

E. Objective Scoring Supporting Documentation

E-1. Rurality

Rurality is the term we use to describe how rural your DLT project’s service area is. We ask you to present an estimated *Rurality* score in your application. A *Rurality Worksheet* is provided in the *Toolkit* for this purpose. The Agency will review your estimate and correct it if necessary.

This category is scored on average population as described below:

- Your project must score at least 20 points to qualify for the DLT Program competition.
- Your project may obtain a higher score, up to a total of 45 points, depending on the relative rurality of the project service area.

We use the following definitions as determined by the 2000 US Census to evaluate *Rurality*.

1. **EXCEPTIONALLY RURAL AREA – 5,000 and under.** Any area of the United States **not included within** the boundary as defined by the US Census of an Urbanized Area (UA) or of an Urban Cluster (UC) having a population in excess of 5,000 inhabitants. This includes areas within the boundary of urban clusters of 5000 and under as well as areas that are outside of any Urbanized Area or Urban Cluster.
2. **RURAL AREA – 5,001-10,000.** Any area of the United States included within the within the boundary as defined by the US Census of an Urban Cluster having a population over 5,000 but not in excess of 10,000 inhabitants.
3. **MID-RURAL AREA – 10,001-20,000.** Any area of the United States included within the boundary as defined by the US Census of an Urban Cluster having a population over 10,000 and not in excess of 20,000 inhabitants.
4. **URBAN AREA - Over 20,000.** Any area of the United States included within the boundary of an Urbanized Area or within the boundary of an Urban Cluster in excess of 20,000 inhabitants. Remember that the DLT program is intended to benefit rural areas (20,000 or less). The Agency reserves the right to evaluate the benefit that flows to urban areas and reduce grant and match funds budgeted for the benefit of urban end-users when that benefit is not necessary to benefit rural end-users or incidental to the benefit to rural end-users.

<u>Site Location</u>	<u>Points</u>
Exceptionally Rural Area	45
Rural Area	30
Mid-Rural Area	15
Urban Area	0

The *Rurality* Score by Type of Project – Fixed and Variable Sites

Tips:

- As you prepare your *Rurality* data, if you find you are having problems finding the data, we recommend that you repeat each step of the several examples presented below to help you become familiar with the Census site.
- You may find that your browser blocks certain “pop-up images” from the Census site. If so, you will need to turn off the blocker to use every feature. Internet Explorer will tell you it has blocked a pop-up by placing a message under the toolbar in the top left corner of your screen. Click on that message and it will allow you to turn off the blocker for this site. Other browsers provide similar adjustments.

Most DLT projects operate at fixed sites such as schools or medical facilities. For these traditional DLT projects, the *Rurality* score as described below is based on the population of the area where the end-user sites are located.

In recent years, we have begun to receive applications from projects where the end-user sites are not fixed. Although we can contemplate distance learning projects along this line, to date, the non-fixed category comprises two types of telemedicine projects. In both cases, the end-user sites vary over time with need:

Home Health Care Systems – These typically involve either the placement of medical monitoring equipment at the home or the provision of equipment for visiting nurses so that they and the patients they visit can interact with medical professionals located at a distant site. In this way, medical monitoring can be performed elsewhere via telecommunications and care can be delivered into the home via telecommunications.

Ambulance Systems – These typically involve monitoring, pre-admittance testing, and interactions between the medical professionals in the ambulance and those in the emergency room, all conveyed via telecommunications.

End-user sites that vary over time were not contemplated when the regulation was written. It is clearly not a fair measure of the rural benefit of such projects to base the *Rurality* score entirely on the fixed sites of such a system, such as the location of the nurse’s hospital headquarters or the facility where the ambulance is parked when off duty. (This was the method used when these types of applications were first submitted.) In the first place, those sites do not represent the sites where the benefit of the project is delivered. Second, both the nurse’s headquarters and ambulance storage area are likely to be located in the most urban community in the area regardless of the extent of their rural service territory. On the other hand, it is not a fair method of determining rural benefit if we allow the applicant to choose its *Rurality* score by selecting to include in its *Rurality calculation* only the rural locations in its service area when some, or even the majority of the people it serves, are in Urban Areas. Neither can we rely on an applicant’s assurance that it will only use the funded equipment in its rural areas. We must operate under the assumption that from both a practical standpoint and from a medical ethics standpoint, equipment will be used based on medical need, not customer location.

