

POLICY BRIEF

HIGH DENSITY AREAS (HDA)

OVERVIEW

A high-density area (HDA) is a ZIP Code defined sampling area within a Metro County in ethnic Differential Survey Treatment (DST)¹ markets. The purpose of HDAs is to group together ZIP Codes that have high concentrations of ethnic (Black or Hispanic) populations into a discrete sampling unit within a county. This helps facilitate ethnic representation in the sample.

HDAs also receive separate sample weighting subject to In-Tab minimums. HDAs are eligible for individual reporting in instances where the In-Tab sample target is at least 30. An HDA will not be established if the remaining portion (balance or other type of HDA) does not have a Persons 12+ In-Tab sample target of at least 21 diaries.

CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING AN HDA IN DIARY METROS

Nielsen Audio establishes a high-density area under the following circumstances:

- The county contains ZIP Codes that are at least 35% Black with a combined diary In-Tab target of 21 or greater;
- or*
- The county contains ZIP Codes that are at least 40% Hispanic with a combined diary in-Tab target of 21 or greater.

ZIP Codes may meet both thresholds in Metros with both Black and Hispanic DSTs. When this occurs, the ZIP Code is assigned to the HDA that corresponds to the higher of the two population percentages.

There may be instances where Nielsen Audio uses more discrete sampling unit definitions to expand or subdivide high-density areas; Nielsen Audio denotes these sampling units as “HDA2s.” Criteria for establishing HDA2s vary based on individual Metro considerations.

Nielsen Audio bases its HDA thresholds on the point at which half of the U.S. Black or Hispanic population can be grouped by ZIP Code.

CRITERIA FOR RETAINING AN HDA

Metros with DSTs undergo ethnic analysis twice annually prior to the Spring and Fall Diary surveys and April and October PPM report periods. Nielsen Audio adds and removes ZIP Codes from existing HDAs depending on whether they meet the required population percentage thresholds. In order to be retained, the HDA must, upon review, maintain an In-Tab target of at least 18 diaries. Likewise, the balance (or other type of HDA) must maintain an In-Tab target greater than 18 diaries in order to prevent the removal of the HDA. Changes take effect in the applicable Diary surveys and April or October PPM report periods.

HDA CRITERIA IN PPM METROS

In establishing and retaining HDAs in PPM Metros, Nielsen Audio calculates the In-Tab threshold based on the Metro’s last Diary Metro target. Nielsen Audio may further subdivide HDAs in PPM Metros into multiple Geographical Zones (Geo Zones)².

For further information on HDAs,

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¹A detailed explanation of DST can be found in the Differential Survey Treatment Policy Brief.

²A detailed explanation of Geo Zones can be found in the Finer Level of Geographic Control–Geo Zones Policy Brief

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