MBI | Massachusetts Broadband Institute | at the MassTech Collaborative

How's Your Internet?

The BEAD Challenge Process

May 22, 2024

Agenda

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2. The Challenge Process
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   b. Timeline
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MASSACHUSETTS TECHNOLOGY COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION: We strengthen the competitiveness of the tech and innovation economy by driving strategic investments, partnerships, and insights that harness the talent of Massachusetts.

THE INNOVATION INSTITUTE

CAM — MASSACHUSETTS CENTER for ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

MBI — MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE

MeHI — MASSACHUSETTS eHEALTH INSTITUTE

MassCyberCenter

NEMC — Northeast Microelectronics Coalition HUB

Administering ~$530M in state and federal funds through the next 2 fiscal years.

Established in 1982 by Legislative Statute

About the Massachusetts Broadband Institute

MBI's mission *is to make affordable high-speed Internet available to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices, and other public places across the Commonwealth. MBI works closely with key stakeholders to bridge the digital divide in Massachusetts.*

Massachusetts Broadband & Digital Equity Funding

$75M - State ARPA Digital Equity Fund

$175M - US Treasury Capital Projects Fund

$15M - NTIA Digital Equity Planning & Capacity Grants

$147M - NTIA Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Grant (including $5M Planning Grant)

BEAD
Challenge Process

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Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD)

BEAD projects are designed to provide fiber connectivity directly to the end user (last mile), including unserved, underserved, and CAIs.

Broadband Deployment

01 **Unserved Locations**
MBI awards funding in a manner that prioritizes Unserved Service Projects.

02 **Underserved Locations**
Once MBI certifies that it will ensure coverage of all unserved locations, it may then prioritize Underserved Service Projects.

03 **Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs)**
NTIA Strongly urges that MBI serves eligible Community Anchor Institutions next
- Ensure deployment of gigabit connections to community anchor institutions such as libraries and community centers that lack such connectivity.
- Eligible Community Anchor: entity (e.g., school, library, hospital) that facilitates greater use of high-speed Internet service by vulnerable populations and have download speed <1 Gbps.

Non-Deployment Uses

04 **Access, Adoption, and Equity**
MBI can apply any remaining funding to pursue eligible access-, adoption-, and equity-related uses, as well as any other uses approved by the Assistant Secretary that support the Program's goals.

BEAD funds prioritize projects that demonstrate they will be able to ensure service to all unserved and underserved locations.

MA by the Numbers

| Summary - State of Massachusetts	Sum of total_count
Served	1,939,689
Underserved	4,140
Unserved	10,842
Grand Total	**1,954,671**

Please note, the data from the current FCC National Broadband Map shows internet availability as of June 30, 2023, and will be updated in May 2024 to reflect availability as of December 31, 2023, which is the version that will be used in the Challenge Process administered by MBI. The FCC National Broadband Map does not directly reflect the quality of internet service provided by providers. Counts represented in the data are for Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs), not units, and may not correlate with residential counts used by municipalities. MBI is aware that the map may not reflect the most accurate, up-to-date funding commitments from existing federal, state, or local sources; the locations with enforceable commitments will not be eligible for BEAD funding. Additionally, the Commonwealth has awarded Last Mile grants with state funds to expand broadband connectivity in unserved towns. These grants are achieving coverage levels of 96-100% served. The coverage in these Last Mile towns may not always be accurately reflected in the FCC National Broadband Map. The source of the FCC National Broadband Map data is submitted by Internet Service Providers.

Last updated 01/23/24
BDC As Of June 30th 2023

10,842	4,140
Unserved	Underserved

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Availability: Where are at the gaps in service?

