

# North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State

## NEWS

August 1, 2022

Elaine F. Marshall  
Secretary of State

For Immediate Release

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### **New Robeson County Businesses to be Added to Rural RISE NC Project** *Initiative Connects New Businesses with Crucial Resources for Success*

**RALEIGH** – North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall launched a unique pilot project late last year to connect new businesses with mentors, business counselors, and funding opportunities located locally and elsewhere. Robeson County is being added to this initiative and new business creators will begin receiving these county-specific communications beginning this month. The agency project known as **Rural RISE NC** (Resources for Innovators, Start-ups, and Entrepreneurs) links new businesses to significant free and low cost resources such as:

- A much requested checklist of crucial steps new business should follow to be successful, such as important tax and reporting deadlines
- Lenders that focus on small and start-up businesses
- Business counselors for permitting and other questions
- Connections to local service providers who can help identify target markets and develop business plans

In launching **Rural RISE NC**, the agency focused on analyzing historic business data and surveying North Carolina’s new entrepreneurs around their needs.

“Our data shows that the first three years are the most challenging for new businesses. The sooner we put these entrepreneurs in touch with valuable business resources and funding opportunities, the more likely they will be making good money, creating jobs and supporting their communities,” said Sec. Marshall. “With the explosive growth of new business creations over the last 18 months, we took this initiative to help our new rural businesses thrive.”

The Secretary of State’s Office saw a record number of new business creations – totaling 178,300 – in 2021, smashing the previous year’s total of 127,000. That’s more than 700 new businesses created each day. Robeson County is home to 1,210 of those new businesses in 2021 compared to 709 in 2020 and 412 in 2019. These increases reflect nearly 200% growth in two years in the number of new businesses created with the Secretary of State.

“The Secretary of State’s Office was the front door to more than 178,000 new businesses in 2021 entering North Carolina’s entrepreneurial ecosystem,” said Marshall. “Our mission and our challenge is give each of these businesses and the ones created before them every opportunity at being successful.”

The initiative began with 14 pilot counties and is now being expanded to Robeson County. The Secretary of State's Office is working with local resource providers to deliver their business support content by e-mail to these new business owners upon creation. While this initiative will be statewide, the Secretary of State's Office intends **Rural RISE NC** to focus mostly on the 78 counties in North Carolina that are considered rural.

Secretary Marshall is a nationally recognized leader for designing and offering innovative and efficient e-government services to businesses and other customers. More than 1.7 million North Carolina businesses have been created during her tenure as Secretary of State.

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