



550 High Street  
Sillers Building – 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201  
[www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov)

Greg Higginbotham  
County Administrator  
Madison County  
P.O. Box 608  
Canton, MS 39046

July 12, 2024

Dear Greg Higginbotham:

Do your constituents complain about the lack of reliable high-speed internet service? Is connectivity for remote work, telehealth, or homework a struggle? If so, your help is urgently needed to guarantee that high-speed internet is available to your community.

The state broadband office (BEAM) will soon administer over a billion dollars in federal funding under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant program. Internet service providers will apply for funding through competitive grants and use those funds to build service to all residential locations in Mississippi lacking high-speed internet. The BEAM office will monitor all aspects of this grant program.

BEAM has published a map that shows internet service reported by providers in your community. If this map is incorrect, your community must participate in the Mississippi Challenge Process to provide information to change the map and be included in a project area for buildout. The map is online at our agency website [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov). BEAM is partnering with Planning and Development Districts across the state to assist local governments in this Challenge Process.

**The Challenge Process will open on August 1, 2024, for thirty days.**

If your community is marked SERVED with a gray dot on the map, but your constituents report problems with service, the only way to make grant funding available for your community is to participate in the Challenge Process. If your area is marked as red (unserved), blue (underserved) or green (already federally funded), your community is already included in grant funding and no challenge is needed.



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A resource guide is included for your review, and informational videos and webinars are available as additional resources on the BEAM website at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov). As the Challenge Process approaches, any updates to the program documents will be posted to the [www.beam.ms.gov/BEAD](http://www.beam.ms.gov/BEAD). In the meantime, your Planning and Development District and the BEAM office are available to assist and answer any questions. Please submit questions directly to BEAM at [info@beam.ms.gov](mailto:info@beam.ms.gov) or call 601-359-5397.

Thank you for your dedication to public service and the people of your community. We look forward to working with your community and the possibilities that high-speed internet brings for all Mississippians.

Kindest Regards,

Sally Doty, Director  
BEAM



## MISSISSIPPI CHALLENGE PROCESS FAQs

### **Why is the Challenge Process so important?**

Mississippi will receive over a billion dollars to expand high-speed internet in the BEAD grant. If your area is marked as served on the Challenge Map, your area will NOT be eligible to be included in a grant-funded project.

### **When is the Challenge Process?**

The Challenge Process portal will open on August 1, 2024. Challenges may be submitted for 30 days until September 2, 2024.

### **Who can participate in the Challenge Process?**

Local units of government, Tribal governments, Nonprofits, and Internet Service Providers

### **How do I register for the Challenge Portal?**

Visit <https://broadbandms.com/register/bead>.

### **Can Residents file a challenge directly?**

No, only local governments, tribal governments, nonprofits, or internet service providers may submit challenges. However, **residents provide evidence that the challengers must have to successfully submit a challenge.**

### **How do I know if my community should participate?**

Look at the map at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov). If your area is marked as SERVED (gray dots) but residents report lack of service, this is the process to correct the map.

### **Do I need to challenge the map if I am unserved or underserved?**

No. Look at the map at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov) to see if your area is unserved (pink) or underserved (blue). These areas will be included in BEAD grant-funded projects and no challenge is needed. Areas in green have federal funding designated and a provider is required to build out to those locations already.

### **What does served / underserved / unserved mean?**

These terms are based on internet speeds as defined in the BEAD grant program as follows:

Unserved (Pink on map):	Below 25 mbps down / 3 mbps up
Served (Gray on map):	100 mbps down / 20 mbps up
Underserved (Blue on map):	Speeds between unserved and underserved



### **What do the green dots on the map mean?**

These dots mean that high-speed internet is on its way. Green dots show addresses where funding is already dedicated and a provider has a commitment to build to that location in another grant program. BEAM does not administer the majority of this funding.

### **Why is this process so complicated?**

This is the process required and defined by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the federal agency overseeing BEAD funding. Every state in the nation is conducting this type of Challenge Process.

### **Where can I get some help?**

The Planning and Development Districts will assist local governments in the Challenge Process. Please contact your local PDD or the BEAM office at [info@beam.ms.gov](mailto:info@beam.ms.gov) to schedule a meeting.

Also, various resources are available on the BEAM website at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov), including a Resource Guide, recorded webinars, and short informational videos.

### **Who will receive this grant funding?**

Internet service providers will apply for the funding through a competitive grant process. The BEAM office will monitor the funding as projects are built out.

### **What do I do if addresses are not on the map?**

Please e-mail [info@beam.ms.gov](mailto:info@beam.ms.gov) with any addresses that are not shown on the map. This is a problem with FCC data that BEAM is working to correct.

### **How does my community collect evidence for challenges?**

The most common challenges are based on speed. For speed challenges, residents should:

1. Verify the residence is marked "served" on the Challenge Map on [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov).
2. Obtain a copy of the resident's bill and determine what speed they currently pay for.
3. Complete the speed test at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov) on at least 3 different days and download the results each time.
4. Go to the RESIDENT CHALLENGE LINK at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov), answer the questions provided, and upload the three speed tests showing underserved or unserved.