99% of locations in Massachusetts have service available. According to the FCC's broadband maps **~15,000 locations remain underserved** and **underserved** and these locations are in every part of the state and impact every region.
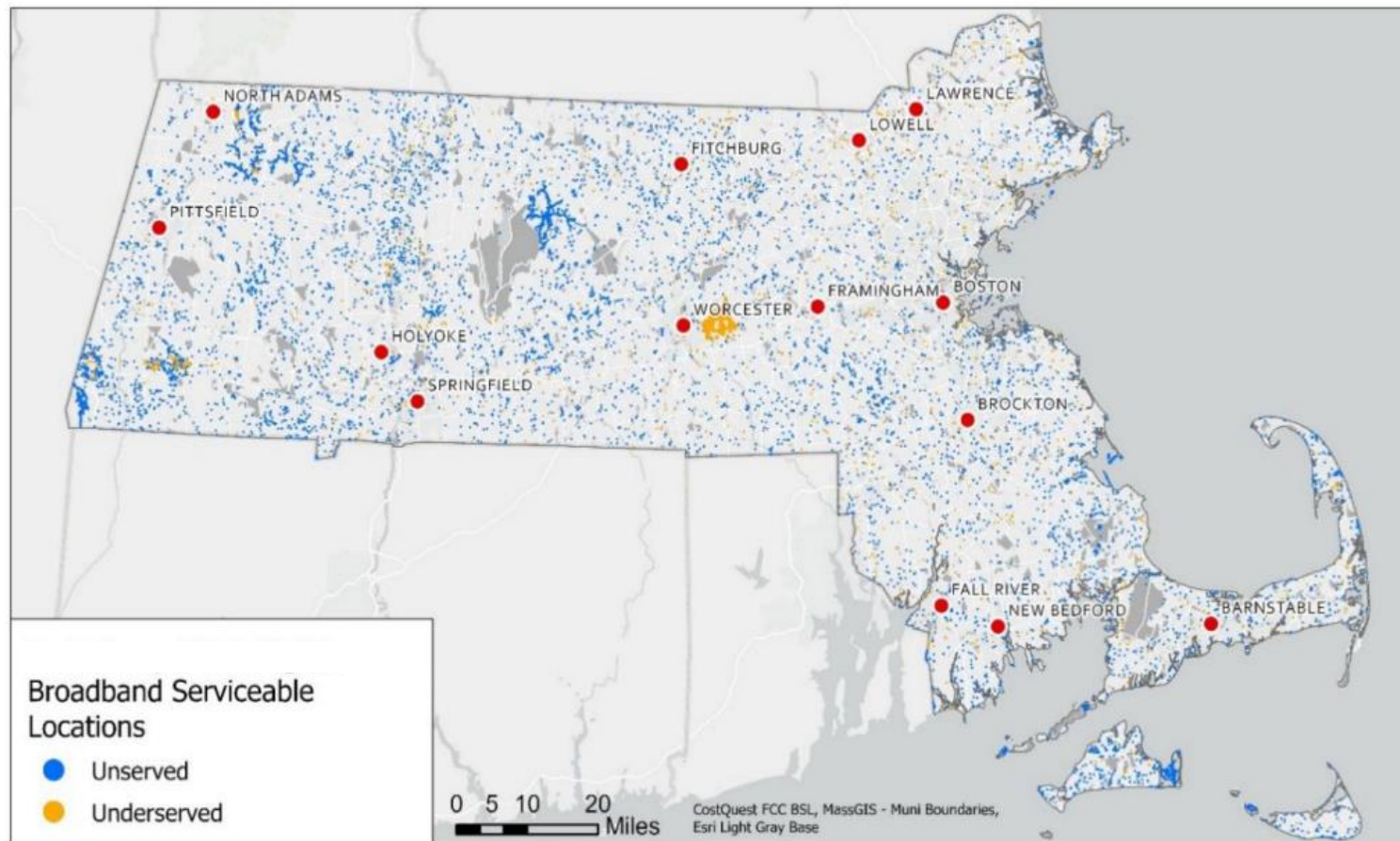
Definitions
- **Served:** Internet service is available by reliable broadband technologies at 100/20 Mbps speeds or faster
- **Underserved:** Internet service is available by reliable broadband technologies at speeds of at least 25/3 Mbps but less than 100/20 Mbps
- **Unserved:** Internet service is not available by reliable broadband technologies even at speeds of 25/3 Mbps.

BEAD Challenge Process

BEAD CHALLENGE PROCESS DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

1 — Publication of Eligible Locations

- The Eligible Entity publishes the set of locations eligible for BEAD funding which includes the full universe of locations potentially eligible for BEAD funding minus those removed in the modifications to location classifications process.

- This set also includes locations considered served.

2 — Challenge

- The Eligible Entity defines the level of evidence needed for a challenge.

- A permissible challenger submits a challenge to the EE's online portal ("challenge portal") and the location becomes challenged.

