

# North Carolina Broadband Survey Outreach Guide

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## **About the survey**

The North Carolina Broadband Survey is designed to gather information on locations without adequate internet access and speeds in the state.

Information gathered using the survey will be used to provide context to the state's broadband picture, guiding funding opportunities through North Carolina's Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant program, informing research and policy recommendations, and supporting strategic targeting of additional funding channels.

Users with internet access at their location can take the five-minute survey online. Users without internet service can take the survey by phone. The survey is available in both English and Spanish.

This survey includes an optional internet speed test. If your home or business currently has internet service, please take this survey from that location.

## **Using this guide**

The N.C. Department of Information Technology's Broadband Infrastructure Office has developed this guide to support communities as they develop outreach plans to connect with neighbors who are without access to high-speed broadband.

This guide is intended to be a resource providing outreach suggestions for survey efforts and outlines strategies, tactics, and tools that communities can use for outreach as well as an example outreach plan for a launch week.

If you are starting or planning to start a campaign, we'd love to know. Please contact our office at [NCBroadbandSurvey@nc.gov](mailto:NCBroadbandSurvey@nc.gov) or by [visiting our Community Action page](#).

## **Important notes**

### ***Mind the numbers***

Different phone numbers are used for the English-translated version than for to the Spanish-translated version.

English Phone Number: 919-750-0553

Spanish Phone Number: 919-750-8860

### ***Dialing, browsing and texting into the survey***

Residents without internet have two phone-based options for taking the survey. However, the phone-based options do not collect data that is as comprehensive and should be offered and used as a last resort.

Residents with phones capable of text messaging can text “internet” to take the survey to 919-750-0553 for English speakers or to 919-750-8860 for Spanish speakers. They will then receive a series of text messages asking for their address to register it as having no internet capability. Standard text messaging rates will apply to these participants.

Residents with land lines or cell phones that do not have texting capability may place a voice call to take the survey. The interactive voice response system will guide them through a series of short questions to obtain their address and register it in the database as having no internet capability.

Again, when possible, it is strongly advised to take the survey using the online version. Information gathered using the survey and speed test will help provide context to North Carolina’s broadband picture, guiding funding opportunities through the State’s Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant, informing research and policy recommendations, and supporting strategic targeting of additional funding channels.

## **Building an outreach plan**

When building an outreach plan, remember that continued engagement is essential to reach the community members who you need to hear from most. Launching a survey in your community that is supported by active outreach and marketing for only one to two weeks will substantially limit the results of your campaign.

Taking the time to consider how you will present the survey to the community is essential to success. Designing a three to four month plan that lays out your tactics and milestones over a period of time allows you to develop the materials necessary to support those needs in advance. You may also find new audiences that are not currently being reached and are essential to creating a full local broadband picture.

When planning, we recommend that you take your regular communications with your stakeholders into consideration. Does your community already send an email or direct mail notice about utilities or events? Is your school planning a communication with parents who might need improved broadband service for remote learning efforts? These are great options to consider as part of your outreach plan in your community.

Put your options out on the table and build the plan that reaches your community.

### ***Starting your campaign***

Many of your partners and key stakeholder groups will be the most excited about your campaign during this initial period, and getting buy-in and support from those groups during this period is a great way to promote your survey.

Identifying and empowering stakeholder groups creates new community champions that can be an unbelievable force in your outreach.

Some key groups to consider engaging as part of your outreach efforts include libraries, business organizations, charitable organizations, homeowner's associations and schools.

Reaching out to connect with these key groups before your survey launch is great for getting buy-in, coordinating efforts, and identifying other gaps in outreach. Identifying those gaps is critical for ensuring comprehensive data for your area.

### ***Example launch plan***

Building out a strategy only needs to be as complex as you choose for it to be. Having a plan in place is one of the most important steps, providing you with a reference resource to keep your outreach efforts moving forward.

In your first week, an outreach launch plan might look like below:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Press Release	Press release story published in local media outlet	Mailed tax notice with mailer insert	Call to action social inviting people to take the survey	Redistribute press release through local Chamber of Commerce or other business organization	Social media post with graphic of mailer, calling attention to the call to action  "Did you see our survey in your tax notice?"	Social media post referring readers to the Letter to the Editor piece
Social media post referring to press release	Elected officials share post to relevant social media	Social media post referring to news coverage			Publish Letter to the Editor for local news media from elected official, city manager, key leader, etc.	
Email to citizens from primary sender (such as town, city, HOA, county, Council of Government)	Distribute and post N.C. Broadband Survey flyers to target buildings and business locations					
Notify Broadband Infrastructure Office of press release publication						

Building an outreach plan that will guide your marketing for the duration of your campaign is a great way for making sure that you are maximizing your efforts, identifying and reaching all of your essential audiences, and gathering critical data.

### ***Measure and adjust***

As you continue to move through your survey period, refer to the tactics in your campaign that have given the best results to guide your ongoing efforts.

For example, if you find that mailer inserts are particularly successful for reaching critical areas of your community but social media in the area hasn't been as successful, identifying other direct mail opportunities to reach those individuals applies metrics to tactics and should guide your outreach.

## Spreading the word

Local leaders serving as champions are your best resource for creating outreach plans that connect with your communities.

Below you will find some ideas for how your community champions can connect with areas that you might find more difficult to reach. In addition to the ideas below, you will find marketing materials that your community can plug and play as part of your outreach plans to help you reach your data aggregation goals.

