Certification Policy Branch
SNAP Program Development Division
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

RE: Proposed Rule: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Requirements for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents RIN 0584-AE57

Dear Certification Policy Branch:

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy takes this opportunity to comment in strong opposition to the USDA's Proposed Rulemaking on SNAP requirements and services for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). The proposed changes would cause serious harm to West Virginians in at least 28 counties, many of whom face significant barriers to steady, well-paying employment and live in DOL-designated Labor Surplus Areas.

SNAP IN WEST VIRGINIA

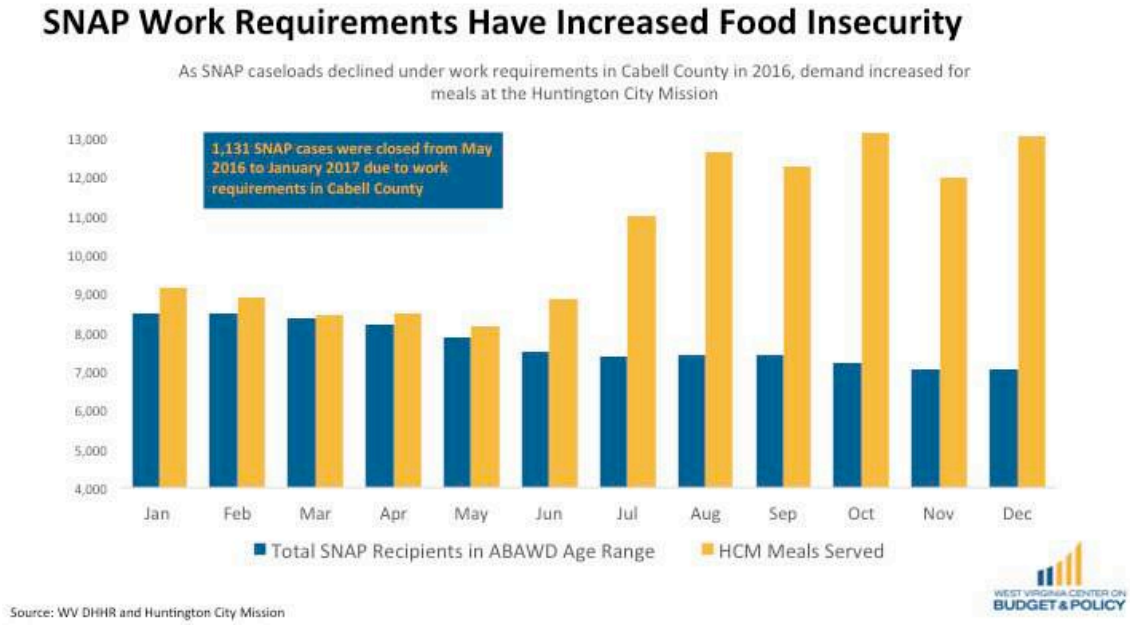
SNAP plays a critical role for food security in West Virginia, where 14.6 percent of the population is food insecure.[i] In Fiscal Year 2017, SNAP reached 19 percent of the population, or 340,000 residents.[ii] Children who receive SNAP in early childhood see improved high school graduation rates, adult earnings, and adult health.[iii]

The program is also vital to provide urgent food assistance in times of economic problems or natural disasters. The flexibility that states are currently given to implement waivers, including some of the criteria that states can use to provide waivers and the use of banked exemptions, is critical in these times. The proposed rule would eliminate much of this flexibility and harm the abilities of states to respond to local need in times of economic downturn or natural disaster.[iii]

SNAP also lifts millions of families out of poverty, including 74,000 West Virginians. [ii] The food security offered by SNAP is critical, as West Virginia has not fully recovered from the recession. West Virginia was one of only two states to see an increase in the poverty rate from 2016 to 2017, with 19.1 percent of residents living below the poverty rate. Poverty is highest (32.9 percent) among West Virginians who did not graduate from high school, a population who is very likely to be affected by the USDA proposal. [iii]

The SNAP program relieves pressure on overwhelmed food banks, pantries, and other emergency food providers across the nation and in West Virginia. For every meal provided by the Feeding America network of foodbanks, SNAP provides twelve meals.[iv] The charitable and food bank sector simply would not be able to make up the loss of SNAP meals that would occur under the USDA proposed rule. In 2016 and 2017, West Virginia implemented a pilot program in nine counties to place similar work and reporting requirements back on the ABAWD population, and food pantries and soup kitchens saw drastic increases in need as the SNAP

caseload declined. In Cabell County, one of the nine counties who was part of the pilot program, the Huntington City Mission saw a drastic increase in need when 1,131 individuals were removed from SNAP due to the time limits and work reporting requirements. The mission was forced to cut back to serving two hot meals per day rather than three.[v]



Counties in West Virginia That Would be Affected By Proposed Rule

West Virginia currently has 37 counties who are waived from the ABAWD work and reporting requirements. If implemented, the changes in the proposed rule would mean that 28 of our currently-waived counties would lose their waivers in October 2019 due to their overall unemployment rate. 22 of these counties are designed as labor-surplus areas by the Department of Labor, meaning that they have unemployment rates that are more than 20 percent higher than the national average.

The following 28 counties would lose their waiver status according to unemployment data:

Barbour
Boone
Brooke
Fayette
Gilmer
Grant
Hancock
Hardy
Jackson
Lewis

Lincoln
Marshall
Mason
Mercer
Mineral
Nicholas
Pleasants
Pocahontas
Raleigh
Randolph
Ritchie
Summers
Tyler
Upshur
Wayne
Webster
Wetzel
Wood

	No Waivers Under Current Policy (18 total)	**28 Counties Losing Waiver**	**US Averages**
2017 Average Unemployment	6.8	7.4	4.4
January 2019 Avg Unemployment	5.3	6.7	4.0
2017 Poverty Rate-All Ages	16.1	19.0	13.4
2017 Poverty Rate-Under 18	21.5	26.4	18.4
2017 Median Household Income	$47,641	$40,918	$60,336

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and American Community Survey

Data from the Bureau for Labor Statistics and American Community Survey shows that the average unemployment rates in the counties who would lose their waiver is 6.7 percent as of January 2019, which is significantly higher than the US average. The counties affected also experience high levels of overall poverty and a median household income far below the national average. Additionally, the counties affected are largely rural, and residents of these counties face significant barriers in access to public transportation, job training, and phone and internet access.