In as much as we recognize such uses of telecommunications can provide important benefits to rural areas, we are specifying a method of determining *Rurality* for non-fixed site projects - a method based on the idea that each potential end-user in the service territory is an actual end-user. This is a method that is consistent with the intent and spirit of the regulation while providing a measure of rural benefit that is reasonably comparable to that captured by the fixed-site method. In the discussion below, we

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will discuss two methods for determining a *Rurality* score based on the nature of the project, *i.e.*, fixed site or variable site. We have no administratively practical way to evaluate and score projects that combine fixed and variable sites, so do not submit an application that mixes the two. If you have this situation, you may separate the projects and submit two applications that will be evaluated and scored independently.

***Rurality* Score for Projects in which all End-User Sites are Fixed**

Enter each hub, hub/end-user and end-user site on the *Rurality Worksheet*, showing its location in parentheses. Although pure hubs are not included in the calculation, the Agency will need this data to recalculate the score in the event that we determine that the site should be included. Place the sites in the same order and use the same numbering as on the *Site Worksheet* and *NSLP Worksheet*. Use Census Urban and Rural Area population data along with the table above (it is also printed on the *Rurality Worksheet*) to determine *Rurality* points for each site. To document the numbers, attach a 2000 Census population sheet and map for each site's location behind the *Worksheet* as described below:

The population to be used will be Census "Urban Area" data. A good place to start the process is from the main Fact Finder Page on the Census at this website:

factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

Imagine that you have a facility located in College Township, Pennsylvania. You can enter an address or zip code, but since the site in this example is hypothetical, we enter College Township. This brings up a page that shows population data for the township. This is not the population you will enter on your *Rurality Worksheet*. We are using the jurisdiction as a locating tool and as an introduction to the Census website.

The screenshot shows the American FactFinder interface. The search results for "College township, Centre County, Pennsylvania" are displayed. The page includes a navigation menu, a search bar, and a table of demographic highlights for the year 2000. A "Reference Map" link is circled in red.

Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights:			
General Characteristics - show more >>	Number	Percent	U.S.
Total population	8,489		map brief
Male	4,062	47.9	49.1% map brief
Female	4,427	52.1	50.9% map brief

Image 1

Click on "Reference Map," which is circled in the view above. It will bring up the map below, which shows College Township (in yellow) and adjoining jurisdictions. The applicant knows its territory and will have a good idea before it looks at a map if it is part of a larger population center that must be considered. Also, when you see the abbreviation UA or UC in the vicinity of your site, you can

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assume this is a question you must deal with. In this case, at least part of College Township appears to be in the State College UA (Urbanized Area, underlined in red below).

College township, Centre County, Pennsylvania

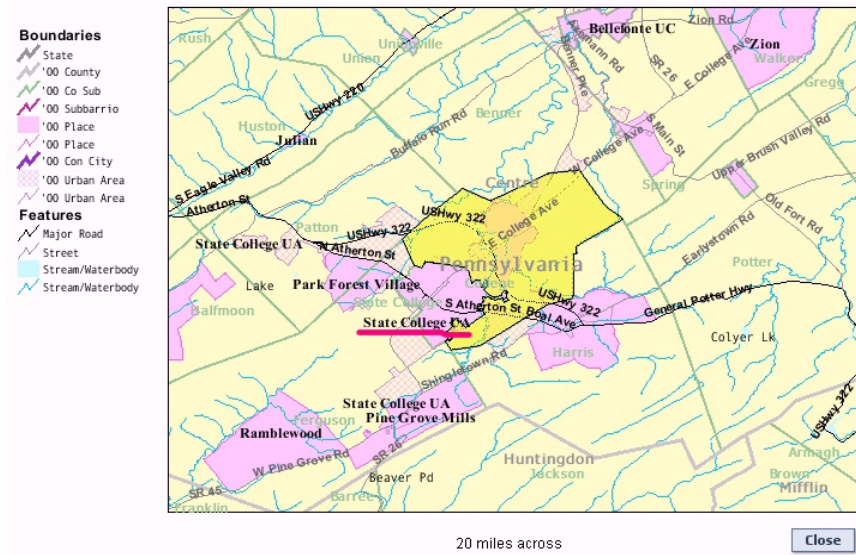


Image 2

To make a more precise determination, we will use more powerful features of the site. Close this map box, which will return you to the main page. Look at the left column and click on “Data Sets” and the dropdown menu “Decennial Census.”

