



CostQuest Federal Program Licensing FAQ

Publication date:

4/4/2024

Updated:

5/9/2024

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How do I get a license to Fabric Data?

It depends. CostQuest provides a no-cost Fabric license through two distinct paths. Each path supports a distinct set of purposes within Federal programs. To decide on the appropriate license, you need to first understand what you are trying to accomplish with the Fabric Data.

If you need the Fabric to file challenges to the data shown on the National Broadband Map or to participate in the FCC Broadband Data Collection, you will need to obtain an FCC Fabric license. The FCC has posted several articles describing the process. See: <https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/10419121200923-How-Entities-Can-Access-the-Location-Fabric>.

If you need the Fabric to participate in a Federal Broadband Granting Agency (FBGA) program, you will need an NTIA Fabric license. NTIA licenses are available for recipients, sub-recipients, and challengers. More information is available under the NTIA Licensing Questions section of this FAQ.

To achieve all of your goals, you may need both an NTIA and FCC license.

The table below provides a quick summary of purposes that qualify an entity for a Fabric Data license.

Purposes	FCC Fabric License	NTIA Fabric License
Participate in an FCC BDC Bulk Fabric challenge	Yes	No
Participate in an FCC BDC Bulk Broadband Availability Challenge	Yes	No
Participate in an FCC BDC availability submission	Yes	No
Participate in an FCC effort to update and verify compliance with certain High-Cost program support and deployment obligations	Yes	No
Participate in an NTIA BEAD Eligible Entity challenge process	No	Yes
Participate in Treasury, USDA or other FBGA challenge process	No	Yes
Participate in an FBGA broadband grant program as a sub-recipient, recipient or indirect recipient	No	Yes

However, not all participants in challenge processes will need a Fabric license; see discussion later in this FAQ.

What are some examples of FBGAs and eligible programs?

The list below is a partial collection of FBGA programs. Not all programs are open at all times and to all potential recipients.

FBGA
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)-Area Development
Appalachian Regional Commission-POWER
Department of the Treasury -Community Development Financial Institutions Fund-New Markets Tax Credit Program
Delta Regional Authority-Community Infrastructure Fund
Delta Regional Authority-States Economic Development Assistance Program
Denali Commission-Alaska Broadband Program
Department of the Treasury-American Rescue Plan Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
Department of the Treasury-Capital Projects Fund
Northern Border Regional Commission-State Economic & Infrastructure Development (SEID) Program
USDA-Rural Business-Cooperative Service-Business and Industry (B&I) Loan Guarantee Program
USDA-Rural Business-Cooperative Service-Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG)
USDA-Rural Utilities Service-Community Connect Grant Program
USDA-Rural Utilities Service-Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program
USDA-Rural Utilities Service-ReConnect Program
USDA-Rural Utilities Service-Telecommunications Infrastructure Program (Infrastructure Program)
U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration-FY 2023 EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs
U.S. Department of Commerce/ Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program
U.S. Department of Commerce/ Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program

U.S. Department of Commerce/ Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program
U.S. Department of Commerce/ Broadband Infrastructure Program

Do I need a Fabric license to participate in a challenge process?

It depends on how you are planning to participate.

If you or your organization is going to participate in a challenge process and will create the challenge through the FCC or a State challenge map, you won't need a Fabric license. For example, you can create an FCC Fabric challenge, including adding a location or changing an address, by searching for address in the FCC National Broadband Map < <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home> > and submitting the challenge directly through the map interface. No license is required. Many States are developing similar methods to support the BEAD challenge process without requiring challengers to identify locations by fabric location ID. If you or your organization wants to create a bulk or file-based challenge, you will need a Fabric license. The Fabric license will provide the attributes (longitude, latitude, primary address, etc.) that will support broad analysis to enable Fabric and availability challenges. The most common analysis supports linking state-provided broadband availability information to a location record. Establishing this linkage allows challengers to validate the presence of broadband service provided to an address. In some cases, challengers use an address lookup against service availability databases. In other types of analysis, we are aware of challengers who are field-validating the presence of broadband networks. The field survey information is compared to broadband availability information developed within a Geographic Information System.