Local governments who register as challengers will then access and use this evidence when submitting speed challenges in the Challenge Portal. Residents cannot directly participate in the BEAD Challenge Process.



## **What is an availability challenge and what evidence is required?**

If the map shows that a provider serves a location, but a resident has attempted to get service and been denied, or the cost of service is more than the standard installation fee, an availability challenge is appropriate. The resident should:

1. Document the denial of service in a format that can be uploaded in a file or screenshot. The documentation may be an email, text, or letter from a provider, a screenshot of a provider's website, or a written description of a call or other interaction with the provider in as much detail as possible.
2. Go to the RESIDENT CHALLENGE LINK at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov), answer the questions provided, and upload the documentation of the denial of service.

Local governments who register as challengers will then access and use this evidence submitted by residents when submitting availability challenges in the Challenge Portal. Residents cannot directly participate in the BEAD Challenge Process.

## **My entire community (neighborhood / street / apartment complex) incorrectly shows as served. Does everyone have to challenge service?**

The Challenge Process rules provide that if six successful speed or availability challenges are submitted, the results apply to the entire census block group. Census block groups are designated by yellow lines on the Challenge Map. Multiple Dwelling Unit (MDU) challenges require at least three units or 10% of the unit count at the broadband serviceable location.

## **How do I get residents to participate?**

Look at the map and determine if there are areas in your community that show as served but residents report problems with internet speeds or reliability. Reach out to those who have reported problems with service and ask them to participate in the resident challenge. Residents will need a copy of their bill for the Challenge Process. Outreach on social media, through community groups, chambers of commerce, schools, churches, or civic organizations may be helpful.

## **What if I have additional questions?**

BEAM can be reached by email at [info@beam.ms.gov](mailto:info@beam.ms.gov) or 601-359-5029.



# MISSISSIPPI BEAD CHALLENGE PROCESS RESOURCE GUIDE

July 12, 2024

**Register for the Mississippi BEAD Challenge Portal.**

<https://broadbandms.com/register/bead>



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# BEAD Challenge Process Guide

The BEAD State Challenge Process is designed to provide stakeholders in Mississippi with an opportunity to participate in the process of challenging the eligibility of locations for BEAD funding. As required by statute, the initial eligibility determinations for funding under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program are based on the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) [National Broadband Map](#).

Based on the process approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), challengers can dispute the data sourced from the National Broadband Map by using relevant and allowable evidence.

The BEAD Challenge Process must be completed before the state can distribute its allocated BEAD funds. This ensures that the list of eligible locations is finalized before internet providers apply for BEAD grants in Mississippi.

**Questions related to policy, procedural items, or technical assistance should be directed to [info@beam.ms.gov](mailto:info@beam.ms.gov).**

**Note:** Due to ongoing discussions between federal and state partners, the information in this document is subject to update and clarification. Any changes will be announced through official channels, with any changes documented in a change log.

## Eligible Challengers

### Who can submit a challenge?

Under the federal policy for the BEAD Program, only the following entities are eligible to submit formal challenges during the BEAD Challenge Process<sup>1</sup>:

- Units of local government
- Units of Tribal governments
- Nonprofit organizations
- Broadband providers

### Role for Residents, Businesses, and CAIs

While residents and businesses are not allowed to submit challenges directly to the State, they are an essential part of the challenge process. For many types of BEAD Eligibility Determination challenges, the evidence submitted by the permissible challengers will be gathered directly from residents and/or businesses that have not been provided the level of broadband service that is reportedly available to them. Accordingly, successful participation in the submission of BEAD

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<sup>1</sup> Eligible challengers are defined in NTIA Challenge Process Policy Notice as Permissible Challengers.



Eligibility Determination challenges may require coordination between residents, businesses, and permissible challengers.

## How to Prepare to Participate in the Challenge Process

### Account Registration

Before an Eligible Challenger can participate in the Challenge Process, they must register for an account in the Challenge Portal, ensuring that only eligible parties submit challenges.

### Registration Steps

1. **Visit the Registration Page** – <https://broadbandms.com/register/bead> A QR code for this site can also be found on the last page of this document.
2. **Click the Register button** – The Register button will open an intake form to provide the necessary information.
3. **Complete the intake form** – The intake form will ask for the information needed to verify the account as an eligible challenger.
  - a. **General information** – Every registrant for the challenge process will be asked to provide the following information:
    - i. Entity Name
    - ii. Entity Website
    - iii. Primary Contact name
    - iv. Primary Contact Email (Please use domain affiliated with entity)
    - v. Primary Contact Phone Number
    - vi. Category of Entity (select from dropdown)
  - b. **Unit of Local Government Information**
    - i. Physical Address
    - ii. Additional documentation to verify identity
  - c. **Unit of Tribal Government Information**
    - i. UEI Number assigned by Sam.gov
    - ii. Tribe's name as listed by BIA
    - iii. Physical Address
    - iv. Additional documentation to verify identity
  - d. **Non-Profit Organization Information**
    - i. EIN
    - ii. Physical Address
    - iii. Additional documentation to verify identity

4. **Click “Finish” and submit the form** – After submitting the form, an email confirmation will be sent. **No action is needed at this point.**
5. **Wait for Account Approval** – Each registration will be manually reviewed by BEAM before it is approved. As a result, there will be a slight delay between registration and account setup. If the registration lacks necessary details, an email notice will be sent to update the account request with the necessary information.
6. **Complete setting up the account** – Once approved, an email will be sent with a link to complete the setup of the account, including setting a password.

