What is Rural?  
An Overview of Urban/Rural Geographies and Classifications  
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Geography Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
November 15, 2018
Agenda

• Census Geography
• Urban/Rural Definitions
• County-based Demographics
• 2020 Census
• Questions
Standard Hierarchy of Census Geographic Entities

NATION

REGIONS

DIVISIONS

ZIP Code Tabulation Areas

Urban Areas

Core Based Statistical Areas

School Districts

Urban Growth Areas

Congressional Districts

State Legislative Districts

Voting Districts

Public Use Microdata Areas

Traffic Analysis Zones

Suburban Civil Divisions

County Subdivisions

Places

Census Tracts

Block Groups

Census Blocks
1950: urbanized areas of 50,000+ adopted.
Census Bureau designated Urban Areas

- Delineated decennially

- Two types of urban areas:
  - Urbanized Areas (UAs) of 50,000 or more people
  - Urban Clusters (UCs) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people
### Urban and Rural Population in the United States: 2000 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>222,360,539</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>249,253,271</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanized Area</td>
<td>192,323,824</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>219,922,123</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Cluster</td>
<td>30,036,715</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>29,331,148</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>59,061,367</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>59,492,267</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rural Land Area vs. Rural Population: 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Land Area percent</th>
<th>Population percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Urban/Rural Population: New Mexico

Percent Rural

- 2000: 25.0%
- 2010: 22.6%
Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas

- Defined by U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- County Level
- Metropolitan Statistical Areas
  - associated with at least one urbanized area with 50,000 population
  - adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties
- Micropolitan Statistical Areas
  - associated with at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 population
  - adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties
USDA Rural Classifications

• County Level
  • Rural-Urban Continuum Codes

• Sub-County Level
  • Frontier and Remote Areas Codes
Rural-Urban Continuum Codes

• 2013 (update planned for mid-2023)
• Based on OMB Metropolitan and Micropolitan categories
  • Metropolitan counties by the population size of their metro area
  • Nonmetropolitan counties by degree of urbanization and adjacency to a metro area
  • Subdivided into three metro and six nonmetro categories
  • Every county assigned one of the 9 codes
## Rural-Urban Continuum Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metro</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Counties in metro areas of 1 million population or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Counties in metro areas of 250,000 to 1 million population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Counties in metro areas of fewer than 250,000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Micro</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metro area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metro area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metro area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metro area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metro area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metro area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frontier and Remote Area Codes

- **ESRI zip code area level**
  - Based on different population thresholds
  - Meant to reflect likely access to high order services (level one), low order services (level four), and intermediate order services (levels two and three)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rural areas and urban areas up to 50,000 people that are 60 minutes or more from an urban area of 50,000 or more people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rural areas and urban areas up to 25,000 people that are: 45 minutes or more from an urban area of 25,000-49,999 people; and 60 minutes or more from an urban area of 50,000 or more people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rural areas and urban areas up to 10,000 people that are: 30 minutes or more from an urban area of 10,000-24,999; 45 minutes or more from an urban area of 25,000-49,999 people; and 60 minutes or more from an urban area of 50,000 or more people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rural areas that are: 15 minutes or more from an urban area of 2,500-9,999 people; 30 minutes or more from an urban area of 10,000-24,999 people; 45 minutes or more from an urban area of 25,000-49,999 people; and 60 minutes or more from an urban area of 50,000 or more people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Refined Degree of Urbanisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell level criteria</th>
<th>Residents per sq km</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Rural Dispersed Areas</th>
<th>Mostly Uninhabited Areas</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Suburb &amp; Urban Edge</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Urban Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Density</td>
<td>&gt;1,500</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Urban Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Density</td>
<td>300 – 1,500</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Suburb &amp; Urban Edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Density</td>
<td>50 – 300</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>Rural Dispersed Areas</td>
<td>Mostly Uninhabited Areas</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Suburb &amp; Urban Edge</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Urban Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Density</td>
<td>&lt;50</td>
<td>Mostly Uninhabited Areas</td>
<td>Rural Dispersed Areas</td>
<td>Mostly Uninhabited Areas</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Suburb &amp; Urban Edge</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Urban Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas outside settlements</th>
<th>Settlements by population size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500 – 5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Residents per sq km are categorized into different density levels based on their size.*
How long does it take to download?

- Book (1 mb in size):
  - 200 kbps: 10.4 sec
  - 10 mbps: .3 sec

- Movie (6144 mb in size):
  - 200 kbps: 17 h 47 min
  - 10 mbps: 33 min

- Song (4 mb in size):
  - 200 kbps: 41.7 sec
  - 10 mbps: 1.3 sec
What is “rural?” What characterizes “rurality?”

