



BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM  
**West Carolina Fiber, LLC**

**SUCCESS STORY**

West Carolina Fiber, LLC (WCFIBER), along with its parent West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc. and its affiliate West Carolina Communications, LLC, offer broadband and telecommunications services to consumers in parts of Greenwood County, SC, the City of Newberry, SC, and Columbia County, GA.

With eleven total projects, WCFIBER received almost \$3 million in CARES Act funding to help expand broadband infrastructure in South Carolina. The award covered 40 percent of WCFIBER's total project cost.

**Impact to Community**

Receiving CARES Act funding allowed WCFIBER to install infrastructure that delivers high-speed fiber broadband to customers. With these CARES Act projects, previously unserved homes and businesses now have access to fiber to the premises, delivering symmetrical speeds of 200 Mbps/200 Mbps with up to a maximum of 1Gbps/1Gbps.

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 broadband available.

WCFIBER proactively educates the communities it serves by providing computer literacy and "Tech Link" classes for adults. The company also supplies a monthly magazine with a dedicated "tech page" to communicate the resources that are available to existing customers.

**AT A GLANCE**

**Number of Projects:** 11

**Total Project Cost:** \$6,463,257

**CARES Act Funding:** \$2,740,376

**Households Served:** 400 orders processed and 120 working customers. This number is growing daily.

**Households Passed\*:** 2,542

**Businesses Passed:** 98

**Community Anchor Points Passed:** 8

**Technology deployed:**  
Fiber to the premises

**Minimum download/upload speeds:**  
200 Mbps/200 Mbps

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



“ My wife is a teacher and has had to do training online and we have three children who have had to quarantine at home for COVID. Before, only one person could be online at a time in our house to work using a cell phone as a hotspot. Now, it's so much better it's not even comparable. When it first got turned on, we turned on everything in the house we could at the same time and nothing buffered, even once. Everyone could be on and working or studying or just watching Disney or Netflix. It's awesome. ”

Jason Arnold  
Residential customer

## Helping Consumers During COVID-19

WCFIBER's CARES Act projects allow residents the ability to perform virtual telehealth visits with health-care facilities and hospitals, such as the local Abbeville Medical Center, using high-speed internet, thereby reducing the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus to others.

**Employees are now able to complete work, previously hindered by the lack of access to broadband.**

Many students in the Greenwood 50, Abbeville 60, and Greenwood 52 School Districts, along with those attending Piedmont Technical College, are attending classes virtually. High-speed internet allows students to continue learning while at home.

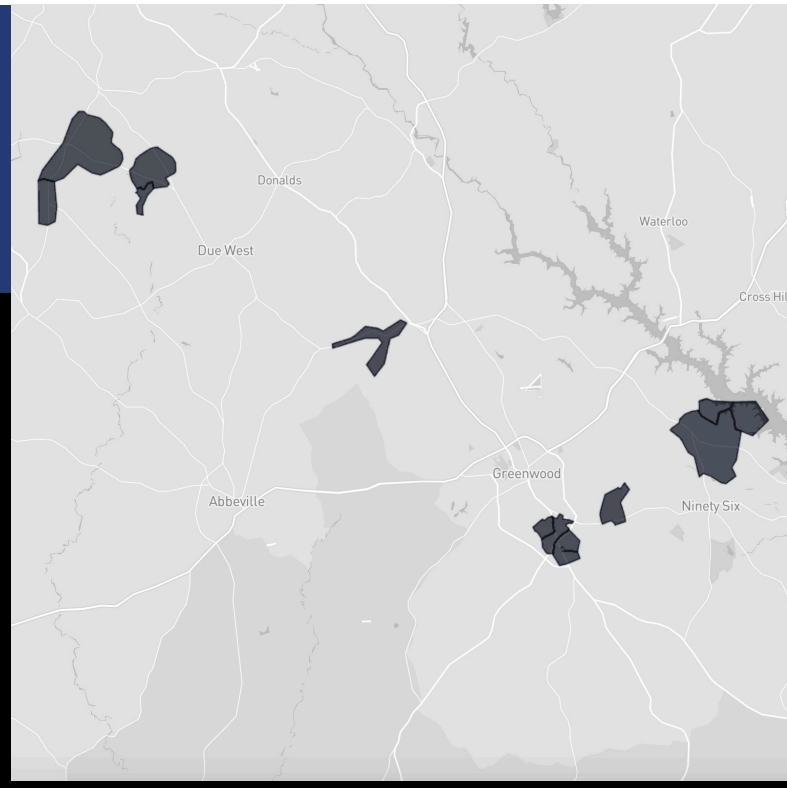
Many companies have required employees to work from home. Employees are now able to complete work previously hindered by the lack of access to broadband. Additionally, these employees are able to share bandwidth with their children who may be attending school virtually.



### Project Area

WCFIBER's projects were completed in the following counties:

- Abbeville
- Anderson
- Greenwood



### 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: \$2,440.80**

### 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.

