

## **Project Abstract**

Education Stabilization Fund – Rethink K-12 Education Models (ESF-REM)  
Discretionary Grant Program

### **Light The Way: Strengthening K-12 Remote Instruction, Content, and Access Across North Carolina’s Rural and Distressed Communities**

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) will address Absolute Priority 3: Field-Initiated Projects for Educational Models for Remote Learning to Improve Student Outcomes. By implementing a state-wide blended instructional model, NCDPI aims to (1) stabilize or improve student achievement during contingency learning circumstances, (2) empower resilient and adaptive teachers who are equipped for digital-age instruction, and (3) strengthen school (public school unit [PSU]) preparedness for learning disruptions.

The model is designed to address North Carolina’s top three barriers to equitable remote learning: instruction, content, and access. Emphasizing support to 45 of the most rural and economically disadvantaged communities across the state, the Light The Way (LTW) model uses grant funds to build teacher capacity through a high-quality professional development certification process, provide new standards-aligned virtual content focused on K–8, offer mobile-friendly learning resources and technical assistance for parents, and prioritize online and offline learning options for access equity. Premised on the extensive blended-learning research of Heather Stacker and Michael Horn, coupled with an evidence-based strategy to improve teacher effectiveness and engage parents, the model is built to scale state-wide while offering locally customizable options. Within North Carolina, LTW is designed to reach 100% of K–8 families, 65% of PSUs, and approximately 50,400 educators and the students they teach within the 34-month grant period. Led by NCDPI, anticipated partners include NC PSUs (including charter schools), RTI International, North Carolina State University’s Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, University of North Carolina’s Education Policy Initiative at Carolina, and other local subject matter experts.