## Obtaining CostQuest BSL Fabric Licenses (optional)

CostQuest Associates is the owner of the FCC National Broadband Map data that BEAM is required to use for the Challenge Process. The terms of BEAM’s licensing agreement with CostQuest prevents BEAM from providing downloadable address data to eligible challengers.

However, eligible challengers can get a free CostQuest license to download the address-level data directly from CostQuest.

**A CostQuest License is not required to file challenges directly through the challenge portal.** However, if you are considering downloading data or submitting bulk challenges (challenges to more than one location in the same submission), BEAM highly recommends that you obtain a license from CostQuest, which will allow BEAM to provide a bulk challenge template pre-populated with each Broadband Serviceable Location ID that you select. A CostQuest License is also required for entities wishing to download data from the Fabric.

### License Tiers

There are two tiers of licenses relevant for the BEAD Program:

- **Tier D License** – This license is available to broadband providers, including co-ops, and units of Tribal governments. [Request License](#)
- **Tier E License** – This license is intended for units of local government, non-profits, and other organizations that have signed an FCC Tier 4 license. [Request License](#)

# Allowable Challenges

## What Can Be Challenged?

The BEAD Challenge Process is designed to accommodate different classes of challenges that are necessary to develop a more accurate list of BEAD-eligible locations.

There are different challenge types within each challenge class, but generally, eligible challengers can only challenge on the following grounds:

- BEAD eligibility determinations for Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) included in the FCC's National Broadband Map<sup>2</sup> – these include challenges to reported availability, speed, data cap, latency, technology, and residential/business service.
- Enforceable commitments for existing BSLs (locations with existing funding) [Internet providers only]
- Planned or existing service for existing BSLs [Internet providers only]
- The identification of eligible Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs), as defined in Mississippi's Initial Proposal Volume 1
- CAI BEAD eligibility determinations

## Area & Multi-Dwelling Unit (MDU) Challenges

The Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) will administer area and MDU challenges for Speed (S), Availability(A), Technology(T), Latency(L), and Data Cap(D) challenge types. An area challenge is triggered if six (6) or more broadband serviceable locations using a particular technology and a single provider within a census block group<sup>3</sup> are challenged under the same challenge type.

An MDU challenge requires challenges to at least 3 units or 10% of the unit count listed in the Fabric within the same broadband serviceable location, whichever is larger. An MDU challenge counts towards an area challenge (*i.e.*, six or more MDUs challenges in a census block group may trigger an area challenge).

The provider receiving an area challenge or MDU challenge must demonstrate that they are indeed meeting the availability/technology, latency, speed, and data cap requirement, respectively, for all locations within the area or all units within an MDU. Area challenges for Availability need to be rebutted with evidence that service is available for all BSLs within the census block group.

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<sup>2</sup> BEAM will use Version 4 of the Broadband Serviceable Locations Fabric and May 14, 2024, update of the National Broadband Map Availability Data.

<sup>3</sup> Area challenge determinations will be determined based on 2020 Census Block Groups

For a Speed Test Area Challenge, the challenged provider will be required to submit a rebuttal for at least 10% of the customers in the challenged area. The customers must be randomly selected.

For a Latency Area Challenge, the challenged provider will be required to submit a rebuttal for at least 10% of the customers in the challenged area.

## Structure and Timing of the Challenge Process

Prior to the kickoff of the challenge process, BEAM will post the final eligibility determinations on a public map and available through the portal. A preliminary map is already available on [www.broadbandms.com](http://www.broadbandms.com) and at [www.beam.ms.gov](http://www.beam.ms.gov).

### The Challenge Process Phases

#### Timeline

Public Challenge Map Available	July 17, 2024
Challenge Submission Window	August 1 – September 2, 2024
Rebuttal Submission Window	September 2 – 17, 2024
Final Determination	September 18 – October 17, 2024

#### *Challenge Phase*

The challenge phase will run for 30 calendar days. During this phase, eligible challengers may submit challenges using the Challenge Portal. If a challenge is determined to meet the minimum level of evidence, it will be considered a 'valid challenge'.

After all challenges are reviewed, the valid challenges will be processed collectively to determine which challenges require a rebuttal and identification of Area Challenges.

Since the intention of the challenge process is to modify the BEAD eligibility status, rebuttals will only be required for locations where a successful challenge would result in a modification of the eligibility status for the affected location. For example, if there are two providers reporting coverage at 100/20 Mbps and only one of those providers is challenged, the challenged provider will not be required to submit a rebuttal for that location. However, that challenge will still be considered for the purposes of reaching the area challenge threshold.

