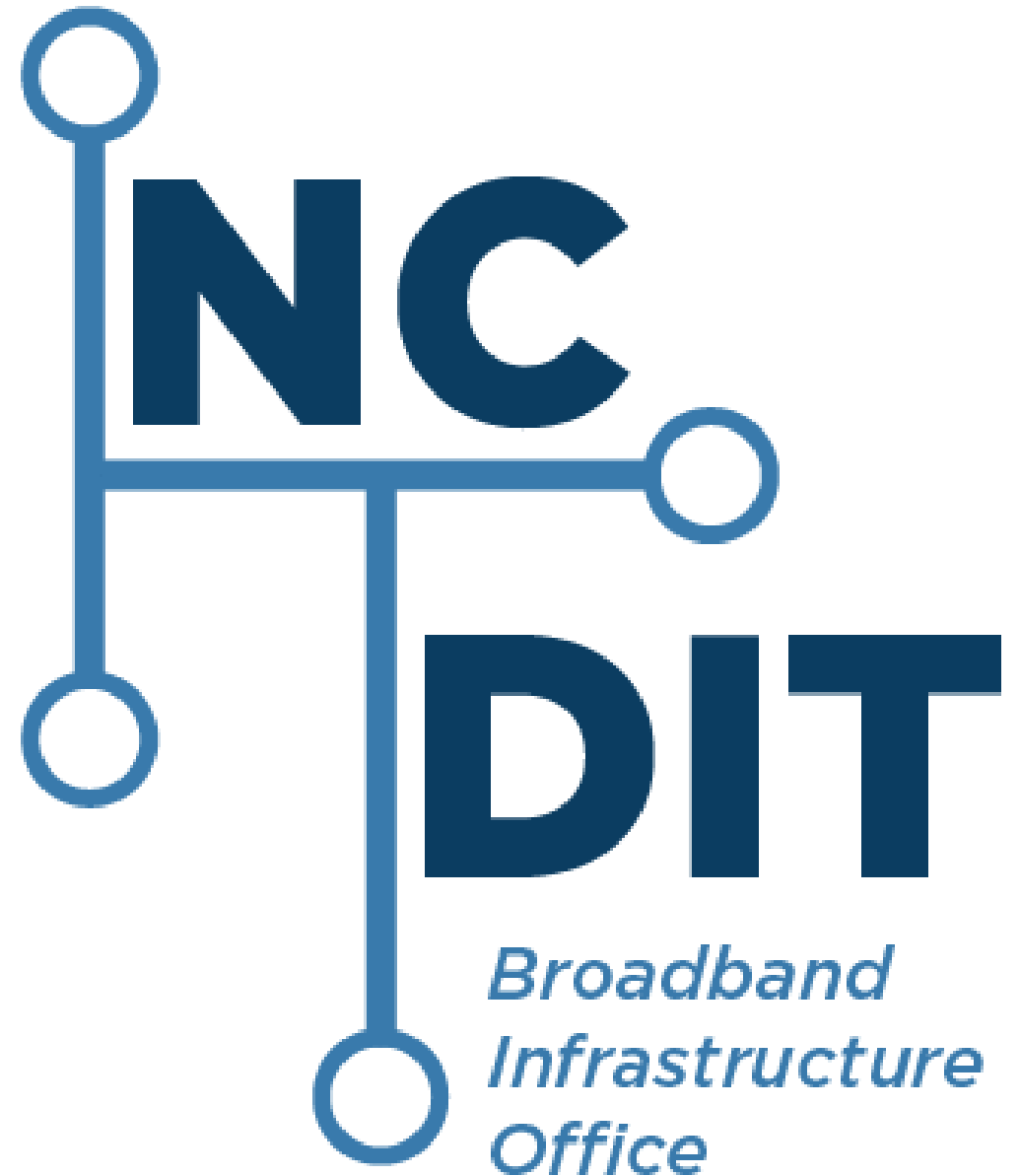
Post-GREAT Information Session

Division of Broadband and Digital Equity
Broadband Infrastructure Office

September 1, 2022

NC DIT

Broadband Infrastructure Office

GREAT Awards Made to Date

GREAT Grant Program
- $350m in ARPA SFRF dollars

Awards Made to Date:
- One project in each of the 92 counties
- Total Awards - ~ $267M
- Total Proposed Locations - ~ 112,113 (HH & Bus.)

Process for Rolling Awards

- Awards for the 2021-2022 Federal GREAT Grant Program are being awarded on a rolling basis.