Barriers Faced by Affected Populations

Volatile work hours and unstable employment are particularly common features of the jobs that employ working-class people who rely on SNAP.[vi] One indicator of this is the rate of involuntary part-time employment in the industries most likely to employee SNAP recipients (including home health aides, child care workers, retail salespersons, cooks, waiters, food preppers, maintenance workers, and janitors). National research shows that the rate of involuntary part-time employment is very high in retail trade and leisure and hospitality work.[vi] In 2018, West Virginia had the second highest labor underutilization rate in the country at 9.8 percent.[vii] This includes all unemployed workers and adds in involuntary part-time workers and those who are marginally attached to work.

In addition to providing unstable and insufficient work hours, the jobs most often available to working-class people who are likely to rely on SNAP due to low incomes also share other common characteristics that affect workers' ability to meet work and reporting requirements. 57 percent of private-sector workers in the bottom fourth of wage distribution lack access to paid sick leave. Nearly 100 percent lack access to paid family leave, and 20 percent lack access even to unpaid family leave. Two-thirds lack access to health care benefits.[vi]

Low-wage and working-class jobs are more likely to have schedules set by the employer with no possibility for change, unpredictable and irregular work, unpleasant or potentially dangerous work conditions, and a hostile/discriminatory work environment. [vi]

An Urban Institute study found that over half of SNAP recipients who fall short of work hours to satisfy a work requirement in at least one month of the year do work enough to satisfy the requirement in other months. In the analysis of work requirement provisions in the 2018 House Farm Bill, researchers found that 9.8 million SNAP participants nationwide would be subject to the work requirement who do not work enough to meet it in at least one month during the year. Over half of those subject to the work reporting requirements, 5.1 million, do meet the requirement in at least one other month of the year but would still be at risk of losing SNAP benefits.[viii] This speaks to the volatility of low-wage jobs generally held by those who rely on SNAP and the importance of SNAP in sustaining food security during times of job and scheduling uncertainty.

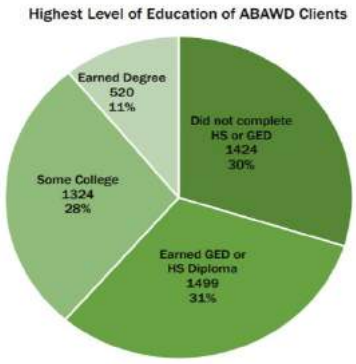
The Ohio Association of Foodbanks conducted a two year study of the characteristics of the ABAWD population with whom they work, resulting in data for nearly 5,000 ABAWD clients. Several of their findings highlight the barriers faced by this population.[ix]

-Nearly 36 percent of all respondents report having a felony conviction. This is a significant barrier to someone who is applying for a job.

-40 percent of respondents said that they lacked access to reliable transportation. Only 40 percent of clients reporting having a valid driver's license, and 18.7 percent had car insurance.

-1 in 3 respondents self-responded that they had a mental or physical limitation or barrier.

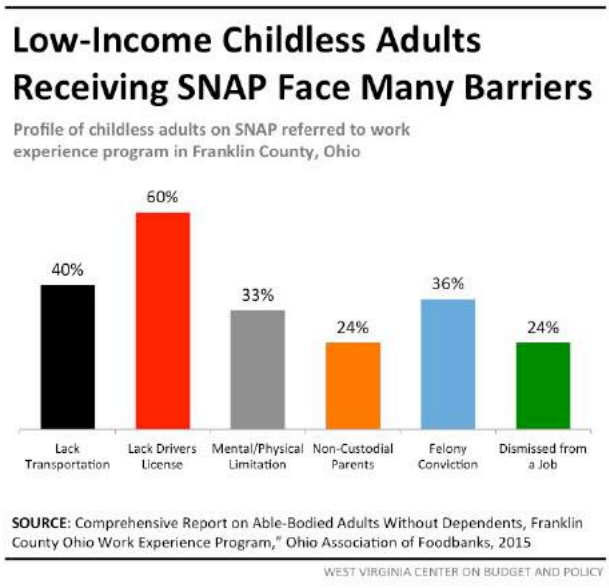
-29.5 percent of respondents did not complete high school or have a GED.



Source: Ohio Association of Food Banks

-53.8 percent of respondents did not have a current resume.

-Although 24 percent of respondents reported having been fired or dismissed from a job, 78.3 percent had never received unemployment compensation, which could qualify them for an exemption.



The Ohio Association of Food Banks study also looked at ABAWD placement and compliance in volunteer or job-training programs. Though Franklin County is much less rural than West Virginia counties, there were still a number of barriers for this population to successfully complete volunteer or job-training hours. Some barriers included host locations not being easily accessible by public transportation, host sites requiring a college education, and host sites refusing clients who had felony convictions. They note that the same is true for workforce

development programs, where many clients do not meet minimum education requirements or struggle to pass entrance exams.[ix]

These issues with volunteer and job-training compliance would only be more exacerbated in the rural West Virginia counties who would lose waivers under the USDA proposed rule. This population faces unique barriers to successfully finding employment, and setting a general unemployment floor to determine SNAP waivers ignores the realities faced by this group.

Snap Pilot in West Virginia

West Virginia conducted a nine-county pilot program in 2016 and 2017 to voluntarily give up ABAWD waivers. The nine counties had an average unemployment rate of 5.5 percent in 2015 when the state's Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) made the decision to re-implement ABAWD work reporting requirements in this counties. By 2017, the average unemployment rate in the nine counties was 6.7 percent and 15.6 percent of residents lived in poverty.

A report from the West Virginia DHHR stated, "Our best data does not indicate that the program has had a significant impact on employment figures for the ABAWD population in the 9 issuance-limited counties". The agency also noted that they made 13,984 referrals to the SNAP E&T program during calendar year 2016. Of these, 259 gained employment while participating in the program. This indicates a success rate of 1.8 percent.

Health & Human Resources

ABAWD FAQs

Has the program been a success in the 9 pilot counties?

Our best data does not indicate that the program has had a significant impact on employment figures for the ABAWD population in the 9 issuance-limited counties.

While we have reduced the SNAP caseload by approximately 5,417 across the nine counties since the ABAWD restrictions were put in place, we do not see a clear increase in the number of ABAWDs maintaining benefits due to meeting the work requirements during that same time frame. The percentage of working ABAWDs proportional to the total SNAP population has held steady since the work requirements were put into place.

We made approximately 13,984 referrals to the SNAP E&T program during calendar year 2016. Of these, 259 gained employment while participating in the program.

