**CHIME Cheat Sheet – December 8, 2023**
**The FCC National Broadband Map**

The National Broadband Map ("the Map") shows locations where internet services are available in the United States based on reports given by Internet Service Providers (ISPs). It was originally developed by the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 2011. Congress requested the creation of the map because they realized economic opportunities required 21st century infrastructure. The Map was originally based on census blocks, which the FCC recognized are imperfect. If a portion of a census block had access to high-speed internet, then the entire block was deemed to have access, thus, access to high-speed internet was overstated.

**What's New**

Following years of criticism by lawmakers and others around the accuracy of the Map, in 2022 the FCC decided to take a new approach and develop its first location-based broadband map. Instead of using a census block level reporting system using data taken from a small geographic location, the Commission identified every household and business in the U.S. that should have access to high-speed internet. In November 2023, the FCC updated the National Broadband Map to improve its accuracy and increased the number of broadband serviceable locations to 115 million which was an 800,000 increase since May; in doing so, they were also able to cut down the number of locations that lacked access to high-speed internet services from 8.3 million to 7.2 million.

Despite these advancements, significant accuracy issues persist. Many stakeholders and lawmakers are concerned the map is not considering "blind spots." For instance, many rural locations are left off of the Map because they are hard to identify or connect using traditional area-wide deployments. Almost 90 percent of rural broadband providers of NTCA -The Rural Broadband Association reported locations missing in the FCC database.

**Federal Funding**

The accuracy of the Map is directly tied to receiving certain federal funding – so ensuring the data is correct is critical to states and localities. The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) and the State Broadband Initiative (SBI), which are responsible for the creation of the National Broadband Map, jointly invested approximately $4 billion in broadband projects across the U.S. These initiatives aimed to boost broadband infrastructure, expand public computer centers, encourage broadband adoption, and facilitate statewide broadband planning and data collection. Additionally, the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP), administered by the NTIA, provided formula-based grants of $121.5 million to assist regional, state, local, and tribal government entities in planning for a national public safety broadband network. SLIGP 2.0 offered up to $43.4 million in matching grant funds to further support states and territories.

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) included $42.45 billion in federal funding to expand high-speed internet access across the country. IIJA directed NTIA to apply the BEAD allocation formula set in the law – which includes three components (1) a baseline of $100 million for each state (plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) and $25 million for each territory, (2) a calculation of the number of unserved locations in each state divided by the nationwide total of unserved locations, and (3) the number of "high cost" unserved locations in each state divided by the nationwide total of high-cost unserved locations. State allocations, which were announced in June 2023, can be found here.

**Submitting Challenges**

The National Broadband Map allows consumers and stakeholders to dispute the information shown on the map by filling out the Availability Challenge Form and challenging the information they feel is inaccurate. When filing an availability challenge, FCC staff will initially review it, which can take up to a few days. A submission can be rejected during this stage if it: 1) appears to be a complaint about quality of service or billing issues; 2) is a question about an existing broadband service; 3) if it should be a location challenge; and 4) if the description of the evidence being provided is insufficient or unrelated. If the challenge is accepted, then the FCC staff have 60 days to review and respond to it. This can be done by either conceding it, after which they will have up to 30 days to update the broadband availability data, or providing documentation to rebut it.

**What's Next?**

A large issue is that while the FCC's National Broadband Map shows where broadband services are available, it does not reflect the quality of the services offered. Under law, the FCC must develop the maps in an iterative fashion – releasing major updates bi-annually and making minor updates to availability data throughout the year. With the NTIA and the BEAD program, the FCC will continue its efforts in creating the most accurate version of the Map with the help of public challenges and stakeholder feedback.


Please reach out to policy@chimecentral.org with questions.