

NCES Locale Classifications and Criteria

The NCES locale framework is composed of four basic types (City, Suburban, Town, and Rural) that each contains three subtypes. It relies on standard urban and rural definitions developed by the U.S. Census Bureau, and each type of locale is either urban or rural in its entirety. The NCES locales can be fully collapsed into a basic urban–rural dichotomy, or expanded into a more detailed collection of 12 distinct categories. These subtypes are differentiated by size (in the case of City and Suburban assignments) and proximity (in the case of Town and Rural assignments). For additional information about the locale criteria, see the [Locale Boundaries User’s Manual](#).

City – Large (11): Territory inside an Urbanized Area and inside a Principal City with population of 250,000 or more.

City – Midsize (12): Territory inside an Urbanized Area and inside a Principal City with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.

City – Small (13): Territory inside an Urbanized Area and inside a Principal City with population less than 100,000.

Suburban – Large (21): Territory outside a Principal City and inside an Urbanized Area with population of 250,000 or more.

Suburban – Midsize (22): Territory outside a Principal City and inside an Urbanized Area with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.

Suburban – Small (23): Territory outside a Principal City and inside an Urbanized Area with population less than 100,000.

Town – Fringe (31): Territory inside an Urban Cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an Urbanized Area.

Town – Distant (32): Territory inside an Urban Cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an Urbanized Area.

Town – Remote (33): Territory inside an Urban Cluster that is more than 35 miles from an Urbanized Area.

Rural – Fringe (41): Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an Urbanized Area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an Urban Cluster.

Rural – Distant (42): Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an Urbanized Area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an Urban Cluster.

Rural – Remote (43): Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an Urbanized Area and also more than 10 miles from an Urban Cluster.

REAP Locale Classifications and Criteria

The REAP locale framework is composed of four basic types (City, Urban Fringe, Town, and Rural) that each contain two subtypes. It incorporates urban and rural designations defined by the Census Bureau, but does not apply them the same way as the NCES locale framework. REAP subtypes are differentiated by place size (in the case of City, Urban Fringe, and Town assignments) and location relative to a metropolitan area (in the case of Rural assignments). For additional information about the locale criteria, see the [Locale Boundaries User's Manual](#).

Large City (1): A principal city of a metropolitan area, with the city having a population greater than or equal to 250,000.

Midsize City (2): A principal city of a metropolitan area, with the city having a population less than 250,000.

Urban Fringe of a Large City (3): Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory within a metropolitan area of a large city and defined as urban by the Census Bureau.

Urban Fringe of a Midsize City (4): Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory within a metropolitan area of a midsize city and defined as urban by the Census Bureau.

Large Town (5): An incorporated place or Census-designated place with a population greater than or equal to 25,000 and located outside a metropolitan area.

Small Town (6): An incorporated place or Census-designated place with a population less than 25,000 and greater than or equal to 2,500 and located outside a metropolitan area.

Rural, Outside Metropolitan Area (7): Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory not within a metropolitan area and defined as rural by the Census Bureau.

Rural, Inside Metropolitan Area (8): Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory within a metropolitan area and defined as rural by the Census Bureau.