

Media Contact:

Katie Gorscak
katie.gorscak@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

**FCC LAUNCHES INQUIRY TO INCREASE MINIMUM BROADBAND
SPEED BENCHMARK, SET GIGABIT FUTURE GOAL**

Agency to Examine How Broadband Data Collection Impacts Standards

WASHINGTON, November 1, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today announced it will launch an inquiry to kick off the agency’s evaluation of the state of broadband across the country, as required by section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. As part of this inquiry, the Commission will focus on the universal service goals of section 706—universal deployment, affordability, adoption, availability, and equitable access to broadband throughout the United States.

“During the pandemic and even before it, the needs of internet users surpassed the FCC’s 25/3 standard for broadband. This standard is not only outdated, it masks the extent to which low-income neighborhoods and rural communities are being left offline and left behind,” **said Chairwoman Rosenworcel**. “In order to get big things done, it is essential to set big goals. That is why we are kicking off this inquiry to update our national broadband standard and also set a long-term goal for gigabit speeds.”

In light of the increasing uses and demands for broadband and the Congressional directives embodied in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which includes the largest ever federal investment in broadband deployment, this Notice of Inquiry (NOI) will take a fresh look at the Commission’s standards for evaluating broadband deployment and availability, the quality of the Commission’s available data, and the framework that the agency uses to make a finding under section 706.

In addition to focusing on a universal service standard, the NOI proposes to increase the national fixed broadband speed benchmark to 100 megabits per second for download and 20 megabits per second for upload, and discusses a range of evidence supporting this standard. The FCC previously set the benchmark at 25/3 Mbps in 2015 and has not updated it since. The NOI also seeks comment on setting a separate national goal of 1 Gbps/500 Mbps for the future.

Lastly, this inquiry will be the first to use the new Broadband Data Collection (BDC) data. In March 2020, Congress passed the Broadband DATA Act, which required the Commission to collect biannual data relating to the availability and quality of service of fixed and mobile broadband Internet access service for the Commission to create broadband coverage maps. Pursuant to the Act, the FCC now collects more precise, location-by-location broadband availability data through the BDC. Through this inquiry, the Commission will examine how these improvements to our data collection may impact the standards and inform the agency’s conclusions about broadband availability.

###

Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / Twitter: @FCC / www.fcc.gov

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).