The screenshot shows the U.S. Census Bureau website interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Main', 'Search', 'Feedback', 'FAQs', 'Glossary', and 'Site Map'. The left sidebar contains a 'Fact Sheet' section with a 'DATA SETS' menu item circled in red. The main content area displays the 'FACT SHEET' for 'College township, Centre County, Pennsylvania' for the year 2000. A table titled 'Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights: General Characteristics - show more >>' lists various data points with their corresponding numbers. The 'Decennial Census' and 'American Community Survey' items in the table are also circled in red.

General Characteristics - show more >>	Number
Total population	8,489
• Decennial Census	4,062
• American Community Survey	4,427
• Puerto Rico Community Survey	36.2
• Annual Population	404
	6,702
	1,788

Image 3

The data sets of interest are circled below. The first is “reference maps.” The mapping tool found here is much more capable than that used to obtain image 2. This tool allows zooming and precise identification of a site’s location with respect to whether it is inside a Census Urban Area.

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Image 4

When you click on “reference maps,” it will bring up a map of the U.S. Click on “Reposition on A street address or ZIP code.” Enter the zip code “16801” to bring up a detail map.

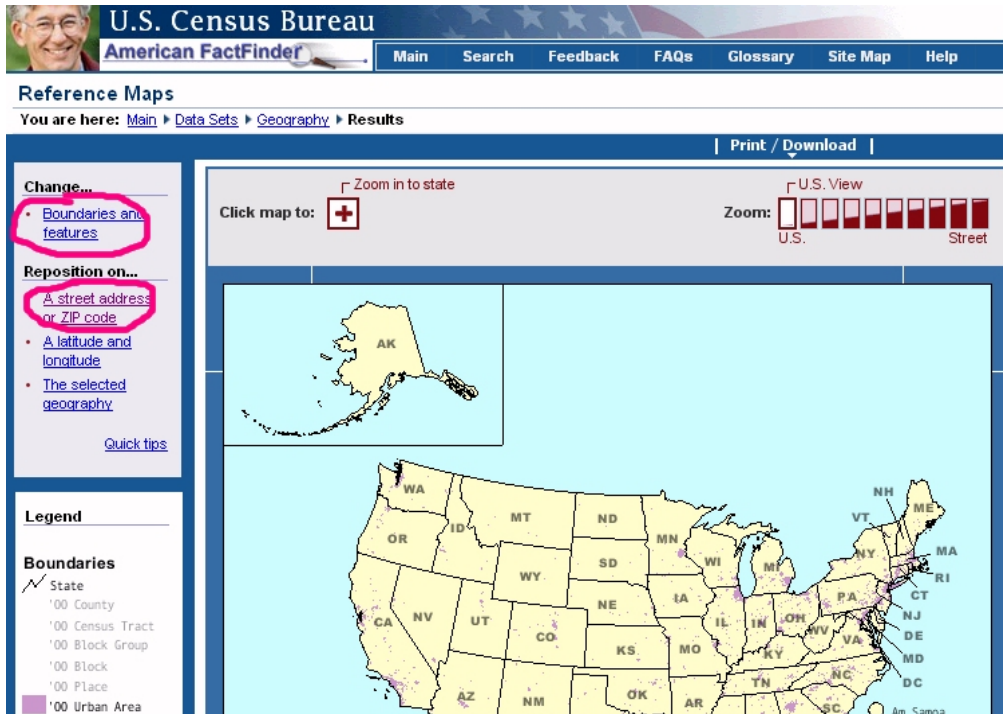


Image 5

When the detail map appears, click on “Change Boundaries and Features.” Remove the checks from every item except “2000 Urban Areas,” then click the “Update” Button. If you wish, you may leave the block checked for “2000 Place” in the “Label Column,” not the “Boundary Column. You want the jurisdictional boundaries to disappear, but it is sometimes useful to have the place names remain.