- All awards are based on the scoring matrix dictated by statute.

- Upon scoring all final applications within an individual county, the Office will make one award per county, to the highest scoring eligible application. (The Office will score applications within a county as soon as all of the applications within a county have received a completed review process, protest resolution, and updated application data as needed.)

- This rolling process will continue until one award has been made in all 93 participating counties.

- Following awards to all 93 counties, the Office will evaluate the amount of funding remaining out of the initial $350m GREAT Grant pot.

- For remaining funding, the Office will identify the highest-scoring remaining projects statewide, ensure that there are no overlapping areas, and make awards to the next highest scoring on down, with a maximum of one additional award per county, until the balance of the funds is allocated. The tie-breaker provisions posted in the GREAT Grant Guidance FAQs will apply to all awards.

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How Did We Get to the $267m?

Timeline

- **Application Open 1/31/2022**
- **Application Due Date 05/04/2022**
- **Public Posting Period for Protests – 05/31/22 – 06/20/22**
- **Protest review and decisions – 6/21/22 to 8/10/22**
- **Application Revisions (Post Protest) – 08/12/22 to 08/22/22**
- **Rolling Award Round 1 – 07/18/22**
- **Rolling Award Round 2 – 08/01/22**
- **Rolling Award Round 3 – 08/31/22**

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How Did We Get to the $267m?

As of 05/04/2022

- 305 Applications Received on 05/04/2022
- 488,000 location points represented
- 93 Counties represented
- 37 ISP applicants

As of 08/31/2022

- 216 Protests received and adjudicated
- 280 applications scored in 93 counties
- 16 ISPs Awardees for one award in 92 counties
- Total Awards - ~ $267M
- Total Proposed Locations - ~ 112,113 (HH & Bus.)

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Application Review Categories

Eligibility Review

Financial Solvency

Technical Review

Partnerships

Mapping / Eligible Locations

Protests of Eligible Locations

- 216 Protests received
- Over 200,000 location points

- **Protesting ISP can only submit a protest if the:**

- Proposed project covers an area that is a protected area as defined in our Guidance Document **OR**

- Proposed project area contains 10% or more of total households with access to broadband service