NTIA Licensing Questions

What is the NTIA Fabric License, and what funding programs can it be used for?

CostQuest is contracted by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to provide the Fabric data. This data can be accessed through the NTIA Fabric License Tiers – A, B, C, D, and E. This framework has been designed to support the objectives of the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, including participation in state and other eligible entity administered challenge processes, and other Federal broadband programs available today or in the future through a Federal Broadband Granting Agency (FBGA). An awardee of Federal funds from the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (Section 60105) will need to license the data to satisfy compliance reporting requirements of these programs. If your organization currently participates or intends to participate in Federally funded broadband programs or a state-led challenge process, the NTIA Fabric license may support these activities, in accordance with the terms of the License Agreement.

What is included in the NTIA Fabric file?

Once your license is approved, you will receive the NTIA Fabric file. The Fabric file is a .csv file that includes the unique location_id for each Broadband Serviceable Location, the latitude/longitude for each location record as well as other attribute information. Two types of location records are present within the NTIA Fabric file. Records with bsl_flag=TRUE indicate where mass-market broadband is provided. Records with bsl_flag=FALSE indicate where mass-market broadband is not provided. Broadband information derived from the FCC BDC program is only available for records where bsl_flag=TRUE.

What licenses are available within the NTIA program?

The different tiers of NTIA Fabric licenses are described in the table below:

Tier	Available to Licensees	Description	How do you request a license?
Tier A	NTIA	NTIA, its agents, and any NTIA-established entities	Internal distribution.
Tier B	Federal Broadband Granting Agencies	Includes any Federal agency that administers a Federal financial assistance program that supports or promotes broadband deployment, use, or adoption	Available on request through NTIA
Tier C	Pass-through entities	Includes NTIA Broadband Grant Program recipients that are a State, local government, Tribal entity, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization	All states have received a license. Other eligible organizations should contact ifasupport@costquest.com
Tier D	Prospective and awarded recipients, sub-recipients of Federal broadband	Entities that participate in Federal broadband programs and will file challenges	Available by request from CostQuest.

	funds from FBGA (NTIA, USDA, Treasury, etc.)	during State-led challenge processes. Includes ISPs.	
Tier E	Units of local government, non-profits, and FCC Tier 4 organizations supporting units of local government and non-profits.	Entities that will challenge pass-through entity coverage maps	Available by request from CostQuest only in states that have not started their challenge process.

How do Pass Through Entities (State and Tribal entities) receive the NTIA license and licensed materials?

NTIA has provided CostQuest with a list of contacts at state broadband offices. CostQuest has sent an email to each contact. If you have not been contacted and believe you should have been, please email CostQuest at ifasupport@costquest.com.

Tribal organizations seeking a Fabric license to participate in the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program should contact ifasupport@costquest.com and request a Tier C license.

I am a contractor for a State. How do I get the NTIA Fabric?

A contractor for a State can obtain the NTIA Fabric pursuant to the terms of the State's Tier C license. The State must complete the NTIA Tier C license process. Once the state is licensed, it is permitted to share the Licensed Materials with you as an Authorized User, per the process outlined in the License Agreement. The Licensed Materials will be shared by the Licensee (state), they will not come through CostQuest. It is the Licensee's responsibility to ensure Attachment B of its License Agreement is completed by the Authorized Users. The Licensee remains responsible for the protection and appropriate use of the Licensed Materials.

Under the NTIA Tier C license, can I share data?

The NTIA Tier C license supports the distribution of Licensed Materials to a Licensee's Authorized Users. An Authorized User may be a subcontractor or contractor working on the Licensee's behalf to support the licensed purposes. The use of the Licensed Materials by the Authorized Users must be in support of the Licensee's intent and consistent with the terms of the license agreement. A Tier C licensee can publish a subset of location_id(s). This subset is typically the location_id of Unserved and Underserved records that are the basis of the challenge process. A Tier C user can also publish Derivative Data Records to fulfill reporting requirements under IIJA section 60105. More information can be found in section 6 of the UCS.

Under the NTIA Tier D license, can I share data?