Do you need this legislation to implement the ABAWD restrictions statewide?

We do not need legislation to implement ABAWD work requirements statewide. The current waiver of ABAWD requirements for 46 of WV's 55 counties is part of the Bureau's annual applications to USDA-FNS. With FNS approval, the waiver can be relaxed independent of any state legislation.

What happens to the SNAP dollars saved through removing these ABAWDs from the SNAP rolls?

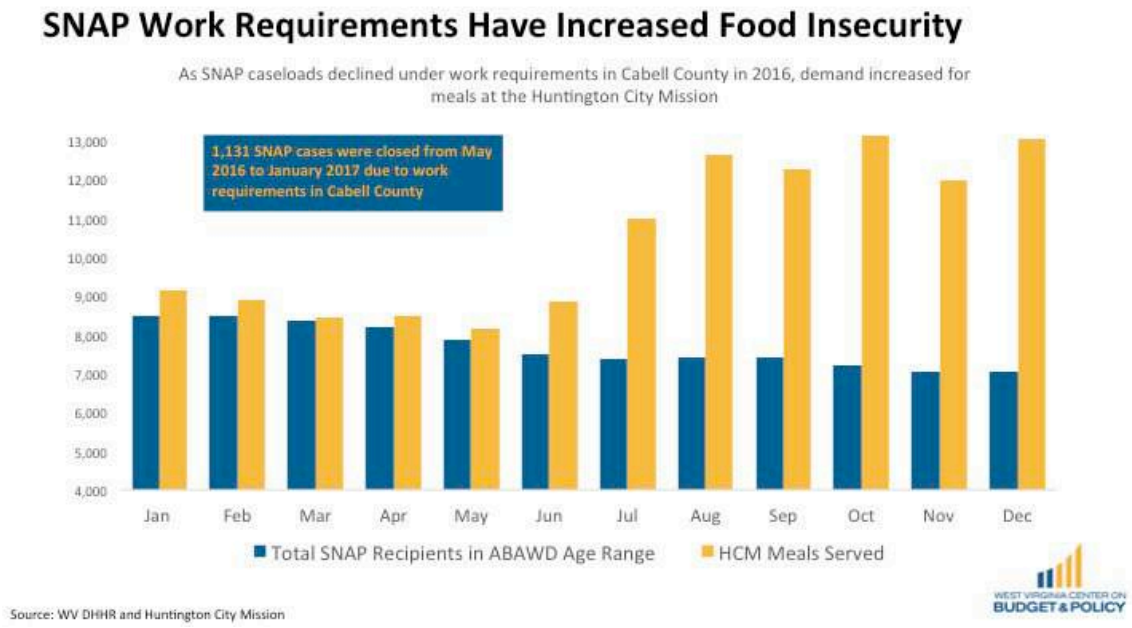
SNAP benefit payments to WV citizens are reimbursed by the Federal Government to WV's Electronic Benefits Transfer vendor (currently JP Morgan Chase). Benefits not paid out do not go into a pool that can be used for other cases or other purposes; these are simply Federal dollars that will no longer be circulating in the WV economy.

What is the estimated dollar amount of SNAP benefits that would be withheld due to the implementation of ABAWD work requirements statewide?

Based on our estimate of 7,310 non-exempt ABAWDs statewide and an average benefit amount of $203.20, the estimated impact would be $17,824,704.00 fewer federal SNAP dollars circulating in WV's economy.

pg. 1 of 1 03/02/2017rkn

An additional finding in the nine-county pilot was tied to the increase of need at charitable organizations in the counties who saw loss of SNAP benefits. As cited earlier, 1,131 residents of the county lost SNAP benefits due to the elimination of the waiver, and the Huntington City Mission saw a significant increase of up to 30 percent in emergency food need. The Mission was forced to cut back on hot meals from serving three meals a day to two meals.



Over 5,400 West Virginians lost SNAP coverage in the nine county pilot in 2016, and the WV DHHR estimates that an additional 7,310 people would lose coverage if the waivers were lifted in the remaining counties across the state.

The fact that this proposal did not budge unemployment in the nine-county pilot makes it very concerning to imagine it being implemented in an additional 28 counties who, by all indicators, are economically worse off. Additionally, West Virginia is one of only two states who saw an overall increase in poverty in 2018.

	First 9 Counties in Pilot to Lose Waiver	**28 Counties That Would Lose Waiver**	**US Averages**
2017 Average Unemployment	6.7	7.4	4.4
January 2019 Avg Unemployment	5.0	6.7	4.0
2017 Poverty Rate-All Ages	15.6	19.0	13.4

2017 Poverty Rate-Under 18	18.96	26.4	18.4
2017 Median Household Income	$51,575	$40,918	$60,336

Transportation Issues

Amenities Accessible by Public Transportation	MSA Central City (Urban)	MSA Not Central City (Suburban)	Outside MSA (Rural)
Grocery store	73%	47%	27%
Personal services	71%	45%	25%
Retail shopping	74%	46%	25%
Entertainment	73%	46%	24%
Health Care Services	71%	44%	26%
Personal Banking	71%	44%	26%
Household uses public transportation	31%	15%	4%

Source: 2013 American Housing Survey & SURTC.ORG[x]

Transportation is a significant barrier to employment, especially for those who live in rural areas or areas without adequate public transportation. Thirteen of the 28 counties who would lose waivers under the USDA proposed rule are designated as rural by the US Census Bureau.[xi] Only one in four rural residents has access to a grocery store, health care services, or other necessities via public transportation. And while 20 percent of Americans live in rural areas, the federal government only allocates about 11 percent of transportation funding and grants to rural areas.[x]

The limitations are no different in West Virginia. Tri-River Transit is the only public transit available for Lincoln, Logan, and Boone Counties, two of which (Boone and Lincoln) would lose waivers under the proposed rule. The agency provides nine regular routes, and will deviate from those routes as far as ¾ of a mile with 24 hours advanced notice. This includes only two towns in Boone County, with vast swaths of the county left uncovered, even with the ¾ of a mile route deviation allowances. Further, Tri-River Transit only operates Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 7:55 pm, with no coverage on weekends.[xii] Many jobs that low-wage workers often have- retail, food service, maintenance- require off-shift work with little say from the employee as to scheduled hours.

