

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While North Carolina ranks 14th in the country concerning broadband connectivity, there is a stark divide between rural and urban areas in access speeds provided. WiderNet seeks to increase broadband access to rural and under-served areas across the state.

This report begins with the Client Background which profiles the history of broadband access, current barriers to rural access in North Carolina, and notes other key terms or measurements for context. The portfolio then highlights the team's working document in order to provide context into how and why deliverables were selected for inclusion in partnership with WiderNet. After, the three key deliverables: (1) the Organizations of Interest Directory, (2) Infographic, and (3) White Paper are included.

The Organizations of Interest Directory lists strategic local, regional, and national organizations actively working to solve the broadband divide between rural and urban areas. WiderNet can utilize this directory to form strategic coalitions between these partnerships to pool resources and influence.

The Infographic is a visually appealing overview of broadband access in North Carolina meant for distribution among key stakeholders to increase awareness among the general public about the state of broadband access in North Carolina.

The White Paper is the final deliverable encompassing current legislative barriers to broadband access in rural areas, key organizations, rural impact, and possible solutions. It is to be used for distribution among key stakeholders to provide context to stakeholders concerning broadband access.

Other deliverables noted, such as the Capstone Poster and Final Client Presentation are subsidiary deliverables for WiderNet to use in presentations with key stakeholders. They allow the client to clearly explain overall goals and potential solutions in a concise manner.

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Ultimately, this report implicates that expanding funding for rural grant programs, reversing Chapter 160A, Article 16A of the NCGA bill to allow municipal networks, and creating a better system to hold private providers accountable to higher internet quality standards are all key measures for increasing broadband within rural communities.