

Dear [Internet Service Provider]:

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us more than ever that high-speed internet is critical for education, health care and economic opportunity. We must do more to make it accessible and affordable for all North Carolinians.

One opportunity to make progress is available to us right now. On February 25th, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program), a \$3.2 billion initiative created by Congress in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021,¹ to help lower the cost of high-speed internet for eligible households during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.² I am asking you to participate in this effort to get more North Carolinians connected to high-speed broadband in their homes.

Participating in the program and accepting the EBB as payment toward internet service from the FCC for as long as the benefits are available will help families in need connect to school, healthcare providers and work. The application window is now open for internet service providers without an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) status to apply for verification or to opt in if you already are an ETC. We encourage you to apply for verification or opt in as soon as possible.

Given the urgency of the need and the speed at which this program will be deployed, our Broadband Infrastructure Office (BIO) team at the North Carolina Department of Information Technology (DIT) is creating a suite of tools to help North Carolinians learn about this opportunity. The tools will be housed on the BIO website and will include marketing materials and a searchable map of all providers participating in the EBB program, similar to the map DIT put together of free public Wi-Fi locations available at <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/covid-19/wi-fi-locations>. We hope these tools will help more people participate despite the tight timeline to do so.

Please let me know if you plan to participate by notifying us at broadband@nc.gov and we will work with you to include your information in the EBB map. The BIO office is also glad to answer questions as you begin the application process. You can find more information about the program at <https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-program> and filing instructions at <https://us-fcc.app.box.com/v/EBBproviderinstructions>.

We appreciate the work that you are doing to connect the people of our state and we must work together to do more to close North Carolina's digital divide. We look forward to continuing and expanding our partnership to ensure that all North Carolinians have equitable, affordable access to high-speed internet.

¹ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260, div. N, tit. IX, § 904, 134 Stat. 1182, 2130 (2020), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/133/text> (Consolidated Appropriations Act).

² See *Emergency Broadband Benefit Program*, WC Docket No. 20-445, Report and Order, FCC 21-29 (2021) (*EBB Program Order*).

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

Roy Cooper