Ten of the 28 counties who would lose waivers under the proposed rule have no public transportation at all in the county. This includes Brooke, Fayette, Lewis, Mason, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Ritchie, Summers, Tyler, and Wetzel.[xiii] In West Virginia, SNAP recipients participating in Employment and Training activities are eligible for a $25 per month maximum

transportation reimbursement.[xiv] Without low-cost public transportation in these ten counties, a SNAP E&T participant would have little opportunity to purchase a personal vehicle, utilize a cab service, or a pay a family member or friend to take him or her to work, assuming those options are even available to the individual. This remains an issue in the remaining 18 counties as well, as public transportation was shown to have limited availability on evenings and weekends, when low-wage workers are often scheduled.

SNAP Employment and Training

Participation in SNAP Employment and Training is often difficult, for various reasons highlighted in the Ohio Food Banks study. Additionally, the transportation reimbursement is wholly inadequate to an individual who must work or volunteer a minimum 20 hours per week.

The state will face additional barriers implementing E&T programs in the counties who would be affected by the USDA proposed rule. The WV Department of Health and Human Resources estimated that it would cost an additional $2 million to implement the E&T program statewide. The current federal match for SNAP E&T costs is 100 percent up to $800,000 and then 50 percent for costs above $800,000. [xv] This would represent a major expansion with large costs to the state for a program that showed very little return on investment in the nine county pilot in 2016. Of 13,984 referrals to the SNAP E&T program, only 259 people gained employment.

That money could be better spent building the infrastructure needed to help overcome the barriers t employment that these populations face: improving access to child care and public transportation, making health care and education more affordable, and improving phone and broadband access in rural parts of the state.

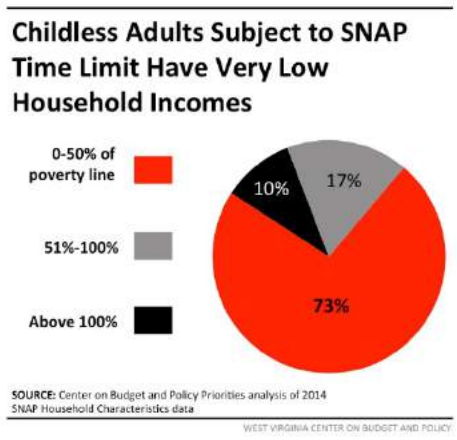
Unemployment and Educational Attainment

Unemployment rates for workers over the age of 25 with just a high school diploma are nearly double the rates for workers with a bachelor's degree or more. West Virginia has one of the lowest educational attainment rates in the country, with just 19.9 percent of residents having a bachelor's degree or more. [xvi] This is another example of why a general unemployment rate does not tell us much about the population who would be affected by ABAWD work and reporting requirements. Labor market outcomes are clearly affected by barriers that persist even during times of comparative labor market health.

Conclusion

A growing body of research shows that vulnerable populations must have basic health and food security needs met in order to maintain steady employment- not the other way around. Years of experience, including in the nine county pilot here in West Virginia, have shown us that simply taking food assistance away from vulnerable populations does nothing to help them get back into the workforce. This proposal does not address the true barriers that are faced by the population who would be affected by this rule. Transportation, education, criminal history, mental and physical limitations, and lack of true training opportunities would all persist. Taking food away from people facing these barriers is only likely to make them worse off and less likely to engage in workforce participation.

The population subject to this proposal already faces very low household incomes and significant barriers to steady, well-paying jobs. The chart below showing an analysis of SNAP Household Characteristics data shows that nearly ¾ of childless adults subject to the SNAP time limit live in households at 0- 50 percent of the poverty line. Their barriers to employment go beyond those of the general population who can be lumped in with the general unemployment rate.



If implemented, this proposal would harm individuals, communities, and the state and national economy. Rural economies rely on the federal dollars that SNAP brings into their communities, and struggling individuals are lifted out of poverty around the country by the food security provided by SNAP. Instead of making life harder for a population that is already facing

challenges, federal agencies should address the root causes of chronic unemployment and lack of opportunity.

---

[i] Feeding America: Map the Meal Gap 2018 https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/research/map-the-meal-gap/2016/overall/WV_AllCounties_CDs_MMG_2016.pdf SEE APPENDIX A

[ii] CBPP: West Virginia Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Fact Sheet https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_west_virginia.pdf SEE APPENDIX B

[iii] http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/frac-facts-snap-strengths.pdf SEE APPENDIX C

[iv] Feeding America Statement April 12, 2018 https://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/press-room/farm-bill-statement SEE APPENDIX D

[v] Budget cuts force meal cuts at City Mission https://www.wsaz.com/content/news/Budget-constraints-lead-to-new-meal-schedule-at-Huntington-City-Mission-448043903.html SEE APPENDIX E

[vi] EPI: Why punitive work-hours tests in SNAP and Medicaid… https://www.epi.org/files/pdf/151107.pdf SEE APPENDIX F

[vii] BLS: Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for States https://www.bls.gov/lau/stalt.htm SEE APPENDIX G

[viii] Urban Institute: Assessing Changes to SNAP Work Requirements https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98455/assessing_changes_to_snap_work_requirements_in_the_2018_farm_bill_3.pdf SEE APPENDIX H

[ix] ABAWD Report 2014-2015 http://admin.ohiofoodbanks.org/uploads/news/ABAWD_Report_2014-2015-v3.pdf SEE APPENDIX I

[x] 2015 Rural Transit Factbook https://www.surtc.org/transitfactbook/downloads/2015-rural-transit-fact-book.pdf#page=10 SEE APPENDIX J

[xi] State of Rural WV https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/wvcbp/pages/2522/attachments/original/1540309560/State_of_Rural_WV_.pdf?1540309560 SEE APPENDIX K

[xii] Lincoln County Public Transportation https://transportation.wv.gov/publictransit/Documents/2014%20Providers%20Directory/Lincoln%20County-2014.pdf SEE APPENDIX L

[xiii] https://transportation.wv.gov/publictransit/Pages/MapofCountieswithTransitServices.aspx SEE APPENDIX M

[xiv] SNAP E&T Activities https://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/policy/imm/new_manual/immanual/manual_pdf_files/chapter_25/ch25_3.pdf SEE APPENDIX N

[xv] ABAWD briefing https://wvpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/5/Legislative-ABAWD-Briefing-03-02-2017rkn.pdf SEE APPENDIX O

[xvi] Census Bureau: WV Quick Facts https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/wv SEE APPENDIX P

Appendix A

Map the Meal Gap 2018:

Overall *Food Insecurity in West Virginia by County in 2016* [1]

