

#MobileOnly Challenge FAQ

MobleOnlyChallenge.com

What is the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) role in setting broadband standards?

The FCC is in charge of overseeing the nation's telecom and broadband infrastructure. One of their responsibilities, as set by Congress, is to ensure that all Americans have access to "high-speed broadband internet." The FCC is also responsible for setting this definition of "high-speed broadband internet." Every year they evaluate the current standard, and update it if necessary.

Currently, the FCC's definition is set as *fixed access* at 25 mbps download / 3 mbps upload speeds. *Fixed access* is the direct internet connection that you can subscribe to in your home or business. This is typically a faster and more reliable connection than the *mobile service* that you can get with a cell phone data plan.

Under the current definition of *fixed access* at 25 mbps download / 3 mbps upload speeds, the most recent data shows that

- o 10% of Americans lack access to high-speed broadband
- o 39% of rural Americans lack access to high-speed broadband, and
- o 51% of Americans have one choice of high-speed broadband provider.

This means that the FCC has an obligation to ensure that these Americans who do not currently have access to high-speed broadband internet are able to get this service in the future.

What action is the FCC taking now that is causing concern?

Under new leadership, the FCC is trying to redefine "high-speed broadband" to a lower standard. The new standard they are proposing would include a mobile connection at 10 mbps download / 1 mbps upload speeds as "high-speed broadband." This means that if an individual had a mobile cell phone data subscription that provided her with speeds of 10/1 mbps, and she **did not have a fixed connection of 25/3 mbps available in her region, that she would still be classified as "served" by the FCC's new standard.**

This new, lower standard would absolve the FCC of their obligation to improve broadband connections in underserved areas of the country. It would curtail the FCC's ability to encourage broadband buildout, and it would further solidify the digital divide that currently exists in the United States.

Why is this important?

The FCC is choosing to address its obligation to make sure that all Americans are served with high-speed broadband *not* by expanding broadband access, but instead by lowering our country's standards. This is harmful for America because it effectively hides our country's digital divide.

By defining away our digital divide problem, the FCC is ignoring its responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable Americans have access to high-speed broadband.

What is the #MobileOnly Challenge, and how can it help?

The #MobileOnly Challenge asks individuals to spend **one day accessing the internet only via their mobile device and mobile service subscription, and to document their experience using the hashtag #MobileOnly**. Don't forget to turn off wi-fi! This is about testing Americans' ability to use the cellular network for all daily activities. Some activities you can try for the challenge:

- o Try to accomplish work tasks on your phone
- o Try to stream high definition (720p) video on your phone
- o Try to multi-task as if you were on a computer and a fixed broadband connection

If you live in an area where only mobile service is available, use the hashtag #MobileOnly to tell the FCC why they should continue to fight to improve connectivity in your area and the rest of the country.

The goal of this challenge is to highlight the limitations of accessing the internet only on a mobile device and with a mobile subscription, and to tell the FCC that Americans deserve better.

If you have further questions about this challenge, please feel free to reach out to [Cat Blake](#).