Poverty in Our Rural Communities:
Challenges and Potential Solutions

Agenda

- Overview of Rural Poverty Challenges
- State Management Work Group's Focus
- Group Discussion
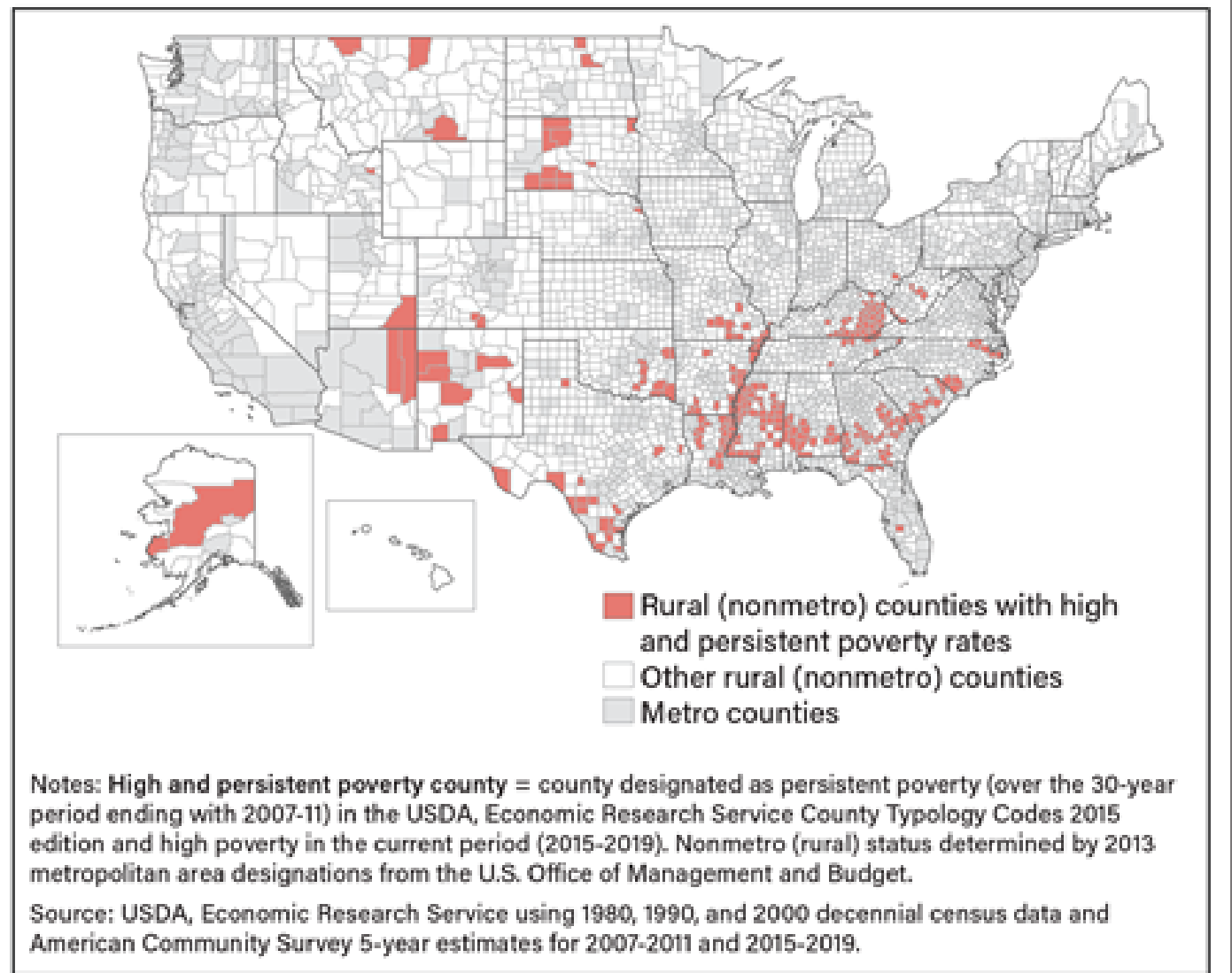- Report Out
- Next Steps

What's a "Rural Community"?

A county that does not have a core urban area of at least 50,000 people.

OR

An area of at least 400 square miles with a density of less than 35 people per square mile.

Poverty Rates in Rural Areas

Rural Poverty	Urban Poverty
17.2%	5.5%

High and persistent poverty rates in U.S. rural counties, 2019

USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Legend:
- Rural (nonmetro) counties with high and persistent poverty rates
- Other rural (nonmetro) counties
- Metro counties

Notes: **High and persistent poverty county** = county designated as persistent poverty (over the 30-year period ending with 2007-11) in the USDA, Economic Research Service County Typology Codes 2015 edition and high poverty in the current period (2015-2019). Nonmetro (rural) status determined by 2013 metropolitan area designations from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial census data and American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2007-2011 and 2015-2019.

