



Safe Streets and Roads for All

Identifying Underserved Communities

This document provides instructions on how to use the (the Tool) for the purposes of responding to the Underserved Communities questions in the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant applications. The SS4A [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) defines an Underserved Community consistent with the definition of an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP) in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, [49 USC 6702\(a\)\(1\)](#)), as follows:

1. Any county (or equivalent jurisdiction) in which, during the 30-year period ending on the date of enactment of this chapter, 20 percent or more of the population continually lived in poverty, as measured by
 - o the 1990 decennial Census;
 - o the 2000 decennial Census; and
 - o the most recent annual small area income and poverty estimate of the Bureau of the Census;
2. Any Census tract with a poverty rate of not less than 20 percent, as measured by the 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census for the period of 2014 through 2018; and
3. Any territory or possession of the United States.

All SS4A applicants must identify whether the jurisdiction(s) included in the application, as well as any project areas for Implementation Grant applications, are entirely, partially, or not included within an underserved community.

The Tool displays all U.S. Census tracts and those of U.S. territories, showing which are identified as underserved communities. Applicants may use the Tool to respond to application questions in Valid Eval about underserved communities.

Note: USDOT will use the data in this map to calculate the percentage of the population in the applicant's jurisdiction or project area in an Underserved Community Census tract. Applicants may address impact to underserved communities in their application narrative but are not required to calculate this percentage as part of their application.

Using the Tool

This Tool can be used to identify whether the jurisdiction(s) or project area included in the application are entirely, partially, or not within an underserved community by following these steps:

1. When you visit the [Underserved Communities Tool](#), there are a couple of ways to find your jurisdiction or project area:
 - o Zoom and pan to a particular location.
 - o Enter a location or address in the Search bar to navigate to that location. The Search function can be found by clicking the "down arrows" icon in the top right corner of the map. Click the "Search" function in the dropdown menu and type in the relevant location.

- **Note:** When you zoom into a location, the data on the right side of the screen will NOT change. It only changes if you select an area, as described below.
2. Underserved communities are indicated in purple on the map. A simple visual assessment may be adequate to understand whether the jurisdiction(s) included in the application, as well as any project areas for Implementation Grant applicants, are entirely, partially, or not within an underserved community.

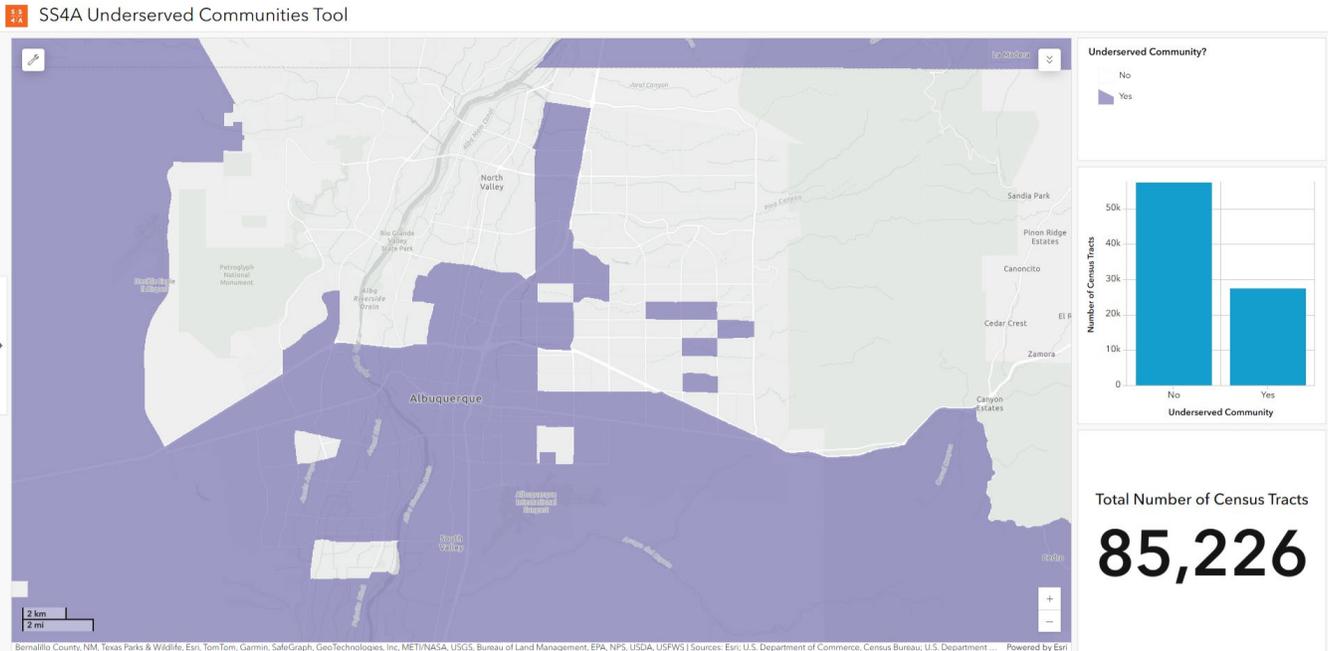


Figure 1: A visual assessment of the map of Albuquerque, New Mexico, shows that the jurisdiction is partially within an underserved community.