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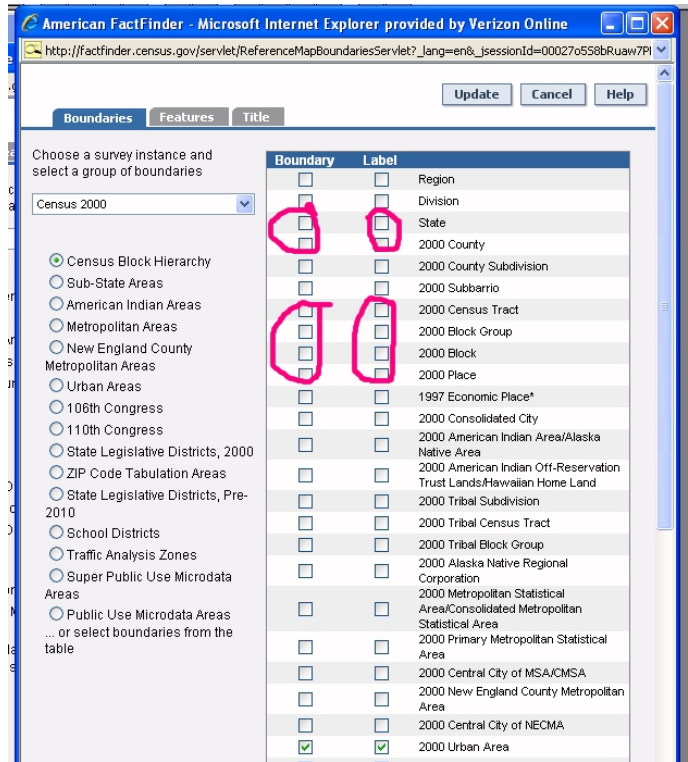


Image 6

This will alter the map you brought up based on the zip code so that it shows only the Census rural area (in yellow) and the State College Urbanized Area (in pink cross hatching). You can use the circled features to re-center and zoom until you precisely locate your site. To re-center, click on the “hand” button, move your cursor to the location you wish to center, and drag it to the center while holding down the left mouse button.

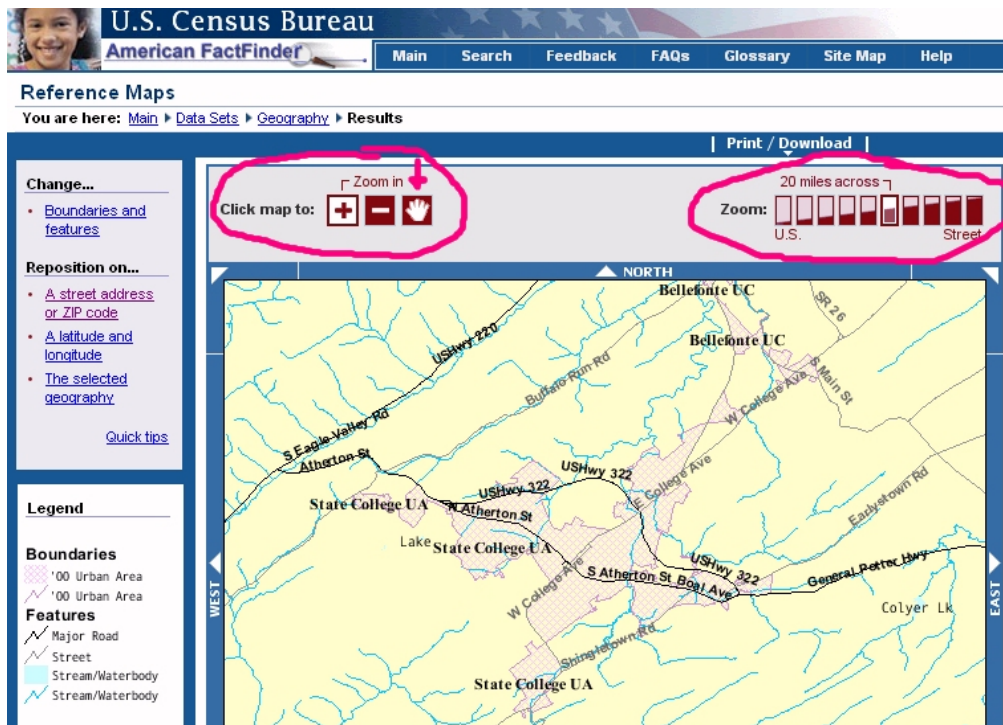


Image 7

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Print a Census page with a detail map like the one below. Include it in your application as documentation for this site behind your *Rurality Worksheet*. Show the site's exact location on this map. In this case, we have entered a hypothetical location on Porter Road in the yellow area of College Township at the top. A site located here is Census rural and would score 45 points.