County	Population	Food insecurity rate	Estimated number food insecure individuals (rounded)	Likely Income Eligibility for Federal Nutrition Assistance[2]		
				% below 130% poverty *SNAP, WIC, free school meals, CSFP, TEFAP*	% between 130% and 185% poverty *WIC, reduced price school meals*	% above 185% poverty *Charitable Response*
Barbour	16,892	15.3%	2,580	59%	11%	31%
Berkeley	110,173	11.2%	12,340	50%	13%	36%
Boone	23,645	16.8%	3,970	61%	8%	31%
Braxton	14,463	15.0%	2,170	57%	16%	28%
Brooke	23,473	12.5%	2,940	48%	13%	39%
Cabell	96,623	15.4%	14,910	59%	9%	33%
Calhoun	7,482	15.2%	1,140	49%	19%	32%
Clay	9,033	16.3%	1,470	61%	6%	33%
Doddridge	8,363	11.3%	940	58%	10%	32%
Fayette	45,192	14.8%	6,690	55%	16%	29%
Gilmer	8,497	17.4%	1,480	51%	10%	39%
Grant	11,770	11.6%	1,360	60%	22%	19%
Greenbrier	35,580	13.4%	4,760	57%	14%	29%
Hampshire	23,455	13.6%	3,200	56%	24%	20%
Hancock	30,024	13.3%	3,990	51%	16%	33%
Hardy	13,942	11.9%	1,660	58%	33%	9%
Harrison	68,775	12.8%	8,770	52%	15%	33%
Jackson	29,199	12.3%	3,600	55%	16%	30%
Jefferson	55,531	9.7%	5,370	45%	12%	43%
Kanawha	189,636	13.5%	25,640	51%	13%	36%
Lewis	16,422	15.1%	2,490	56%	13%	31%
Lincoln	21,482	16.4%	3,520	64%	7%	29%
Logan	35,166	16.1%	5,650	59%	14%	27%
McDowell	20,273	22.4%	4,550	70%	7%	23%
Marion	56,716	13.2%	7,510	52%	12%	36%
Marshall	32,296	13.1%	4,240	51%	17%	33%
Mason	27,060	13.8%	3,730	61%	16%	23%
Mercer	61,476	15.3%	9,400	60%	14%	26%
Mineral	27,606	14.4%	3,980	56%	22%	22%
Mingo	25,549	19.0%	4,870	63%	11%	26%
Monongalia	102,827	15.2%	15,620	54%	7%	39%
Monroe	13,496	12.0%	1,620	59%	16%	24%
Morgan	17,514	10.6%	1,850	52%	28%	19%
Nicholas	25,743	14.2%	3,650	54%	16%	31%
Ohio	43,257	13.6%	5,890	50%	14%	36%
Pendleton	7,291	12.3%	900	57%	20%	23%
Pleasants	7,612	13.0%	990	53%	11%	36%
Pocahontas	8,620	13.5%	1,160	56%	13%	30%
Preston	33,793	12.0%	4,070	50%	14%	35%
Putnam	56,743	9.7%	5,480	41%	15%	43%
Raleigh	78,051	14.7%	11,450	54%	14%	33%
Randolph	29,287	13.3%	3,900	54%	14%	32%
Ritchie	10,044	13.7%	1,380	61%	13%	26%
Roane	14,513	15.6%	2,270	60%	18%	22%
Summers	13,325	13.8%	1,840	57%	14%	29%
Taylor	16,949	12.2%	2,070	60%	9%	31%
Tucker	6,922	11.1%	770	56%	20%	24%
Tyler	9,000	14.7%	1,320	54%	16%	30%
Upshur	24,632	13.9%	3,420	50%	12%	37%
Wayne	41,237	14.2%	5,840	59%	14%	27%
Webster	8,820	17.2%	1,520	64%	21%	14%
Wetzel	15,997	15.3%	2,450	60%	14%	26%
Wirt	5,826	13.2%	770	49%	30%	21%
Wood	86,262	13.3%	11,500	53%	16%	31%
Wyoming	22,537	15.6%	3,520	62%	12%	27%
State Total[6]	**1,831,102**	**14.6%**	**267,280**	**54.3%**	**12.9%**	**32.7%**

County	Population	Food insecurity rate	Estimated number food insecure individuals (rounded)	Likely Income Eligibility for Federal Nutrition Assistance[2]		
				% below 130% poverty *SNAP, WIC, free school meals, CSFP, TEFAP*	% between 130% and 185% poverty *WIC, reduced price school meals*	% above 185% poverty *Charitable Response*

For additional data and maps by county, state, and congressional district, please visit map.feedingamerica.org .

Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. *Map the Meal Gap 2018: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2016* . Feeding America, 2018. This research is generously supported by The Howard G. Buffett Foundation and Nielsen.

[1]Map the Meal Gap's food insecurity rates are determined using data from the 2001-2016 Current Population Survey on individuals in food insecure households; data from the 2016 American Community Survey on median household incomes, poverty rates, homeownership, and race and ethnic demographics; and 2016 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on unemployment rates.

[2]Numbers reflect percentage of food insecure individuals living in households with incomes within the income bands indicated. Eligibility for federal nutrition programs is determined in part by these income thresholds which can vary by state.

[6]Population and food insecurity data in the state totals row do not reflect the sum of all counties in that state. The state totals are aggregated from the congressional districts data in that state. All data in the state totals row pertaining to the cost of food or the "Meal Gap" reflect state-level data and are not aggregations of either counties or congressional districts.

Map the Meal Gap 2018:

Overall *Food Insecurity in West Virginia by Congressional District in 2016* [1]

Congressional District	Population	Food insecurity rate	Estimated number food insecure individuals (rounded)	Likely Income Eligibility for Federal Nutrition Assistance[2]		
				% below 130% poverty *SNAP, WIC, free school meals, CSFP, TEFAP*	% between 130% and 185% poverty *WIC, reduced price school meals*	% above 185% poverty *Charitable Response*
1	617,131	13.9%	85,660	53%	12%	35%
2	622,850	13.5%	84,150	49%	13%	37%
3	591,121	16.5%	97,470	60%	13%	27%

For additional data and maps by county, state, and congressional district, please visit map.feedingamerica.org .

Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. *Map the Meal Gap 2018: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2016* . Feeding America, 2018. This research is generously supported by The Howard G. Buffett Foundation and Nielsen.

[1]Map the Meal Gap's food insecurity rates are determined using data from the 2001-2016 Current Population Survey on individuals in food insecure households; and data from the 2016 American Community Survey on median household incomes, unemployment rates, poverty rates, homeownership, and race and ethnic demographics.