**Tip:** *Submit your challenges early. If there are errors in your submission, you'll be given an opportunity to re-submit, but ONLY until the challenge phase ends. You will not be allowed to fix errors or omissions in your challenge after the 30-day submission window closes.*

## *Rebuttal Phase*

After the Challenge Phase closes and challenges are processed, the Rebuttal Phase will run for 15 calendar days. At the beginning of the Rebuttal Phase, all the challenges that require a rebuttal will be posted in the challenge portal. For challenges directed against a specific provider, only the challenged provider may submit a rebuttal. For other challenge types, any Eligible Challenger may submit a rebuttal.

Broadband providers will be directly notified via email of any challenges directed against them and provided the details necessary to respond during the Rebuttal Phase. The challenged provider will have 15 days to agree with the challenge or dispute the challenge. If no rebuttal is filed in the allotted time, the challenge will be sustained.

Units of Local and Tribal governments, and non-profit organizations, will receive an email notification when the Rebuttal Phase has opened. However, they will not receive direct notifications for specific challenges since they will not be named parties in the challenges. Accordingly, these challenges will remain open for the entirety of the 15-day period. Unlike the provider challenges, other challenge types are still subject to the final review and determination by BEAM.

After a rebuttal is submitted, BEAM will review the evidence and determine if it meets the evidentiary requirements. If a rebuttal submission is determined to meet the minimum level of evidence, it will be considered a 'valid rebuttal.' At the end of the Rebuttal Phase, all challenges with valid rebuttals submitted will be marked as "disputed" and proceed to the Final Determination Phase.

## *Final Determination Phase*

Within 30 days of the close of the Rebuttal Phase, BEAM will review the evidence for each challenge, including the evidence from any rebuttals, and will make a final determination to "sustain" or "reject" each challenge. The reviewers will fully review all the information included in each challenge and rebuttal prior to making any final determinations.

BEAM reserves the right to request additional information or evidence from the challenger or submitter of the rebuttal at any time during the final determination phase.

## **How to Submit Challenges**

Once a requested registration has been approved and the account has been set up, the account will be able to file challenges.

## Submitting Challenges in the Challenge Portal

In general, all Eligible Challengers are eligible to submit challenges of any type. The primary exception is that “Planned Service or Existing Service” challenges are submitted by providers.

### Challenge Steps

1. **Log-in to the Challenge Portal** – Users can log-in using email/password combo or use a “Magic Link” which sends an email with a link to log-in directly without password.
2. **Expand “Challenge” Item in the Navigation Menu** – There are a range of options in the sidebar navigation menu. When clicking on the Challenge menu item, the sub-menu will expand to display two options: “Dashboard” and “Challenge Map.”
3. **Click on either “Dashboard” or “Challenge Map”** – Both options provide different functionality, but each of them will allow you to open a challenge submission window. The Challenge Map provides a geospatial representation of the eligibility designations under BEAD, while the Dashboard is your portal to review the challenges that you’ve submitted. If you’re a provider, you will eventually see challenges submitted on your reported service in your Dashboard.
4. **Click on “Add Challenge” Button** – The “Add Challenge” button is found on the top right of the “Submitted Challenges” panel of the Challenge Map page or on the top-right of the challenges table on the Dashboard page. This will open the “Create a Challenge” page, which includes the Challenge Map with a challenge flow panel on the right and layers that can be used to filter the map based on a range of parameters.
5. **Create a Challenge** – When creating a challenge in the challenge portal, there are several steps included in the flow:
  - a. **Select Challenge Class and Type** – Each challenge category includes multiple challenge types to select. The two used by nonprofits will be:
    - i. **Reported Provider Service Level**
      1. Availability
      2. Speed
      3. Latency
      4. Data Cap
      5. Technology
      6. Business Service Only
    - ii. **Anchor Institution Classification**
      1. Location is a CAI
      2. Location is not a CAI
      3. CAI: Qualifying broadband unavailable
      4. CAI: Qualifying broadband available

- b. **Select Challenge Details** – After selecting the Challenge Type, the data in the map will be filtered to display only those locations that are eligible for the selected challenge type. For example, **if an area is already unserved, you will not be able to file an Availability challenge.** From the locations eligible for the selected challenge type, you will be prompted to provide the challenge details that will further filter the locations, based on the options you select. The required challenge details will vary by challenge type, as described further throughout this document.
  