If the site were inside the checkered territory, you would designate it “Urbanized Area” and you use the State College Urbanized Area population. Do not enter the population for College Township, or any other political jurisdiction in which the site may happen to be located. The method for determining the State College Urbanized Area population is described below:

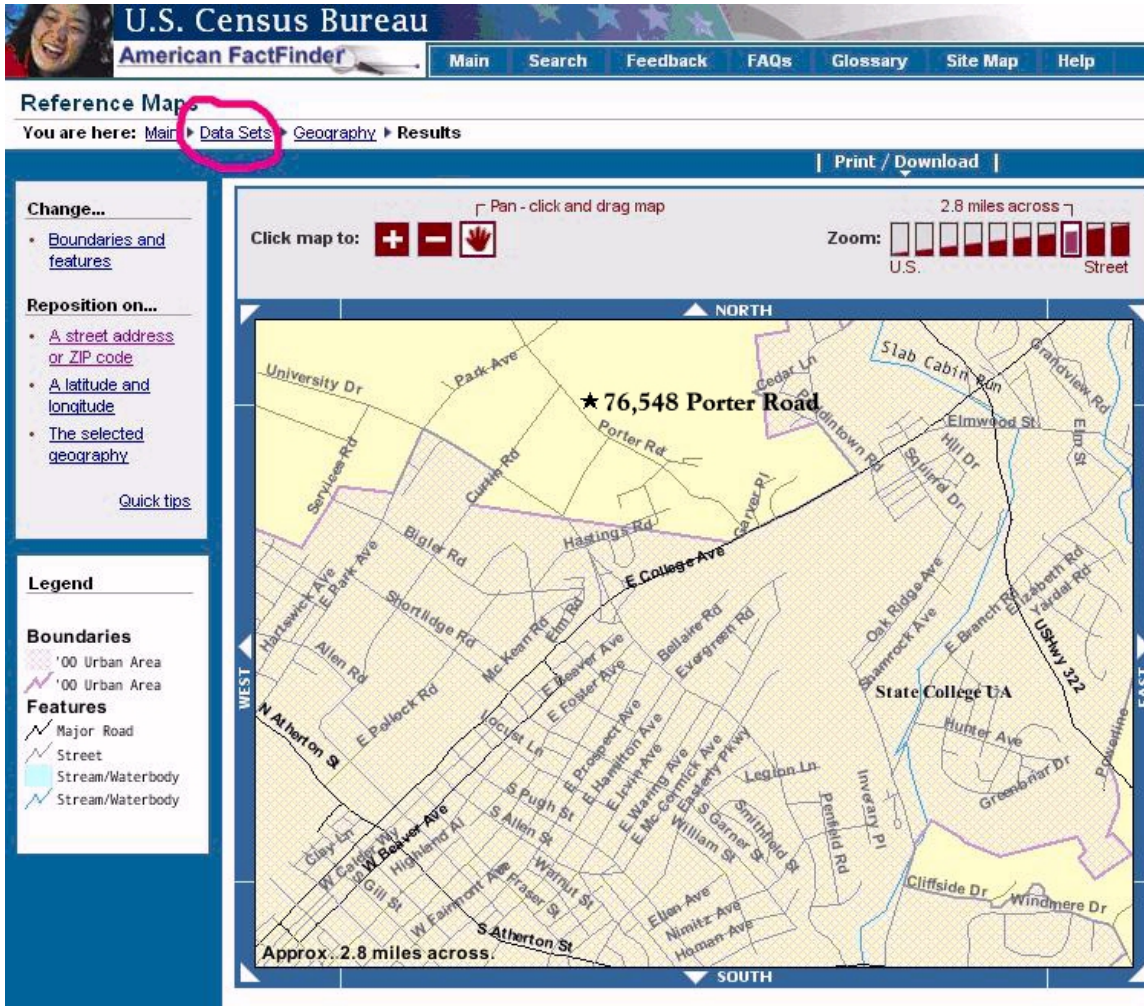


Image 8

Click on “Data Sets,” circled in image 8. This will return you to Image 4. Click on “Detailed Tables.” It will bring up the screen below. First select “Urban Area” from the drop down menu under “Select a geographic type.” Wait while the website populates the next block with every “Urbanized Area” and Urban Cluster” in the country. Scroll down to “State College Urbanized Area,” highlight it, then click the “add” button. When it appears under “current geography selections,” click on “next.”

