§ 25.301 Selection factors for designation of nominated rural areas.

In choosing among nominated rural areas eligible for designation as Empowerment Zone, Enterprise Community or Champion Community, the Secretary shall consider:

(a) The potential effectiveness of the strategic plan, in accordance with the key principles in §25.202(a);

(b) The strength of the assurances made pursuant to §25.200(b) that the strategic plan will be implemented;

(c) The extent to which an application proposes activities that are creative and innovative;

(d) The extent to which areas consisting of noncontiguous parcels are not so widely separated as to compromise achievement by the nominated areas.

The applications must be complete, inclusive of the strategic plan, as required by §25.202, and the certifications and written assurances required by §25.200(b).

(c) Site visits. In the process of reviewing each application accepted for processing, USDA may undertake site visits to any nominated area to aid in the process of evaluation.

(d) Modification of the strategic plan, boundaries of nominated rural areas, or period during the application review period. Subject to the limitations imposed by §25.100.

(1) USDA may request additional information pertaining to the strategic plan and proposed area and may, as a part of that request, suggest modifications to the strategic plan or nominated area that would enhance the effectiveness of the strategic plan;

(2) Enlargement of a nominated area will not be allowed if the inclusion of the additional area will result in an average poverty rate less than the average poverty rate at the time of initial application; and

(3) An applicant may modify the nominated area or strategic plan during the application review period with USDA approval.

(e) Designations. Final determination of the boundaries of areas and the term for which the designations will remain in effect will be made by the Secretary.