Persistent Poverty

Persistently poor counties are classified as having poverty rates of **20 percent or more for three consecutive decades**.

There were approximately **377 persistently poor counties** in 2020.

Not Persistent Poverty County in 2020

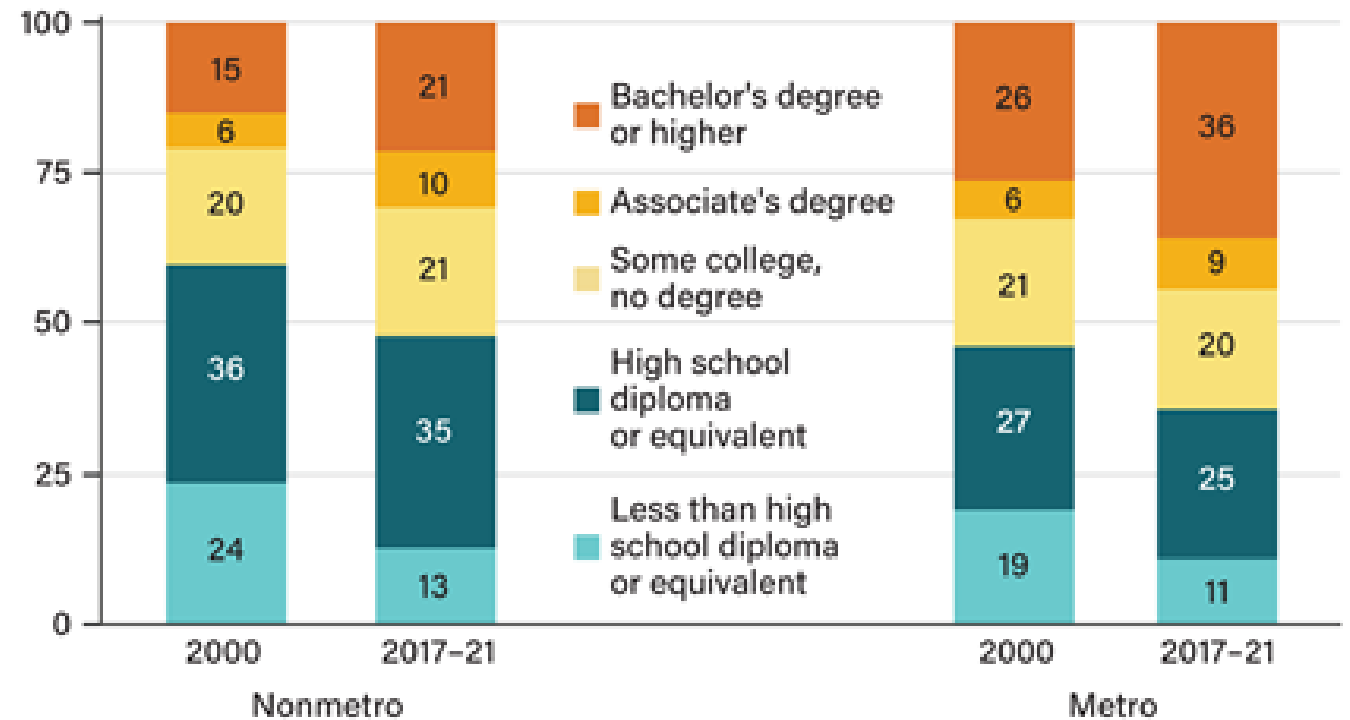Persistent Poverty County in 2020
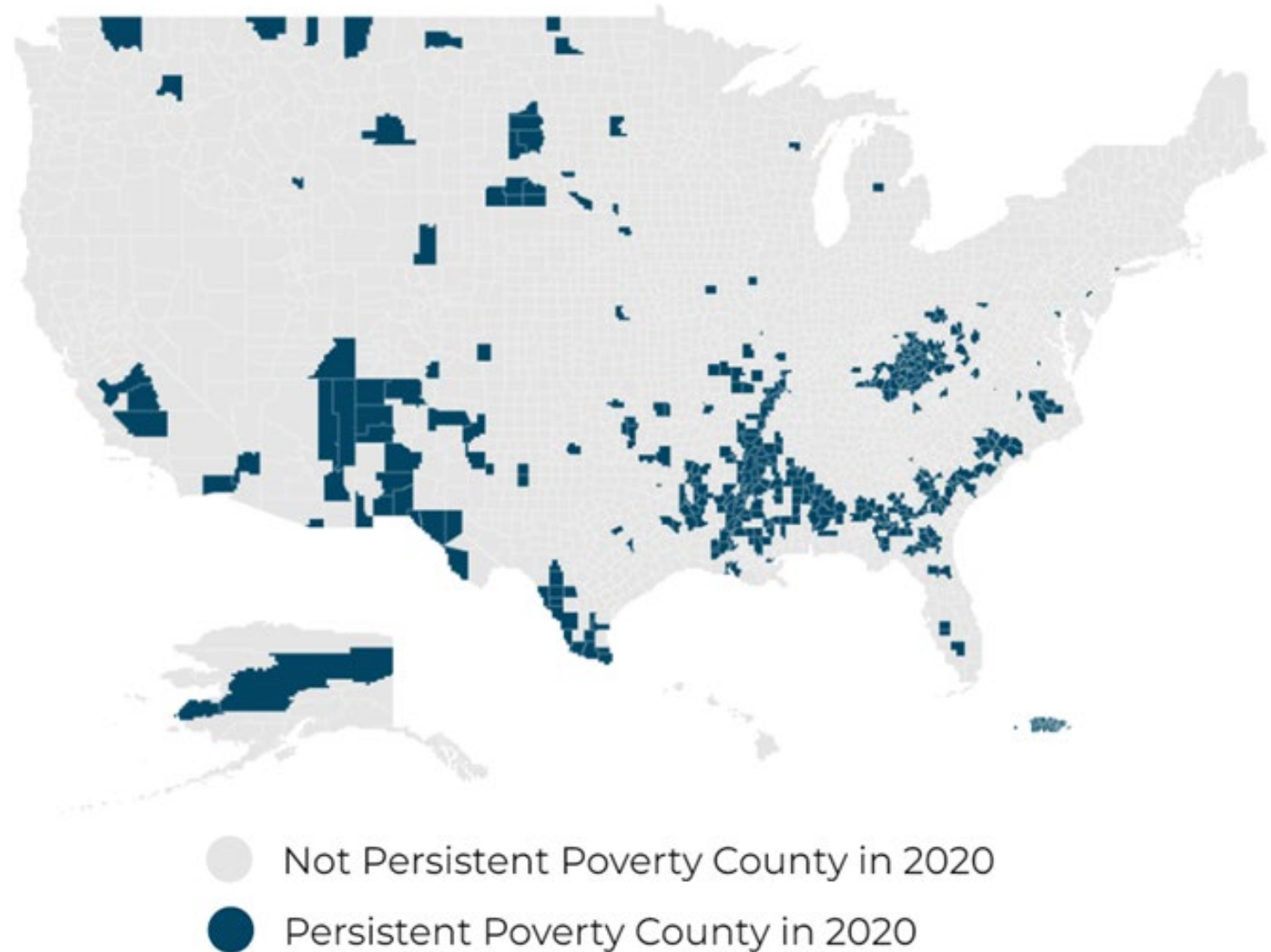
Education in Rural Areas