• Low population density
• Small numbers of people
• Low levels of urbanization/urban population
• Distance from/proximity to [larger] urban centers
• Isolation and remoteness

Rural often is defined as the residual. This could be “not urban” or “not metropolitan” in a dichotomous classification, or what remains after all other categories in a multi-category classification have been defined.
Rural New Mexico

- **Completely Rural**: 100% of population lives in areas that have lower population density with <1,000 people per square mile (Harding County)
- **Mostly Rural**: 50.1% to 99.9% of the population lives in areas with lower population density (Taos County)
- **Rural/Urban**: Counties with populations < 50,000 people that have >50% of people in higher population density (Los Alamos County)
- **Mostly Urban**: Counties with Populations > 50,000 people that have >50% of people in higher population density (San Juan County)
To search for tables and other files in American FactFinder:

1. Enter search terms and an optional geography and click GO

   - topic or table name
   - state, county or place (optional)
   - topics
   - race/ancestry
   - industries
   - occupations

   -- or --

   Select from Topics, Race and Ethnic Groups, Industry Codes, EEO Occupation Codes.
   - these are added to "Your Selections"
   - the Search Results are updated

2. Next, select Geographies (states, counties, cities, towns, etc.)
   - these are added to "Your Selections"
   - the Search Results are updated

3. Select one or more Search Results and click View
### Table Viewer

#### AGE AND SEX

2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table View**

**Actions:**
- Modify Table
- Add/Remove Geographies
- Bookmark/Save
- Print
- Download
- Create a Map

**Tell us what you think. Provide feedback to help make American Community Survey data more useful for you.**

Although the American Community Survey (ACS) produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates, it is the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program that produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities and towns and estimates of housing units for states and counties.

#### Versions of this table are available for the following years:

- 2016
- 2015
- 2014
- 2013
- 2012
- 2011
- 2010
- 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>New Mexico</th>
<th>Bernalillo County, New Mexico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>310,050,192</td>
<td>156,765,322</td>
<td>+61,427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### AGE

- **Under 5 years:**
  - 6.2% (+0.1)
  - 5.6% (+0.1)
  - 6.0% (+0.1)
  - 6.4% (+0.1)

- **5 to 9 years:**
  - 6.4% (+0.1)
  - 6.7% (+0.1)
  - 6.2% (+0.1)
  - 6.9% (+0.1)

- **10 to 14 years:**
  - 6.0% (+0.1)
  - 6.7% (+0.1)
  - 8.3% (+0.1)
  - 6.8% (+0.1)

- **15 to 19 years:**
  - 6.7% (+0.1)
  - 5.9% (+0.1)
  - 6.4% (+0.1)
  - 6.6% (+0.1)

- **20 to 24 years:**
  - 7.1% (+0.1)
  - 7.4% (+0.1)
  - 6.8% (+0.1)
  - 7.2% (+0.1)

- **25 to 29 years:**
  - 6.9% (+0.1)
  - 7.1% (+0.1)
  - 6.7% (+0.1)
  - 6.7% (+0.1)

- **30 to 34 years:**
  - 6.7% (+0.1)
  - 6.9% (+0.1)
  - 6.6% (+0.1)
  - 6.6% (+0.1)

- **35 to 39 years:**
  - 6.3% (+0.1)
  - 6.4% (+0.1)
  - 6.2% (+0.1)
  - 6.0% (+0.1)

- **40 to 44 years:**
  - 6.4% (+0.1)
  - 6.5% (+0.1)
  - 6.1% (+0.1)
  - 6.0% (+0.1)

- **45 to 49 years:**
  - 6.5% (+0.1)
  - 6.7% (+0.1)
  - 5.6% (+0.1)
  - 5.9% (+0.1)

- **50 to 54 years:**
  - 7.0% (+0.1)
  - 7.0% (+0.1)
  - 7.0% (+0.1)
  - 6.7% (+0.1)

- **55 to 59 years:**
  - 6.7% (+0.1)
  - 6.8% (+0.1)
  - 8.8% (+0.1)
  - 6.7% (+0.1)

- **60 to 64 years:**
  - 5.9% (+0.1)
  - 5.7% (+0.1)
  - 6.0% (+0.1)
  - 6.2% (+0.1)

- **65 to 69 years:**
  - 4.6% (+0.1)
  - 4.6% (+0.1)
  - 5.0% (+0.1)
  - 5.2% (+0.1)

- **70 to 74 years:**
  - 3.5% (+0.1)
  - 3.2% (+0.1)
  - 3.7% (+0.1)
  - 3.7% (+0.1)

- **75 to 79 years:**
  - 2.5% (+0.1)
  - 2.2% (+0.1)
  - 2.7% (+0.1)
  - 2.7% (+0.1)
Median Age

- U.S.
- New Mexico
- Completely Rural
- Mostly Rural
- Rural/Urban
- Mostly Urban
Educational Attainment: HS Degree
Educational Attainment: BS Degree

- U.S.: 30.0
- New Mexico: 25.0
- Completely Rural: 16.0
- Mostly Rural: 22.0
- Rural/Urban: 24.0
- Mostly Urban: 23.0
Owner Occupied Housing Units

U.S. New Mexico Completely Rural Mostly Rural Rural/Urban Mostly Urban

United States Census Bureau
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov
Monthly Housing Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Housing Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely Rural</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Rural</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/Urban</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Urban</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sante Fe County, New Mexico

County Median Income: $55,370

- Rural
  - $40,000 - $49,999
  - $50,000 - $59,999
  - $60,000 - $69,999
  - More than $70,000

- Urban
  - Less than $40,000
  - $40,000 - $49,999
  - $50,000 - $59,999
  - $60,000 - $69,999
  - More than $70,000

Miles

0 5 10 20
2020 Urban Areas and Future

• 2020 Urban Areas Delineation Criteria

• How to define a Rural Statistical Area?
Questions? Comments?

Contact information:

Jennifer Zanoni
301-763-5647
Jennifer.zanoni@census.gov
• **American Fact Finder**
  • [https://factfinder.census.gov/](https://factfinder.census.gov/)

• **Am I Rural tool**
  • [https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural](https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural)