



# UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE

**New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program  
University of New Hampshire  
Methodology Paper  
October 2013 Data Submission**

## **I. Data Description**

In accordance with the effective NTIA guidance for Round 7 data submissions, the New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program (NHBMP) submitted the data set described below and associated documents to NTIA in October of 2013.

NH\_SBDD\_2013\_10\_01.gdb – file geodatabase containing feature classes for:

<b>Feature Class</b>	<b>Number of Records</b>
BB_ConnectionPoint_LastMile	0
BB_ConnectionPoint_MiddleMile	111
BB_Service_Address	0
BB_Service_CAIstitutions	4073
BB_Service_CensusBlock	109,757
BB_Service_Overview	0
BB_Service_RoadSegment	45,856
BB_Service_Wireless	50
State_Boundary	1

In total, over 159,800 individual data records on broadband availability were submitted by New Hampshire. Collectively, these records describe availability as reported by 40 broadband providers in the state. In addition, the NHBMP submitted data on 4,073 community anchor institutions, an increase of 6 records from the prior submission.

To achieve this level of reporting, the NHBMP relied on a number of sources to identify potential providers in the state. The following table details the disposition of the initial set of providers:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of Records</b>
Potential providers identified in NH	94
Providers confirmed as delivering service in NH	64
Providers represented in the NHBMP submission	40

## II. Provider Participation

The NHBMP has identified 64 broadband providers in the state. As noted above, 40 of these providers participated in the program for the Fall 2013 cycle. The 40 current participating providers include:

<b>Provider Name</b>	<b>Technology</b>
1. Argent Communications, LLC**	Fixed Wireless
2. AT&T Mobility LLC	Mobile Wireless
3. BayRing Communications (dba Freedom Ring Communications, LLC)	Middle Mile
4. Charter Communications Inc.	Cable
5. ClearWire	Mobile Wireless
6. Comcast Cable Communications, LLC	Cable
7. Cyberpine Cooperative, Inc.*	Fixed Wireless
8. DSCI Corporation*	Middle Mile
9. Dunbarton Telephone Company, Inc.*	DSL
10. FairPoint Communications, Inc.	DSL
11. G4 Communications**	DSL, Middle Mile
12. Granite State Communications (aka Granite State Telephone)*	DSL, Fiber
13. Great Auk Wireless (dba GAW High-Speed Internet Inc.)*	Fixed Wireless
14. GWI (aka Biddeford Internet Corporation)	DSL, Other Copper Wireline
15. HughesNet**	Satellite
16. IAMNOW.net**	Fixed Wireless
17. Lakes Region Wireless*	Fixed Wireless
18. Level 3 Communications	Fiber, Middle Mile
19. Lighttower Fiber Networks*	Middle Mile
20. MegaPath (fka Covad Communications Company)	DSL, Other Copper Wireline, Middle Mile
21. MetroCast	Cable
22. OTT Communications*	DSL, Middle Mile
23. Oxford Networks*	Middle Mile
24. Sidera Networks, LLC*	Middle Mile
25. Skycasters*	Satellite
26. Sovernet Communications*	DSL
27. Spectra Access*	Fixed Wireless
28. Sprint	Mobile Wireless
29. StarBand Communications, Inc.**	Satellite
30. Tamworth Wireless Cooperative**	Fixed Wireless
31. TDS Telecom	DSL, Fiber, Middle Mile
32. Time Warner Cable	Cable
33. T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless
34. Topsham Communications**	Fiber
35. U.S. Cellular*	Mobile Wireless

36. Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless
37. ViaSat (fka WildBlue Communications, Inc.)	Satellite
38. Wave Comm, LLC**	Fixed Wireless
39. Wireless LINC of NH and VT (fka NCIC)*	Fixed Wireless
40. WiValley*	Fixed Wireless

\* Provider confirmed that coverage has not changed since July, 2013 and therefore did not submit revised data for this round.

\*\* Provider did not confirm or submit revised data for Fall, 2013 submission. Data from previous round is being resubmitted.