Educational attainment for adults 25 and older, 2000 and 2017–21

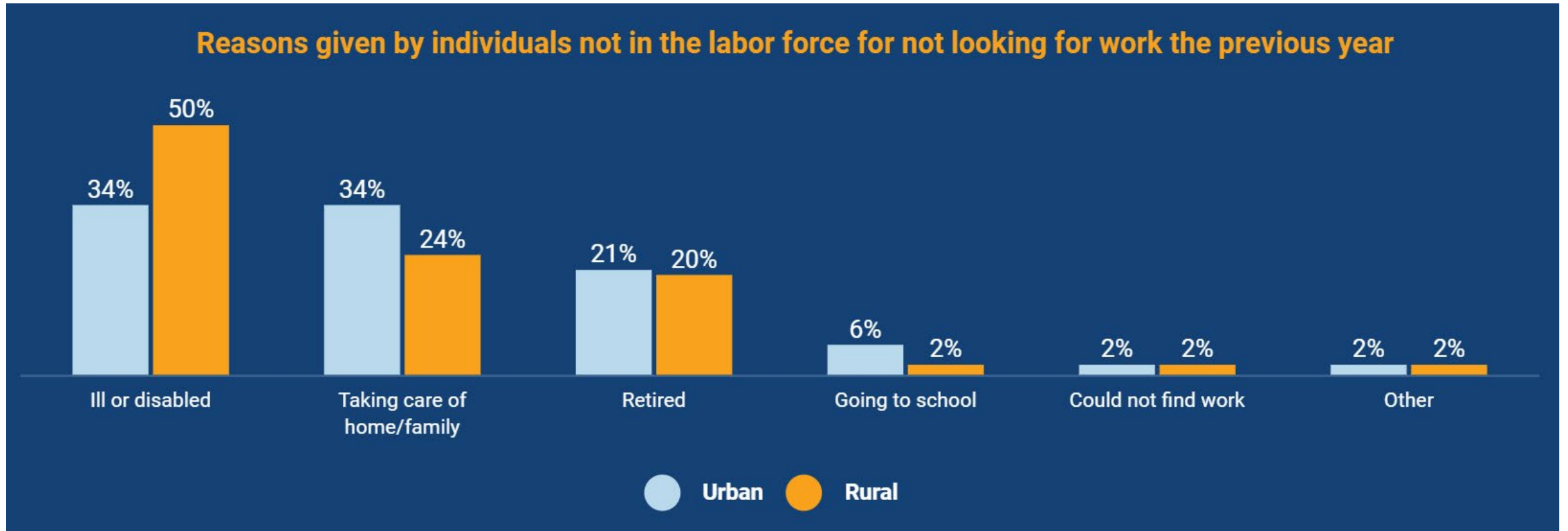USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Percent