[2]Numbers reflect percentage of food insecure individuals living in households with incomes within the income bands indicated. Eligibility for federal nutrition programs is determined in part by these income thresholds which can vary by state.

West Virginia

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program *December 3rd, 2018*

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's most important anti-hunger program.

Whom Does SNAP Reach?

In Fiscal Year 2017, it reached:

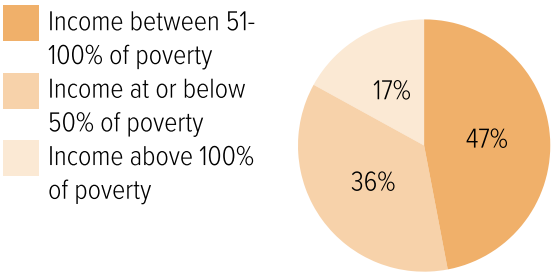
- **340,000** West Virginia residents, or **19%** of the state population **(1 in 5)**
- **42,000,000** participants in the United States, or **13%** of the total population **(1 in 8)**

WEST VIRGINIA	more than **62%** of SNAP participants are in families with children	almost **40%** are in families with members who are elderly or have disabilities	more than **36%** are in working families
NATIONALLY	more than **68%** of SNAP participants are in families with children	almost **33%** are in families with members who are elderly or have disabilities	more than **44%** are in working families

Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2017

Most SNAP Participants in West Virginia Are Poor

Share of participants by household income, FY 2017



Source: CBPP analysis of FY 2017 USDA SNAP Household Characteristics data

Many West Virginia households struggle to put food on the table. The most recent data show:

- **14.9%** of households were "food insecure," or struggled to afford a nutritionally adequate diet.
- Median income was **1% below** the 2007 level, after adjusting for inflation.
- **19.1%** of the population lived below the poverty line.
- **25.9%** of children lived below the poverty line.
- **10.2%** of elderly lived below the poverty line.

SNAP reaches needy populations: 85% of eligible individuals participated in SNAP in **West Virginia** in 2015, and **83%** of eligible workers participated.

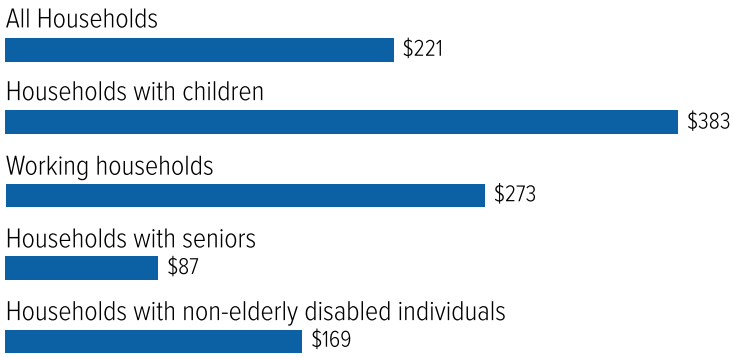
SNAP kept **74,000** people out of poverty in **West Virginia**, including **24,000** children, per year between 2009 and 2012, on average. (These figures adjust for households' underreporting of benefits.)

What Benefits Do SNAP Recipients Receive?

SNAP targets benefits according to need. Very poor households receive more SNAP benefits than households closer to the poverty line since they need more help affording an adequate diet. SNAP recipients in West Virginia received $481.16 million in benefits in 2017.

	Fiscal Year 2017
Average monthly SNAP benefit for each household member:	**$118**
Average SNAP benefit per person per meal:	**$1.29**

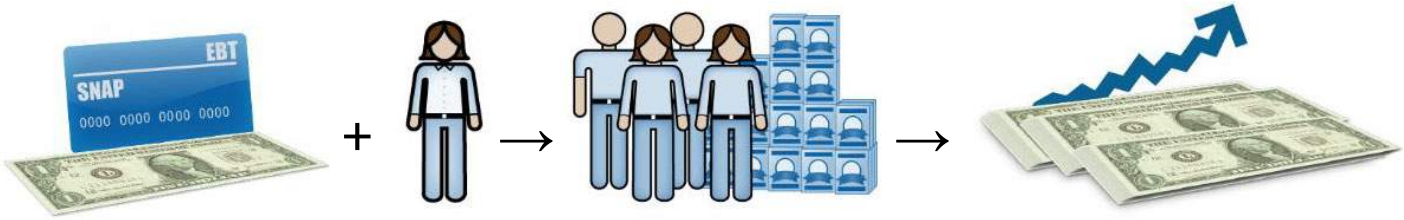
Average Monthly SNAP Benefit By Demographic Group, FY 2017, West Virginia



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Research and Analysis, "Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2017"

How Does SNAP Benefit the Economy?

Moody's Analytics estimates that in a weak economy, $1 in SNAP benefits generates $1.70 in economic activity. Households receive SNAP benefits on electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards, which can be used only to purchase food at one of the 263,100 authorized retail locations around the country, including some 2,200 in West Virginia.



For more information on SNAP, including West Virginia-specific information, please see:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Chart Book: https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/chart-book-snap-helps-struggling-families-put-food-on-the-table
USDA SNAP data: http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap
West Virginia SNAP program: http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/Services/familyassistance/Pages/Supplemental-Nutritional-Assistance-Program-(Former-Food-Stamp-Program).aspx

FRAC Food Research & Action Center

FACTS
SNAP Strengths

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reduces hunger and food insecurity by providing very low-income people desperately needed, targeted assistance to purchase food at grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other regular commercial food outlets, through an effective and efficient Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system.

- Because SNAP benefits are so urgently needed by families, they are spent quickly — **97 percent of benefits are redeemed by the end of the month of issuance** — thereby bolstering local economies.
- **Every federally funded SNAP dollar generates $1.79 in economic activity,** according to USDA research.
- SNAP reaches key vulnerable populations: **78 percent of SNAP households include a child, an elderly person,** or a person with disabilities; 84 percent of all SNAP benefits go to such households. While losing a job is the most common event causing a household to seek SNAP, **55 percent of SNAP households with children in 2015 worked** and had earnings; only 11 percent of SNAP households with children received TANF.
- Research has found that receipt of SNAP in early childhood **improved high school graduation rates, adult earnings, and adult health.**
- When the national, regional, state, or local area economy is in trouble, SNAP is among the most effective government responses. **SNAP reacts quickly and robustly to economic problems.** This has been seen most clearly and dramatically at the start of the recession in 2008, when millions of people became newly unemployed or underemployed. Disaster

SNAP (D-SNAP) has been deemed **effective and responsive** in quickly delivering nutrition assistance to people recovering from hurricanes, tornadoes, and other disasters, as recently seen in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

- SNAP **lifted 3.6 million Americans out of poverty** in 2016, according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure. SNAP is nearly as effective as the Earned Income Tax Credit in lifting families above the poverty line, and far more effective than any other program in lifting families out of deep poverty.
- SNAP **relieves pressure on overwhelmed food banks, pantries, religious congregations, and other emergency food providers** across the country. They recognize the comprehensive approach needed to end hunger and see SNAP as the cornerstone of national, state, and local anti-hunger efforts, and are the first to note their inability to meet added demand that would come from weakening SNAP.