- c. **Select Locations** – After providing challenge details, only the locations eligible for the challenge type and details provided will be displayed. From the remaining locations, you will be prompted to select the location(s) that you want to challenge. You can add locations one-by-one or select a group of locations.
  - i. **Adding individual locations** – To add an individual location, click on the location on the map, which will then provide a pop-up of the address of that location and an “Add to Challenge” button. If the address aligns with the location you intend to add to the challenge, click “Add to Challenge” and then click “Confirm” in the following prompt. You can add multiple locations to the same challenge submission using this method.
  - ii. **Add locations in bulk (Can only be done if your organization has registered for a CostQuest License to download data from the FCC. CostQuest Licenses are free for nonprofits wishing to obtain one.)** – When filing bulk challenge submissions, you can add locations in groups, rather than adding each location individually, to add multiple locations as a group, there are two methods available.
    1. **Upload List of Locations** - This method allows you to upload a list of valid Fabric Location IDs in a .csv format. The .csv must be a single column with the header: location\_id.
    2. **Select or Upload Area by creating a “Zone”** – This method allows you to define a zone by drawing a polygon, uploading a shapefile, or selecting from a library, which includes defined geographies such as cities, counties, and Tribal areas. To add a zone, click on the Zones tab in the left panel to define a new zone by drawing, uploading a shapefile or selecting from a library of official boundaries.
    3. **Shift+Click+Drag cursor** – This method allows you to quickly select multiple locations directly on the map. This is the quickest, but less precise method of selecting multiple locations, because the selection boundaries are in a rectangular shape. Once you’ve selected locations using this method, you’ll be prompted to

confirm that you want to add these locations to your challenge. The prompt will include the number of locations that you've selected.

- 4. Removing locations from selection** – If you inadvertently added locations, you do not wish to challenge, you can remove the locations by clicking the trash icon next to the location in the right panel, or remove all the selected locations by clicking “Remove All”
  
- d. Upload Evidence and Documentation** – Once you've finalized the location(s) that you want to challenge you will be asked to provide any evidence and documentation that you want included in the review of your challenge. For challenges that may require you to provide separate evidence files per location, you will be prompted to download a .csv file with the selected Location. **Definition of Evidence for each challenge type begins at the bottom of this page.**
  
- e. Attestation** – After uploading the evidence, you will be required to accept and complete an attestation that, to the best of your knowledge and belief, the challenge is true, complete, and accurate, subject to potential civil or administrative penalties.

## Evidence and Documentation Requirements

Evidence and documentation submission is the most important part of the challenge submission. Evidence submitted by local governments or nonprofits must be collected from citizens who report unreliable broadband service. If your submission does not meet the minimum level of evidence sufficient to establish a valid challenge, it will not be approved to proceed to the rebuttal phase.

The minimum level of evidence required varies by challenge type.

### Availability Challenges

The Availability challenge type in the BEAD Challenge Process closely resembles the FCC Challenge Process. It supports challenges that have evidence that the service reported in the maps at a specific location is not actually currently available, or cannot be scheduled for activation within 10 days, over the reported technology and maximum advertised speeds.

In alignment with the FCC Challenge Process, the BEAD Challenge Process requires the “Reason for the Challenge” to be documented, using the reason\_code field from the FCC



## Evidence for Availability Challenges

When filing availability challenges, you will be required to select one of the following reasons and provide evidence for each challenge. Table 1 outlines the acceptable evidence for each reason code and the maximum age of the evidence submitted to support the challenge.

If you choose to provide “Other evidence to support challenge,” instead of an explicitly stated evidence type, BEAM cannot ensure that the evidence will meet the minimum requirements. To support our review, please provide a thorough explanation of any evidence classified as other.

Table 1

Code	Reason	Acceptable Evidence Types for Challenges	Data Age
1	Provider failed to schedule a service installation within 10 business days of a request.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	365 days
2	Provider did not install the service at the agreed-upon time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	365 days
3	Provider requested more than the standard installation fee to connect the location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	365 days
4	Provider denied the request for service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> </ul>	180 days

<sup>4</sup> See “Broadband Data Collection: Data Specifications for Bulk Fixed Availability Challenge and Crowdsource Data (Section 3.2),” Federal Communications Commission, January 12, 2023, [bdc-bulk-fixed-challenge-dataspecifications.pdf](https://www.fcc.gov/document/broadband-data-collection-data-specifications-for-bulk-fixed-availability-challenge-and-crowdsource-data).

Code	Reason	Acceptable Evidence Types for Challenges	Data Age
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	
5	Provider does not offer the technology entered above at this location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Terms of Service / Service Description</li> <li>● End-User contract or offer</li> <li>● Infrastructure Knowledge/Evidence, including manufacturer and model number of residential gateway</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	365 days
6	Provider does not offer the speed(s) shown on the Broadband Map for purchase at this location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Terms of Service / Service Description</li> <li>● End-User contract or offer</li> <li>● Infrastructure Knowledge/Evidence</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	180 days
7	Intentionally Omitted <sup>5</sup> (Does not constitute a formal challenge)	N/A	N/A

<sup>5</sup> The Availability challenge does not adjudicate whether the actual speeds of the service falls below the advertised speeds. The FCC uses Code 7 is used for consumer complaints when "Subscribed Speed Not Achievable."

Code	Reason	Acceptable Evidence Types for Challenges	Data Age
8	No wireless signal is available at this location (only for technology codes 70 and above).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Infrastructure Knowledge/Evidence</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	365 days
9	New, non-standard equipment had to be constructed at this location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Infrastructure Knowledge/Evidence</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	365 days

## Additional Provider Service Level Challenges

In addition to the Availability challenge type in the BEAD Challenge Process, there are four additional allowable Provider Service Level Challenge Types: Latency, Speed, Data Cap, Technology, and Business Service Only.