- These challenges must be visible to the relevant ISP

3 — Rebuttal

- A rebuttal of a challenger makes the location or locations disputed.

- A challenge that is not rebutted within the rebuttal period is sustained.

- A provider may agree with the challenge, making the location(s) sustained.

4 — Final Determination

- The Eligible Entity either sustains the disputed locations, or rejects the dispute.

Why is the BEAD Challenge Process Important?

INTERNET FOR ALL

The BEAD Challenge Process is vital because it determines the **locations and community anchor institutions** within each jurisdiction that are **eligible for BEAD funding.**

Key step toward achieving BEAD goals

Before the BEAD program can meet the goal of providing accessible and affordable broadband, all unserved locations, underserved locations, and eligible Community Anchor Institutions must be identified.

Helps ensure accurate results

An evidence-based, fair, transparent, and expeditious BEAD Challenge Process, as outlined in the NOFO and Challenge Process Policy Notice, helps ensure accurate results, an efficient process, and a precise allocation of resources.

Gathers information needed before running the subgrantee selection

The subgrantee selection process cannot be run without first having an accurate and comprehensive list of eligible locations and CAIs.

NTIA

11

Challenge Process Timeline

JUNE 10	JUNE 20	JULY 20	JULY 26	August 25	August 26	October 18	October 28
State Broadband Map Published & Portal Registration Opens	Challenge Process Opens	Challenge Process Closes	Rebuttal Phase Opens	Rebuttal Phase Closes	Adjudication Phase Opens	Adjudication Phase Closes	Submission of Final Map/Data to NTIA

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Who Can Submit a Challenge?

NTIA Designated Eligible Entities

Under the federal policy for the BEAD program, only the following entities are permitted to submit formal challenges during the BEAD Challenge process:

- Unit of Local Government
- Unit of Tribal Government
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Internet Service Providers

Resident Challenges

Residents in Massachusetts may be eligible to submit challenges through an eligible entity. Eligible entities will be responsible for reviewing evidence and submitting on behalf of the resident.

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Types of Challenges

Code	Challenge Type	Description
A	Availability	The broadband service identified is not offered at the location, including a unit of a multiple dwelling unit (MDU).
S	Speed	The actual speed of the service tier falls below the unserved or underserved thresholds
L	Latency	The round-trip latency of the broadband service exceeds 100 ms.
D	Data Cap	The only service plans marketed to consumers impose an unreasonable capacity allowance ("data cap") on the consumer
T	Technology	The technology indicated for this location is incorrect.
B	Business Service only	The location is residential, but the service offered is marketed or available only to businesses.
E	Enforceable Commitment	The challenger has knowledge that broadband will be deployed at this location by the date established in the deployment obligation.
P	Planned Service	The challenger has knowledge that broadband will be deployed at this location by Dec 31, 2024 without an enforceable commitment or a provider is building out broadband offering performance beyond the requirements of an enforceable commitment.
N	Not part of enforceable commitment	This location is in an area that is subject to an enforceable commitment to less than 100% of locations and the location is not covered by that commitment.
C	Location is a CAI	The location should be classified as a CAI.
R	Location is not a CAI	The location is currently labeled as a CAI but is a residence, a non-CAI business, or is no longer in operation.

CAI Definition & examples

MBI has applied the definition of "community anchor institution" to mean a school, library, health clinic, health center, hospital or other medical provider, public safety entity, institution of higher education, public housing organization (including any public housing agency, HUD-assisted housing organization, or Tribal housing organization), or **community support organization that facilitates greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, children, the incarcerated, and aged individuals.**

CAI	Example
Schools	K-12 Schools
Libraries	
Health clinic, health center, hospital, or other medical providers	
Public safety entity	Fire houses; police stations
Institutions of higher education	Private and public universities; community colleges; trade schools
Public housing organizations	
Community support organizations	Senior centers; community centers; food banks; homeless shelters; community media centers; veteran's centers

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Resident Engagement Opportunities

Residents can participate:

Taking & submitting 3 speed tests on 3 different days.

Submitting evidence for Availability, Data Cap, and Business Service Only challenge types

Working with an Eligible Entity to identify and report service issues.

Service Challenges

TAKE A SPEED TEST   REPORT AVAILABILITY EVIDENCE

Are you an ISP/Non-Profit/Local Government?
Request an account to begin submitting BEAD challenges

Speed Test   ✕

Check all that apply:
☐ I am on VPN
☐ Mobile/wireless network
☐ My network is currently being heavily used for video streaming or gaming.

