

## How We're Capturing Broadband Availability Changes due to Hurricane Helene Damage

### ALL BEAD CHALLENGERS

You do **not** need to submit challenges by the Jan. 8, 2025, deadline for service in areas impacted by Hurricane Helene that have rebuilding efforts underway. We are seeking challenges specifically for locations where it is known that service will not be rebuilt. Any challenges we receive of this nature can be rebutted by the internet service provider and resolved in the final determination phase.

**Location ("fabric") challenges are not part of the BEAD state challenge process.** Instead, submit any Broadband Serviceable Location structures that were destroyed and will not be rebuilt to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) National Broadband Map.

During the challenge process, all locations in hurricane-impacted areas will remain in the BEAD data so those previously determined to be eligible for BEAD funding for broadband infrastructure will stay eligible for BEAD funding if they are rebuilt. In later stages of the BEAD program, there will be opportunities to reflect locations that will not be rebuilt.

### INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER CHALLENGERS

During the BEAD challenge window, permanent changes in availability status of a location due to damage from Hurricane Helene may be reported by an existing broadband provider as an availability challenge to the provider's own service. Changes should only be reported through this BEAD challenge process if an existing broadband provider has determined that:

- service has been lost to a specific Broadband Serviceable Location; and
- the existing broadband provider will **not** rebuild to provide service to that location.

If both criteria above are met, providers must submit the following evidence:

- a CSV file that lists the affected Broadband Service Location IDs; and
- an [attestation letter](#) that indicates the disaster-related circumstances and states the above two criteria for the challenged locations.

Challenges submitted as described above will not be counted toward the total of challenges that trigger area or multi-dwelling unit challenges. Please see our [NTIA-approved BEAD Initial Proposal Volume I](#) for additional information about area and multi-dwelling unit challenges.

If you are rebutting challenges received for locations where Hurricane Helene destroyed broadband infrastructure that is currently being rebuilt or will be rebuilt within the coming months, submit the following evidence:

- a planned service attestation letter modified for this purpose;
- a CSV file of affected broadband serviceable location IDs; and
- any additional supporting documentation on the rebuild timeline and specifications.

### PROVIDERS REPORTING BEYOND JAN. 8 DEADLINE

If reconstruction feasibility is still being assessed beyond the Jan. 8 BEAD challenge deadline, providers have a second opportunity to share any known locations for which infrastructure has

been destroyed and will not be rebuilt, by uploading the same evidence listed above to the division's secure Data Exchange Portal by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, March 11. This will allow us time to process the data and incorporate changes into the BEAD data we will submit to the NTIA.

## **ONGOING COORDINATION**

We are continuing to work with the NTIA and the FCC to determine additional ways to capture changes in fabric and availability status due to Hurricane Helene damage during or beyond the BEAD challenge process deadlines. We will maintain open communication with broadband providers on this issue to ensure we have the best data possible to fund high-speed internet service to unserved and underserved locations.