### Evidence for Additional Provider Service Level Challenges

The Latency and Speed challenges have specific requirements that differ from the rest, as described below in the “Evidence for Latency Challenges” and “Evidence for Speed Challenges” section. However, the Data Cap, Technology, and Business Service Only challenge requirements are similar to those for Availability challenges. Table 2 outlines the acceptable evidence for each of these challenge types and the maximum age of the evidence submitted to support the challenge.

If you choose to provide “Other evidence to support challenge,” instead of an explicitly stated evidence type, BEAM cannot ensure that the evidence will meet the minimum requirements. To support our review, please provide a thorough explanation of any evidence classified as other.

Table 2

Type	Reason	Acceptable Evidence Types for Challenges	Data Age
Data Cap	The only service plans marketed to consumers impose an unreasonable capacity allowance ("data cap") on the consumer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Terms of Service / Service Description</li> <li>● End-User contract or offer</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	180 days
Technology	Provider does not offer the technology entered above at this location (The technology indicated for this location is incorrect.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Terms of Service / Service Description</li> <li>● End-User contract or offer</li> <li>● Infrastructure Knowledge/Evidence, including manufacturer and model number of residential gateway</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	365 days
Business Service Only	The location is residential, but the service offered is marketed or available only to businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screenshot from provider website</li> <li>● Email from provider</li> <li>● Text message or Voicemail transcript from provider</li> <li>● Letter from provider (Physical or PDF)</li> <li>● Documentation of phone call or in-person interaction</li> <li>● Terms of Service / Service Description</li> <li>● End-User contract or offer</li> <li>● Other evidence to support challenge</li> </ul>	180 days

### Evidence for Speed Challenges

BEAM will accept speed tests as evidence for substantiating challenges and rebuttals. Each speed test consists of three measurements, taken on different days. Speed tests cannot predate the beginning of the challenge period by more than 60 days.

Speed Challenges must provide evidence that the download/upload speeds of the broadband service are materially lower than 100/20 Mbps, as described below. This will require multiple speed tests by the subscriber at each challenged location.

Each speed challenge must consist of three measurements, taken on different days. The measurements do not need to occur on consecutive days. The median of the three tests is used to trigger the challenge.

Speed tests can take four forms:

1. A reading of the physical line speed provided by the residential gateway, (i.e., router, cable modem (for HFC), ONT (for FTTH), or fixed wireless subscriber module.
2. A reading of the speed test available from within the residential gateway web interface.
3. A reading of the speed test found on the service provider's web page.
4. A speed test performed on a laptop or desktop computer within immediate proximity of the residential gateway. **BEAM encourages use of the speed test found on [www.broadbandms.com](http://www.broadbandms.com) as it conducts Ookla, Measurement Lab, and Cloudflare speed tests simultaneously.**

Each speed test measurement must include:

1. Each speed test measurement must include the time and date the speed test was conducted.
2. The provider-assigned internet protocol (IP) address, either version 4 or version 6, identifying the residential gateway conducting the test.
3. Download and Upload speed results.

The speed test at broadbandms.com captures all the information required.

Each group of three speed tests must include:

1. The name and street address of the customer conducting the speed test.
2. A certification of the speed tier the customer subscribes to (e.g., a copy of the customer's last invoice). Tier must be  $\geq 100/20$  Mbps.
3. An agreement, using an online form provided by the Eligible Entity, that grants access to these information elements to the Eligible Entity, any contractors supporting the challenge process, and the service provider.

The IP address and the subscriber's name, and street address are considered personally identifiable information (PII) and thus are not disclosed to the public (e.g., as part of a challenge dashboard or open data portal).

## Evidence for Latency Challenges

Latency Challenges must provide evidence that the round-trip latency of the broadband service exceeds 100ms. This will require multiple speed tests by the subscriber at each challenged location, **which will show excessive round-trip latency.**

Each latency challenge must consist of three measurements, taken on different days. The measurements do not need to occur on consecutive days. The median of the three tests is used to trigger the challenge.

Speed tests for Latency Challenges can take four forms:

1. A reading of the physical line speed provided by the residential gateway, (i.e., router, cable modem (for HFC), ONT (for FTTH), or fixed wireless subscriber module.
2. A reading of the speed test available from within the residential gateway web interface.
3. A reading of the speed test found on the service provider's web page.
4. A speed test performed on a laptop or desktop computer within immediate proximity of the residential gateway. **BEAM encourages use of the speed test found on [www.broadbandms.com](http://www.broadbandms.com) as it conducts Ookla, Measurement Lab, and Cloudflare speed tests simultaneously.**

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2. A certification of the speed tier the customer subscribes to (e.g., a copy of the customer's last invoice). Tier must be  $\geq 100/20$  Mbps.
3. An agreement, using an online form provided by the Eligible Entity, that grants access to these information elements to the Eligible Entity, any contractors supporting the challenge process, and the service provider.

The IP address and the subscriber's name are considered personally identifiable information (PII) and thus are not disclosed to the public (e.g., as part of a challenge dashboard or open data portal).

