

Indicators of Broadband Need

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I provide feedback about the Map?

A: Users should direct all inquiries, questions, suggestions, and other feedback to NTIA at nbam@ntia.gov.

Q: Why doesn't this show what Internet plans I can get?

A: This map brings together several different datasets to show information on general broadband availability within the United States and is not meant to be a resource for provider plan specific information.

Q: How does this relate to the FCC's new map? Is it a replacement for it?

A: This project is separate from the mapping work under development at the FCC. By pulling together various existing data sources into one place to provide a rich visual depiction of common broadband availability questions, this map should complement the FCC's mapping work but it is not intended as a substitute for that work.

Q: Where do I get the underlying data?

A: The underlying data is accessible via the attribute tables, which can be opened by clicking on the arrow at the bottom of the map. By default, clicking on the arrow brings up attribute tables with data from all census geographies: counties, census tracts, and census blocks. Users can export the attribute table by selecting the Options button and clicking Export all to CSV. The data presented is "as is," "as available" for informational purposes. NTIA does not warrant the accuracy, adequacy, or completeness of this information and expressly disclaims any liability for any errors or omissions.

Q: Will this map change as broadband gets built out? Do you have a schedule?

A: We expect to update the map as new data becomes available.

Q: Is this showing information about mobile as well as fixed Internet?

A: The Microsoft, M-Lab, Ookla, and FCC data layers measure only fixed Internet service and do not contain information on cellular network speeds at this time. The American Community Survey (ACS) data includes cellular networks as a type of Internet access. The layer "American Community Survey – 25% or More of Households Report No Internet Access" includes areas where 25% or more of respondents reported having no access to Internet of any kind (fixed, cellular, etc.)

Q: I get much lower speeds at my location than those shown on the map. Why is that?

A: Layers on the map were created showing a single metric aggregated for the area shown. In the case of most layers, this is usually a median value shown at the U.S. county or census tract level. Individual speed tests are

not displayed but are factored in the aggregated metric. Individual results within the area may differ on either side of the values provided.

Q: How can I access more granular data for layers shown in the map?

A: Data in the map is shown at the lowest level publicly available in the census geographic hierarchy of counties, census tracts, and census blocks. More granular data may be available from commercial data providers.

Q: When I look at a particular geographic area, what does it mean that some areas are brighter red than others?

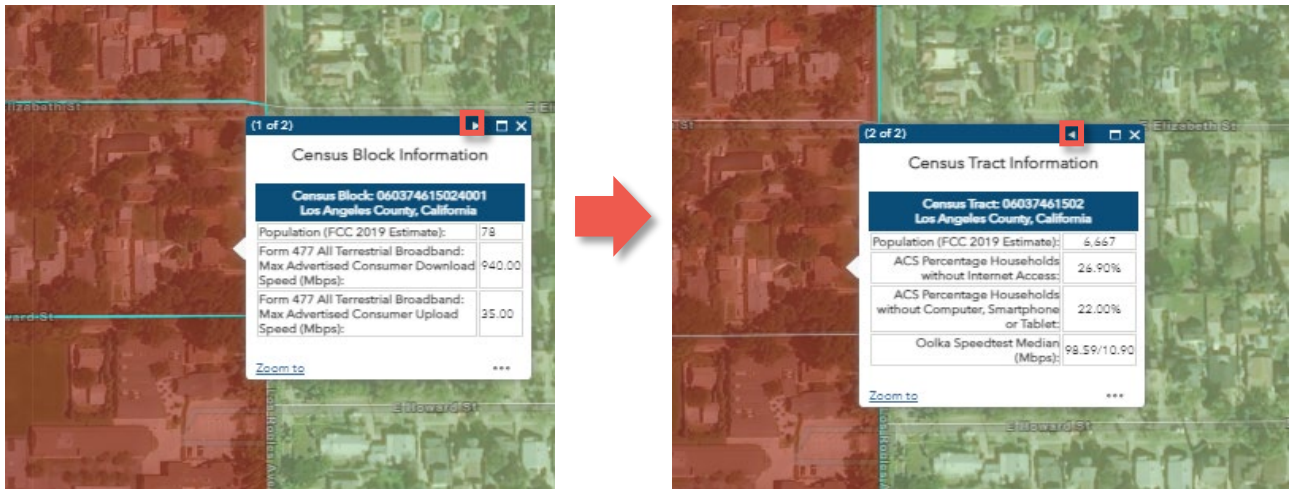
A: When more than one indicator layer is turned on in the map, overlapping indicators will result in a brighter color for affected areas. The more indicators of broadband need there are for an area, the brighter red it will appear on the map.

Q: I zoomed in and clicked on the same area but now I see a different pop up, why is that?

A: The map is scale dependent and users will see a popup with county information, census tract information, or census block information depending on their zoom level. The chart below shows the different census geographic boundaries and their corresponding zoom levels.

Census Geographic Boundaries	Upper Scale Bounding	Lower Scale Bounding
Counties	1:591,657,528	1:2,311,162
Census Tracts	1:1,155,581	1:1
Census Blocks	1:36,112	1:1

It's important to note census tract information is also available at the census block level. Layers built from census tracts remain visible and their popups are accessible by clicking the arrow at the top of any census block popup. Use this arrow to toggle back and forth between block and tract popups as shown in the screen shots below.



Q: Why are the indicators of broadband need ordered the way they are?

A: The indicators of broadband need are ordered based on the scale of the census geographic boundaries. Indicators created from county-level data are at the top of the Layers list and are displayed on top of indicators created from census tract data, which in turn are displayed on top of the FCC indicator at the census block level, creating a layering effect. County-level indicator layers have a scale dependency and are not displayed at the tract level and below. Users can change the order of the indicators by clicking the ellipsis next to the layer and selecting up or down. Additionally, users can set the county layers to draw at lower levels by clicking the “Set visibility range” option and moving the slider below the tract level.

