

Frequently Asked Questions

FCC National Broadband Map & Challenge Process

General Information

What is the FCC National Broadband Map?

The National Broadband Map displays locations – a home or business – where internet services are and are not available across the country, as reported by internet service providers. By clicking on the map, you can see a listing of the broadband providers that reported offering service to your location as well as the speed and technology reported by each provider. The map allows consumers and other stakeholders to dispute, or challenge, information shown on the map that they believe is inaccurate. The map can be viewed here: <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home>. Each individual location is part of a dataset called the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric.

Why participate in the challenge process?

The number of unserved locations in the Commonwealth on this map is an important factor in determining how much funding Pennsylvania receives for broadband projects through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program. Hundreds of millions of dollars are at stake. By challenging locations that are incorrectly listed as receiving service through January 13, you help make sure we get our fair share of this funding and can reach as many people as possible. Challenges after January 13 will still be valuable: the maps will guide the PA Broadband Development Authority and internet service providers as they identify locations in need of service and eligible for future broadband projects.

What locations will be eligible for funding support?

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program will provide the next major round of broadband funding. It will focus on providing service to unserved locations (with service of less than 25 Mbps downstream / 3 Mbps upstream) and underserved locations (with less than 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps service). For the purposes of this federal program, some technologies – including satellite and unlicensed fixed wireless – are not classified as providing broadband service, and service with latency of more than 100 milliseconds are not considered served.

What should I challenge?

We encourage individuals to challenge any incorrect data on the map. That said, prioritize challenges to service that could incorrectly disqualify locations from receiving funding:

- Availability challenges where there is incorrectly listed service that would classify the location as served rather than underserved or unserved (see “what locations will be eligible for support?”)
- Location challenges where addresses are missing, mapped to the wrong location, or incorrectly classified as not in the market for commercial broadband (appears as a gray dot)

How do I file challenges?

There are two ways to submit a challenge: by a single location, or in bulk. The location challenge can be completed by individual consumers utilizing the map itself. Bulk challengers will be required to use the Broadband Data Collection (BDC) platform to submit information to the FCC. Information about the Consumer Challenge Process can be found [here](#), and information on the Bulk Challenge Process can be found [here](#).

On what grounds can I file an availability challenge?

If you tried to get a listed service at your location and any of the following happened, consider filing a challenge:

1. Provider failed to schedule installation within 10 days of request for service
2. Provider failed to perform installation within 10 days of request for service
3. Provider requested connection charges above its standard installation charge
4. Provider denied request for service
5. The reported service type (e.g. Fiber to the Premises, Cable) was not available for purchase
6. The reported speed was not available for purchase
7. Signal was not available at the location for satellite or wireless service
8. Provider required additional construction for satellite or wireless service

What happens after I file a challenge?

See the following FCC documentation related to [availability](#) and [location](#) challenges. For availability challenges, providers have an opportunity to respond to establish that they do provide service.

Can an entity challenge on behalf of a community or group of communities?

Yes. Anyone – including businesses, government entities, individuals – can challenge the information.

Does the FCC or NTIA have a press release or media tools that counties can use to inform the public about the challenge process?

The FCC has provided several useful resources that can be used in outreach efforts about the map and challenge processes. Please visit their [website](#).

Technical Questions

How does an entity download the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric (fabric data)?

Eligible entities must request the fabric directly from CostQuest, the entity the FCC has enlisted to create the map. There are several steps that must be completed before the fabric is released to a requesting entity. Details for providers, governments, and other entities to request the fabric can be found [here](#).

How long should it take for a location challenge to be resolved by the FCC? And is there a way to submit a challenge to coverage without a resolved location challenge?

There is no standard set of time for when a challenge will be resolved. The FCC plans to analyze submitted data and compare it to other data sources before verifying, but it has not committed to a specific time for when this will happen. However, after information is submitted, locations should be listed on the federal map as “challenged”.

How are individual locations reviewed? Can they be downloaded, or do we have to click through them on the map one by one?

There is not a current process to download multiple location details into a comprehensive document. To see information such as location ID, proposed providers, and speeds, you will need to search for an address on the map and expand the details to view that level of information.

What methods are being utilized by the Penn State Extension team to verify the validity of the data? What is the scientific method being used to determine service coverage?

Penn State Extension is using a standard random sampling method. They assign points to a county based on the number of providers and the level of service available in each county. This method has a 95 percent confidence interval. They conduct sampling by analyzing providers’ websites or making phone calls. The Penn State Extension team also directly contacts providers to discuss discrepancies.

I tried to challenge my personal address location that is listed incorrectly on the map, but the system will not record the challenge. How should I report this to the FCC?

The [BDC Online Help Center](#) includes help articles, video tutorials, frequently asked questions, and other materials on how to use the National Broadband Map, how to file challenges, and how to submit availability data in the BDC system. It also includes a [help form](#) where users can submit a request for additional support.

Is there fixed broadband GIS data available for download?

Data is available in CSV file format, which can be uploaded into GIS software like ESRI’s ArcGIS Pro or ArcMap.

How do we open the data or upload it into GIS (ArcPro)?

The data files can be directly read by GIS software. The data is tabular and not in a spatial format, like a shapefile. It should be easily “unzipped” (but not opened) and imported as a CSV file.

For additional general questions please contact Kalie Snyder, Economic Development Consultant at 717-425-7599 or kalsnyder@pa.gov. For technical questions and to submit bulk challenge data to the Authority and Penn State Extension, please contact Kyle Snyder, Broadband Planning Specialist, at kysnyder@pa.gov. Please list “FCC Challenge” as the subject line.