Nonmetro
- 2000: Less than high school diploma or equivalent 24; High school diploma or equivalent 36; Some college, no degree 20; Associate's degree 6; Bachelor's degree or higher 15
- 2017–21: Less than high school diploma or equivalent 13; High school diploma or equivalent 35; Some college, no degree 21; Associate's degree 10; Bachelor's degree or higher 21

Metro
- 2000: Less than high school diploma or equivalent 19; High school diploma or equivalent 27; Some college, no degree 21; Associate's degree 6; Bachelor's degree or higher 26
- 2017–21: Less than high school diploma or equivalent 11; High school diploma or equivalent 25; Some college, no degree 20; Associate's degree 9; Bachelor's degree or higher 36

Note: Data are aggregated based on county metro-nonmetro status by Office of Management and Budget's 2013 metropolitan area definitions. Categories may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.
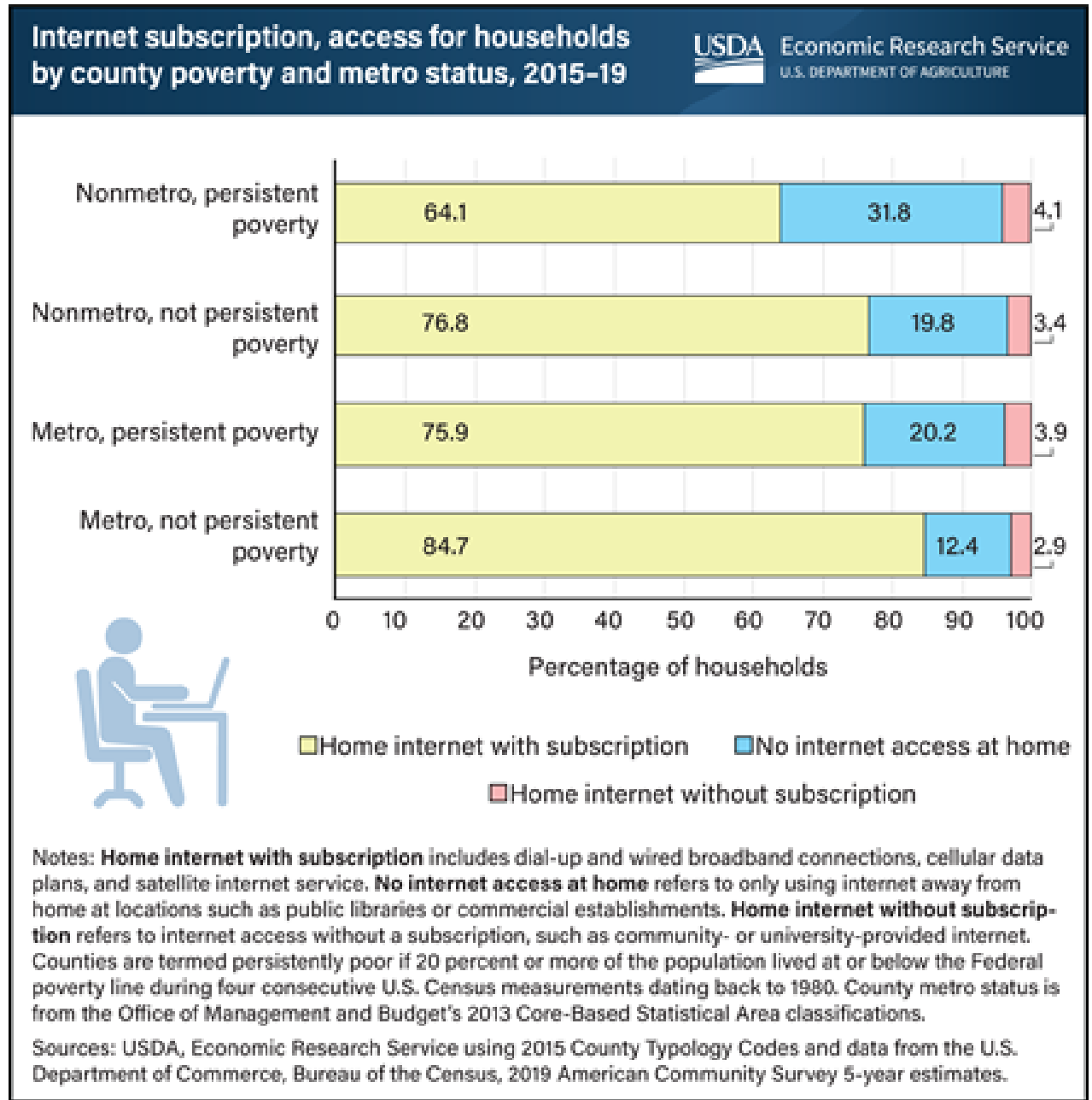
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2000 Decennial Census and 2017–21 American Community Survey 5-year period estimates.
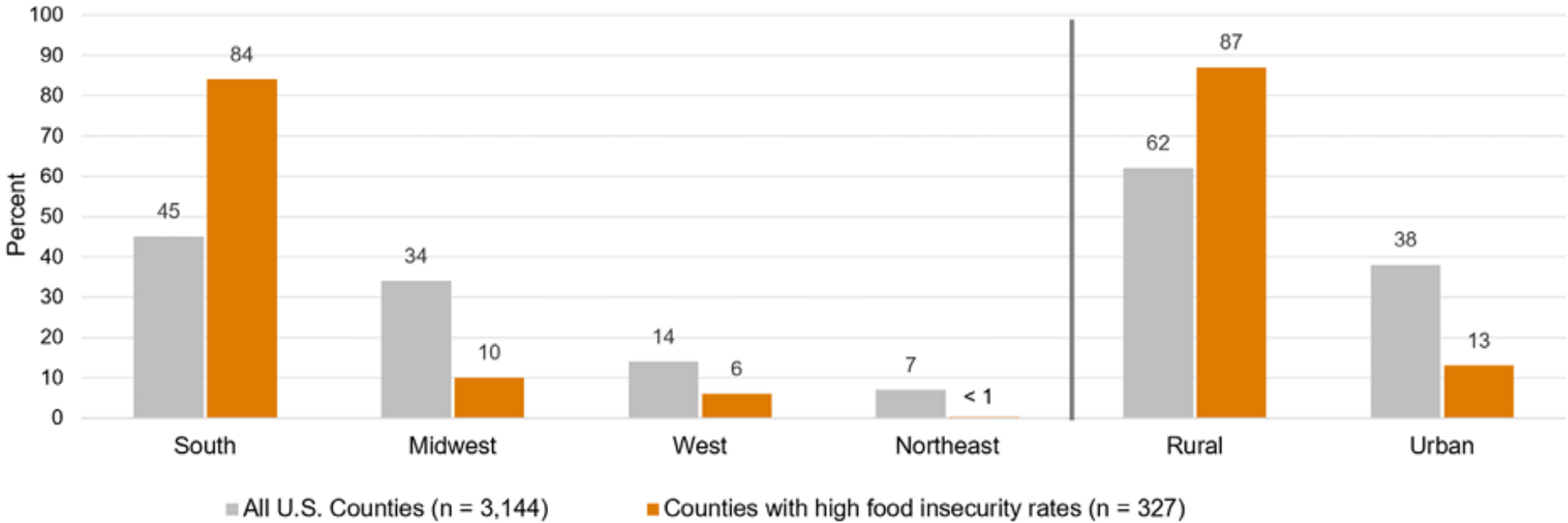
Rural Labor Force

