GREAT Program
Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program

ELIGIBLE & INELIGIBLE PROJECT AREAS

Eligible Areas:
Eligible Areas for the GREAT program are areas without Internet service providing transmission speeds of 10 Mbps download, 1 Mbps upload (with wireline or fixed wireless). As defined in conjunction with the Eligible Project and Broadband Service definitions of the legislation, these are the areas that are considered "unserved" and are targeted for deployment under this grant program.

Ineligible Areas:
Locations that already have Internet service *available* to them at transmission speeds of 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload (with wireline or fixed wireless) are ineligible. In addition, areas where a private provider has been designated to receive funds through other State or federally funded programs are ineligible as follows: these areas (census blocks) targeted by other programs shall be considered "served" if such funding is intended to result in construction of broadband in the area in the upcoming 18 months. Failure on the part of a provider to submit the relevant listing of census blocks by August 30, 2018 results in those areas being eligible for funding for the current program year.

Identifying Your Project Areas:
The GREAT program is designed somewhat like the USDA's Community Connect Program in that applicants identify the areas they wish to apply to serve. Applicants can apply for funding to serve census blocks, or *portions* of census blocks. The application offers a range of ways to provide location data for projects (address-level, street segment, polygons, etc.). See *Section III. Application Materials* for more detailed information on submission of locations where service is proposed to be made available.

While the Broadband Infrastructure Office (BIO) cannot provide a listing of all households or businesses within the state that have broadband service of less than 10:1 Mbps available, the Office encourages applicants to consider the following sources of information as a starting point for identifying project areas.

- *Tier One Counties*

All locations must be located within Tier One counties as designated by the NC Department of Commerce for 2018:
https://www.nccommerce.com/research-publications/incentive-reports/county-tier-designations

- *Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Form 477 Data*
  Census blocks with less than 10/1 Mbps (entire blocks)

Broadband availability data is collected twice per year by the Federal Communications Commission, from providers of facilities-based broadband services through their Form 477 data submissions. This data is granular to the census block level. If one household within a census block is shown as being served, the full census block is reflected as being a served block. Census blocks that are entirely unserved with advertised speeds of 10:1 Mbps can be identified through the FCC Form 477 data. These

census blocks have been mapped by BIO using the latest FCC data (July 2017) and are available for download for grant planning purposes.

- *Ineligible Areas*

The areas ineligible for GREAT due to current/upcoming broadband deployments utilizing State or federal funds have been mapped by BIO and are made available for download to denote ineligible census blocks. This information is compiled based on provider submissions to BIO (as of August 30, 2018).

- *Connect America Fund (CAF) Deployments*

In October 2018 the Universal Service Administrative Company released a new online map - the Connect America Fund Broadband Map. The federal Connect America Fund (CAF) is the largest source of federal funding in North Carolina for broadband deployment. Four providers in North Carolina have received Connect America Funds for Phase II (AT&T, CenturyLink, Frontier Communications and Windstream), with Wilkes Telephone Membership Corporation also recently receiving an award for the CAF Phase II Auction 903. In addition, some rate-of-return carriers in the state have participated in the CAF Broadband Loop Support program.

The online CAF Broadband Map may be useful in understanding where CAF cost model and BLS locations have been deployed. The map is current through 2017 in terms of deployments. CAF location data is downloadable from USAC's CAF map.

- o Connect America Fund Broadband Map:
  https://data.usac.org/publicreports/caf-map/

In addition, the BIO has mapped the original CAF-eligible areas to inform interested applicants of where the CAF-eligible areas are, within the Tier One counties. To be CAF-eligible, an area generally had to have had service of less than 10:1 Mbps and meet the CAF cost model, at the time the areas were designated. The map layers demonstrate which areas were identified by the FCC as having those thresholds.

- GREAT Grant Online Mapping Tool

The Broadband Infrastructure Office, with its partner the Center for Geographic Information & Analysis, has created the GREAT Grant Online Mapping Tool to provide in one place, many of these various data sets discussed above. This online map does not contain all eligible locations for GREAT but can be used as a foundation to begin planning potential service areas, especially for potential applicants that may not have GIS capabilities to map these datasets themselves.

- o The GREAT Grant Online Mapping Tool can be found here:
  https://bit.ly/2CGdpZ9

- *Downloadable Shapefiles*

Many of the data sets described above that can be downloaded as shapefiles can be found here:

From BIO GREAT webpage:
- Census block boundaries in the Tier One counties
- Census blocks with less than 10/1 Mbps, according to the FCC Form 477 Data (entire blocks)
- Ineligible blocks for 2018
- CAF Eligible Areas (original CAF eligible areas from FCC)
  https://www.ncbroadband.gov/great-grant-getting-started/

From USAC CAF Broadband Map:
- Location data for CAF builds to-date
  https://data.usac.org/publicreports/caf-map/

- *Other Data*

This program allows applicants to apply for funding to serve census blocks *OR portions* of census blocks where current speeds are less than 10:1. Applicants may choose to utilize other sources of data, including field data, as part of their planning and application development, to identify unserved portions of census blocks. Applicants may also submit applications for areas where transmission speeds are less than 10:1 Mbps, if data is available to support differences between advertised and transmission speeds.

Application Review & Protest Process

Once all applications are received they will be publicly posted. The Protest Process will provide an additional check to verify eligible areas. In addition, the BIO will conduct its own review on eligible areas for relevant proposals, based on data available, and may perform field tests when necessary.