



Understanding the Speed Test Requirements in the Model Challenge Process

*Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment
(BEAD) Program*

November 2023



This document is intended solely to assist recipients in better understanding the BEAD program and the requirements set forth in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for this program. This document does not and is not intended to supersede, modify, or otherwise alter applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, or the specific application requirements set forth in the NOFO. In all cases, statutory and regulatory mandates, and the requirements set forth in the NOFO, shall prevail over any inconsistencies contained in this document.

OVERVIEW

Speed tests are used to substantiate challenges and rebuttals related to internet service speed and latency. The requirements detailed in the **Optional Speed Test Module** (*Section 1.4.6 of the BEAD Model Challenge Process*) govern the use of speed tests for both the regular challenge process and pre-challenge modifications outlined in **Optional Module 3: Speed Test Modifications** (*Section 1.4.2 of the BEAD Model Challenge Process*). For Eligible Entities that adopt Optional Module 3, the speed tests used to substantiate the pre-challenge modifications must align to these requirements¹.

SPEED TEST REQUIREMENTS:

- The median result of three speed tests, taken on separate days, is used to identify service levels
- Speed tests must not be older than 60 days from the start of the challenge period
- Speed tests may be conducted by subscribers, but speed test challenges must be gathered and submitted by an eligible challenger (units of local government, nonprofit organizations, or an internet service provider)

ACCEPTABLE SPEED TESTS

Acceptable speed tests include readings from:

- The **physical line speed** provided by the residential gateway, (i.e., DSL modem, cable modem (HFC), ONT (for FTTH), or fixed wireless subscriber module)
- Within the residential gateway web interface**
- The **service provider's web page**
- Tests performed on a laptop or desktop computer** within immediate proximity of the residential gateway, using a NTIA-approved speed test application

WHAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN EACH SPEED TEST?

Each speed test measurement must include:

- Time and date** of the speed test
- Provider-assigned **IP address** of the residential gateway (Either IPv4 or IPv6)

WHAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN EACH GROUP OF THREE SPEED TESTS?

Each group of 3 speed tests must include:

- The **customer's name and street address**
- A **certification of the speed tier** to which the customer subscribes
- An **agreement form** that grants access to the information above to the Eligible Entity, any contractors supporting the process, and the service provider

SERVICE PROVIDER REBUTTALS

Service providers may rebut speed and latency challenges by conducting speed tests in the manner described above. Service providers also must:

- Provide speed tests for **at least 10% of customers in the challenged area**
- Ensure customers are **randomly selected**
- Apply the **80/80** rule for speed compliance²
- Conduct speed tests between **7:00 PM and 11:00 PM** local time

¹ Eligible Entities may propose other approaches to using speed tests but must provide sufficient detail for NTIA to evaluate such proposals.

² The 80/80 rule requires that 80% of challenge locations must experience a speed that equals or exceeds 80% of the speed threshold.



NTIA-APPROVED SPEED TEST APPLICATIONS

NTIA has approved the following applications for conducting speed tests:

- ✓ **Ookla** (<https://www.speedtest.net/>)
- ✓ **M-Lab** (<https://speed.measurementlab.net/#/>)
- ✓ **Cloudflare** (<https://speed.cloudflare.com/>)
- ✓ **Netflix** (<https://fast.com/>)
- ✓ Speed test sites operated or sponsored by the Eligible Entity (including commercial test aggregators)

