



**Webinar and Workshop Q&A
February 2010**

Q: How can we identify the existing service areas of RUS borrowers?

RUS will make maps available on either the RUS website or on broadbandusa.gov before the applications are due. There is no clear time frame for the posting of these maps.

Q: What are the rules regarding definition of rural?

The definition of rural has not changes from Round One. The distinctions between remote and non-remote have been removed.

A rural area means any area, as confirmed by the latest decennial census of the Bureau of the Census, which is not located within: (1) a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants; or (2) an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants. For purposes of the definition of rural area, an urbanized area means a densely populated territory as defined in the latest decennial census of the Bureau of the Census.

Q: Is the 75/25 split for rural vs urban in BIP based on population or geography?

This percentage should be determined based on the total square mileage of the service area.

Q: Is telemedicine technology via broadband covered as a part of the BTOP application?

Applicants will receive favorable consideration for applying to other Recovery Act programs. For example, applicants who propose a BIP Last Mile project and also apply for a Rural Telemedicine Grant from USDA or a Health IT from the Department of Health and Human Services will receive extra points. Applicants may also partner with hospitals to provide telemedicine services and receive points for connecting community anchor institutions.

Q: When can we expect NTIA's BTOP application guidelines to be released?

This is expected within the next few weeks. Monitor www.broadbandusa.gov for the application guide.

Q: How do we review our mapping submission?

The maps from Round One are no longer available for viewing. Round Two applicants applying to BIP will not be able to use their maps from Round One and must draw new maps using the mapping tool. The mapping tool is no longer a requirement for BTOP applicants.

Q: If Provider A is an RUS borrower, is its entire area thus ineligible for another to apply for - or could provider B apply to cover a portion of Provider A's territory that provider A is not serving with broadband?

The entire area is ineligible.

Q: Will the agencies provide comments on applications besides that provided in the rejection letters?

The agencies will not provide additional comments or feedback on unsuccessful applications. Applicants are encouraged to review the fact sheets and Executive Summaries from the initial awardees for examples.

Q: Can applicants who were rejected in Round One reapply for Round Two?

Absolutely. Both agencies are encouraging Round One applicants to reapply and review the projects funded from Round One.

Q: How is the \$10K per premise calculated?

This is a calculated field based on the total requested BIP award amount (Grant Request plus Loan Request) divided by the total number of Premises Passed. (See the BIP Application Guide)

Q: Why did we not use the same file, data, and census tract format for mapping that we use on FCC form 477 ?

NTIA developed a program based on requirements from Congress (Broadband Data Improvement Act). NTIA requires that a broadband inventory is taken and displayed at a Census Block level. NTIA also has requirements to measure the customer experience with respect to speeds. Our surveys and data requests reflect the technical requirements described in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the State Broadband Data and Development Program.

Q: Do you have a map that will be available soon?

Our maps will be available shortly after our submission to NTIA. We expect to have static maps available on the program's public website by the end of April. An interactive web mapping tool will be made available later this Spring.

Q: What will be done to get mapping data from the rest of the providers who have not yet responded?

We will be using a number of methods to gather data. First, we rely on data submissions for service providers. We feel the most accurate source for broadband inventory resides with the providers. Next, we will use third-party data sources to estimate serving areas where we do not have direct data submissions from providers. We will use standard engineering parameters to estimate serving areas and speeds for some areas.

What role will States and Tribes play in the review process?

After the application deadline, NTIA will invite each State, via its Governor, to provide input on those geographic areas within the State for which NTIA should give priority in selecting projects for funding. States may, if they wish, comment on specific BTOP applications that propose to serve areas within their jurisdiction, regardless of the size or geographic scope of the project and, at their discretion, provide an explanation for why certain applications meet the greatest needs of the State.

NTIA also will extend the invitation to tribal entities to comment upon applications that propose to serve tribal communities in an effort to fund projects that best meet the needs of their tribal lands. NTIA will share data that are available on the publicly searchable application database with each relevant State and tribe.

States and tribes that wish to review additional information regarding applications proposing to serve areas within their jurisdiction may request such information from applicants directly.

States and tribes will not be required to rank or comment on BTOP applications in order for applications affecting their areas to receive funding. The input of States and tribes is consultative in nature and, while extremely valuable, constitutes only one among several factors the Selecting Official, the Assistant Secretary, weighs when evaluating applications. States or tribes will not have the ability to veto any particular project. States and tribes will have no less than 20 calendar days from the date of notification to submit their comments to NTIA.

NTIA will make the comments of the States and tribes publicly available at <http://www.broadbandusa.gov>.

Will RUS have a first lien?

RUS must be given an exclusive first lien, in form and substance satisfactory to RUS, on all of the assets purchased with the loan or loan/grant funds. RUS may share its first lien position with one or more lenders on a *pari passu* basis if security arrangements are acceptable to RUS.

Are the services areas of former and current RUS borrowers considered ineligible?

RUS will not fund a BIP project in the existing service area of RUS borrower(s) in which they provide broadband service. RUS has developed a search tool (<http://mappingtool.broadbandusa.gov/SearchTabs.aspx>) which provides community data on all RUS Broadband Loan and Loan Guarantee Program (Farm Bill) borrowers and some borrowers under Title II of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (Title II). The search tool does not provide

a complete listing of all communities where RUS has made loans under Title II or our Pilot Broadband Program. To accurately check whether a particular area has already received funding through RUS, applicants should use this tool and consult the additional listing RUS has provided of all current and former Farm Bill and Title II borrowers and the listing of all communities served under the Pilot Broadband Program ([RUS Borrowers](#), [Pilot Communities](#)). It is expected that applicants will utilize all information available in order to determine which areas are eligible for BIP funding.

Search results only include communities where Broadband deployment is funded or may be funded. A “No results” message indicates that we currently do not have a pending or approved company on file for the community you are searching for. Please also check our list of communities being served by Pilot Broadband Program companies ([Pilot Communities](#)) and our list of current and former RUS borrowers ([RUS Borrowers](#)). The tools provided may not be an exhaustive source of information on communities RUS has lent money into and **the applicant is ultimately responsible for ensuring they do not include ineligible areas in their proposed service areas.**

How do I find Small and Disadvantaged Business with which to partner? What is a small and disadvantaged business?

The Small Business Administration authorized NTIA to adopt an alternative small business size standard for BTOP’s definition of a Small and Disadvantaged Business (SDB), which is:

—[A] firm, together with its controlling interests and affiliates, with average gross revenues not exceeding \$40 million for the preceding three years, and that meets the definition of a socially and economically disadvantaged small business concern under the Small Business Act.||

To qualify as a SDB, the Applicant must be a small business concern (including its controlling interests and affiliates) with revenues not exceeding \$40 million for the preceding three years, for which one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals or an economically disadvantaged Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization, control the small business concern’s management and daily business operations and unconditionally own at least 51 percent of the business. The Small Business Act defines **socially disadvantaged individuals** as —those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities.|| and **economically disadvantaged individuals** as —those socially disadvantaged individuals whose ability to compete in the free enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital and credit opportunities as compared to others in the same business area who are not socially disadvantaged

The SBA’s rules for determining socially disadvantaged individuals (13 CFR § 124.103) and economically disadvantaged individuals (13 CFR § 124.104) are available online at <http://www.sba.gov/regulations/124/>. NTIA may request documentation supporting an Applicant’s declared status as a SDB before granting an award.

Here is the link to search for SDBs: http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp_dsbs.cfm

The site allows you to search by state, congressional district, area code, zip code, and MSA.