One new fixed wireless provider has been identified, but was not able to submit data to the NHBMP in time for this data cycle. We anticipate their involvement during subsequent data collection rounds.

The following 21 providers have remained unresponsive to multiple and ongoing requests to participate in the NHBMP, have indicated that they will not participate or have dropped out of the program after initially providing data.

Provider Name	
1. Boston Telephone	2. Broadview Networks***
3. CityVoice	4. DESTEK
5. EarthLink Business (aka One Communications)	6. Fibercast Cable Communications
7. The Granite Connection	8. Grolen Communications
9. ITLLC (f/k/a Russet Communications)	10. Met Tel
11. MV Communications	12. NCIA
13. NHvt	14. Qwest Communications
15. RadiusNorth	16. segTel, Inc.
17. SkyWire Wifi (f/k/a Akers Pond)	18. TelJet***
19. Turnpike Technologies	20. USAi.net
21. WindStream	

\*\*\* Provider formally indicated that they will not be participating in the program.

The following 2 providers have been identified as providing internet service, but the maximum download and upload speeds they currently offer do not meet the broadband definition.

Provider Name	
1. Bretton Woods Telephone	2. Dixville Telephone

The 7 providers listed below were identified from analysis of the FCC Form 477 data (filings through February, 2011). The NHBMP has contacted these providers, but to this date they have either been unresponsive or data has not been received so we cannot confirm their status in NH.

Provider Name	
1. Airespring, Inc.	2. BurgNet
3. Global Crossing North America, Inc.	4. Hickory Tech
5. NewEdge Network, Inc.	6. NextWave Wireless, Inc.
7. Telovations, Inc.	

Finally, the NHBMPP identified a number of providers during previous rounds that we no longer maintain on the active list because they have either ceased providing service, have merged with other providers, or were never an active provider in NH.

Provider Name	
1. Access Communications	2. All Media, Inc.
3. Alterracom Networks	4. BIT-NET
5. CheshireNet	6. Cogent
7. Cooperative Resources	8. Equal Access Networks
9. FCG Networks	10. Finowen
11. First Bridge	12. GreenNet
13. Green Wave Wireless	14. JLC
15. LevelOne Communications	16. Mainstream EIS
17. Mason Coop	18. RNK Communications
19. TTLC.net	20. Vermont Telephone
21. WaveGuide	22. Wireless Horizon
23. Worldpath	

The initial master list of providers was extracted from the “New Hampshire Broadband Action Plan”, 2008, NH Telecommunications Advisory Board (TAB) and NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). This listing was cross-referenced against a statewide cell tower inventory maintained by the NH Office of Energy and Planning. NHBMPP staff maintains an ongoing effort to identify additional active service providers in the state based on continuing interactions with TAB and DRED, review of speed test results, updated FCC data when published, and other sources as available.

### **III. Data Collection and Integration**

#### **A. Primary Data Collection**

##### Data Acquisition

Primary data was collected directly from the service providers. The NHBMPP first developed a set of guidance documents based on NTIA specifications, and distributed those to the individual providers. Once the guidance was disseminated, NHBMPP staff followed up with providers via phone/email to encourage participation and address questions, as required. Typically, multiple communications were required to ensure a complete data submission was received.

##### Data Pre-Processing

To support the data mapping and integration efforts, the following base data sets were acquired and/or retrieved from the NH GRANIT state GIS clearinghouse archives:

- State and town boundaries (based on 1:24,000 USGS DLG files);
- 2001 Land Cover data set (derived from Landsat TM imagery);
- 2010 TIGER Census Blocks;
- 2010 Census MAF/TIGER Road Segments; and
- 2009 USGS National Elevation Data set (NED).

All required NTIA fields were added to the census block and road segment data sets. In addition, the road segments were processed against the census blocks to populate two fields used internally – the left block ID and the right block ID associated with each road segment.

