



Digital inclusion planning supports a community's ability to connect and bolster the digital access and literacy of all community members. Recognizing that a regional approach is critical to closing the digital divide, Centralina is partnering with the Institute for Emerging Issues to **improve broadband access** and **digital literacy** in the region. This initiative will assist county leaders in developing and implementing digital inclusion (DI) plans that include **strategies to address digital equity concerns** and **enhance a community's digital economy**. There is no cost to participate in the [BAND-NC](#) DI Plan Initiative, which is one of several ongoing NC digital enhancement and access initiatives. See the chart on the following page for an overview of how these NC grant programs may support your community.

COUNTY BENEFITS

Centralina will work in partnership with the identified county leads to assist in the development of individual county DI plans that will inform a regional DI plan and supporting digital navigator webpage to assist with implementation needs.

Benefits to the counties include:

- State recognition as a DI plan county for future grant funding
- Direct support for economic mobility and community prosperity goals
- Bolstered public safety warning awareness and resilience planning

CENTRALINA'S ROLE

As the facilitator of the planning process and administrator of the BAND-NC funds, Centralina will:

- Develop DI plans for each county, in partnership with the counties of Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan and Union respectively
- Establish a regional working group and web-based repository for county plans
- Develop outreach materials, surveys, focus groups and a Centralina region digital access resource map
- Ensure compliance with BAND-NC DI plan grant reporting requirements

READY TO GET STARTED?

Please contact Christina Danis, Director Community Economic Development, at cdanis@centralina.org with any questions or requests for more information.

DIGITAL EQUITY & BROADBAND FUNDING PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

	<u>Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grant</u>	<u>Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Program</u>	<u>Building a New Digital Economy in NC (BAND-NC) Program (Centralina)</u>	<u>The Broadband Stop Gap Solutions Program (Stop-Gap Grant)</u>
Funding Recipient	Private broadband providers; program encourages partnerships with counties, nonprofits and other internet service providers	All counties in NC	Councils of Government	Municipalities, counties, school systems, internet service providers, councils of government and nonprofits
Eligible Projects	Deployments that provide minimum speeds of 100 Mbps download/20Mbps upload	Projects applied for and not funded under GREAT grant can be considered for funding under CAB program	Digital inclusion plan development activities, consultant services and community engagement efforts	Installation of infrastructure that expands the provision of broadband service expansion to unserved and underserved households
Period of Performance (Timeline)	FY2021 – FY2024	FY2021 – FY2024	October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2025	Anticipated start in FY2024

DIGITAL INCLUSION (DI) PLAN ELEMENTS

DI plans assess what broadband digital access, literacy resources and tools counties currently have, do not currently have or may be insufficient to meet community needs. The goal of the DI plan is to develop implementation strategies to ensure access for all in NC for a fully connected digital future.

Regional digital inclusion conditions

- Statewide initiatives
- Regional digital inclusion navigator website

County-specific plans

- Asset inventory
- Needs inventory
- Implementation strategies and next steps

Visit [Broadband | NC OneMap](#) to see your community's digital footprint