

STEMconnector

OVERLOOKED TALENT POOLS DATA SERIES

RURAL RESIDENTS & COMMUNITIES IN STEM

Researchers and policy officials employ many definitions to distinguish rural from urban areas, which often leads to unnecessary confusion and unwanted mismatches in program eligibility. However, the existence of multiple rural definitions reflects the reality that rural and urban are multidimensional concepts.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2019

As of 2018, an estimated **19.3%** of the total population live in rural areas.

Of those living in rural areas **17.2%** live below the poverty level compared to the national average of **14.6%**.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2017

Broadband Internet access has steadily increased across the U.S., but rural residents lag behind.



In 2019, only **63%** of rural Americans reported having Broadband Internet access at home, compared to **75%** and **79%** of urban and suburban residents, respectively.

Pew Research Center, 2019

Rural Students in K-12 STEM



Rural students graduate high school at **8% above** the national average of 80%.

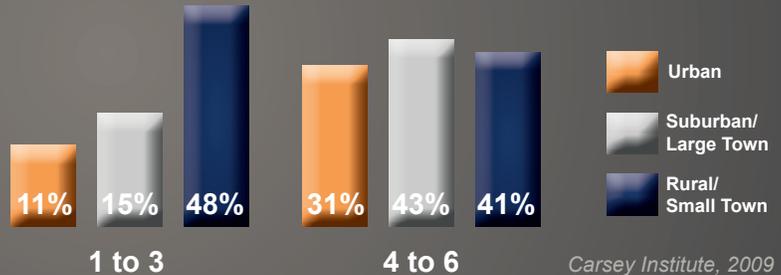
National Center for Education Statistics, 2015



Rural students **perform near or above** the national average in math and science.

Despite positive scores and graduation rates, rural students do **NOT** have access to a full range of the math courses at their schools.

Proportionate student access to advanced mathematics courses, by geography and number of advanced courses



Rural Postsecondary Students



33% of the rural population lives in a **higher education desert** compared to an average of **16%** nationally.

Urban Institute, 2018

Many rural students do not have access to postsecondary institutions close to their home.

A **higher education desert** is defined as either having no colleges or universities within 25 miles or having access to a single community college as the only broad-access public institution within 25 miles.

Urban Institute, 2018

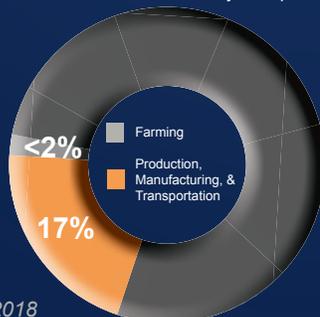
STEM Workforce in Rural Communities

While rural areas are often associated with agriculture, **less than 2%** of rural workers are employed in farming.

Production, Manufacturing and Transportation employ the most with **17%**.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2018

Labor force in rural areas by occupation



Rural areas have **higher** rates of employment in manufacturing and farming than urban areas.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2018

To download the full data story, visit www.STEMconnector.com