#### Data Processing and Integration

The broadband availability data was processed and integrated using a suite of GIS tools and procedures, depending upon the format and content of the data submitted by the individual providers. Generally, the processing involved executing one or more of the following steps:

- Scanning and georeferencing paper maps and using the results as a visual reference to select out corresponding features from the project base data sets.
- Geocoding addresses using both an internal locator based on the TIGER road segments, and where required, the ESRI TA\_BatchAddress\_US subscription service; where NDAs were in place, geocoded points were then used to identify the host census block (if  $\leq 2$  sq. mi.), or the TIGER road segment in closest proximity but within 500' (if the host census block was  $> 2$  sq. mi.). Related note(s):
  - In some cases, the selection of the TIGER road segment in closest proximity to the geocoded point yielded a pattern of disconnected road segments with broadband service.
- Using ArcGIS Network Analyst to select road segments within a cumulative distance of 3,000 and/or 18,000 lineal feet from central office locations, depending upon data submitted by the provider. The selected segments were subsequently used to identify adjacent census blocks  $\leq 2$  sq. mi. or used as features to quantify coverage along census blocks  $> 2$  sq. mi. Note that in early submission rounds, adjacent census blocks were flagged based on road segments intersecting those blocks. More recently, we refined our approach to define adjacency as blocks sharing a boundary with the road segment. This more conservative approach resulted in some blocks dropping out of provider coverage footprints.
- Processing KMZ image files, using the bounding rectangle to establish interior georeferencing, and then converting the georeferenced image to polygons.
- Utilizing Cellular Expert ArcGIS extension to generate a signal prediction surface for wireless providers submitting antenna locations (and associated data). Related note(s):
  - The statewide cell tower inventory provided the starting point for the signal propagation modeling efforts.
  - Subsequently, working with UNC-Raleigh and a NH-based fixed-wireless provider, the data processing models were refined to take into consideration visibility parameters (in addition to vegetation and topography).
  - A -90 DB threshold was used to define service areas of fixed-wireless providers.

- In processing the fixed-wireless polygon data, exterior polygons, e.g. those outside of the main coverage footprint, that were < .125 sq. mi. were eliminated. Interior non-coverage polygons were not eliminated.
- Processing satellite coverage footprints to incorporate the Utah shadow analysis (as posted on PBWorks).

The NHBMPP maintains a record of all specific processing steps applied to each provider's data submission in each round. We review that methodology with each provider as part of the verification process to ensure appropriate processing steps are followed.

#### Data Processing Issues

The NHBMPP encountered a number of issues in processing the broadband data for the state. These include:

- Most providers submitted data only on areas that are currently served, and not on areas that could be served following the NTIA guidance. This contributed to the pattern of occasional disconnected rural road segments with broadband service.
- Reliance on the TIGER road segments likely yielded overstated broadband coverage in rural areas. A single rural customer address, when geocoded, could result in a long street segment being selected as part of a provider's coverage area.
- Most providers did not submit typical speed data. As the volume of our speed test data set grows, we anticipate using this information to estimate typical speeds.
- Fixed wireless providers frequently did not deliver the full set of antenna parameters required for the signal propagation software, and required multiple requests for data followed by requests for clarification of those data submitted. While submissions continue to improve in terms of comprehensiveness, this remains an issue.
- Providers who are knowledgeable and experienced with the original 2009 NTIA NOFA and corresponding clarification documentation provided information appropriate to that data schema / model, and modifications to these in June 2011 resulted in additional follow-up required to achieve a complete data submission.
- As a result of reprocessing data to incorporate enhanced methodologies, there are some instances of reduced provider footprints being reported.
- For providers who submitted address records, the first process was to geocode those addresses to the 2010 TIGER road segments. For any ungeocoded addresses, the program next utilized ESRI's online geocoding services. Any remaining, ungeocoded records were geocoded manually using Bing. In some instances, records continued to remain uncoded after this three-phase approach. We have identified a number of issues with some of the resulting geocoded data:
  - In reviewing addresses geocoded against ESRI services, we discovered a small number of records that did not appear to be correctly positioned. The incorrect positioning was confirmed by viewing the geocoded points relative to both TIGER road data and by referencing Bing. In some instances, the geocoded points were positioned a significant distance away from any mapped road segment. A proximity analysis with a 500' distance constraint was used to identify the closest road in these instances.
  - Finally, some geocoded results were mapped in a town other than the town identified by the provider in their address records. In most instances the

geocoded result was to a neighboring town and was within .1 miles of the recorded town. The NHBMP retained the geocoded locations and notified the provider of these discrepancies.

- For speeds reported by providers in ranges, e.g. 4G LTE, the speed tier reported was selected to include the upper end of the range.
- Some fixed wireless providers continue to report minimum download speeds < 768 kbps, e.g. outside of the NTIA domain, but maximum download speeds within NTIA speed tier domain values. In these instances, the NHBMP reported the data based on the maximum speed reported.

## B. Community Anchor Institutions

Data was submitted for 4,067 Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) in the state covering the full range of categories established by NTIA, as follows:

Category	Number of CAIs	Percent of Total
1. School – K through 12	764	18.8%
2. Library	793	19.5%
3. Medical/health care	951	23.3%
4. Public safety	566	13.9%
5. University, college, other post-secondary	64	1.6%
6. Other community support – government	735	18.0%
7. Other community support – non governmental	200	4.9%
TOTAL	4,073	100.0%

This submission represents an increase of 6 CAIs over the prior data set, with most of the growth was in the medical/health care category.

In this data collection and maintenance round, the collection was largely accomplished by the individual community anchor institutions via the project’s CAI web portal. The nine regional planning commissions in New Hampshire provided regional technical support, with the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) & NHBMP staff at the University responsible for developing guidance, for overseeing collection, and for compiling the resulting regional data sets into a standardized statewide layer. The primary steps in the process included:

- Issue initial and reminder emails to existing CAI contacts, requesting that they review/update their record(s);
- For round 8, prioritize municipal CAI’s and follow up with those who remained unresponsive;
- Develop a master list of CAIs by category that were not inventoried in previous rounds through review of updated statewide lists (schools, libraries, health care facilities), existing GIS data sets (largely from local hazard mitigation plans ), and local knowledge;
- Review updated statewide lists of healthcare facilities, schools and libraries to identify newly opened facilities and those which have closed;

- Develop a list of previously identified CAIs with incomplete broadband information focusing on municipalities;
- Contact those entities to collect their broadband details using an email outreach methodology, as well as phone surveys;
- Map the location of each unmapped CAI, using existing GIS data sets, reference to aerial imagery, property boundaries, web research, and field data collection where necessary;
- Verify data (see verification section below).

One issue related to the CAI data collection and submission remains outstanding. The 793 libraries reported in the dataset include the standard set of public libraries, but also include a number of libraries that are associated with K-12 schools. At present, these entries do not include a CAIID. NHBMPP has requested and is awaiting guidance on this issue.

#### **IV. Validation**

##### **A. Primary Data Collection**

The NHBMPP utilized multiple processes to verify the broadband provider data collected during the current round. These processes, each of which is described further below, included:

- Internal verification
- Provider verification
- Ground infrastructure checks
- Use of orthophotography
- Use of parcel data
- Use of FCC filing data
- Crowdsourced data – including speed tests and surveys
- Satellite dish inventory

The NHBMPP continued to use local knowledge to conduct an internal analysis of the reasonableness and consistency of our mapping results. Significant overstatements or understatements of service areas resulting from internal processing issues were readily identified and addressed. The NHBMPP also verified the “reasonableness” of data by comparing current coverage footprints to those reported during the prior round. This allowed us to identify areas where service areas changed substantively, and to communicate these findings to the provider for verification.

