Rural Populations: Issues and Concerns for Returning Veterans

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What I Will Discuss Today

• *How large* is the rural population, and where is it concentrated?

• How do people *make a living* in rural America?

• How *well off* are rural Americans?
How Does Changing Demographic and Socioeconomic Structure Relate to Veteran’s Needs?

- Can rural **economies** provide adequate economic opportunities for veterans?
- Do rural **communities** have sufficient capacity to provide social, health, and other forms of support for veterans?
Rural Population

• How many rural Americans?
  – Growing?
    • Where/where not?
  – Ethnic composition
## Rural Population Size & Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (000)</td>
<td>54,388</td>
<td>56,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pct. of U.S.</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural = nonmetropolitan

U.S. Census of Population
Metro and nonmetro population change, 1950-2002

- Turnaround
- Reversal
- Rebound
Nonmetro population change, 1990-2000

Source: Bureau of the Census.
# Changing Ethnic Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990 #</th>
<th>1990 %</th>
<th>2000 #</th>
<th>2000 %</th>
<th>1990-’00 % CHG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>44 M</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>48M</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4.4 M</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.9M</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am Ind</td>
<td>.9M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.9 M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2M</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>70.4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>.4M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.8M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51 M</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56 M</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hispanic Population Growth

Source: USDA/Economic Research Service
II. Making a Living

• What kinds of jobs are available?
• What kinds of jobs are growing; which are declining?
• How well paying and secure are rural jobs?
Industrial Composition of Rural Economy

![Bar chart showing industrial composition of rural economy with categories: agr, mine, mfg, prod serv, con serv, govt. The chart indicates that the largest proportion is in con serv, followed by mfg and then agr, mine, prod serv, and govt.](image-url)
Industrial Restructuring, 1970-2000

BEA earnings data
Metro-Nonmetro Gap in Earnings per Nonfarm Job, 1990-2002

BEA data
Unemployment in Urban & Rural Areas

![Graph showing unemployment rates over years for Metro and nonmetro regions]
III. How Well Off are Rural Persons & Families?

- Poverty
  - How much?
  - Where?
  - Who is most likely to be poor?
- Rural poverty is often hard to see
Poverty rates by residence, 1959-2002

2002 Poverty rates - Nonmetro 14.2%
    Metro 11.6%

2004
Metro  12.3
Nonmet 14.9
Gap     2.6

Note: Metro status of some counties changed in 1984 and 1994. Metro and nonmetro rates are imputed for 1960-68.

Who is Most likely to be poor?
Poverty rates for select groups

Poverty rates by family type, 2002
People living in female-headed families have highest poverty rates

Poverty rates by race and ethnicity, 2002
Nonmetro Blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics have highest poverty rates

Note: Percent of people in families, either primary or related subfamily, who are poor.

Note: Hispanic is defined as anyone who is Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. All Race categories exclude Hispanics. Native Americans includes American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts. White, Black, and Native American categories exclude persons who respond with multiple races.
Where is rural poverty most likely?
Poverty rates by region and area, 2001

Metro-nonmetro differences are the largest in the South and West

Note: Metro and nonmetro definitions are based on the June 1993 Metropolitan area classification.
Persistent Poverty Counties

Persistent poverty counties, 1970-2000

Indian Land
Appalachia
Rio Grande Valley
Mid South
Delta

Persistent poverty counties—20 percent or more residents were poor as measured by each of the last four censuses, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA
Rural poverty is often hard to see
Lane County Oregon
[Featured in Aug. 12 NYT article]

Beautiful, but...
• urban--rural differences
  • **Urban = Eugene**
    • Prosperous univ. town
    • Mdn income = $48,527
    • Family poverty **8.7%**
  • **Rural = Oakridge**
    • Deindustrialized
    • High unemployment
    • Mdn income = $33,017
    • Family poverty **12.2%**
    • 700 families use food pantry
    • 22% of houses are single wide trailers
Veterans Will Encounter New Opportunities & Persistent Disadvantages

• New Opportunities
  – Recreation-based economies
  – Retirement destinations
  – Commuter areas
  – Alternative energy [Bio fuels, wind power, etc.]

• Persistent Disadvantage
  – Areas
    • Delta, Appalachia, Indian Land, Rio Grande Valley
  – Population groups
    • Racial and ethnic minorities
    • Female headed families
Thank you!

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Population Loss Counties
Low Employment Counties

Low-employment counties, 2000

Low-employment counties—less than 95 percent of residents 21-64 years old were employed in 2000. Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.
Low Education Counties

Low-education counties, 2000

Low-education counties—25 percent or more of residents 25-64 years old had neither a high school diploma nor GED in 2000.

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.
Earnings per Job Within Industries