

Need Broadband? Ensure Your Community's Broadband Data is Accurate!

March 25, 2024



Vermont's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program's Challenge Process is underway! You can verify what businesses, residences, and community anchor institutions are considered adequately served, and challenge the data with evidence proving it's not.

What is the BEAD Program?

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program will provide Vermont with \$229 million to expand high-speed internet access. Areas of focus are those areas that don't have internet at all, areas with very slow internet (under 25/3 Mbps), and areas considered underserved (under 100/20 Mbps).

What is the Challenge Process?

The Challenge Process permits eligible entities, such as municipalities, to challenge data on service availability at Broadband Serviceable Locations from the FCC's National Broadband Map and the Community Anchor Institutions identified by the Vermont Community Broadband Board. The outcome of the Challenge Process determines which locations and community anchor institutions are eligible to be served by BEAD funded networks.

Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSL) are a businesses or residential location at which mass-market fixed broadband Internet access service is, or can be, installed.

Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) are schools, libraries, medical care facilities, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that facilitates greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations. These populations include, but are not limited to, low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, children, the incarcerated, and aged individuals. In Vermont, Community Anchor Institutions also may include workforce development organizations, adult education agencies, public housing neighborhood organizations and community centers, houses of worship, local and/or state government buildings, housing shelters, social service agencies, correctional facilities and juvenile detention centers, public outdoor spaces, community media centers, and general stores.

Who can participate in the challenge?

Eligible challengers include units of local and/or Tribal government, relevant nonprofits, and internet service providers. Individuals do not have standing to submit challenges but can participate by contacting an eligible challenger to submit a challenge on their behalf.

Individuals or businesses may contact your municipality and ask it to submit a challenge.

What is the role of eligible challengers?

- Understand the steps required to submit a challenge.
- Gather acceptable evidence.
- Submit a challenge with acceptable evidence.
- Respond to, or check for responses to, your challenge.

How does the challenge process work?

- **Submit evidence through the Vermont Community Broadband Board's Challenge Portal by April 1, 2024.** Registration for the Challenge Portal is required!
- Internet Service Providers and others submit rebuttals to your evidence between April 15 and April 29. **You can respond to these rebuttals before the portal closes on April 29.**
- The Vermont Community Broadband Board will make a final determination of the classification of a location by June 14. Vermont's Final Eligibility Data is expected to be posted publicly and submitted to NTIA by June 17, 2024.

What resources can I use to create my strategy for participating in the challenge process?

Vermont Resources

- Challenge Process Website - Vermont Challenge Process website/portal for conducting the Challenge Process. Consider signing up early and be validated as a permissible challenger. <https://explore-vcbb.hub.arcgis.com/pages/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment>
- SBO/TBO Overview - Provides an overview of the Challenge Process phases, challenge timelines, and instructions on how to submit and rebut a challenge.

NTIA Resources

- **Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program** - The [BEAD Program website](#) includes a program overview, links to state proposals, the challenge process, and Frequently Asked Questions.

- **BEAD Challenge Process Policy Notice** - Guidance informing the design and implementation of the BEAD Challenge Process.

Visit [BEAD | Explore VCBB \(arcgis.com\)](#) to review the Challenge Process instructions and guidance, submit your challenge evidence, and check for challenge responses.