Selecting a Jurisdiction or Project Area (Optional)

For some applications, it may be difficult to visually determine the Census tracts corresponding with your jurisdiction or project area. You can use this Tool to select specific Census tracts that align with your jurisdiction or project area and determine whether they are entirely, partially, or not within an underserved community.

You are not required to submit screenshots or data from this tool in your application.

1. Zoom into the general location using the steps described above.
2. Click the "Maps tools" button () in the top left corner of the map. In the dropdown, choose your preferred selection type: Rectangle, Lasso, or Line.
3. When you draw an area or line, the Tool will select all the Census tracts that intersect it. Alternatively, you can use your cursor to click and select individual Census tracts by holding down the "Shift" key on your keyboard while making each selection.
4. At any time, you can clear your selection by clicking the "Clear selected" button ().
 - When you have completed your selection, use the chart on the right side of the screen to determine whether the area is entirely, partially, or not within an underserved community.

5. For more information, click the arrow on the left side of the dashboard to open a sidebar. A window with instructions on how to use the Tool will appear.

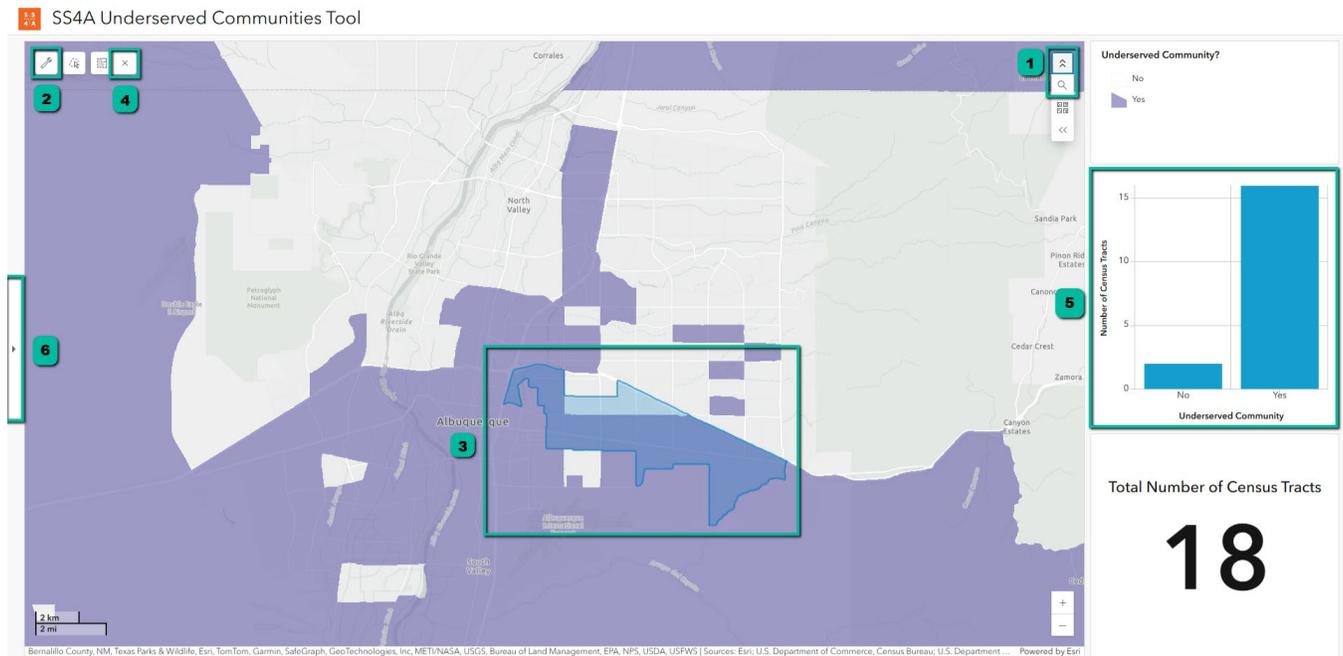


Figure 2: Screenshot of the Tool showing the 6 steps to select jurisdiction or project area.

More Resources

Listed below are additional resources related to the data in the Tool that applicants may explore:

3. [U.S. Census Bureau, Persistent Poverty in Counties and Census Tracts, 2023.](#)
4. [U.S. Department of Transportation, MPDG - Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities, 2024.](#)
5. [U.S. Department of Transportation, BUILD Location Designations, 2025.](#)