

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007**

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HOUSE BILL 566*

Short Title: WOW e-CDC Pilot Program Funds.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Spear.

Referred to: Appropriations.

March 12, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO ENABLE WOW E-COMMUNITY
3 DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO IMPLEMENT AND ESTABLISH A
4 TWO-YEAR PILOT PROGRAM THAT WOULD ALLOW THE WINDOWS ON
5 THE WORLD TECHNOLOGY CENTER TO BECOME THE NORTHEASTERN
6 NORTH CAROLINA REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE CENTER FOR
7 INDIGENT RURAL LOW-WEALTH COMMUNITIES THROUGH DIRECT
8 ENGAGEMENT.

9 Whereas, northeastern North Carolina is the State's most economically
10 distressed region with eight Tier I counties, over 30 small municipalities, and many
11 remote communities that need special attention to participate in the State's
12 technology-driven economy; and

13 Whereas, there is a serious lack of urgency concerning digital literacy and
14 information technology in the indigent communities in northeastern North Carolina
15 which must be addressed; and

16 Whereas, many of the rural communities in northeastern North Carolina do
17 not have the resources to address technology issues such as digital literacy and the
18 availability of affordable broadband; and

19 Whereas, the indigent population in many northeastern North Carolina
20 communities remains untrained for twenty-first century employment and entrepreneurial
21 opportunities; and

22 Whereas, there are many remote communities that continue to lack public
23 access to computers and the Internet; and

24 Whereas, there are low-wealth municipalities in northeastern North Carolina
25 with populations under 1,500 that need Web sites and others whose Web sites need
26 updating, as well as other technology-related assistance; and

27 Whereas, the lack of Internet proficiency within the indigent communities of
28 northeastern North Carolina negatively impacts the ability to effectively and efficiently

1 utilize the Internet to access resource information for and about northeastern North
2 Carolina; and

3 Whereas, affordable broadband for the last mile remains a challenge for
4 remote, rural low-wealth communities because of the required initial investment, and
5 profitability being based upon demand, it must be determined whether nonprofit Internet
6 service providers represent the best solution; Now, therefore,
7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the North
9 Carolina Community Development Initiative, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, the sum of
10 two hundred ninety thousand dollars (\$290,000) for the 2007-2008 fiscal year and the
11 sum of two hundred ninety thousand dollars (\$290,000) for the 2008-2009 fiscal year to
12 be allocated to WOW e-Community Development Corporation to establish and
13 implement a two-year pilot program that would enable the Windows on the World
14 Technology Center to become the northeastern North Carolina regional technology
15 resource center for indigent rural low-wealth communities through direct engagement.
16 These funds shall be used as follows:

- 17 (1) \$150,000 for each fiscal year of the 2007-2009 biennium for operating
18 expenses of the Windows on the World Technology Center.
19 (2) \$100,000 for each fiscal year of the 2007-2009 biennium for the
20 following:
21 a. Developing, maintaining, and hosting municipal Web sites and
22 a northeastern North Carolina portal.
23 b. Expanding public access points and digital literacy classes in
24 the northeastern North Carolina Tier I counties.
25 c. Establishing initiatives in indigent communities to create a
26 sense of urgency concerning digital literacy and information
27 technology.
28 (3) \$40,000 for each fiscal year of the 2007-2009 biennium for operations
29 of the Internet service provider.

30 These funds shall not revert at the end of each fiscal year but shall remain available until
31 expended for these purposes.

32 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the North
33 Carolina Community Development Initiative, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, the sum of
34 four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) for the 2007-2008 fiscal year to be allocated
35 to WOW e-Community Development Corporation for infrastructure to provide wireless
36 broadband to unserved communities in portions of Washington, Tyrrell, and Martin
37 Counties.

38 **SECTION 3.** The Department of Administration, Division of Surplus
39 Property, shall earmark 1,000 surplus computers for each fiscal year of the 2007-2009
40 biennium for the WOW e-Community Development Corporation. The computers will
41 be used to provide training, and later upgraded and sold at cost to faith-based
42 organizations, low-wealth communities committed to public access, and low- and
43 moderate-income families.

44 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.