⊘ SPEEDTEST

GO

Comcast ⌄
Boston, MA

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FCC National Broadband Map
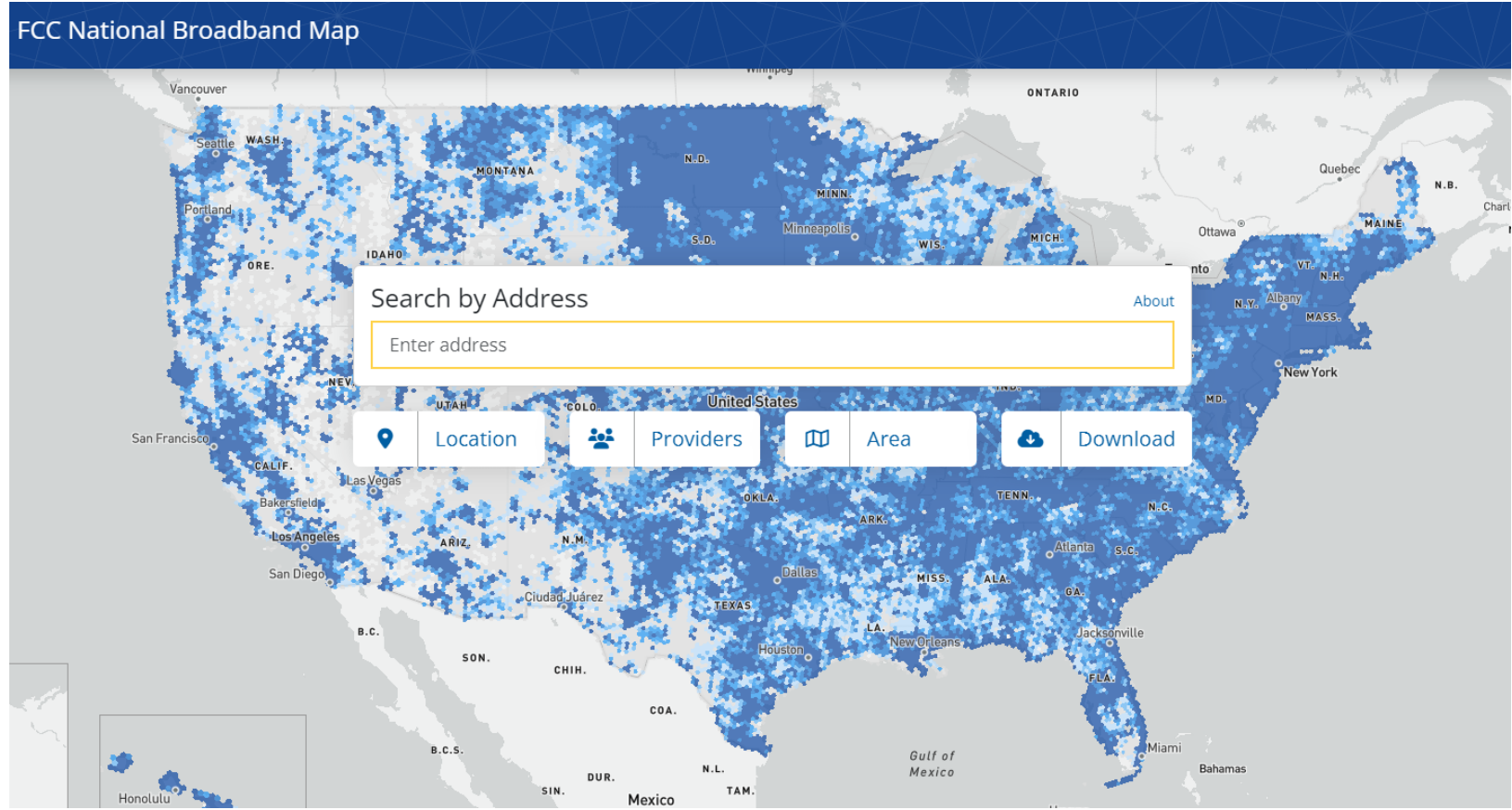
You can prepare for the BEAD Challenge Process by becoming familiar with the data on the FCC's National Broadband Map. [Linked here](#)

