

## 2014 NCES LOCALE FILE SPECIFICATIONS

### 1.0 Abstract

The NCES locale file (EDGE\_LOCALE14\_NCES) is a geographic boundary file developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates (EDGE) program to identify and assign geographic locales to educational institutions. The NCES locale framework classifies all territory in the U.S. and Island Areas into four basic types -- City, Suburban, Town, and Rural. Each type is further divided into three subtypes based on population size and/or proximity to urban areas. NCES uses this general geographic indicator to support survey design, promote research and analysis, and assist with U.S. Department of Education program administration.

### 2.0 Source Files

The NCES locale file is based on urban area and place boundaries sourced from the Census Bureau's TIGER/Line database. Source layers include:

tl\_2014\_us\_uauc.shp  
tl\_2014\_us\_place.shp

### 3.0 Structure

#### Format

The NCES locale file (EDGE\_LOCALE14\_NCES) is provided in shapefile format. A shapefile is a collection of files with a shared name and unique suffix that function together to define and describe geographic features. The file types and extensions include:

- .shp – The .shp file contains information about feature geometry. It encapsulates information for all of the vertices needed to construct the locale polygons.
- .dbf – The .dbf file is a table that provides attributes (fields) for each feature. The .dbf table contains a unique record for each feature identified in the .shp file.
- .shx – The .shx file provides an index that supports the link between feature geometry and table attributes.
- .prj – The .prj file specifies the spatial coordinate system applied to the features. It identifies how the features are referenced and centered relative to an ellipsoidal representation of the earth. The boundaries use North American Datum 1983 (NAD83), the native coordinate system used for Census TIGER/Line boundaries.
- .sbn – The .sbn and .sbx files are additional index files that divides features into regions to improve processing efficiency.
- .shp.xml – The .shp.xml file contains metadata about the shapefile in Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) format.
- .cpg – The .cpg file defines the character encoding used for the .dbf file.

#### Datum (GCS NAD 83)

The shapefile includes a .prj file in the GIS industry standard well-known text (WKT) format that describes the coordinate system/projection/datum information for each shapefile. All Census Bureau generated shapefiles are in Global Coordinate System North American Datum of 1983 (GCS NAD83). The .prj file contains the following projection specification:

```
GEOGCS["GCS_North_American_1983",DATUM["D_North_American_1983",SPHEROID["GRS_1980",6378137,298.257222101]],PRIMEM["Greenwich",0],UNIT["Degree",0.017453292519943295]]
```

#### **4.0 Record Layout**

NCES Locale File (EDGE LOCALE14 NCES) Record Layout

<b>Field</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
LOCALE	2	String	NCES locale code