Download and use the marketing materials below and share them in your communities to help spread the word about your community's broadband surveying efforts. Be sure to share and use the hashtag #NCBroadband on Twitter.

### ***Social posts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)***

Spreading the word using social media is a great way to reach out into your community quickly. Using location-based groups, as well as faith-based organizations, on platforms like Facebook, Reddit, and LinkedIn are great ways to spread the word directly to the members of your community.

Below are some example social posts that your community can use to spread the word online about your local campaign.

[COUNTY/COMMUNITY/TOWN NAME]'s broadband survey has launched. Help us identify high-speed broadband gaps in our community by taking the 5-minute survey at <https://ncbroadband.gov/survey> today and help our community get better connected. #NCBroadband

Help [COUNTY/COMMUNITY/TOWN NAME]'s families and homes get better connected. Take the #NCBroadband Survey and let us know your connection needs and reliability. Visit the 5-minute survey at <https://ncbroadband.gov/survey>

[COUNTY/COMMUNITY/TOWN NAME] has broadband gaps that keep people in our community from being able to easily and efficiently access services like telehealth, remote learning and remote work. Help us find the gaps in our community by visiting <https://ncbroadband.gov/survey> and taking the 5-minute survey.

[COUNTY/COMMUNITY/TOWN NAME] needs your help finding the areas of our community that need better high-speed broadband service. Visit the 5-minute survey at <https://ncbroadband.gov/survey>

[COUNTY/COMMUNITY/TOWN NAME] students and teachers need better high-speed broadband and we need help finding the un- and underserved areas in our community. Please help by taking the 5-minute survey at

<https://ncbroadband.gov/survey> today and help our community get better connected. #NCBroadband

### ***N.C. Broadband Survey direct mailer***

Postal mail provides local communities a great opportunity to deliver the N.C. Broadband Survey to the members of their community that you need to hear from the most. Many municipalities and community institutions often deliver mail to citizens in the form of billing notices, community bulletins, tax notices, etc. This direct connection with your local citizens can be a great opportunity to deliver information about your community's survey to those who are less likely to encounter it online.

We've developed a 3x5.25" postal mailer insert that you can download from our website. Download and print the Survey Mailer and include it in your community's mailings, such as utility bills, school board notices, library notices, church bulletins, etc.

### ***N.C. Broadband Survey handout***

The N.C. Broadband Survey handout is a great education resource to share and leave behind with key elected officials, stakeholders, faith-based organizations, and other community leaders. Download and share the full-sized N.C. Broadband Survey Information Handout.

### ***N.C. Broadband Survey flyer***

Download, distribute and share the 8.5 x 11 inches flyer around your community areas, like in libraries, coffee shops, schools, places of worship, and other central community hubs. Have you hung the flyer up in your community? Take a photo and send it to us on Twitter. Make sure to tag us at @BroadbandIO with the hashtag #NCBroadband.



## **Local resources for big impacts:**

Reaching out to your community to connect with every individual possible can seem like an overwhelming task.

Below, we have some recommended focal points to get you started with your N.C. Broadband Survey outreach campaigns. These are organizations and events that provide you an opportunity to spread the word quickly.

### ***Faith-based communities***

Faith-based institutions are excellent at spreading the word about causes that are important to their communities. Engaging local leaders in your faith-based communities in promoting your effort can be a great way to reach large portions of the community quickly. Share the flyer and ask that they suggest their congregations participate in the survey

### ***Engaging your local press partners***

Engaging local news and media partners to help you spread the word about your community's broadband planning efforts is often a key resource on the way to your success.

At the launch of your community's N.C. Broadband Survey outreach campaign, sending a press release to local press outlets and publications is a great way to inform local partners about your efforts, as well as to provide a referral piece for people in your community that are interested in the information and might not have been on your distribution list.

In addition to a press release, engaging local elected leaders or other community influencers and supporting an effort to write a letter to the editor of a local paper is another great way to reach additional citizens while also strongly advocating for relevance and need.

### ***Don't forget your website***

A website remains a key tool for establishing credibility and providing critical education to citizens in communities across the state. Building out a section of your website that supports your campaign initiatives, provides education about the survey, and promotes the need for the survey can all be great ways to reach your community. Contact our office for a unique link that you can use with your campaigns to better identify your residents.

### ***Email communications***

Does your community send utility bills, memos, event announcements or other kinds of communications to your citizens? Engaging your citizens through email is an excellent way to inform them about the survey.

Share your mission with organizations who might be willing to spread the word for you through their email lists. Great options for this might include the programs and camp organizers at community centers, schools, as well as for-profit entities who might be willing to send a call-to-action to their email lists.

### ***Back-to-school***

This year, as teachers and parents connect for the first time, things are going to be different. Many of those meetings will involve conversations around remote learning. Please include the survey as part of those meetings and encourage parents to participate to help support planning and funding efforts by visiting <https://ncbroadband.gov/survey>.

### ***Engage public libraries***

Public libraries are excellent resources in your community can be strong supporters of your broadband surveying efforts. A library is in a great position to connect with members of the community that are often difficult to reach in other ways. Our mailer can be a great postcard handout that libraries can include in a kiosk, at a front desk, or with other materials. You can also set up a computer at a library for users to visit and complete their survey online. Just be sure to clean the computer between uses and follow proper social distancing guidelines.

Have other materials you need? Please contact our office at [ncbroadbandsurvey@nc.gov](mailto:ncbroadbandsurvey@nc.gov) to connect with our team and discuss your campaign and how we might be able to help.