## Submitting Rebuttals

1. **Notifications of Rebuttal Phase Sent** – When the Rebuttal Phase opens, notifications will be sent to all registered Eligible Challengers to provide formal notice that the challenges are open for rebuttal. All Eligible Challengers will be notified of the opportunity to submit rebuttals to open rebuttal challenges, which includes any challenge

not submitted directly against a provider. In addition to the standard notification, the Broadband Provider's notification will include a notification of whether challenges were received against them. The formal notice at the close of the challenge window will initiate the 15-day rebuttal window.

2. **Log-in to the Challenge Portal** – Users can log-in using email/password combo or use a “Magic Link” which sends an email with a link to log-in directly without password.
3. **Expand “Challenge” Item in the Navigation Menu** – There are a range of options in the sidebar navigation menu. When clicking on the Challenge menu item, the sub-menu will expand to display two options: “Dashboard” and “Challenge Map.” To view the challenges available for rebuttal, click on the “Dashboard.”
4. **Go to “Dashboard”** – During the Rebuttal Phase, the Dashboard is the portal to review the challenges for which you are eligible to submit rebuttals. In the dashboard, two tabs will be available to review challenges: “Challenges Received” (Providers Only) and “Open for Rebuttal.”
  - a. **Open for Rebuttal** – The Open for Rebuttal tab will display all the challenges that are not directed at a specific broadband provider, such as Planned Service, Enforceable Commitment, or CAI challenges. The challenges will be grouped by submission and include details, including the challenging entity, challenge type, number of challenged locations, and other details.
5. **Click View Details** – To begin the Rebuttal Process, click “View Details” on the challenge that you want to submit a rebuttal against. This will pull up an interface with a map displaying the locations and details on the challenged locations included in the submission. The information on the challenge submission will be available in the right panel, which has two tabs: Details and Locations.
  - a. **Details:** The challenge details will be similar to those provided in the Dashboard but will include an expanded description of the challenge type.
  - b. **Locations:** The locations tab will provide a full list of locations that were challenged under the selected submission.
6. **Rebut or Accept Challenges** – Using the locations tab, you can choose which individual location challenges you want to rebut and which individual location challenges, if any, you want to accept. **Note that accepting challenges is only an option for providers reviewing challenges against them, since they are the only ones eligible to rebut those challenges.** Open challenges can be rebutted by multiple entities, so they will remain open for the entire 30-day window.
7. **Upload Evidence and Documentation** – Once you've finalized the location(s) that you want to rebut you will be asked to provide any evidence and documentation that you want included in the review of your rebuttal.

8. **Attestation** – After uploading the evidence, you will be required to accept and complete an attestation that, to the best of your knowledge and belief, the rebuttal is true, complete, and accurate, subject to potential civil or administrative penalties.

## Community Anchor Institution (CAI) Challenges and Rebuttals

There are two categories of Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) challenges, including:

- Identification of CAIs
- Eligibility based on Broadband Availability

The identification of Community Anchor Institutions for the purposes of BEAD is based on the definition and process outlined in Section 1.3 of Mississippi's Initial Proposal Vol. 1, which includes:

- **Schools:** K-12 schools include all K-12 schools participating in the FCC E-Rate program or that have an NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) ID in the categories “public schools” or “private schools.”
- **Libraries:** Including all libraries participating in the FCC E-Rate program as well as all member libraries, and their branches, of the American Library Association (ALA).
- **Health clinic, health center, hospital, or other medical providers:** The list of health clinics, health centers, hospitals and other medical providers includes all institutions that have a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) identifier.
- **Public safety entity:** The list includes entities such as firehouses, emergency medical service stations, police stations, sheriff and constable offices, and public safety answering points (PSAP), based on records maintained by the Eligible Entity and units of local government. The list of public safety answering points (PSAPs) includes all PSAPs in the FCC PSAP registry.
- **Institutions of higher education:** Institutions of higher education include all institutions that have an NCES ID in the category “college,” including junior colleges, community colleges, minority-serving institutions, historically black colleges and universities, other universities, or other educational institutions.
- **Public housing organizations:** Public housing organizations were identified by contacting the Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) for the state or territory enumerated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The nonprofit organizations Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC) and National Low-Income Housing Coalition maintain a database of nationwide public housing units at the National Housing Preservation Database (NHPD).
- **Community support organizations:** The Eligible Entity included any organizations that facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, and aged individuals. The Eligible Entity included senior centers and job training centers in this category. The Department of Labor maintains a database of “American Job Training” training centers, established as



part of the Workforce Investment Act, and reauthorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014. The database can be accessed at the American Job Center Finder. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) helped identify senior centers.

## Identification of Community Anchor Institution (CAI)

All Eligible Challengers can challenge the designation of the location as a CAI, based on the categories described above.