Statement On Introduction Of The 2018 House Farm Bill

April 12, 2018

Attributed to Matt Knott, President of Feeding America

"Today's release of the 2018 House farm bill revealed alarming proposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's cornerstone federal nutrition program. Feeding America is deeply concerned with the damage the legislation could do to communities we serve and the decades of progress in addressing hunger it would unravel.

"While Feeding America's nationwide network of member food banks distributes more than four billion meals annually, our contribution to addressing hunger in the United States pales in comparison to the assistance made possible by the SNAP program. For every meal provided by the Feeding America network, SNAP provides 12. The inescapable reality is that SNAP cuts would have a boat-swamping effect on our network, and changes of this magnitude to an efficient and sound program would set the fight against hunger back in communities across our country.

"In 2014, congress examined expanding work requirements and concluded that to avoid adopting uninformed and risky changes, they would provide $200 million for 10 substantial state demonstration projects to find what aids jobless SNAP participants in gaining employment. These demonstrations are well underway. But rather than await the results, the proposal introduced, today, mandates that all states institute untested, sweeping changes.

"This legislation's SNAP provisions are held out as a means of helping unemployed individuals find jobs and obtain independence. Regrettably, making it harder for vulnerable members of our community to access food assistance does not set them on a path to self-sufficiency and success; rather it knocks them back down and makes it harder for them to work toward a better future.

"SNAP not only supports families in need, it boosts the economies around them. For every dollar invested in SNAP, the program generates $1.79 in economic activity. SNAP is

Contact

Please contact one of our media representatives or call 800-771-2303

About Feeding America

Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs, we provide meals to more than 46 million people each year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate. Together we can solve hunger. Visit www.feedingamerica.org, find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

ABOUT US

OUR HISTORY

WHY FEEDING AMERICA

OUR LEADERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT

OUR PARTNERS

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

PRESS RELEASES

Local Media Contacts

Our Leadership
Annual Report
Our Partners
Job Opportunities
Press Releases

Interactive Data
Senior Hunger Research
Teen Hunger Research
Latino Hunger Research
Hunger and Health
Poverty and Unemployment
Policy and Benefits
Program Evaluation
Technical Advisory Group

Personal Fundraising
Honor & Memorial
Planned Giving
Gift Catalog
Give Stocks and Funds
Give by Mail or Phone
Workplace Giving
Corporate Partners
Food Drives
FAQ

HUNGER FACTS ›

Hunger and Nutrition
Children
Seniors
Rural Communities
African Americans
Latinos
Poverty and Unemployment

UPDATE: Budget cuts force meal cuts at City Mission

By Dalton Hammonds, Dan Klein | Posted: Thu 6:01 PM, Sep 28, 2017 | Updated: Thu 6:16 PM, Sep 28, 2017

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. (WSAZ) -- UPDATE 9/28/17 @ 6 p.m.
Budget cuts are forcing meal cuts at the Huntington City Mission. It comes at a time when the demand is at an all-time high.

For years, the mission has served three meals a day to anyone and everyone who needs one. But as of Thursday, it will be serving two meals a day: a mid-morning brunch and an evening dinner.

The changes really date back to July 2016. Executive Director Mitch Webb said after three years of averaging fewer than 9,000 meals a month, the number jumped to more than 10,000. Every month since, that figure has been hit more often than not, including one month with about 15,000 meals.

Webb said the mission made two budget moves to trim about $200,000, laying off eight staff members and cutting the meals. It aims to bring a $1.8 million budget to a little under $1.6 million in the fiscal year beginning Oct 1.

"It makes me feel horrible," Webb said. "No one on our staff or on our board that wants to do this. Nobody, least of which me. But it's the fiscally responsible thing to do. We don't want to close the place down either."

Webb said these meals aren't just for the homeless. About 50 percent are served to community members who come in and get a free meal, possibly freeing up some money for rent or the electric bill.

He said $300,000 is allocated for the meal program each year.

Webb adds this calendar year, the mission is on track to serve 140,000 meals. It comes after last year's record of 126,000. The previous years averaged about 106,000 meals.

Webb tells WSAZ there is no easy answer for why the jump in meals, but last summer some changes were made to the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program or SNAP, which meant fewer people qualified and that's about when the mission started seeing a big jump in their demand.

Webb hopes those in need can adjust.

"But I'm certain that there are people that are going to be missed. It pains us to do that but at this point, right now, we still feel it's the best option to make these choices," he said.

He adds if finances turn around, he hopes to add the third meal back. He's also very grateful to the agencies, churches and individuals who have reached out offering aid since news of the cuts got out.

ORIGINAL STORY 9/26/17

The Huntington City Mission has announced it will be serving two meals a day instead of three due to budget constraints.

According to a release, the new meal schedule will begin on Sept. 28.

Brunch for woman and families will be served from 9 a.m.-9:45 a.m. and dinner will be served from 4:30 p.m.-5:25 p.m.

For men, brunch will be served from 9:50 a.m.-10:30 a.m. with dinner being served from 5:30 p.m.-6:10 p.m.

According to a release, the Huntington City Missing served 126,000 meals in 2016 which was a 20% increase from 2015.

The mission says if current trends continue the mission will serve over 140,000 meals in 2017, 50% of those meals are served to the community and not just to people living at the Huntington City Mission.

The meals are free to all.

According to release, the Huntington City Mission houses 143 men, women and children each night.

Show Comments

Comments are posted from viewers like you and do not always reflect the views of this station.

