



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## **BROADBAND DATA TASK FORCE RELEASES PRE-PRODUCTION DRAFT OF THE NATIONAL BROADBAND MAP; ANNOUNCES THE START OF THE BROADBAND AVAILABILITY CHALLENGE PROCESSES**

### **WC Docket No. 11-10, 19-195**

By this Public Notice, the Broadband Data Task Force, together with the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Wireline Competition Bureau, Office of Economics and Analytics, and Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau announce that today the FCC has released the pre-production draft of the National Broadband Map (the Broadband Map). The map shows fixed and mobile broadband availability data submitted by internet service providers through the Commission's Broadband Data Collection (BDC). The release of the Broadband Map, which provides the most comprehensive, granular and standardized data the Commission has ever made available on broadband availability, is an important milestone in implementing the Broadband DATA Act.<sup>1</sup> It begins an ongoing, iterative process that will improve the data submitted by providers by incorporating challenges from individuals and other stakeholders.

Starting today, consumers, state, local, and Tribal governments, service providers, and other entities can begin to file challenges to the fixed and mobile broadband availability data shown on the Broadband Map. In addition, consumers may begin to submit corrections, in the form of individual challenges, to the location data in the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric (Fabric).<sup>2</sup> The new map includes easy-to-use forms that the public can use to submit challenges to dispute the availability and location information shown on the map to help the Commission ensure that the map is – and remains – as accurate as possible.

### **The National Broadband Map**

The Broadband Map is available at <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov>, and displays where fixed and mobile internet services are available across the United States as of June 30, 2022. The foundation for the location-level data on fixed broadband availability – the individual points on the map – is the Commission's Fabric dataset, which includes the buildings or structures – such as a home, apartment building, or small business building – where internet service is, or could be, available.

The data shown in the Broadband Map and collected through the BDC significantly improves on the Commission's historical collection of broadband deployment data through FCC Form 477. The new

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<sup>1</sup> Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Availability Act, Pub. L. No. 116-130, 134 Stat. 228 (2020) (codified at 47 U.S.C. §§ 641-646) (Broadband DATA Act); *see* 47 U.S.C. § 642(c) (instructing the Commission to create maps showing the extent of the availability of broadband internet access service in the United States).

<sup>2</sup> The process for state, local, and Tribal governments, service providers, and other entities to submit challenges to the data in the Fabric began on September 12, 2022. *Broadband Data Task Force, Wireline Competition Bureau, and Office of Economics and Analytics Announce Start of Fabric Bulk Challenge Process*, WC Docket Nos. 19-195, 11-10, Public Notice, DA 22-913 (BDTF/WCB/OEA Sept. 2, 2022).

Broadband Map enables users to search by address to see, on a location-by-location basis, where providers make broadband Internet access service available. Information on fixed broadband service is shown by service technology type (e.g., fiber, copper, satellite), and the maximum advertised speed offered at the location. Mobile wireless service is shown by technology type (i.e., 3G, 4G LTE, 5G) and is based on standardized propagation modeling parameters used by mobile providers to generate their coverage areas. Users may sort and compare information by technology and speed, by service provider, and by geographic area (such as state, county, census place, Congressional District or Tribal area). In addition, users may download data files with the availability and coverage information shown on the map.

### **Availability and Location Challenge Processes**

The challenge processes are a key component of the iterative Broadband Data Collection effort. They will assure that the data submitted by providers, as well as the map's location data, are verified and as accurate as possible, by addressing input from consumers, governmental entities, service providers, and other third parties.

*Fixed Availability Challenges:* Challengers may dispute the availability of fixed broadband service at a particular location, including whether a connection could be installed or the network technology and maximum advertised download and upload speed reported by a provider, based on one of nine pre-established challenge reasons or categories.<sup>3</sup> Providers must respond by either conceding or disputing a challenge.<sup>4</sup> Providers are expected to communicate and work with the challengers directly to resolve the challenges.<sup>5</sup> If a provider concedes the challenge, fails to rebut it, or loses the challenge, the provider will be required to update its BDC data within 30 days, and the challenged service will no longer show as available for that location or area on the Broadband Map.<sup>6</sup>

*Mobile Availability Challenges:* Stakeholders may dispute the availability of mobile broadband service using on-the-ground speed test data.<sup>7</sup> Individual consumers seeking to file mobile challenges must do so using the FCC Speed Test app.<sup>8</sup> The Commission has released an updated version of the FCC Speed Test app that will collect, and automatically submit to the FCC, all data necessary to submit a

