

Hometown Strong

Championing Rural Communities



An initiative by Governor Roy Cooper, Hometown Strong works with both the public and private sector to **meet the needs of local communities**.

80
of 100 counties
in NC are outside
major metropolitan
areas

2.2
million people
call rural North
Carolina home

“Rural North Carolina isn’t looking for directions from Raleigh — they want state government to listen and help when asked.”

— Governor Cooper

Key Principles

1. Use existing data

Avoids start-up delay and moves projects into action.

2. Use local priorities

Listening to local leaders and the community first.

3. Lead with positives

Progress builds upon the community's existing assets.

4. Share templates

State agencies come together to provide varied resources.

Case Study Highlights



Closing the digital divide

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, NC Student Connect installed Wifi hotspots to provide free filtered internet in more than 410 sites statewide.

Economic development

As downtown businesses closed in McDowell County, the city sought to vitalize entrepreneurship through its **Growing Entrepreneurs Marion (GEM)** program, which prepared business owners for success.



Innovative public transit

Wilson County launched the RIDE program, a **micro transit solution** with an on-demand rides haring service, to make public transportation more accessible and efficient.