

March 19, 2009

S 697. E-NC AUTHORITY CONNECTIVITY/ECON. DEV. FUNDS. Filed 3/19/09.

APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE E-NC AUTHORITY TO SUPPORT CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVES AND TO ADVANCE TECHNOLOGY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Current law provides that the e-NC Authority (Authority) is the Internet planning and policy body for the state. Appropriates \$505,000 for 2009-10 and \$505,000 in recurring funds for 2010-11 from the General Fund to the Authority. States that these funds are in addition to the \$495,000 the Authority currently receives in recurring state funds and that the added funding will allow the Authority to continue its efforts in Internet planning and policy statewide.

Appropriates \$12.5 million in nonrecurring funds for 2009-10 from the General Fund to the Authority to provide connectivity incentive grants to be used to increase access to a high-speed Internet connection to 75% of the households in all 100 counties with a progressive goal of working towards an increase to 80%, then 90%, and ultimately 100% of households in the state. Provides that the funds are to be granted via a formal request for proposals (RFP) process with a provider match required when appropriate. Provides additional requirements regarding the use of grant funds. Allows the funds to be used for entities that need to provide a match to receive funds from the broadband stimulus money from the federal government.

Appropriates \$1 million for 2009-10 from the General Fund to the Authority to continue support of the Authority's Business and Technology Telecenter program and to establish up to two new centers in underserved areas of the state. Provides that grants to establish new centers are to be awarded using a competitive bidding process.

Appropriates \$1.5 million in nonrecurring funds for 2009-10 from the General Fund to the Authority for public access and digital inclusion grants (1) to support public Internet access sites in communities with low levels of connectivity and (2) to provide digital literacy programs and access to communities with low participation rates in the digital economy. Provides that these funds be granted through an RFP process.

Effective July 1, 2009.

Intro. by Rand.

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