What is Rural America?

Urban and Rural Population Growth 1790-2009

Population per Square Mile

Average U.S. Density: 86.9 individuals per square mile

Children in Poverty

The worst child poverty occurs in 14 states within the contiguous United States. Rates tend to be highest in Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, along the Mexican border and in states with many American Indian reservations. Four counties in South Dakota, five in Mississippi, two in Kentucky, one in Louisiana and one in North Dakota have child poverty rates of 50 percent or more. Ziebach County, South Dakota, has the highest rate of child poverty at 67 percent.

Average Population Per Square Mile

- 500 or more
- 160 to 2999
- 86.9 to 1559
- 40 to 86.8
- 10 to 39.9
- Less than 10

Rural America

It is not limited to a single geographic region or a single group of people. These maps and charts bring some of the statistics to life.

Urban and Rural America

Statistics in Percentages

- High school diploma or equivalent: 84%, 85%
- Bachelor's degree: 39%, 42%
- Advanced degree: 11%, 12%

Median Age

- 39 years old
- Median age

Speak a language other than English at home

- 5%

Foreignborn

- 4%

Married couples

- 66%

Veterans

- 5%

Work outside county of residence

- 3%

Have a disability

- 2%

Live in mobile homes

- 2%

Spend 30 percent or more of income on rent and utilities

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The Poorest of the Poor in Rural Education

Research suggests that poverty is the biggest threat to academic achievement. With that in mind, the Rural School and Community Trust set out to identify the poorest rural school districts in every state. The group used five indicators to point toward what they termed “concentrated poverty.” Those indicators are: number of students living in the districts, percentage of those students living in poverty, percentage of students of color, educational spending per student, and high school graduation rate. These 13 states—forming a solid band across the southern United States, from California to North Carolina—had the most concentrated poverty in rural areas.

Students in Rural Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0.218,311</th>
<th>1,119,974</th>
<th>1,071,729</th>
<th>84,640</th>
<th>199,441</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.218,311</td>
<td>1,119,974</td>
<td>1,071,729</td>
<td>84,640</td>
<td>199,441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poverty in Rural Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau expects the U.S. population of minority children to be 62 percent, up from 44 percent in 2008. Thirty-nine percent are projected to be Hispanic, up from 22 percent in 2008.

These figures are for the 10 percent of poorest rural school districts within each state, not the state as a whole.