

## **CBSA DEFINITION**

A CBSA is a geographic entity associated with at least one core of 10,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties. The standards designate and delineate two categories of CBSAs: Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Micropolitan Statistical Areas.

The purpose of the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area standards is to provide nationally consistent delineations for collecting, tabulating, and publishing Federal statistics for a set of geographic areas. The Office of Management and Budget establishes and maintains these areas solely for statistical purposes.

Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas are not designed as a general-purpose geographic framework for nonstatistical activities or for use in program funding formulas. The CBSA classification is not an urban-rural classification; Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas and many counties outside CBSAs contain both urban and rural populations.

CBSAs consist of counties and equivalent entities throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. In view of the importance of cities and towns in New England, a set of geographic areas similar in concept to the county-based CBSAs also will be delineated for that region using cities and towns. These New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs) are intended for use with statistical data, whenever feasible and appropriate, for New England. Data providers and users desiring areas delineated using a nationally consistent geographic building block should use the county-based CBSAs in New England.

The following criteria apply to both the nationwide county-based CBSAs and to NECTAs, with the exceptions of Sections 7 and 9 in which separate criteria are applied when identifying and titling divisions within NECTAs that contain at least one core of 2.5 million or more population. Wherever the word “county” or “counties” appears in the following criteria (except in Sections 7 and 9), the words “city and town” or “cities and towns” should be substituted, as appropriate, when delineating NECTAs. Commuting and employment estimates are derived from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

### **Section 1. Population Size Requirements for Qualification of Core Based Statistical Areas**

Each CBSA must have a Census Bureau delineated urbanized area of at least 50,000 population or a Census Bureau delineated urban cluster of at least 10,000 population. (Urbanized areas and urban clusters are collectively referred to as “urban areas”)

## **Section 2. Central Counties**

The central county or counties of a CBSA are those counties that:

- (a) Have at least 50 percent of their population in urban areas of at least 10,000 population; or
- (b) Have within their boundaries a population of at least 5,000 located in a single urban area of at least 10,000 population.

A central county is associated with the urbanized area or urban cluster that accounts for the largest portion of the county's population. The central counties associated with a particular urbanized area or urban cluster are grouped to form a single cluster of central counties for purposes of measuring commuting to and from potentially qualifying outlying counties.

## **Section 3. Outlying Counties**

A county qualifies as an outlying county of a CBSA if it meets the following commuting requirements:

- (a) At least 25 percent of the workers living in the county work in the central county or counties of the CBSA; or
- (b) At least 25 percent of the employment in the county is accounted for by workers who reside in the central county or counties of the CBSA.

A county may be included in only one CBSA. If a county qualifies as a central county of one CBSA and as outlying in another, it falls within the CBSA in which it is a central county. A county that qualifies as outlying to multiple CBSAs falls within the CBSA with which it has the strongest commuting tie, as measured by either 3(a) or 3(b) above. The counties included in a CBSA must be contiguous; if a county is not contiguous with other counties in the CBSA, it will not fall within the CBSA.

## **Section 4. Merging of Adjacent Core Based Statistical Areas**

Two adjacent CBSAs will merge to form one CBSA if the central county or counties (as a group) of one CBSA qualify as outlying to the central county or counties (as a group) of the other CBSA using the measures and thresholds stated in 3(a) and 3(b) above.

## **Section 5. Identification of Principal Cities**

The Principal City (or Cities) of a CBSA will include:

- (a) The largest incorporated place with a 2010 Census population of at least 10,000 in the CBSA or, if no incorporated place of at least 10,000 population is present in the CBSA, the largest incorporated place or census designated place in the CBSA; and

(b) Any additional incorporated place or census designated place with a 2010 Census population of at least 250,000 or in which 100,000 or more persons work; and

(c) Any additional incorporated place or census designated place with a 2010 Census population of at least 50,000, but less than 250,000, and in which the number of workers working in the place meets or exceeds the number of workers living in the place; and

(d) Any additional incorporated place or census designated place with a 2010 Census population of at least 10,000, but less than 50,000, and at least one-third the population size of the largest place, and in which the number of workers working in the place meets or exceeds the number of workers living in the place.

### **Section 6. Categories and Terminology**

A CBSA is categorized based on the population of the largest urban area (urbanized area or urban cluster) within the CBSA. Categories of CBSAs are: Metropolitan Statistical Areas, based on urbanized areas of 50,000 or more population, and Micropolitan Statistical Areas, based on urban clusters of at least 10,000 population but less than 50,000 population. Counties that do not fall within CBSAs will represent Outside Core Based Statistical Areas.

A NECTA is categorized in a manner similar to a CBSA and is referred to as a Metropolitan NECTA or a Micropolitan NECTA.

### **Section 7. Divisions of Metropolitan Statistical Areas and New England City and Town Areas**

(a) A Metropolitan Statistical Area containing a single urbanized area with a population of at least 2.5 million may be subdivided to form smaller groupings of counties referred to as Metropolitan Divisions.

