



# PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission  
45 L Street NE  
Washington, DC 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500  
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>  
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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## WIRESLINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES AN UPDATED INTERIM ELIGIBLE LOCATIONS LIST FOR ENHANCED ALTERNATIVE CONNECT AMERICA MODEL MECHANISM

### WC Docket No. 10-90

In this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces an update to the Interim Eligible Locations list for use in the Enhanced Alternative Connect America Model (Enhanced A-CAM) mechanism.<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to the *Enhanced A-CAM Order*, the Bureau must provide a final report on the Enhanced A-CAM obligations and support amounts no later than December 31, 2025.<sup>2</sup> The Interim Eligible Locations file is intended to update to Enhanced A-CAM carriers and other stakeholders regarding the status of locations in Enhanced A-CAM service areas based on currently available data.

The Bureau previously provided an Interim Eligible Locations list concurrently with the *Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice*.<sup>3</sup> Today's version of the Interim Eligible Locations list is updated to use location data from the December 2023 Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL) Fabric (Fabric) and availability data as of June 2023, as well as correcting minor errors, such as incorrect study area boundaries, that were identified since the release of the January 2024 list. Today's release also includes information related to Enhanced A-CAM support amounts that was not included in the prior list.

The Commission adopted the Enhanced A-CAM mechanism on July 24, 2023, as a voluntary path for supporting widespread deployment of 100/20 Mbps or better broadband service throughout the rural areas served by carriers currently receiving A-CAM support and in areas served by legacy rate-of-return support recipients.<sup>4</sup> On August 30, 2023, the Bureau released a Public Notice announcing Enhanced A-CAM offers for eligible carriers, as well as the *Enhanced A-CAM Implementation Order*, which addressed matters that had been delegated to the Bureau by the Commission.<sup>5</sup> On October 30,

<sup>1</sup> The Interim Eligible Locations file is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/files/interim-eligible-locations-file-july-2024>.

<sup>2</sup> *Connect America Fund; ETC Annual Reports and Certifications; Telecommunications Carriers Eligible to Receive Universal Service Support; Connect America Fund – Alaska Plan; Expanding Broadband Service Through the ACAM Program*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 14-58, 09-197, and 16-271; Report and Order, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Notice of Inquiry, 38 FCC Rcd 7040, at paras. 43, 77-78 (2023) (*Enhanced A-CAM Order*).

<sup>3</sup> *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces Guidance Regarding Locations and Broadband Coverage for Enhanced Alternative Connect America Model Mechanism*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Public Notice, DA 24-78 (WCB rel. Jan. 25, 2024) (*Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice*).

<sup>4</sup> See *Enhanced A-CAM Order*, 38 FCC Rcd 7040, at para. 98 (2023) (*Enhanced A-CAM Order*).

<sup>5</sup> See *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model Support Amounts Offered to Rate-of-Return Carriers to Expand Rural Broadband*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Public Notice, DA 23-779 (WCB Aug. 30, 2023) (*Enhanced A-CAM Offer PN*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90 et al., Order, DA 23-778 (WCB Aug. 30, 2023) (*Enhanced A-CAM Implementation Order*).

2023, the Bureau authorized 368 companies to receive Enhanced A-CAM support beginning January 1, 2024.<sup>6</sup> On November 17, 2023, the Enhanced A-CAM commitments were uploaded to the Broadband Funding Map.<sup>7</sup> On January 25, 2024, the Bureau set forth guidance (*Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice*) regarding which Fabric location and Broadband Data Collection (BDC) availability data will be used to determine final deployment obligations and support amounts for Enhanced A-CAM recipients, and further updated that guidance in *Enhanced A-CAM Updated Locations Public Notice* released on May 3, 2024.<sup>8</sup>

Consistent with the guidance provided in the *Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice* and *Enhanced A-CAM Locations Update Public Notice*, the present Interim Eligible Locations file is updated to include location data from the December 2023 (Version 4) of the Fabric, and broadband availability data as of June 2023.<sup>9</sup> This Interim Eligible Locations file does not include several factors that must be considered before it may be finalized, but for which supporting data is not currently available. Specifically, it does not show the effect of:

- Federal enforceable commitments to deploy 100/20 Mbps or faster broadband that were made by August 30, 2023, but have not yet been entered into the Broadband Funding Map;
- State enforceable commitments to deploy 100/20 Mbps or faster broadband that were made by August 30, 2023;
- Successful challenges to the Fabric that would add or remove locations from the December 2023 version;
- Successful challenges to the June 2023 availability data (or later availability data, as applicable to locations for which there is no June 2023 availability data) that were not resolved in time for inclusion in the May 2024 National Broadband Map; or
- Tribal locations removed from Enhanced A-CAM by mutual agreement of the Tribal entity and the Enhanced A-CAM recipient.