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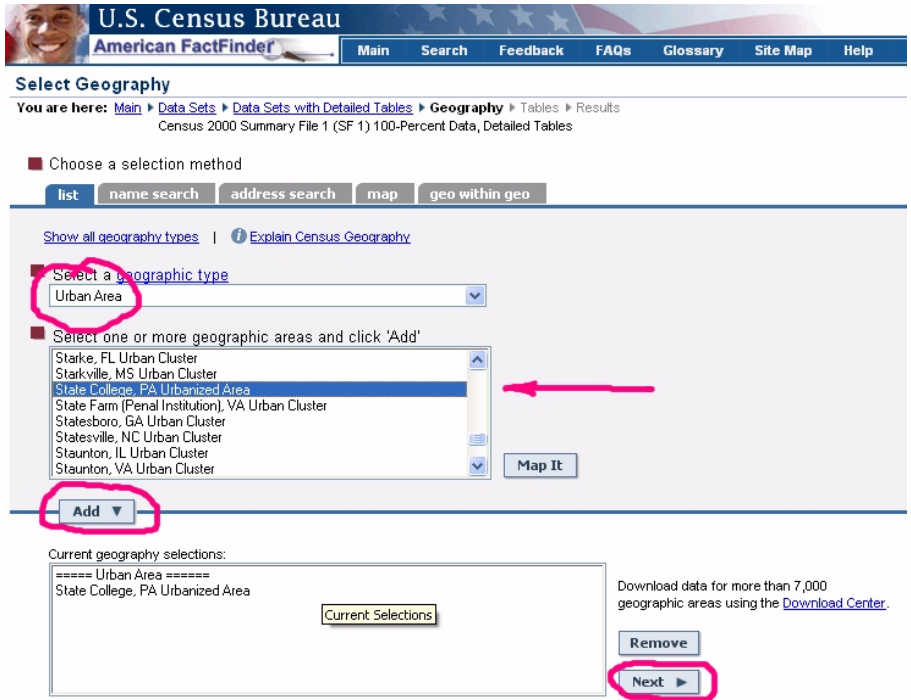


Image 9

Choose P1, P2, and any other items in which you are interested and which may prove useful for your *Needs and Benefits* Section. Add them to the selection then press “show results.”