A county qualifies as a “main county” of a Metropolitan Division if 65 percent or more of workers living in the county also work within the county and the ratio of the number of workers working in the county to the number of workers living in the county is at least .75. A county qualifies as a “secondary county” if 50 percent or more, but less than 65 percent, of workers living in the county also work within the county and the ratio of the number of workers working in the county to the number of workers living in the county is at least .75.

A main county automatically serves as the basis for a Metropolitan Division. For a secondary county to qualify as the basis for forming a Metropolitan Division, it must join with either a contiguous secondary county or a contiguous main county with which it has the highest employment interchange measure of 15 or more. After all main counties and secondary counties are identified and grouped (if appropriate), each additional county that already has qualified for inclusion in the Metropolitan Statistical Area falls within the Metropolitan Division associated with the main/secondary county or counties with which the county at issue has the highest employment interchange measure. Counties in a Metropolitan Division must be contiguous.

(b) A NECTA containing a single urbanized area with a population of at least 2.5 million may be subdivided to form smaller groupings of cities and towns referred to as NECTA Divisions. A city or town will be a main city or town of a NECTA Division if it has a population of 50,000 or more and its highest rate of out-commuting to any other city or town is less than 20 percent.

After all main cities and towns have been identified, each remaining city and town in the NECTA will fall within the NECTA Division associated with the city or town with which the one at issue has the highest employment interchange measure. Each NECTA Division must contain a total population of 100,000 or more. Cities and towns first assigned to areas with populations less than 100,000 will be assigned to the qualifying NECTA Division associated with the city or town with which the one at issue has the highest employment interchange measure. Cities and towns within a NECTA Division must be contiguous.

### **Section 8. Combining Adjacent Core Based Statistical Areas**

(a) Any two adjacent CBSAs will form a Combined Statistical Area if the employment interchange measure between the two areas is at least 15.

(b) The CBSAs thus combined will also continue to be recognized as individual CBSAs within the Combined Statistical Area.

### **Section 9. Titles of Core Based Statistical Areas, Metropolitan Divisions, New England City and Town Divisions, and Combined Statistical Areas**

(a) The title of a CBSA or NECTA will include the name of its Principal City with the largest 2010 Census population. If there are multiple Principal Cities, the names of the second-largest and (if present) third-largest Principal Cities will appear in the title in order of descending population size.

If the Principal City with the largest 2010 Census population is a census designated place, the name of the largest incorporated place of at least 10,000 population that also is a Principal City will appear first in the title followed by the name of the census designated place. If the Principal City with the largest 2010 Census population is a census designated place, and there is no incorporated place of at least 10,000 population that also is a Principal City, the name of that census designated place Principal City will appear first in the title.

(b) The title of a Metropolitan Division will include the name of the Principal City with the largest 2010 Census population located in the Metropolitan Division. If there are multiple Principal Cities, the names of the second-largest and (if present) third-largest Principal Cities will appear in the title in order of descending population size. If there are no Principal Cities located in the Metropolitan Division, the title of the Metropolitan Division will use the names of up to three counties in order of descending 2010 Census population size.

(c) The title of a NECTA Division will include the name of the Principal City with the largest 2010 Census population located in the NECTA Division. If there are multiple Principal Cities,

the names of the second-largest and (if present) third-largest Principal Cities will appear in the title in order of descending population size. If there are no Principal Cities located in the NECTA Division, the title of the NECTA Division will use the names of up to three cities or towns in descending 2010 Census population size.

(d) The title of a Combined Statistical Area will include the names of the two largest Principal Cities in the combination and the name of the third-largest Principal City, if present. If the Combined Statistical Area title duplicates that of one of its component CBSAs, the name of the third-most-populous Principal City will be dropped from the title of the Combined Statistical Area.

(e) Titles also will include the names of any State in which the area is located.

### **Section 10. Updating Schedule**

(a) The Office of Management and Budget will delineate CBSAs in 2013 based on 2010 Census data and 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

(b) In subsequent years, the Office of Management and Budget will designate a new Micropolitan Statistical Area if:

(1) A city that is outside any existing CBSA has a Census Bureau special census count of 10,000 to 49,999 population, or a population estimate of 10,000 to 49,999 for two consecutive years from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program, or

(2) A Census Bureau special census results in the delineation of an urban cluster of 10,000 to 49,999 population that is outside of any existing CBSA.

(c) Also in subsequent years, the Office of Management and Budget will designate a new Metropolitan Statistical Area if:

(1) A city that is outside any existing Metropolitan Statistical Area has a Census Bureau special census count of 50,000 or more population, or a population estimate of 50,000 or more for two consecutive years from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program, or

(2) A Census Bureau special census results in the delineation of a new urbanized area of 50,000 population or more that is outside of any existing Metropolitan Statistical Area.

(d) Outlying counties of CBSAs that qualify after the first delineation (in 2013) will qualify, according to the criteria in Section 3 above, on the basis of American Community Survey 5-year commuting estimates.