The Interim Eligible Locations file will allow Enhanced A-CAM carriers and other interested parties to see, based on currently available data, what locations are “required” (to which the Enhanced A-CAM carrier must deploy 100/20 Mbps or faster service) or “carrier-served” (to which the Enhanced A-CAM carrier must at least maintain existing 100/20 Mbps or faster service). For each BSL, the Interim Eligible Locations file shows: the Location ID; the Census Block ID; the state; the Provider ID of the Enhanced A-CAM carrier; the study area code; the number of units at the BSL; the Tribal status of the location; the broadband availability status of the location;<sup>10</sup> the applicability of any other programs with

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<sup>6</sup> *Wireline Competition Bureau Authorizes 368 Companies in 44 States to Receive Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model Support to Expand Rural Broadband*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Public Notice, DA 23-1025 (WCB rel. Oct. 30, 2023). The number of companies was determined by counting each holding company as a distinct company in each state for which it elected Enhanced A-CAM.

<sup>7</sup> See FCC Broadband Funding Map, available at [fundingmap.fcc.gov](https://fundingmap.fcc.gov).

<sup>8</sup> *Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice* at 2-4; *Wireline Competition Bureau Updated Guidance Regarding Locations and Broadband Coverage for Enhanced Alternative Connect America Model Mechanism*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Public Notice, DA 24-423 (WCB rel. May 3, 2024) (*Enhanced A-CAM Updated Locations Public Notice*).

<sup>9</sup> *Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice* at 2-4; *Enhanced A-CAM Updated Locations Public Notice*. The Interim Eligible Locations file also corrects minor errors involving specific companies caused by incorrect study area boundaries and mismatched Provider IDs.

<sup>10</sup> The codes for this variable are as follows: (1) ILEC-only served; (2) ILEC and competitively served; (3) unserved; (4) served only by a competitor; (5) unserved, subject to an enforceable commitment to deploy reflected in the Broadband Funding Map (BFM); and (6) ILEC-only served, subject to a competitive commitment to deploy, reflected in the BFM. Locations coded as (5) and (6) were previously coded in the “Potentially Eligible Locations” file (which the Bureau released in September 2023) as (4) and (2), respectively.

an enforceable commitment to deploy broadband;<sup>11</sup> whether the location is a “required location,” to which the Enhanced A-CAM carrier is obligated to deploy 100/20 Mbps or faster service; and whether an eligible location is above the appropriate support threshold. Locations within overlapping study area boundaries are assigned to carriers and study areas as described in the *Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice*.<sup>12</sup> This file will be updated in the future to reflect locations and broadband availability are finalized, as discussed above. The Bureau will continue to consider any questions or concerns raised by parties, and provide additional guidance or updates as warranted.

The Bureau notes that there is a relatively small number of locations for which the model does not provide a cost estimate, and therefore a support amount, because the locations are in census blocks which did not have any locations in Version 2 (December 2022) of the Fabric (the version was used to model cost estimates). Consistent with the proposal of the A-CAM Broadband Coalition and others,<sup>13</sup> the Bureau estimated the cost of serving those locations by: 1) using the model-estimated cost of the nearest location in an incumbent study area of the Enhanced A-CAM carrier, if the nearest location is within one airline mile of the location without a cost estimate; 2) where there is no location with a cost estimate within one airline mile, using the highest estimated cost of any location within the census block group and the Enhanced A-CAM carrier’s incumbent service area; 3) if there is no location with a cost estimate within the census block group, using the highest cost location served within the census tract and the Enhanced A-CAM carrier’s service area; or 4) if there is no location within the census tract, using the highest cost location within the study area.

For additional information on this proceeding, please contact Ted Burmeister (Theodore.Burmeister@fcc.gov) of the Wireline Competition Bureau, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, (202) 418-7400.

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<sup>11</sup> This variable is coded as follows: (0) not subject to an enforceable commitment in the BFM; (1) unserved, loan to ILEC; (2) unserved, grant to ILEC; (3) unserved, loan or grant to competitor; (4) ILEC-only served, loan to ILEC; (5) ILEC-only served, grant to ILEC; (6) ILEC-only served, loan or grant to competitor; (7) ILEC and competitive served, with a BFM commitment; (8) only competitive served, with a BFM commitment.

<sup>12</sup> *Enhanced A-CAM Locations Public Notice* at 2-4.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Genevieve Morelli, ACAM Broadband Coalition, *et al.*, to Marlene Dortch, Federal Communications Commission, WC Docket No. 10-90, filed June 11, 2024.