

NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

March S. Gallagher, Esq.
Comptroller



Alicia DeMarco, CPA
Deputy Comptroller

Contact: Jenny Lee 201-873-5853
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Ulster County Citizens Commission for Digital Inclusion Rallies Stakeholders to Challenge the Federal Broadband Map

Kingston, NY (December 27, 2022) – Billions of dollars of federal and state funds will be made available to expand high-speed internet service, and the Comptroller’s Office wants to make sure Ulster County gets its fair share. The funds will be distributed according to a map created by the Federal Communications Commission to identify areas that lack internet access, and that map is out for public review until **January 13, 2023**. Accurate mapping will assist communities in obtaining state and federal broadband infrastructure funding.

During COVID, people across the country learned just how critical access to the internet is for work, school, healthcare, and the community, yet over a thousand properties in Ulster County still lack access. To address that shortcoming, the Comptroller’s Office convened the Ulster County Citizens Commission for Digital Inclusion in May of 2022. Over the summer, the Commission mapped Ulster County cable fiber broadband. The Commission identified over [1,100 properties](#) that are not served by cable fiber broadband and has been working with state officials to have Ulster County data incorporated into the state map and to file a bulk challenge to the FCC map.

The Comptroller’s Office and the Citizens Commission urge Ulster County residents, businesses and organizations who have no internet service via cable fiber broadband to review the map. Those lacking access should make sure the [FCC map](#) accurately reflects the absence of cable fiber broadband and file a challenge if the map shows access where none exists.

The Commission is rallying stakeholders such as municipalities, school districts, libraries, first responders and other organizations to take part in the FCC Broadband Map challenge process. The Commission has issued a “How to File a Challenge Guide” as well as a kit of materials for stakeholder organizations to share with their members encouraging as many challenges as possible. Ulster County residents and businesses should review the challenge materials here <https://tinyurl.com/UlsterBroadbandChallenge>.

“Those struggling to connect to the internet and need help filing a challenge can contact our office. We were informed that multiple challenges from the individual property resident or business owner, the County, and the State is the best way to ensure the map is revised to show the most up to date information,” said Comptroller March Gallagher. “Broadband is critical infrastructure and should be available to even our most rural communities. The Commission wants to ensure that we are able to secure funding so that every unserved home and business get the last mile build out.”

"Having correct data for each address is crucial because the FCC uses the data to calculate the funding allocated to our remote neighborhoods. This will help pay for high-speed internet projects throughout our rural communities which would otherwise be unaffordable for individuals," said Commission Member and Denning resident Jenny Lee.

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