Reasons given by individuals not in the labor force for not looking for work the previous year

- Ill or disabled: Urban 34%, Rural 50%
- Taking care of home/family: Urban 34%, Rural 24%
- Retired: Urban 21%, Rural 20%
- Going to school: Urban 6%, Rural 2%
- Could not find work: Urban 2%, Rural 2%
- Other: Urban 2%, Rural 2%

● Urban ● Rural

Broadband Access

Rural	Urban
22.3%	1.5%

Internet subscription, access for households by county poverty and metro status, 2015–19

USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Category	Home internet with subscription	No internet access at home	Home internet without subscription
Nonmetro, persistent poverty	64.1	31.8	4.1
Nonmetro, not persistent poverty	76.8	19.8	3.4
Metro, persistent poverty	75.9	20.2	3.9
Metro, not persistent poverty	84.7	12.4	2.9

Percentage of households

☐ Home internet with subscription   ☐ No internet access at home
☐ Home internet without subscription

Notes: **Home internet with subscription** includes dial-up and wired broadband connections, cellular data plans, and satellite internet service. **No internet access at home** refers to only using internet away from home at locations such as public libraries or commercial establishments. **Home internet without subscription** refers to internet access without a subscription, such as community- or university-provided internet. Counties are termed persistently poor if 20 percent or more of the population lived at or below the Federal poverty line during four consecutive U.S. Census measurements dating back to 1980. County metro status is from the Office of Management and Budget's 2013 Core-Based Statistical Area classifications.