The NTIA Tier D license supports the distribution of Licensed Materials to a Licensee's Authorized Users. An Authorized User may be a subcontractor or contractor working on the Licensee's behalf to support the licensed purposes. The use of the Licensed Materials by the Authorized Users must be in support of the Licensee's intent and consistent with the terms of the license agreement. A tier D licensee can publish availability information (location_id and broadband coverage information) with other Licensees.

I have already signed an agreement with CostQuest for an FCC license, why do I need to sign an NTIA agreement?

The FCC licenses (Tiers 1, 2, 3, & 4) are specific to FCC Broadband Data Collection (BDC) purposes. Those licenses were developed under an agreement with the FCC to support the use of Licensed Materials for FCC BDC purposes only. These purposes include submitting Fabric corrections as well as submitting broadband availability data and filing availability challenges.

The NTIA licenses (Tier A, B, C, D, & E) were developed to support BEAD and other Federal broadband programs available today or in the future; and to facilitate compliance with reporting obligations associated with such programs – including reporting associated with the FCC Broadband Funding Map established by section 60105 of the IIJA. If your organization currently participates or intends to participate in Federal broadband programs, the NTIA license may support those activities, consistent with the terms of the License Agreement.

FCC Licensing Questions

How do I get a license agreement for the FCC's Fabric?

Visit the FCC Fabric Resources page for more instructions on how to access the Fabric. Note that there are separate instructions for broadband service providers, government entities, and non-profits and researchers.

Questions about FCC Fabric licensing can be sent to nbfsupport@costquest.com.

If I am an FCC licensee, can I use my FCC-licensed materials for purposes outside of the BDC process?

No. The FCC Licensed Materials are only for FCC BDC purposes. They cannot be used for purposes outside of that License Agreement. Use of FCC Licensed Materials for purposes other than FCC BDC purposes is a violation of the FCC License Agreement. More details about some of the uses included in the Tier 2 User Class Statement ("UCS") is available below.

The NTIA Fabric license may be an option if you are participating in a program under an FBGA (Federal Broadband Granting Agency).

Have there been updates to the FCC Tier 2 License?

Yes. The Tier 2 License and User Class Statement (UCS) have been updated periodically. The most recent version can be found at: <https://costquest.info/3KRakYU>

Can ISPs use FCC Tier 2 Licensed Fabric data for network planning or other commercial purposes?

No. FCC Tier 2 Licensees are prohibited from using Fabric data for any other purposes beyond their participation in the BDC, including commercial and non-commercial uses or any publication. For clarity, the NTIA license also limits the use of the Fabric data to a limited set of permitted uses. If you are unsure of your use case, please review the respective license agreement.

Can ISPs use Tier 2 Licensed Fabric data for compliance with other FCC programs like RDOF or State programs?

The User Tier 2 USC was also modified on September 6, 2023 to expand the FCC programs for which the Data and Derivatives can be used. In addition to permitting use of the Fabric in meeting Broadband Data Act ("BDA") obligations, such as the Broadband Data Collection, the modified license now allows Tier 2 licensees, such as broadband internet access service providers, to submit Fabric-derived filings to the FCC (and/or any FCC-established entities, e.g., USAC) for Universal Service Fund reporting obligations. Currently this allows Tier 2 license holders to use the Fabric for comparative analysis of their BDC filings and other FCC required filings.

On January 25, 2024, the FCC released a Public Notice seeking comment on expanded uses of the Fabric for high-cost support mechanism deployment obligations. <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-24-77A1.pdf>

While the FCC has certain rights to use Fabric data in support of its Universal Service Fund programs, we recognize that additional data usage rights may be needed in the future to allow for ISPs to comply with certain program rules. CostQuest anticipates additional information will be provided by the FCC in the future.

The broadband office in my State is requesting address lists of served and unserved locations. Under the FCC Tier 2 license, can I submit my BDC filing to them?

