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## BEAD APPLICATION PROJECT AREA METHODOLOGY

Defining project areas efficiently and strategically is fundamental to achieving the BEAD Program's goal of delivering fiber connectivity to as many households as economically feasible. Idaho's Initial Proposal Vol. II defines project areas as being clustered U.S. Census Blocks (CBs) using broadband serviceable location (BSL) service data designating unserved and underserved locations<sup>1</sup>.

Establishing Idaho's Application Project Areas (APAs) included the following objectives: (1) ensure all BEAD eligible locations receive access to reliable internet service and (2) promote efficient network design by accounting for permitting requirements, geographic obstacles/details and cost per location.

The National Broadband Availability Map Version 4 location fabric, released December 31, 2023, was used in Idaho's Challenge Process which resulted in the Final Determination Locations feature layer, establishing the list of BEAD eligible locations. CBs containing eligible locations were used as the foundational layer for APAs.

Data that was considered in the creation of APAs includes the number of unserved locations, number of underserved locations, number of served locations, land area size, CostQuest investment cost for both fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) and licensed fixed wireless (LFW) and Idaho's in-house cost model investment cost for both FTTH and LFW. Idaho's in-house cost-modeling accounts for characteristics such as geology type, BSL density, passings per mile, distance to a served location and terrain (elevation and slope change).

The following feature layers were then used in clustering CBs, both through computer automation and manual processes, while striving to achieve the APA objectives.

- Bureau of Indian Affairs Native Land Area
- Railroads
- Interstates, US Highways, and State Highways
- Rivers, Lakes, and Watersheds
- Idaho ILEC Study Areas
- County Boundaries
- Incorporated Municipalities
- Federal Permitting Areas
  - National Park Service
  - Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Forest Service
  - Department of Defense
  - Army Corp of Engineers
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - Bureau of Land Management

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<sup>1</sup> Idaho's [BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II](#) page 37 section 5.1 Definition of Application Project Areas (APA).