Note Community Anchor Institutions Will Not Appear on the FCC Map

Engagement Ideas & Comms Toolkit

Engagement Ideas:
- [Illinois/Cook County Facebook House Party](#)

MBI Communication Toolkit – Coming soon!
- Social media posts
- Speed Test Flyer
- Email language
- Glossary of Terms

Example from Michigan

Pre-Register for the Challenge Portal
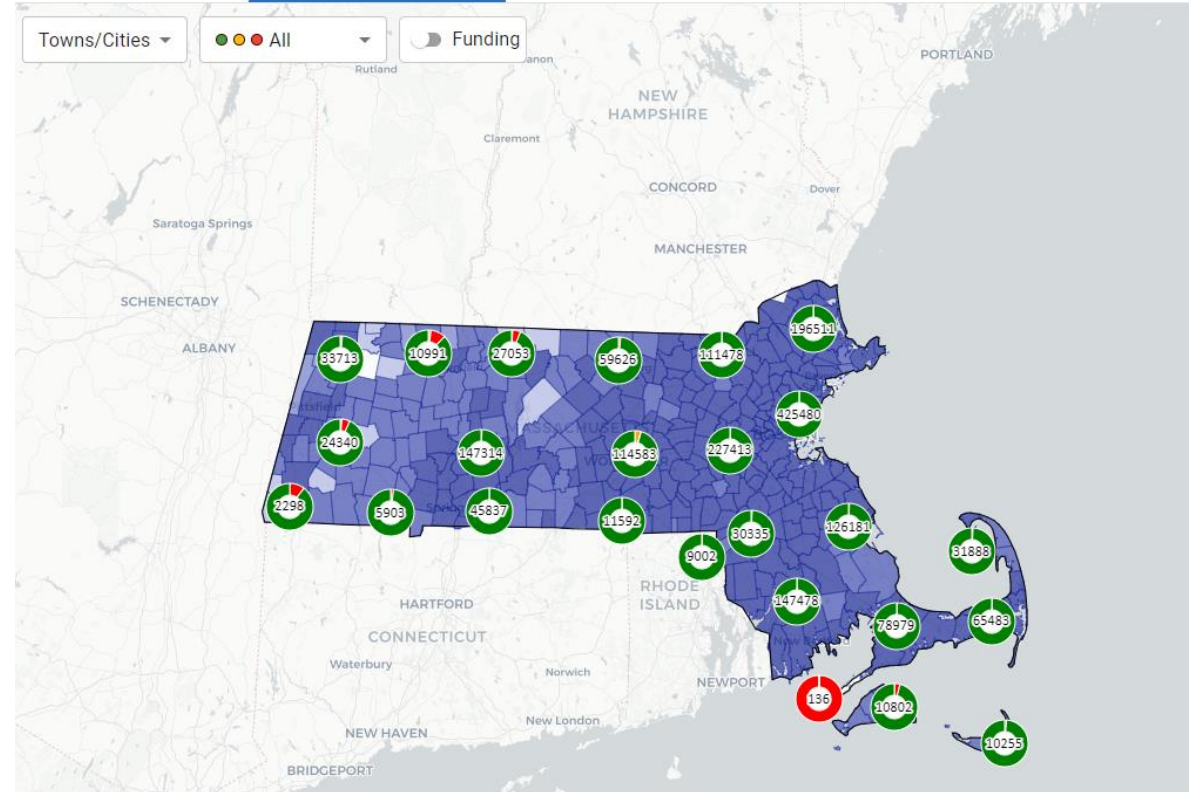
Beta map for reference purposes only

https://form.fillout.com/t/1aRWBsaj4Kus

Next Steps – Invitation to Participate

- Keep an eye out for more Technical Assistance materials that will be posted to the MBI BEAD Challenge Process Webpage

- Please fill out the Pre-Registration Form for all BEAD Challenge Process updates

- Know Your Numbers and Develop a Local Strategy!

- Attend more information sessions with MBI
    - How's Your Internet? Technical Assistance Webinar
        - June 5th from 12:30pm-1:30pm
        - Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_eE9p6ku1Ta-YoMdu7n5jxw

- Be ready to participate!
    - As a challenger
    - As resident support

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Thank You!

Please email additional questions to
broadband@masstech.org

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