The August 26th, 2022, UCS enhancement allows ISPs who licensed the Fabric data under FCC Tier 2 and created their FCC BDC filing, to share the same filing with States who have licensed the FCC Tier 2 Fabric data for BDC purposes. The shared file can only include the Fabric

location_id along with availability data. The States can then link the shared file to their Tier 2 licensed Fabric by location id for more information. That said, the shared data file cannot be shared with non-licensees (FCC Tier 2) nor used for purposes outside the BDC effort. A shared file can contain only the location_id sourced from the Licensed Materials

ISPs seeking to participate in NTIA BEAD or other FBGA broadband award or challenge programs should apply for the appropriate NTIA license.

What kind of reports or analytics can I develop with the Fabric data licensed through the FCC Broadband Data Collection?

Licensee use of the Fabric data is limited to the purposes expressly set forth in the Tier 2 FCC Fabric License and the UCS attached thereto. Under the Tier 2 FCC Fabric License, Licensees can develop reports and analytics that support the FCC BDC efforts. Examples for Tier 2 use by a government entity could include identifying ISPs who have submitted (or not submitted) into the BDC, as well as comparing BDC submissions to other sources of broadband availability information to formulate a BDC availability challenge.

The FCC Tier 4 Research License supports non-commercial academic or public-policy research directly related to broadband availability. More information about Tier 4 licenses is available below.

Under the FCC License Agreement, can I use the provisions for data sharing between and among Tier 2 FCC licensees to share data with an academic institution or non-profit operating in my State?

Tier 2 FCC licensees may only share data with other Tier 2 FCC licensees, which only includes Internet service providers, State, local and Tribal governmental entities, and other approved entities that have executed a Tier 2 FCC Fabric License. It is the licensee's responsibility to confirm, prior to sharing any data, that the entity with whom it intends to share data is a Tier 2 licensee that has executed a licensing agreement with CostQuest Associates.

Academic institutions and non-profits may be eligible for a Tier 4 license. More information about Tier 4 licenses is available below.

In what way(s) can the Fabric data licensed through the FCC Broadband Data Collection be used under NTIA's BEAD program?

The Tier 2 FCC Fabric license allows Tier 2 Licensees to share fixed broadband availability data with other FCC Licensees, provided that the data is in the same format as submitted to the FCC through the BDC.

An NTIA Tier D or E license provides access to Fabric data and allows participation in Federally funded broadband programs or State-led challenge processes. NTIA Tier D data cannot be shared with an FCC Licensee unless the FCC Licensee also has an NTIA Tier D license.

What is a Tier 4 FCC Fabric License?

A Tier 4 Fabric license is intended for entities that are not governments, tribes or ISPs. In some cases, ISPs who seek Fabric data outside of their service area can qualify as a Tier 4 Licensee.

What are the types of Tier 4 Licenses?

There are two Tier 4 FCC Agreements, the “Standard Agreement” and the “Research License”. The FCC Tier 4 Standard Agreement supports the filing of BDC challenges by entities not covered under another FCC license Agreement (i.e. entities other than governments, tribes, ISPs, etc.). The FCC Tier 4 Research License supports non-commercial academic or public-policy research directly related to broadband availability.

What is the process to get a Tier 4 FCC License?

This process is described in this BDC article: [How Entities Can Access the Location Fabric – BDC Help Center \(fcc.gov\)](#)

Challenge Process

How you use the Fabric Data will vary based on the type of challenge program you are participating in. We are aware of three categories of challenge process: FCC BDC, NTIA BEAD and other FBGA.

As part of a challenge process, what Fabric fields can I submit to other Licensees?

The FCC License supports exchanging challenge information among other FCC licensed parties. The NTIA license supports sharing challenge information with the FBGA operating the challenge. In both cases, the only Fabric derived field that can be shared is the location_id, as shown in the table below.

	FCC Fabric License (Tier 2 and Tier 4 License)	NTIA Fabric License (Tier D and Tier E)
location_id	Yes	Yes
address_primary	No	No
city	No	No

state	No	No
zip	No	No
zip_suffix	No	No
unit_count	No	No
bsl_flag	No	No
building_type_code	No	No
land_use_code	No	No
address_confidence_code	No	No
county_geoid	No	No
block_geoid	No	No
h3_9	No	No
latitude	No	No
longitude	No	No

If I am participating in a challenge process under an FBGA, what license do I need?

