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CAPSTONE POSTER

OVERVIEW

The poster represents an aggregated version of the team's semester-long partnership with WiderNet. It highlights the purpose of our project, our approaches to our presented policy problem, and details potential policy implications.

PURPOSE

The Capstone poster is a subsidiary deliverable utilized during the Public Policy Capstone showcase. The team utilized it to explain research, findings, and deliverables created in conjunction with WiderNet.

NC Disconnected

Accessing Broadband Access in North Carolina

BY CALISSA ANDERSEN, JOEL GILLISON, SUSANNAH HORTON, ERIKA ROBERSON, LAURA SELBY | PUBLIC POLICY CAPSTONE, FALL 2019 | UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Background

ESTABLISHED IN 2000, WIDERNET IS A NON-PROFIT BASED IN CHAPEL HILL. THE ORGANIZATION FOCUSES ON PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND TRAININGS FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED GROUPS. WIDERNET WORKS TO BRING INTERNET CONNECTIVITY TO THESE COMMUNITIES.

Problem Definition

RURAL COMMUNITIES IN NORTH CAROLINA SUFFER THROUGH POOR INTERNET CONNECTION AND, AS A RESULT, ARE LEFT WITHOUT ACCESS TO MANY BASIC NEEDS, "WITHIN THE NEXT THREE TO FIVE YEARS, MANY REGIONS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS" USING CURRENT BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY," (TROSTLE, 2016).

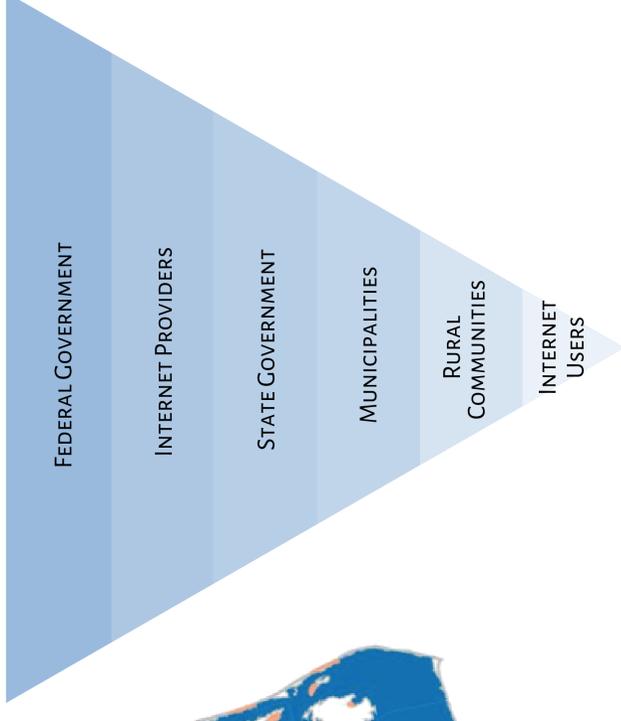
THE FCC MANDATED STANDARD INTERNET SPEED IS 25 MBPS FOR FAMILIES. IN 2015, ONLY 12% OF NORTH CAROLINIANS IN RURAL AREAS HAD MULTIPLE SERVICES TO CHOOSE FROM THAT PROVIDED SUFFICIENT BROADBAND AT 25 MBPS. AN ESTIMATED 125,000 NORTH CAROLINIANS LACK ACCESS TO ANY WIRED INTERNET PROVIDERS.