The Fall, 2013 feedback loop with providers continued to benefit from the strong relationship now established between the providers and program staff. This round’s efforts engaged all providers in data validation, including those who did not submit new data. The NHBMPP returned maps (.pdf files) to each provider for review and correction. Where providers delivered addresses or road segments, the product returned was a geographically referenced version of the data that was submitted. For wireless providers who delivered antenna locations and specifications, the program provided maps that displayed the modeled coverage area generated from the Cellular Expert signal propagation modeling software. Some providers requested the data verification information be provided in shapefile and/or Google Earth (.kmz)

format. Additionally, the NHBMPP created a secure interactive mapping verification website for the five providers whose service areas cover a majority of the state. As in the past, our experience was that the web-based solution was not fully utilized, likely due to limited provider staff resources. Overall, the provider verifications yielded a number of requests for modifications, all of which are represented in the data submission.

Orthophotography was utilized to support a number of mapping activities. Among other applications, it assisted in verifying tower locations and mapping results for the wireless signal propagation modeling, was used as an important reference layer in the verification maps delivered to providers, and contributed extensively to the mapping and verification of Community Anchor Institutions.

Community Anchor Institution mapping was supported by two other substantive data sets – parcel data and “community destination” data. The parcel data was used to map and/or verify locations. (Note that it also was used to assist in verifying the positional accuracy of address data submitted by providers.) The statewide community destinations inventory served as a starting point for compiling and mapping municipal facilities.

The NHBMPP utilized FCC Form 477 filings to support the verification of provider coverage areas. Analysis of tracts reported as being served by each provider against those developed from the provider’s submission allowed for verification and validation of service areas. There were some instances where a provider’s FCC report indicated a greater footprint than indicated by their data submission, and this information was relayed back to the provider during the data review period.

Other verification measures included:

- Speed test – The NHBMPP program has posted a customized speed test on the project web site ([iwantbroadbandnh.org](http://iwantbroadbandnh.org)). To date, over 7,300 have been submitted. We have processed those data to map the locations from which the tests were conducted and to summarize the test results. Through further analysis of the speed tests focusing on reported providers, the program compares the service identified to the provider’s reported coverage area to ensure there are not areas unreported, and/or areas where speed test results represent a significant deviation from the reported speed tier.
- Broadband survey – The NHBMPP website also hosts an online broadband survey, encouraging users to report their broadband access (or lack thereof) at the address level. The address submitted is then geocoded, which delivers a means of verifying provider coverage data at specific locations. (The survey is also linked to the speed test, so that users completing the form are asked to take the speed test as well.) To date, 671 surveys have been completed.
- Satellite dish survey – The NHBMPP has completed a drive-by inventory of satellite dishes in selected rural areas of the state, under the premise that a cluster of buildings with satellite broadband dishes signifies an area with no other broadband options available. This information has been utilized as part of the internal data review cycle.

- Cellular Drive Testing – The NHBMPP has completed a mobile wireless drive test to identify the areas of New Hampshire that are lacking mobile wireless data coverage. The 5 mobile wireless providers (AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, US Cellular, and Verizon Wireless) have provided the NHBMPP with polygon shapefiles of their coverage in an aggregate for the state. It is recognized through personal experience, community emails, and online surveys that these data overstate the actual service coverage. The drive test results are being used to review, verify and enhance the coverage information submitted by the providers.

## **B. Community Anchor Institutions**

The CAI data has been subjected to several rounds of verification during this and previous data submission cycles. An initial round of verification was completed in May, 2010 by re-interviewing a randomly selected subset of CAI contacts (20% of the entities within each of the 7 data categories). Later verification rounds were accomplished by generating a broadband profile sheet for each CAI, emailing that to each CAI contact for review, and modifying the CAI record based on any updates returned.

As of March, 2012, we created an interface for CAI contacts to review and modify their individual records via the NHBMPP website. We continued to leverage the use of these web technologies during the current reporting period, and received over 885 updates via the website for the round 8 submission.

Overall, the completeness of the data set improved over the previous submission in two specific areas:

- The percent of CAIs that reviewed and updated their broadband information via the website increased from 18% to 21%; and
- The number of records with a valid URL improved by over 7%.