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<sup>3</sup> Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection; Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program, WC Docket Nos. 19-195, 11-10, Third Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 1126, 1155, para. 72 (2021) (*Third Report and Order*); 47 CFR § 1.7006(d)(1)(iv); See FCC, *Broadband Data Collection Availability Challenges*, <https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/bdc-fixed-challenge-overview.pdf> (last visited Nov. 16, 2022) (describing the following categories of fixed challenges: 1. Provider failed to schedule a service installation within 10 business days of a request; 2. Provider did not install the service at the agreed-upon time; 3. Provider requested more than the standard installation fee to connect this location; 4. Provider denied the request for service; 5. Provider does not offer the technology, or service type, at this location; 6. Reported speed not available for purchase; 7. Subscribed speed not achievable. [Individuals only can select this option (on the map), but it won't create a challenge.]; 8. No wireless or satellite signal is available at this location; 9. New, non-standard equipment is required to connect this location (satellite/fixed wireless only)).

<sup>4</sup> *Third Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1160, para. 83; 47 CFR § 1.7006(d)(3).

<sup>5</sup> *Third Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1160, para. 84; 47 CFR § 1.7006(d)(3)(ii).

<sup>6</sup> 47 CFR §§ 1.7006(d)(3)(i), (d)(4), 1.7009(d).

<sup>7</sup> *Third Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1164-65, para. 98; *Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection*, WC Docket No. 19-195, Order, DA 22-241, at 5, para. 10 (WTB/OEA/OET 2022) (*Mobile Technical Requirements Order*).

<sup>8</sup> Other apps may in the future be approved by the Office of Engineering and Technology for use in submitting challenge and crowdsource data. *Mobile Technical Requirements Order* at 5, para. 10; *Broadband Data Task Force and Office of Engineering and Technology Announce Procedures for Third-Party Mobile Speed Test Applications Seeking Approval for Use in the FCC's Broadband Data Collection*, WC Docket No. 19-195, ET Docket No. 22-152, Public Notice, DA 22-408 (OET 2022).

speed test that will be used in the mobile availability challenge process.<sup>9</sup> Governments and other entities may collect and submit mobile speed test data for use in the challenge process using the FCC Speed Test app or through their own software and hardware.<sup>10</sup> Mobile providers must rebut a challenge using on-the-ground speed test data or, in some cases, infrastructure information to support their claim of coverage in the disputed area.<sup>11</sup>

*Location Challenges:* Since September 12, 2022, the FCC has been receiving bulk challenges from state governments, service providers, and other entities to assist in updating and augmenting the data used to populate the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric dataset, which is used to map provider availability data at individual locations throughout the United States and its territories. With the release of the Broadband Map, individuals can also file a location challenge directly through the map interface if they believe a location is missing or the information about a location point is incorrect.<sup>12</sup>

A variety of technical assistance resources related to the challenge processes, including help articles, video tutorials, data specifications, and a BDC system user guide are available at [www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData/Help](http://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData/Help). Requests for technical support may be submitted using the “Get Help” link available on that page. Additional tutorials and other information about submitting individual challenges using the map interface will also be made available on the BDC website.

### **For More Information**

For information about the challenge processes or the Broadband Data Collection, please visit the BDC website at <https://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData>. For media inquiries, please contact Anne Veigle in the Office of Media Relations at [anne.veigle@fcc.gov](mailto:anne.veigle@fcc.gov).

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<sup>9</sup> See FCC, Data Specifications for Mobile Speed Test Data, <https://us-fcc.app.box.com/v/bdc-mobile-speedtest-spec> (2022).

<sup>10</sup> *Mobile Technical Requirements Order* at 5, para. 10; see generally *Broadband Data Task Force Establishes Process for Entities to Use Their Own Software and Hardware to Collect On-The-Ground Mobile Speed Test Data as Part of the Broadband Data Collection*, WC Docket No. 19-195, Public Notice, DA 22-962 (BDTF/WTB/OEA/OET Sept. 15, 2022). Entities submitting data collected using their own software and hardware must submit a complete description of the methodology used to collect the data and substantiate the data and methodology through the certification of a qualified engineer or official, and must ensure the data meets the same metrics and parameters as that submitted by consumers. *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> 47 CFR § 1.7006(d).

<sup>12</sup> See *Third Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1161-62, para. 89; 47 CFR § 1.7006(d).