Sources: USDA, Economic Research Service using 2015 County Typology Codes and data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

Food Insecurity

Figure 4. Share of All Counties versus Share of High Food Insecurity Counties, by Region and Rural-Urban Status

South: All U.S. Counties 45, Counties with high food insecurity rates 84
Midwest: All U.S. Counties 34, Counties with high food insecurity rates 10
West: All U.S. Counties 14, Counties with high food insecurity rates 6
Northeast: All U.S. Counties 7, Counties with high food insecurity rates < 1
Rural: All U.S. Counties 62, Counties with high food insecurity rates 87
Urban: All U.S. Counties 38, Counties with high food insecurity rates 13

All U.S. Counties (n = 3,144)
Counties with high food insecurity rates (n = 327)

Source: Feeding America
Note: "High Food Insecurity" refers to counties whose estimated food insecurity rates are within the top 10% of all counties. Rural counties include nonmetropolitan (nonmetro) counties as defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); urban counties include all metropolitan (metro) counties.

Access to Public Transit

States Where Percent of Rural Residents With No Intercity Transportation Access Exceeds Average (14.6%), 2021
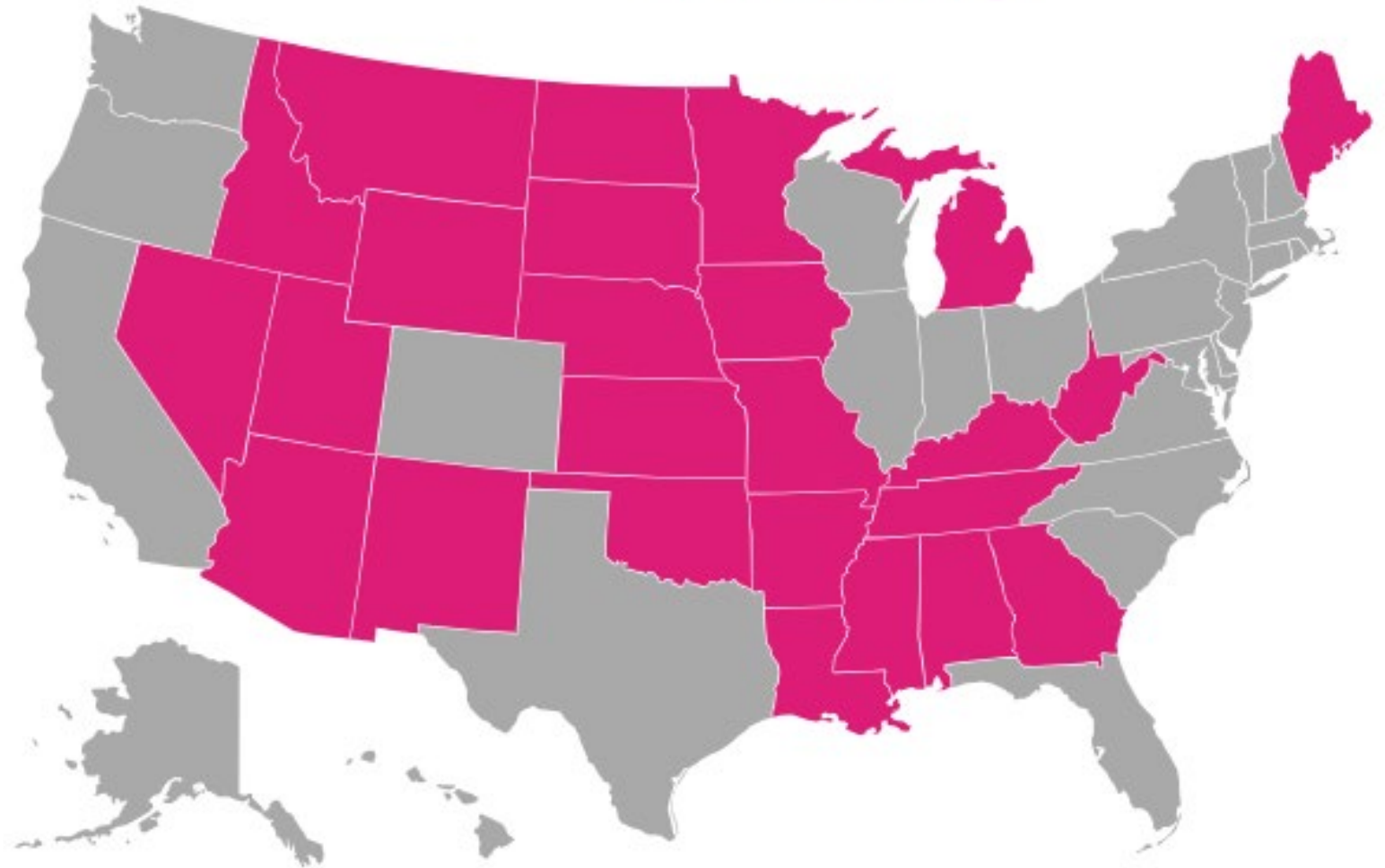
Primary Care in Rural Areas