### Evidence for “Location is a CAI” Challenge

If you believe that a location is not currently marked as a CAI but should be, you may challenge to have that location included as a CAI. To submit a successful challenge, submit the following information and evidence:

1. Official entity name of the institution
2. The type of CAI, selecting from the categories defined on the previous page.
  1. Depending on the entity type, you will be asked to provide different types of identification numbers, e.g. CMS Certification Number (CCN) for hospitals.
  2. If a Community Support Organization, explanation of how organizations facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, and aged individuals.
3. Evidence to support the challenge, which may include:
  1. Registration documents
  2. Contact information to confirm.
  3. Other evidence that demonstrates that the organization meets the requirements of the selected category of CAI.

When submitting a challenge to add a location as a CAI, you will be given an opportunity to indicate whether the institution has unmet broadband needs based on the standard of 1000/1000 Mbps (also known as 1 Gbps symmetrical).

If the location for a CAI is missing entirely from the map, please reach out to [info@beam.ms.gov](mailto:info@beam.ms.gov).

### Evidence for “Location is a CAI” Rebuttal

Any Eligible Challenger may submit a rebuttal for a “Location is a CAI” Challenge. The information and evidence must include:

1. Identify the basis for the challenge that claims the location is not a CAI.
  1. Location is a residence.
  2. Location is a non-CAI business.
  3. Institution does not fall under the listed category.
    1. Identify the institution type that the location should be listed as

4. CAI has ceased operations.
  1. Date CAI ceased operations:
  2. Evidence to support rebuttal

### Evidence for “Location is a Not CAI” Challenge

If you believe that a location is incorrectly identified as a CAI, you may submit a challenge to have that location removed from the list. Please note that BEAM is not allowed to add residential Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) to the map, so a successful challenge will remove this location from the Mississippi broadband map.

To submit a successful challenge, submit the following information and evidence:

1. Identify the basis for the challenge that claims the location is not a CAI.
  1. Location is a residence.
  2. Location is a non-CAI business.
  3. Institution does not fall under the listed category.
    1. Identify the institution type that the location should be listed as
  4. CAI has ceased operations.
    1. Date CAI ceased operations:
    2. Is there another CAI currently operating at this location? If so, provide the following information:
      1. Official entity name of the institution
      2. The type of CAI, selecting from the categories defined above
        - a. Depending on the entity type, you will be asked to provide different types of identification numbers, e.g. CMS Certification Number (CCN) for hospitals.
        - b. If a Community Support Organization, explanation of how organizations facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, and aged individuals.
        - c. Other evidence that demonstrates that the organization meets the requirements of the selected category of CAI.
  2. Evidence that demonstrates that the location is a non-CAI or is no longer in operation.

### Evidence for “Location is a Not CAI” Rebuttal

Any Eligible Challenge may submit a rebuttal for a “Location is a CAI” Challenge. The information and evidence must include evidence that the location falls within the definitions of CAIs set by the Eligible Entity or is still operational.

## CAI BEAD Eligibility Based on Broadband Availability

### Evidence for CAI: Qualifying Broadband Unavailable Challenge

If a CAI is reported to have 1 Gbps symmetrical service, but you have countering evidence, you may submit a “CAI Does Not Receive 1 Gbps Service” Challenge. To submit this challenge type, provide the following information and evidence.

1. Attest that this location does not currently receive 1 Gbps/1Gbps broadband service and does not have a connection that is readily scalable to 1 Gbps speeds at a higher tier of service over the existing infrastructure.
2. If there is an available Internet connection at the location, you’ll be asked to provide the following information:
  1. Who is the current provider?
  2. What technology is delivering the current services?
  3. What are the speeds of your current plan?
3. Upload evidence of recent bill/invoice, photo of the provider gateway, or other evidence to support the challenge.
4. Signed attestation or uploaded evidence.

#### **Evidence for CAI: Qualifying Broadband Unavailable Rebuttal**

Any Eligible Challenger may submit a rebuttal for a “CAI Does Not Receive 1 Gbps Service.” The information and evidence must include evidence that the CAI Location has an existing connection capable of delivering 1 Gbps/1Gbps speeds or a connection that is readily scalable 1 Gbps symmetrical speeds at a higher tier of service over the existing infrastructure.

#### **Evidence CAI: Qualifying Broadband Available Challenge**

1. I confirm that selected CAI Location(s) have an existing connection capable of delivering 1 Gbps/1Gbps symmetrical speeds or a connection that is readily scalable to these speeds at a higher tier of service over the existing infrastructure.
2. (Optional) If available please provide the following information:
  1. Who is the current provider? (Do not use dropdown of providers, as it may not include the network delivering enterprise ISPs)
  2. What technology is delivering the current services? (Dropdown from the Technologies used in other challenges)
  3. What are the speeds of your current plan?
3. Upload evidence of recent bill/invoice, photo of the provider gateway, or other evidence to support the challenge.
4. Signed attestation or uploaded evidence.

#### **Evidence for CAI: Qualifying Broadband Available Rebuttal**

Any Eligible Challenger may submit a rebuttal for a “CAI Does Receive 1 Gbps Service.” The information and evidence must include evidence that the CAI Location does not have an existing connection capable of delivering 1 Gbps/1Gbps speed or a connection that is readily scalable 1 Gbps symmetrical speeds at a higher tier of service over the existing infrastructure.