

UPDATE- OCTOBER 2021

Broadband Infrastructure Funding in South Carolina

To date, the ORS has developed and implemented 3 broadband infrastructure grant programs. These 3 programs include a total of 126 projects in 33 counties throughout the state. These programs represent a total broadband investment, including company match, in South Carolina of almost \$112 million.

Grant Program	Status	Start Date	End Date	Number of Projects	Number of Counties	Number of Companies*	Grant Funds Awarded	Broadband Investment in SC (with match)
Act 142	Completed	August 2020	December 2020	76	28	14	\$16,728,421	\$35,267,820
RBGP	In Progress	March 2021	October 2022	34	19	16	\$29,669,889	\$59,399,774
Proviso 73.6	In Progress	July 2021	March 2022	16	11	8	\$8,661,678	\$17,323,357
TOTALS TO DATE				126	33	20	\$55,089,988	\$111,990,951

* rolls subsidiaries into parent company

Act 142- Broadband Infrastructure Program

Governor McMaster signed Act 142 on June 25, 2020, authorizing broadband infrastructure expansion through federal funds disbursed to South Carolina through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). With these funds, the ORS launched the Broadband Infrastructure Program in August 2020 (along with a mapping effort and an online learning initiative).

Rural Broadband Grant Program (RBGP)

In January 2021, the Joint Bond Review Committee approved the allocation of \$30 million from the SC Department of Commerce for a competitive grant program to be developed and implemented by the ORS to expand broadband access in rural parts of South Carolina.

2021-2022 Appropriations Act

Broadband Infrastructure Program- Continued

Proviso 73.6 of the FY 2021-2022 Appropriations Act continues the funding for broadband infrastructure projects originating under Act 142.

Office of Broadband Coordinator

Proviso 73.6 also authorizes the ORS to establish the Office of Broadband Coordinator to serve as the central broadband planning body for the state.

To date, the ORS has hired a Director, a Deputy Director, and a Senior Geo Spatial Data Scientist to staff the Office of Broadband Coordinator.

Future Projects

Starlink Pilot Program

The Office of Broadband Coordinator is coordinating with the SC Department of Education to acquire ten angel (sponsored) subscriptions to be installed in 10 locations throughout the state. The subscriptions will include all equipment, professional installation and 12 months of service for each household.

American Rescue Plan Act

The accelerateSC taskforce published the Final Report and Recommendations for Expenditure of Federal Funds on August 24, 2021. The resource component recommends an allocation of over \$490 million of American Rescue Plan Act funds to the ORS for broadband expansion.

Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund

The Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund allows for investment in high-quality broadband infrastructure, as well as other initiatives. The current allocation to South Carolina is \$188 million.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

In August 2021, the ORS applied for a broadband infrastructure grant through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. If selected, these grant monies will fund six projects totaling over \$15 million. The ORS partnered with the SC Department of Education, the SC Department of Commerce, Prisma Health, and six Internet Service Providers on a proposal to bring fiber and rebuild the digital infrastructure of six main street communities: Denmark, Holly Hill, New Ellenton, Ridge Spring, Salley, and Saluda.

More information can be found at ORS.SC.GOV/Broadband