If you are participating in a challenge process outside of the FCC, you need an NTIA Tier D or E license. The table below summarizes common use cases. Bulk challenges to the location data shown on the FCC’s National Broadband Map require and FCC Tier License, 1, 2, 3, or 4.

Use Case	FCC Fabric License	NTIA License
Prospective sub-recipient, indirect recipient (e.g., ISP) seeking funds to build a network	Not permitted under FCC License	Tier D
Prospective sub-recipient, indirect recipient (e.g., ISP) seeking funds to build a network or submit a challenge	Not permitted under FCC License	Tier D

Awarded sub-recipient or indirect recipient (e.g., ISP) fulfilling an IJA 60105 reporting obligation.	Not permitted under FCC License	Tier D
Non-profit, unit of local government participating in a challenge	Not permitted under FCC License	Tier E
Consultant supporting a non-profit or unit of local government participating in an FBGA challenge process	Tier 4	Tier E

Can you summarize the Data use rights that support NTIA and FBGA challenge processes?

Complete use rights and restrictions are explained within the license. The following summary may help to direct the appropriate use of the Data.

- NTIA Tier C licensees can publish a list of unserved and underserved location_ids. No other Fabric attribute may be published.
- NTIA Tier C licensees have the right to publish and display data via a graphical representation in an online map, in reports or other static formats. Publications, displays, and reports or other static formats shall be locked such that unauthorized parties cannot extract licensed data used to generate the static display or report. The Tier C Licensee will not permit the export or publication of raw licensed data. For clarity, an FCC Tier 2 Designated Entity license (see: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-22-417A1.pdf>) also supports similar rights to support the FCC BDC purposes.
- NTIA Tier D licensees have the right to prepare and submit Derivative Data Records to an FBGA (Tier B) or Pass Through Entity (Tier C) as necessary to participate in an FBGA broadband grant challenge program. Only location_id from the Fabric Data can be provided in any Derivative Data Record. Although the form of responsive record to an FBGA may vary, we understand the record will consist of nothing other than the location_id sourced from the Fabric and additional information such as broadband coverage speed and deployment technology.
- NTIA Tier E licensees have the right to prepare and submit derivative data records to an FBGA (Tier B) or Pass Through Entity (Tier C) as necessary to participate in an FBGA broadband grant challenge program. Only location_id from the Fabric Data can be

provided in any Derivative Data Record. Although the form of responsive record to an FBGA or Pass Through Entity may vary, we understand the record will consist of nothing other than the location_id sourced from the Fabric and additional information such as broadband coverage speed and deployment technology.

- FCC licensees are restricted from using Fabric Data to support any process outside of the Broadband Data Collection (BDC) with data licensed under FCC Tier 2,3 or 4. Any participant in a State or FBGA Federal broadband grant program requires an NTIA Tier D or E License.

IJA 60105 Reporting Process

I am a recipient of Treasury Department funds, and I need to send my deployment information to the State. How can I do this?

Once you have received an NTIA Tier D license that covers the counties of your award, you can provide the location ID(s) and broadband availability information needed to meet the reporting requirement. This same process can be used for other FBGA awards.

A State is requiring reporting attributes beyond the location_id. Can my organization provide these additional attributes to the State?

It depends on the source of the attribute data.

NTIA licenses do not allow any attributes other than location_id to get reported to Pass Through Entities (States). If values beyond the location_id are derived outside of the Fabric Data, they can be supplied. An example of this would be supplying an awardee's GPS derived longitude and latitude. Those values can be used since they were not derived from the Fabric, even if they are similar to information contained in the licensed Fabric data.

If I have additional questions, who should I contact?

Please email ifasupport@costquest.com for any additional questions regarding the NTIA Fabric License.

For questions regarding the FCC's Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric for the Broadband Data Collection, please email nbfsupport@costquest.com.

Disclaimer

This document does not constitute legal advice. CostQuest Associates cannot provide legal analysis for Licensees. We recommend that any questions or concerns be discussed with your legal counsel after review of the appropriate License Agreement.

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