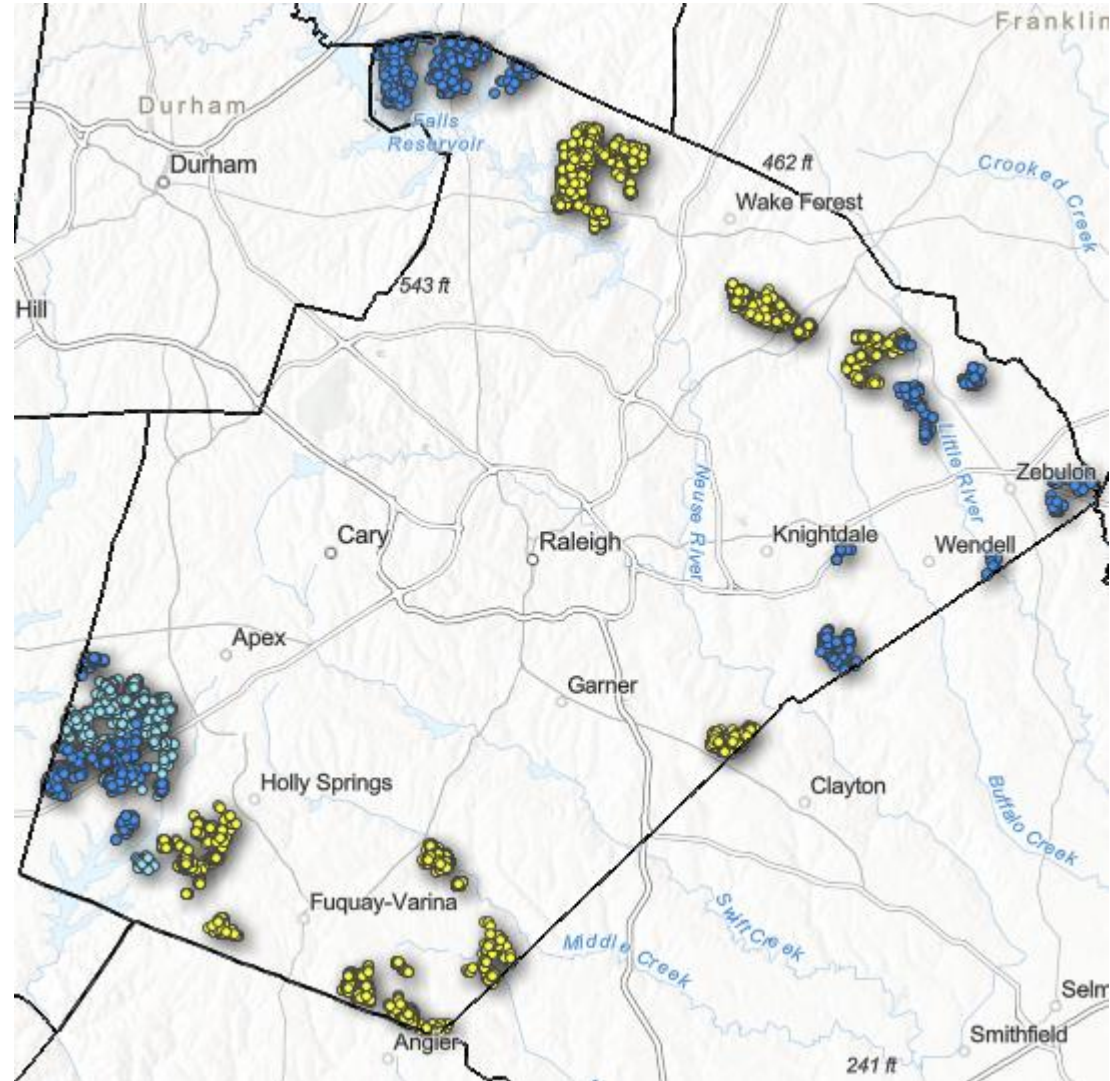# Protests of Eligible Locations

Protest Analysis

• Each Protest is reviewed individually

• Data Submitted by Protester is analyzed for the following:

  • Granularity of information submitted by the protesters

  • Protected areas

  • 10% threshold

  • "Self-protests"

  • Comparison with FCC Form 477 Data

  • Comparison with Speed Test Data (NC Broadband Survey)

• Protest decisions are exempt from the contested case provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act.

• Some protest information is deemed confidential per statute

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Identifying Eligible Areas Moving Forward

- New FCC Broadband Data Collection Process
  - Serviceable Location Fabric
  - Broadband Availability Data
  - Challenge Processes

- Collection of Data directly by the State

- Continuation of NC Broadband Survey

- Goal of receiving protests/challenges to map prior to grant rounds

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What's Next – GREAT?

- Working to award remaining $80m+

- Identifying the second-highest scoring projects in each county, and statewide. Will use the same process as described in the FAQ document.

- Projects with overlap between awarded area and second-highest scoring project, will require application revisions

What about CAB?

- CAB allows for selection of "unfunded" GREAT Grant projects

From CAB Guidance document:

- Once the GREAT Grant awards have been finalized, the Office will make available a list of the unfunded eligible projects. **Because these projects will have been part of a competitive grants process, have passed eligibility requirements for the GREAT Grant Program, have been vetted for eligible areas, and have been part of a protest process for eligible locations, the remaining viable projects may be considered under the CAB Program**. (Some of these unfunded projects may be ineligible for consideration because of duplication with funded GREAT Grant projects, making the remaining project infeasible.)

- Based on the eligible projects list, counties will then be able to determine whether they wish to fund an unfunded GREAT Grant project or move forward with a new competitive process under the CAB Program. If a county wishes to fund an unfunded GREAT Grant project, the matching fund requirements will be calculated based on the total project cost and the matching requirements under the CAB Program.

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What about Contracting for GREAT Awards?

- All award announcements are contingent awards

- Working through contingency items with grantees over coming months

- Will be verifying <u>matching funds</u> first

- MOU Concept: Compliance Monitoring – DIT and counties

- One set of compliance measures for the grantees

- **Please wait on additional guidance from DIT before finalizing of partnership agreements**

Potential Additional Sessions with Counties

- MOUs, Partnership Agreements and Contracting

- Compliance and Monitoring; Reimbursement Processes

- Coordination on Mapping

- Procurement under CAB

- Individual County Meetings for specific GREAT questions?

Contact Information

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- GREAT Grant – greatgrant@nc.gov
- CAB Program – cabprogram@nc.gov
- Mapping – broadbandmapping@nc.gov
- NC DIT Internet Survey - https://www.ncbroadband.gov/north-carolina-broadband-survey or **Call 919-790-0553 to take the survey.**