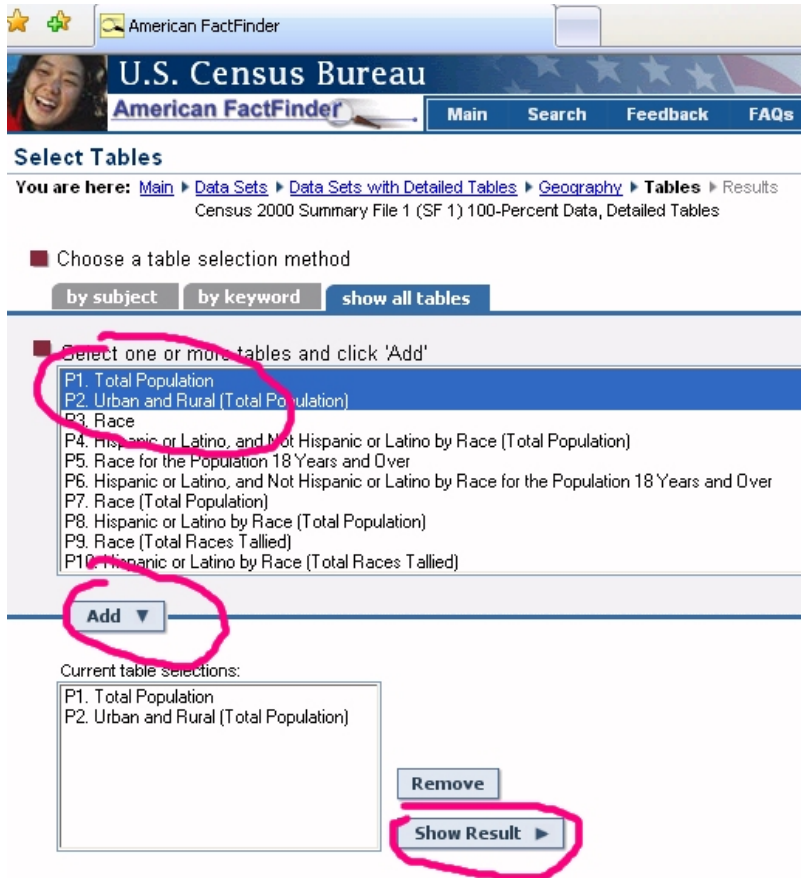
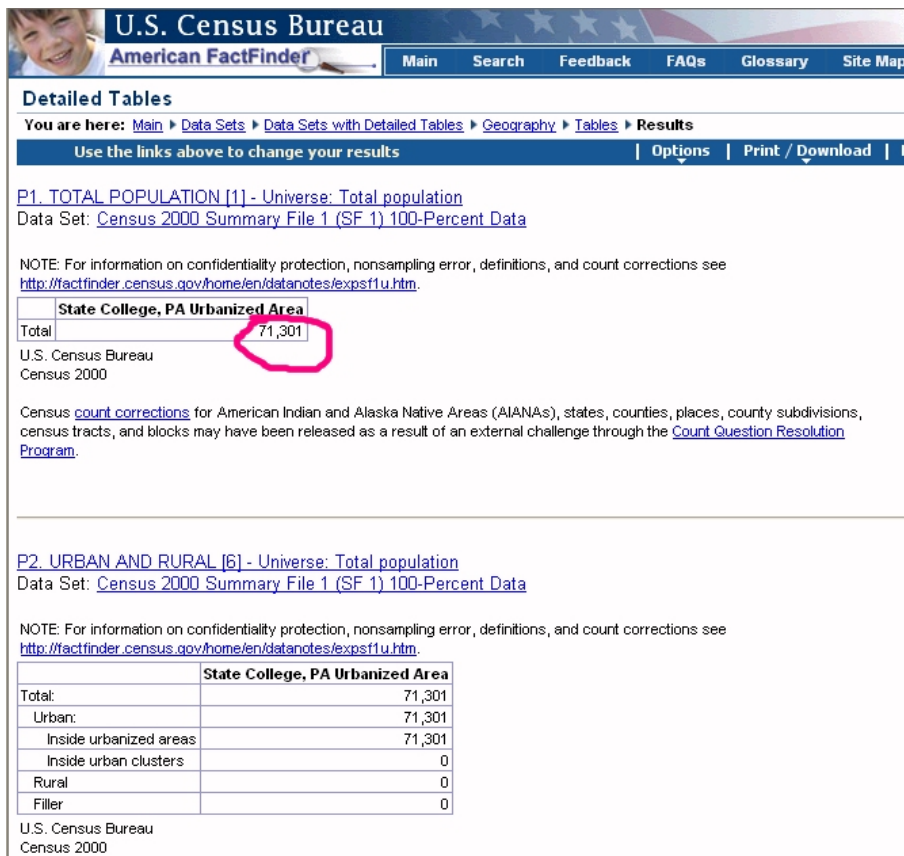


Image 10

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This will bring up the page below. Enter this population on your *Rurality Worksheet*, which yields a score of zero points, and attach a copy of this page as documentation behind the *Worksheet*.



The screenshot shows the U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder interface. The page title is "Detailed Tables" and the breadcrumb trail is "You are here: Main > Data Sets > Data Sets with Detailed Tables > Geography > Tables > Results". The data set is "P1. TOTAL POPULATION [1] - Universe: Total population" with a data set of "Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data". A note provides information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, definitions, and count corrections. A table shows the population for "State College, PA Urbanized Area" with a total of 71,301. A second table provides a breakdown of the population by urban/rural status.

