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All Are Not Equal When it Comes to Broadband

The Federal Communications Commission has concluded that all Americans are not being served equally when it comes to broadband deployment, and that its past benchmark for broadband is woefully out of date.

The Commission announced its finding earlier this year as part of the annual broadband review that it must conduct. The old definition of broadband, or “advanced telecommunications capability”, was 4 Megabits per second (Mbps) downstream and 1 Mbps upstream. The new is 25 Mbps/3 Mbps.

“Recent data show that approximately 55 million Americans (17 percent) live in areas unserved by fixed 25 Mbps/3 Mbps broadband or higher service, and that gap closed only by three percentage points in the last year. We therefore conclude that broadband is not being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion,” the FCC said.



The Commission further stated that a digital divide persists between urban and non-urban parts of the country at a variety of data rates, and that the problem is one of supply, not demand: “Consumers in rural America adopt broadband at the same rates as consumers in urban areas.”

The report states that **Americans living in rural areas** and on Tribal lands disproportionately lack access to broadband. The statistics showed that 25 Mbps/3 Mbps capability is unavailable to 8% of Americans living in urban areas, compared to 53% of Americans living in rural areas and 63% of Americans living on Tribal lands and in the U.S. Territories.

The report is available at the [FCC website](#). There also is a collection of maps the FCC provides to illustrate broadband **deployment**.