Select healthcare professionals by county type, 2020

USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Number of providers per 10,000 residents

	Primary care physicians	Dentists	Other
Nonmetro	5.1	4.7	11.1
Metro	8.0	7.6	14.7
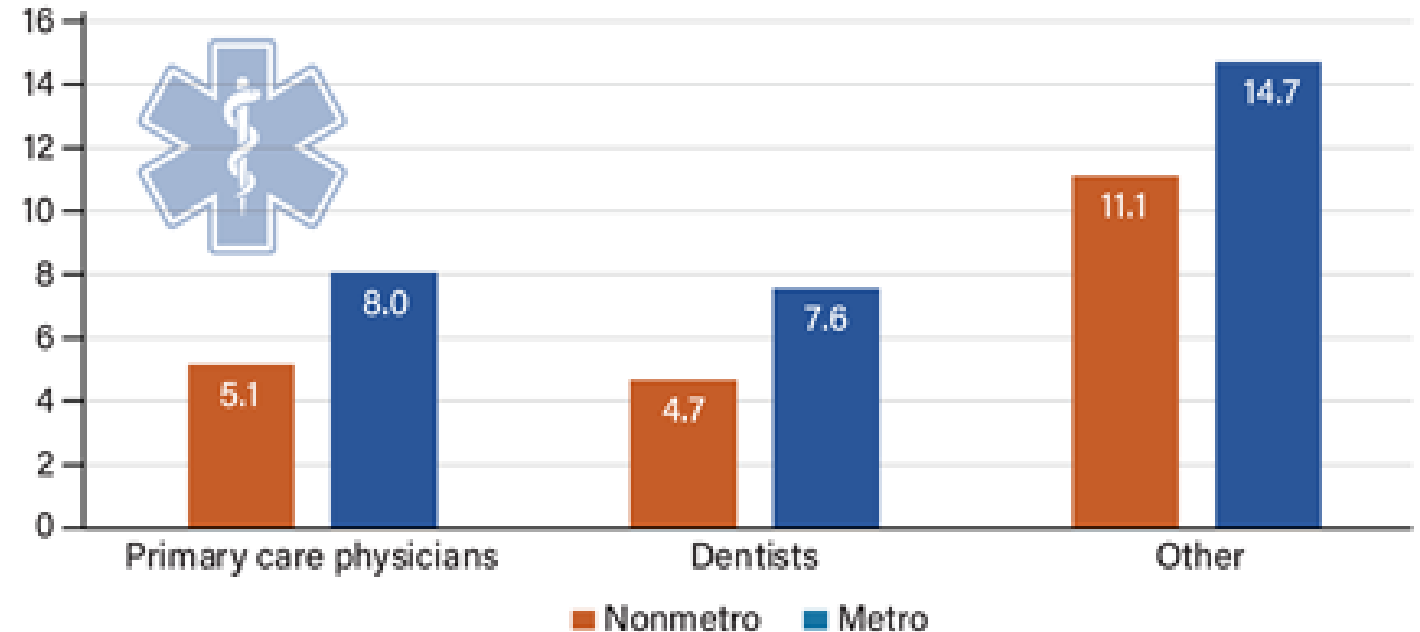
■ Nonmetro ■ Metro

Note: **Metro** and **nonmetro** areas are as classified by the Office of Management and Budget in 2013. **Other** refers to a combined category of healthcare professionals that includes nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and certified nurse midwives.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service analysis of Area Health Resource File data (Health Resources and Services Administration, 2020).

State Management Work Group (SMWG)

The State Management Work Group serves as a consultative body to NASCSP and OCS *in conducting research that informs the development of a variety of practices, tools, resources, and training and technical assistance offerings for state administrators.*

