



**For Immediate Release**

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Media Contact: Hank Page  
[hpage@ors.sc.gov](mailto:hpage@ors.sc.gov)  
803-737-0519

## ***McMaster, Clyburn Announce “GetConnectedSC” Campaign to Expand Broadband Access***

*Invite every South Carolinian to take the Better-Internet Survey*

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** – Governor Henry McMaster and Congressman James E. Clyburn were joined by officials from the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff’s (ORS) Broadband Office (SCBBO) and the South Carolina Department of Administration’s (Admin) Digital Equity Office (SCDEO) to announce **GetConnectedSC**, a high-speed internet access and adoption campaign to transform how our citizens engage with the online world.

The bi-partisan **GetConnectedSC** campaign is designed to identify the areas of greatest need in our state, invest in broadband infrastructure to those areas and provide support services to make that transformation possible for every home, business and community organization in South Carolina.

In addition to a new website, [www.GetConnectedSC.org](http://www.GetConnectedSC.org), the campaign includes a 26-community listening tour and a **Better-Internet Survey**. The survey is designed to capture the barriers to internet adoption of unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities statewide. Information gathered will shape a Five-Year Broadband Plan for the state to ensure a *Better Internet for a Better South Carolina*.

The initiative is part of a nationwide effort to improve broadband access. In 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which included \$65 billion for the deployment of broadband infrastructure development and digital inclusion efforts across the country. As a required first step in the deployment of these funds, South Carolina was granted planning funds for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity (DE) programs which ultimately lead to additional grants. The BEAD and DE planning processes extend through the summer of 2023 and culminate with the formal submission of the SC Five-Year Broadband and Digital Equity Plans to the federal government in August.

Once the South Carolina Five-Year plans have been approved, a minimum of \$100 million additional federal funds for the BEAD program and tens of millions for the DE program will be made available to South Carolina to continue investment in broadband infrastructure and adoption statewide.

For a detailed listing of tour stops or to take the Better-Internet Survey, visit [www.GetConnectedSC.org](http://www.GetConnectedSC.org).

## QUOTES

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“I have been a persistent advocate for incorporating local community feedback in our efforts to make high-speed internet service accessible and affordable for every South Carolinian, and that is why I am excited to help announce the launch of “GetConnectedSC,” said **Congressman Jim Clyburn**. “This critical initiative was authorized and funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and will bring us one step closer to closing the digital divide in South Carolina.”

“Providing access to reliable, high speed internet is one of the most important things we can do to ensure the prosperity of our rural communities in South Carolina,” said **Governor Henry McMaster**. “In order to fully take advantage of the opportunity available to us, we need South Carolinians to participate in this survey process.”

“The creation of the ‘GetConnectedSC’ campaign is the next logical step as we work to roll-out high-speed internet statewide,” said **Jim Stritzinger, director of the SC Broadband Office**. “We have a lot of momentum deploying infrastructure; however, that is just the first step. We need to help residents with affordability and the attainment of digital skills too. That’s where the SCDEO comes in.”

“We recognize having fiber cable does not improve your life unless you can afford the monthly service, have a working device and know how to use the technology,” said **Mike Shealy, director of Admin’s newly formed South Carolina Digital Equity Office**. “We are excited to work alongside elected officials, other state agencies, and local organizations to help people adopt and use high-speed internet service.”

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**SCBBO:** The SCBBO is housed within the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS). It serves as the central broadband planning body to coordinate with federal, state, regional, local, and private entities, to the extent practicable, to engage in the continued deployment of broadband infrastructure in the state.

**ABOUT SCDEO:** The SCDEO is housed within the South Carolina Department of Administration (Admin). It works closely with the SCBBO and supports digital equity and inclusion activities, and builds capacity related to the adoption of broadband statewide.

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