



BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM **Orangeburg County Broadband**

Orangeburg County Broadband (OCBB) provides broadband internet service in Orangeburg County. The OCBB system is self-sufficient, being operated independently outside of county government. OCBB provides broadband to assisted living retirement communities, industrial parks, schools, businesses, and medical facilities.

OCBB received \$300,000 in CARES Act funding for its project to help expand broadband infrastructure in South Carolina. Orangeburg County provided \$300,000 in matching funds. OCBB was also awarded a \$13 million 2019 Reconnect Grant, including a \$3.25 million match.

Impact to Community

Located in the Lowcountry Region of South Carolina, Orangeburg County is situated centrally among Columbia and Charleston, SC and Augusta, GA. Affected communities in Orangeburg County include Bolentown, Springfield, Neeses, Norway, and Four Holes. Receiving CARES Act funding allowed the company to install infrastructure that delivers high-speed fiber broadband to customers. The CARES Act project installed fiber to the premises, providing a maximum download/upload speed of 1 Gbps/1 Gbps.



“ Before we got our new connection, our internet was very unreliable and very slow. Our smart TVs would constantly buffer or be unable to load a program or a movie. Since we got connected with Orangeburg at the beginning of August, our two children were able to learn virtually at the same time while I also worked from home, something that would not have been possible with our internet connection speeds before. It’s been a huge blessing for our family. ”

*Amy Holt
Residential customer*

SUCCESS STORY

AT A GLANCE

Number of Projects: 1

Total Project Cost: \$600,000

CARES Act Funding: \$300,000

Households Served: 27, with requests daily

Households Passed*: 500

Businesses Passed: 20

Health-Care Facilities Passed: 1

Community Anchor Points Passed: 10

Educational Institutions Passed: 1

Technology deployed:
Fiber to premises

Maximum download/upload speeds:
1 Gbps/1 Gbps

**The residence or business is eligible to subscribe to services.*

Access to high-speed broadband can benefit economic development. Companies looking to locate to the area now have access to fiber broadband. Small businesses now also have access to adequate broadband.

For the past 10 years, OCBB has maintained a list of unserved customers requesting access to broadband. OCBB will be personally contacting those customers to let them know about the newly available broadband service.

Helping Consumers During COVID-19

With limited access to health-care facilities, many residents previously had to travel out of their immediate area to health-care centers. OCBB's CARES Act project allows residents the ability to perform virtual telehealth visits with health-care facilities and hospitals using high-speed internet, thereby reducing the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus to others.

Employees are able to share bandwidth with their children who may be attending school virtually.

Many students in the Orangeburg County School District and nearby higher-education institutions are attending classes virtually. High-speed internet allows students to continue learning while at home.

Many companies have required employees to work from home. Employees are now able to complete work previously hindered by the lack of broadband access. Additionally, these employees are able to share bandwidth with their children who may be attending school virtually.



Project Area

OCBB's projects were completed in the following county:

- Orangeburg



Average Cost

The average cost is determined by taking the total cost of the project and dividing by the number of locations. This is the average cost based on the amount of CARES Act funding received and not what a consumer would pay.

Per Location Served: \$653.19

CARES Act

The South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 142 authorizing the ORS to expend up to \$50 million for broadband initiatives related to COVID-19. The expansion of broadband infrastructure emphasized services to rural communities and communities with a high prevalence of COVID-19 or with demographic characteristics consistent with risk factors for COVID-19.



About the Office of Regulatory Staff

The ORS represents consumers of investor-owned utilities in South Carolina before the PSC. The PSC is the state agency that sets utilities' rates. The ORS must look at the impact to the consumer and utilities' continued investment in reliable and high-quality services.

