

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

**H.B. 639**  
**Apr 6, 2017**  
**HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK**

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**HOUSE BILL DRH40375-LRa-70 (03/07)**

Short Title: DIT/COG Technical Assistance/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Corbin, Hardister, and B. Richardson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE STATE'S SIXTEEN REGIONAL  
3 COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS FOR PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN  
4 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND TO IMPROVE THE  
5 ADEQUACY AND AFFORDABILITY OF BROADBAND ACCESS IN UNSERVED  
6 AND UNDERSERVED RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE.

7 Whereas, many areas of North Carolina still lack adequate broadband access; and

8 Whereas, high-speed broadband is now a necessity for the development of resilient  
9 and successful communities; and

10 Whereas, the approaching switch to digital textbooks in public schools in 2017  
11 makes this challenge critical to our rural areas; and

12 Whereas, improved broadband is the minimal baseline for existing businesses to  
13 thrive, and ultra-high-speed broadband is absolutely critical to become globally competitive in  
14 research and innovation; Now, therefore,

15 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

16 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
17 Information Technology (DIT) the sum of nine hundred thousand dollars (\$900,000) for the  
18 2017-2018 fiscal year and the sum of nine hundred thousand dollars (\$900,000) for the  
19 2018-2019 fiscal year, to be allocated in the amount of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in each  
20 fiscal year to each of the State's 16 regional Councils of Government (COG). These funds shall  
21 be used by each regional COG to provide, in accordance with this act, technical assistance in  
22 economic and community development and broadband deployment planning to the unserved  
23 and underserved rural areas within the respective region. The DIT may retain up to the sum of  
24 one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) during the 2017-2019 fiscal biennium to cover  
25 administrative costs related to this act.

26 **SECTION 1.(b)** Each regional COG shall implement a plan of work for use of  
27 these appropriated funds that includes, but is not limited to, the following plan components:

28 (1) Development of one or more multijurisdictional broadband deployment  
29 plans in cooperation with their respective local governments and key  
30 broadband providers, user stakeholders, and the Department of Information  
31 Technology's Broadband Office, based on the broadband needs as  
32 appropriate to the region.

33 (2) Convening coalitions of local governments, private sector broadband  
34 providers, and users in the respective regions to set strategies for adequate  
35 broadband access and services necessary to support sound economic and  
36 community development to create new jobs.



- 1           (3)     Implementation of multijurisdictional projects and activities that address
- 2                     broadband deployment plans in cooperation with the private sector providers
- 3                     and users.
- 4           (4)     Identification of opportunities for connections between local governments,
- 5                     businesses, and broadband providers to achieve efficiencies and make
- 6                     broadband more available in unserved and underserved rural areas of the
- 7                     region.

8           **SECTION 1.(c)** The funds appropriated by this act shall be disbursed by DIT to the  
9 regional COGs on a conditional basis in two equal installments, with the first payment made  
10 only after compliance with subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section and the subsequent  
11 second payment to be made only after compliance with subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this  
12 section.

13           **SECTION 2.** Each regional COG that receives funding under this act shall:

- 14           (1)     By September 1, 2017, submit its goals, objectives, and proposed
- 15                     expenditures for those program funds to the DIT and the Fiscal Research
- 16                     Division and to any other legislative entity as may be required by the COG's
- 17                     annual plan of work.
- 18           (2)     Make a first progress report to the Broadband Infrastructure Office due in
- 19                     the first quarter after the first year of funding and a final report due in the
- 20                     first quarter after the second year of funding
- 21           (3)     By June 30, 2019, submit a report to the DIT and the Fiscal Research
- 22                     Division on its actual expenditure of the funds appropriated by this act and
- 23                     its accomplishments achieved through use of those funds during the previous
- 24                     fiscal year.

25           **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2017.