(e) The Office of Management and Budget will review the delineations of all existing CBSAs and related statistical areas in 2018 using 2011-2015 5-year commuting and employment estimates from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The urbanized areas and

urban clusters used in these delineations will be those based on 2010 Census data or subsequent special censuses for which urban areas are created.

The central counties of CBSAs identified on the basis of a 2010 Census population count, or on the basis of population estimates from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program or a special census count in the case of postcensally delineated areas, will constitute the central counties for purposes of the these area delineations.

New CBSAs will be designated in 2018 on the basis of Census Bureau special census counts or population estimates as described above in Sections 10(b) and 10(c); outlying county qualification will be based on 5-year commuting estimates from the American Community Survey.

(f) Other aspects of the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area and related statistical area delineations are not subject to change between decennial censuses.

### **Section 11. Definitions of Key Terms**

**Census designated place:** A statistical geographic entity that is analogous to an incorporated place, delineated for the decennial census, consisting of a locally recognized, unincorporated concentration of population that is identified by name.

**Central county:** The county or counties of a Core Based Statistical Area containing a substantial portion of an urbanized area or urban cluster or both, and to and from which commuting is measured to determine qualification of outlying counties.

**Combined Statistical Area:** A geographic entity consisting of two or more adjacent Core Based Statistical Areas with employment interchange measures of at least 15.

**Core:** A densely settled concentration of population, comprising either an urbanized area (of 50,000 or more population) or an urban cluster (of 10,000 to 49,999 population) delineated by the Census Bureau, around which a Core Based Statistical Area is delineated.

**Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA):** A statistical geographic entity consisting of the county or counties associated with at least one core (urbanized area or urban cluster) of at least 10,000 population, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties with the counties containing the core. Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas are the two categories of Core Based Statistical Areas.

**Delineation:** The establishment of the boundary of a statistical area, or the boundary that results.

**Employment interchange measure:** A measure of ties between two adjacent entities. The employment interchange measure is the sum of the percentage of workers living in the smaller entity who work in the larger entity and the percentage of employment in the smaller entity that is accounted for by workers who reside in the larger entity.

**Geographic building block:** The geographic unit, such as a county, that constitutes the basic geographic component of a statistical area.

**Main city or town:** A city or town that acts as an employment center within a New England City and Town Area that has a core with a population of at least 2.5 million. A main city or town serves as the basis for delineating a New England City and Town Area Division.

**Main county:** A county that acts as an employment center within a Core Based Statistical Area that has a core with a population of at least 2.5 million. A main county serves as the basis for delineating a Metropolitan Division.

**Metropolitan Division:** A county or group of counties within a Core Based Statistical Area that contains an urbanized area with a population of at least 2.5 million. A Metropolitan Division consists of one or more main/ secondary counties that represent an employment center or centers, plus adjacent counties associated with the main/secondary county or counties through commuting ties.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area:** A Core Based Statistical Area associated with at least one urbanized area that has a population of at least 50,000. The Metropolitan Statistical Area comprises the central county or counties containing the core, plus adjacent outlying counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the central county or counties as measured through commuting.

**Micropolitan Statistical Area:** A Core Based Statistical Area associated with at least one urban cluster that has a population of at least 10,000, but less than 50,000. The Micropolitan Statistical Area comprises the central county or counties containing the core, plus adjacent outlying counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the central county or counties as measured through commuting.

**New England City and Town Area (NECTA):** A statistical geographic entity that is delineated using cities and towns as building blocks and that is conceptually similar to the Core Based Statistical Areas in New England (which are delineated using counties as building blocks).

**New England City and Town Area (NECTA) Division:** A city or town or group of cities and towns within a NECTA that contains an urbanized area with a population of at least 2.5 million. A NECTA Division consists of a main city or town that represents an employment center, plus adjacent cities and towns associated with the main city or town, or with other cities and towns that are in turn associated with the main city or town, through commuting ties.

**Outlying county:** A county that qualifies for inclusion in a Core Based Statistical Area on the basis of commuting ties with the Core Based Statistical Area's central county or counties.

**Outside Core Based Statistical Areas:** Counties that do not qualify for inclusion in a Core Based Statistical Area.

Principal City: The largest city of a Core Based Statistical Area, plus additional cities that meet specified statistical criteria.

Secondary county: A county that acts as an employment center in combination with a main county or another secondary county within a Core Based Statistical Area that has a core with a population of at least 2.5 million. A secondary county may serve as the basis for delineating a Metropolitan Division, but only when combined with a main county or another secondary county.

Urban area: The term used by the Census Bureau to refer collectively to urbanized areas and urban clusters.

Urban cluster: A statistical geographic entity delineated by the Census Bureau, consisting of densely settled census tracts and blocks and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 2,500 people. For purposes of delineating Core Based Statistical Areas, only those urban clusters of 10,000 more population are considered.

Urbanized area: A statistical geographic entity delineated by the Census Bureau, consisting of densely settled census tracts and blocks and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people.

Source: Office of Management and Budget, June 2010