

Process for Identifying Unserved Areas

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Background

The designation of unserved areas is the key consideration in whether or not the ConnectMaine Authority can provide funds for a project. Given the investment in broadband infrastructure by the private sector, and the clear intent of the ConnectMaine statute and rules to direct state funds to support expansion of broadband availability in places where the private sector alone can't justify the investment, going forward the ConnectMaine Authority will use the following process for identifying unserved areas.

Process

Areas designated as unserved may be identified in any or all of the following sources:

- The ConnectMaine Broadband Availability Map:
<https://maps.sewall.com/connectme/public/>
- Community Broadband Plans posted on the ConnectMaine website, if geographic areas are delineated based on a service level of at least 50/10mbps being unavailable: www.maine.gov/connectme/grants/planning-grants/awards
- The 2021 Reviewed Areas, if these weren't awarded infrastructure grants since: www.maine.gov/connectme/communities-resources/Broadbandmapping

If areas for a proposed project aren't identified as unserved in the above sources, there is opportunity to review such areas:

1. The ConnectMaine Authority announces a round of infrastructure grants, and a deadline for requests that is no less than 14 days later.
2. The potential applicant make the request, which must include a map of broadband service availability in the geographic area at a fine enough scale to identify street-level data, and also the address level data and other data behind the map as separate SHP (preferred) or annotated KMZ files¹.
3. From requests deemed complete, lists of the geographic areas are posted for the required 30 days in which comments on the broadband service availability, or lack thereof, in those geographic areas may be submitted.
4. ConnectMaine will consider comments that include a map of broadband service availability in the geographic area at a fine enough scale to identify street-level data, and also the address level data and other data behind the map as separate SHP (preferred) or annotated KMZ files.
5. Without comments and sufficient information that the areas are in fact served, the areas shall be confirmed as unserved by this process.

¹ ConnectMaine Authority Rule, Ch. 101, §3.A.2: <https://www.maine.gov/connectme/about/statutes-rulemaking>