State College, PA Urbanized Area	
Total	71,301

State College, PA Urbanized Area	
Total	71,301
Urban:	71,301
Inside urbanized areas	71,301
Inside urban clusters	0
Rural	0
Filler	0

Image 11

If outside a place designated urban by the Census, such as in the example shown above in image 8, print a Census Urban Area map that clearly shows the location of the site as being outside of the checkered Urban Area using the techniques described above. In extremely rural areas with no nearby population centers, this may require that you zoom out until the closest Census Urban Area shows on the map. Print this map, precisely identify your site's location, and include it as documentation behind the *Rurality Worksheet*.

In some cases, there may be ambiguity about your site's precise location. For example, if your organization has moved recently. If there is any ambiguity, include ancillary identifying information like printouts from Internet sites such as Mapquest or Google Maps. Sometimes local jurisdictions produce maps that can be useful. **Any end-user site for which the applicant does not provide precise location identification and corresponding Census documentation will be evaluated as urban (zero points).**

Remember that for fixed sites, the information must be consistent throughout the application including on the *Rurality* and *NSLP Worksheets*, the *Site Worksheet* attachment to the SF-424, the *Executive Summary*, the *Telecommunications System Plan*, and the *Budget*. **If the end-user sites are not consistent, your application cannot be evaluated and will be returned as ineligible.** (For projects where the end-user sites are not fixed, see below.)

After you have entered all your sites and the corresponding population on the *Rurality Worksheet*, calculate your estimated score by taking the average of the sites you designated as hub/end-users and end-users. Do not include pure Hubs in the calculation. Remember that we will evaluate sites you

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designate as pure hubs to determine if they are also end-users. If we make that finding, we will recalculate your score on that basis.

Excluded Sites - Your project may benefit urban sites (>20,000) that would not score well in the *Rurality* and *NSLP Categories*. Remember that the DLT Grant Program is intended to benefit rural sites. We encourage applicants not to include urban end-users in their project. Should you choose to include urban end-users, but wish to exclude such sites from the calculations, show the excluded sites separately on the *Worksheets* with a clear indication that they have been excluded from the calculations. **In such cases, all funds that benefit the excluded sites must come from other funds. None can be included in the grant or match budget. This is true even if the funds are used for facilities located at a Hub/End-user site that is included in the *Rurality* calculation. (See D-1, *Telecommunications System Plan*, for detail on apportioning DLT project benefit.)**

Rounding and Eligibility

Scores are rounded in the normal manner to an integer (i.e., 30.5 rounds to 31, 30.49999 rounds to zero), but only after determining that a score meets the minimum eligibility threshold of at least 20 points. In other words, if a *Rurality* score is 19.65, it does not round to the minimum eligible score of 20 points.

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Example of a Fixed Site Rurality Calculation for a Project:

Springfield Hospital proposes to share teleradiology services among itself, two medical centers, and two clinics. The hospital will be the electronic hub but it is designated a hub/end-user because patients there will use the services of radiologists from Faryer and Fall City Medical Centers in the absence of their own. Under the assumption that the benefit to the urban site is incidental to the benefit to the rural sites, this example project would receive 21 points ($105 \div 5 = 21$) the average of all end-user sites.

Remember, to be eligible to apply for a grant, the project must score at least 20 *Rurality* points. In this case, Faryer, Fall City, and Middleburg are all designated Urban Clusters, but each receives a different score based on the population of the cluster. The population for the Strinic Clinic is shown as “<2,500” because there is no specific population associated with Census Rural areas.

	Site Name (Location) (Same numbering and order as <i>Site & NSLP Worksheets</i>)	Site Type (Hub, etc.)	Census Designation	Census Population	Rurality Points
1	Springfield Hospital (Springfield Urbanized Area)	Hub/End-User	Urbanized Area	56,403	Zero
2	Faryer Clinic (Faryer Urban Cluster)	Hub/End-User	Urban Cluster	27,298	Zero
3	Fall City Medical Center (Beechwood Urban Cluster)	Hub/End-User	Urban Cluster	12,398	15
4	Middleburg Medical Center (Middleburg Urban Cluster)	End-User	Urban Cluster	2,790	45
5	Strinic Clinic (Windswept Crossroads)	End-User	Census Rural	<2,500	45

Applicant’s Estimated <i>Rurality</i> Score (Sum of Rurality Points ÷ # of End-User Sites)	21
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<i>Rurality</i> Score (For Agency Use)	
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