SMWG

OCS ⬌ NASCSP ⬌ CSBG State Offices
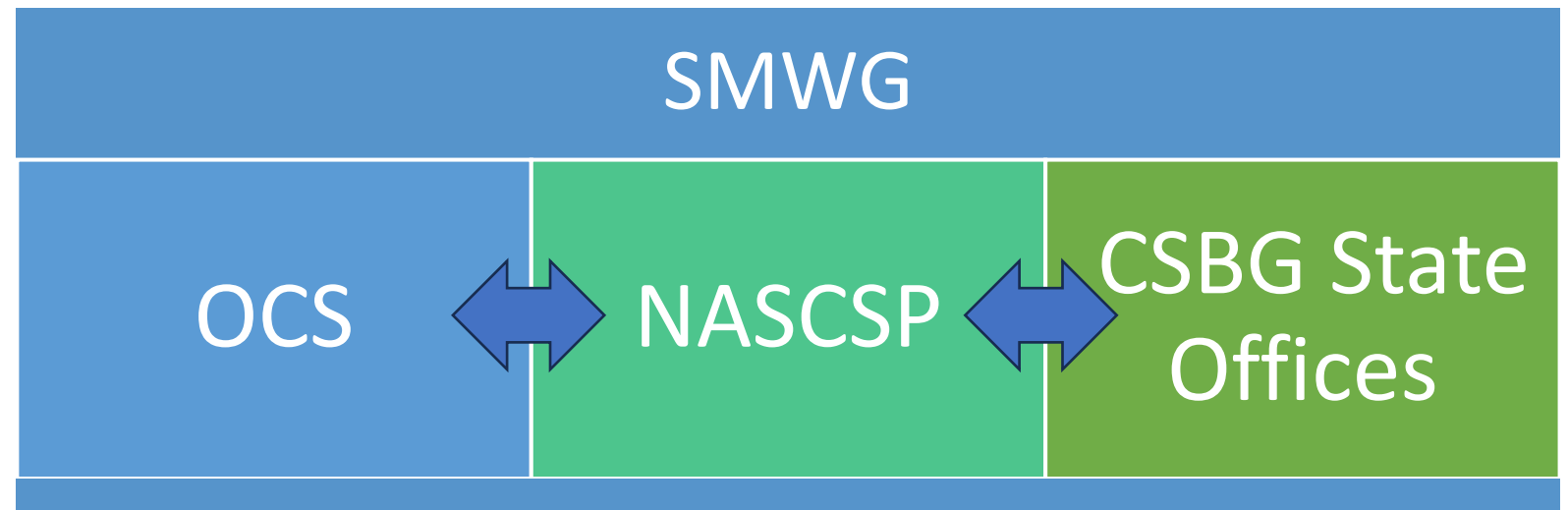
SMWG 2.0 Members

Member	State	RPIC Region
Marc Tremblay	New Hampshire	I
Nikki Battistoni	New York	II
Alicia McDaniel	Delaware	III
Lindsay Whittin	Tennessee	IV
Amy Parker	Minnesota	V
Genevieve Fields	Louisiana	VI
Monice Crawford	Kansas	VII
Karen Quackenbush	Utah	VIII
Christine Shall	Arizona	IX
Elizabeth Rackham	Idaho	X
Beverly Buchanan	Arkansas	NASCSP Board President

SMWG 2.0 Guiding Coalition

A Guiding Coalition is a small group of key stakeholders with the credibility and knowledge to provide information, guidance, and support critical to refining the issue(s) to be addressed by the work group, the goals of the workgroup, and the expected results.

It also serves as an advocate communicating its support for the work group and its improvement recommendations to the CSBG network.

The Guiding Coalition will aid in assuring all effected parties are on the same page over the next three years about the problems to be addressed and the results to be achieved by the SMWG 2.0.

Rural Poverty Challenges

Workforce shortages/finding qualified staff & contractors

Limited community resources (including lack of internet access)

Limited coordination between agencies

Increased administrative burdens and documentation requirements from states (i.e., monthly reimbursement documentation)

High cost of serving remote, often large areas (i.e., travel time of staff to rural communities)

Addressing cultural and language barriers

Board vacancies

Minimal funding based on current funding formulas

Local CAA Challenges to Serving Rural Poor

- Staff capacity (often only one or two-person shop)/difficulty finding qualified staff

- Conflict of interest rules/procurement (where only one vendor)

- Limited local resources (i.e., lack of local hospital, health department, lack of transportation, poor internet access, food deserts, etc.)

- Lack of services or nearby services

- Cultural factors (i.e., unwillingness to seek help)

- Cost/Challenge of managing satellite offices

- Political climate (i.e., housing/zoning laws, DEI, disagreements about what services to offer)

Group Discussion

What do you *wish* states could do to help CAAs better serve rural communities?

What would enable you to do your jobs more easily or effectively in serving these communities?

Report Out

State Support and Flexibilities

- Flexible board member recruitment policies
- Audit report requirements--streamline
- Assist agency with grant applications (templates)
- Client application requirements--streamline
- Use discretionary funds for rural-specific needs like disaster relief and TTA
- Streamline administrative requirements and reporting
- Increase state-level funding and resources for rural agencies
- Rural community workgroups
- Utilize State Association to distribute discretionary funds more quickly to CAAs
- Organizational Standards yearly review—sample vs. full list
- Update state funding formulas to better account for rural factors
- Standardize tools for CAAs (i.e., Organizational Standards, CNA, CAP Plans, Strategic Plans, etc.) –templates, etc.

Help us achieve our goal!

We want to interview you!

If you would like to be involved in this process, please scan the QR code to share your contact information.

Thank You!!

Hugh Poole
CSBG Director

Lauren Johnson
CSBG Program Manager

Please scan here to complete the evaluation for this session!

RESOURCES

- USDA Economic Research Services (ERS) Charrs of Note
- Housing Assistance Council The Persistence of Poverty in Rural America
- Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce Small Towns, Big Opportunities
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- State Management Work Group (SMWG)