Project Overview

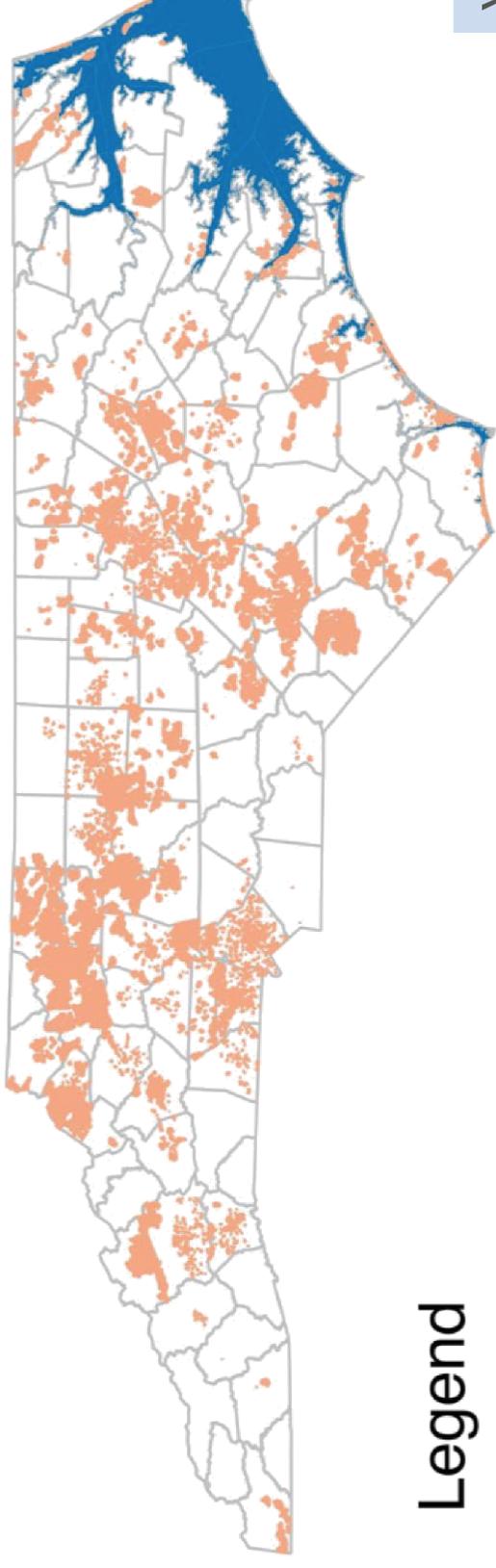
WIDERNET'S PRIMARY MISSION IS TO CLOSE THE DIGITAL GAP FOR RURAL AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES IN N.C. WE PARTNER WITH WIDERNET TO AID IN EXPLORING THIS POLICY ISSUE THROUGH:

- DEVELOPING A ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORY TO PROMOTE COALITION BUILDING
- CREATING A INTERNET ACCESS INFOGRAPHIC TO SPREAD AWARENESS OF THE POLICY ISSUE
- AUTHORING A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE STATE OF INTERNET ACCESS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Levels of Stakeholders



Little Competition in Rural North Carolina



Legend

More than one provider that offers 25Mbps / 3Mbps

High-Speed Internet Access Competition Based on FCC Form 477 Data from June 2015, Released March 2016

Barriers to Access



LEGISLATION HAS BEEN PUSHED THROUGH THE HOUSE, BUT TENDS TO FAIL ONCE IT GETS TO THE SENATE. THE NC CABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION HAS HIRED A LOBBYIST WITH DEEP CONNECTIONS IN THE SENATE. THE TELECOM INDUSTRY WAS ALSO VERY SUPPORTIVE OF CHAPTER 160A, ARTICLE 16A OF THE NC STATUTE. THIS STATE STATUTE PROHIBITS LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES FROM ESTABLISHING THEIR OWN BROADBAND SERVICES.



THE INTERNET IS A CIVIL RIGHT AS DECLARED BY THE UNITED NATIONS ARTICLE 19. CIVIL RIGHTS ARE "GUARANTEES OF EQUAL SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUAL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW, REGARDLESS OF RACE, RELIGION, OR OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS". HOWEVER, NOT ALL GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZE THIS RIGHT AND HONOR IT.

You are a Stakeholder because...

- YOU ARE AN INTERNET USER
- YOU ARE A BROADBAND PROVIDER
- YOU LIVE IN A COMMUNITY WHERE BROADBAND ACCESS IS UNDERSERVED
- YOU THINK INTERNET ACCESS IS A CIVIL RIGHT
- YOU WANT TO HELP CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Policy Implications

- EXPAND FUNDING FOR RURAL GRANT PROGRAMS
- GET RID OF RED TAPE PREVENTING MUNICIPAL NETWORKS
- HOLD PRIVATE, CORPORATE PROVIDERS TO HIGHER INTERNET QUALITY STANDARDS

Map citation: O'Boyle, T., & Mitchell, C. (2012, December 3). Wilson's Greenlight Leads North Carolina in Fast Internet. Retrieved October 2019, from Community Networks website: <https://muninetworks.org/reports/wilsons-greenlight-leads-north-carolina-fast-internet>
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