Economic
Policy
Institute

Why punitive work-hours tests in SNAP and Medicaid would harm workers and do nothing to raise employment

Report • By Josh Bivens and Shawn Fremstad • July 26, 2018

Economic Policy Institute • Washington, DC

View this report at epi.org/151107

Even as it closes in on full employment, today's economy is not providing stable, decent employment with standard hours and employer-provided health insurance to all working-class people. That is why the basic floor of protection provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, sometimes called food stamps) and Medicaid are critical. SNAP and Medicaid help ensure that all families, including ones with adults in low-paying jobs working often-erratic schedules, have access to decent nutrition and health care.

Proposals to expand and intensify work-hours tests in SNAP—and to apply similar tests in Medicaid—are being debated in Congress and in state legislatures. This paper evaluates the likely outcomes of imposing such tests. We find that the tests proposed are excessively rigid and seem designed to maximize failure rather than to help working-class people succeed. The tests ignore labor-market realities (such as the high churn in the low-wage labor market), will not meaningfully increase the employment rate of these workers, and will harm millions of Americans, including millions of workers in low-paying and volatile occupations. Following are some specific conclusions from our evaluation:

- SNAP and Medicaid are already largely worker-assistance programs. For example, more than 14.8 million workers received assistance from Medicaid in 2016.
- Recent proposals for introducing new work tests for these programs are punitive and would actually put barriers in front of recipients looking for stable work (such as involuntarily underemployed workers seeking more hours of work), rather than helping recipients conduct effective job searches.
- Strict monthly work tests (which revoke benefits after just one month of failure to meet work requirements) ignore the reality that labor markets for low-wage workers exhibit lots of "churn" and erratic hours. This churn would leave far too many workers vulnerable to failing these work tests in a given month. Churn and instability of hours are outcomes of policy failures (such as the failure to provide paid family and sick leave) and employers' power to demand that workers

SECTIONS

submit to last-minute scheduling and other unfair practices, not of some lack of motivation on the part of workers.

- While the work-hours tests often could be met in theory by undertaking work or job training, current proposals (such as the House-passed farm bill) provide grossly inadequate funding for job-training programs. If half of recipients not meeting the work-hours test in a month tried to seek training, the House farm bill would provide enough resources for those recipients to have just one meeting with a job counselor and attend one job club.

- Heavy-handed and punitive work tests for SNAP and Medicaid will do little to nothing to boost the employment possibilities for low-wage workers. Policymakers seeking more effective ways to boost stable employment should reject work tests and instead consider policies that aim to make work pay better and that provide work supports such as paid leave and child care.

SNAP and Medicaid are largely noncash worker-assistance programs that help ensure all families have a basic floor of social protection

SNAP and Medicaid are not "welfare programs" in the stereotypical sense the term has traditionally been used in U.S. policy debates.[1] Both programs provide in-kind assistance (i.e., specific goods and services), rather than money income (i.e., cash), to both employed and unemployed people, with household income determining eligibility. While SNAP and Medicaid provide partial protections against nutritional deficiencies or lack of health care or certain other specific risks of working in a poorly compensated job or being unemployed, these programs cannot sustain a person or a family in the absence of earnings from a job, other sources of money income (such as rental and investment income), or family support.[2]

Most SNAP and Medicaid beneficiaries are children, people older than 65, or people with disabilities (Lauffer 2017 and Jarosz and Lee 2017)—groups that most Americans agree should have a social-protection floor without being required to meet individual work tests. When it comes to nonelderly, nondisabled adults, SNAP and Medicaid are already mostly worker-assistance programs (i.e., more than half of nonelderly, nondisabled adult beneficiaries are working).

SNAP supplemented the wages of workers in nearly 7 million households on average each month in 2016 (Lauffer 2017). In 2016, more than twice as many workers—roughly 15 million—reported turning to SNAP at some point in the 12 months before they were surveyed as part of the American Community Survey (Lauffer 2017). SNAP households include adult-only households and households with children. In 2016, most households with children receiving SNAP included one or more workers. Among all nondisabled,

working-age adults who received SNAP in 2016, nearly three out of every four were employed or were recently employed (Lauffer 2017).

More than 14.8 million nonelderly workers had health coverage through Medicaid in 2016 (Garfield, Rudowitz, and Damico 2018). We know that this number is an underestimate since it comes from the Current Population Survey, which undercounts Medicaid receipt by between 20 percent to 30 percent relative to administrative data sources (Noon, Fernandez, and Porter 2016). Among adult Medicaid enrollees ages 19–64 who are not receiving Medicaid based on a disability (hereafter referred to as "nondisabled, nonelderly adult Medicaid enrollees"), nearly 80 percent in 2016 lived in families with at least one worker (Garfield, Rudowitz, and Damico 2018).[3]

Both SNAP and Medicaid show clear evidence of supporting a higher share of workers over time. For SNAP, the share of households receiving benefits that have any labor market earnings has risen steadily since 1989 (USDA 2017). For Medicaid, one key metric of its support for working families—spending on children in working households—has grown. In 1990, less than 20 percent of all Medicaid spending on children went to children in working households; by 2016, that share had increased to more than 80 percent, indicating a huge shift towards spending on working families (Hoynes and Schazenbach 2018). In SNAP, reforms that provided states with options to make their SNAP programs more friendly to families with workers have played an important role in the increasing share of SNAP households with labor market earnings. In Medicaid, the increasing support for working families is largely due to states expanding coverage to low-income workers, and program administrators focusing on Medicaid's core mission of increasing health care coverage among low-income people.

Positive and negative broader economic trends have also contributed to the increase in the share of SNAP and Medicaid beneficiaries who are employed. The positive trend is the steady decline in the unemployment rate over the last eight years. The negative trends include declines in wages and employer-provided benefits for working-class people over the last several decades (Bivens et al. 2014).

Recent proposals would expand and intensify punitive work-tests for SNAP and Medicaid benefits

SNAP already requires most unemployed working-age adults (generally defined as those between 18 and 59 years old) receiving benefits to register for work and accept almost any job they are offered.[4] In addition, employed workers receiving SNAP may not voluntarily quit a full-time job or reduce their hours of work to less than 30 hours a week without good cause. States can also require adult household members to participate in the SNAP Employment and Training Program, except for members who are elderly, disabled, or caring for young children, or who fall into certain other exempt categories. Ten states are currently testing various approaches to delivering SNAP employment and training

services as part of a rigorous national evaluation. Interim results will be available in 2019 and final results in 2021.[5]

SNAP also applies a controversial monthly work-hours test to adults under age 50 who are not living with children and who do not have a medically certified work disability. Adults subject to this test are limited to three months of SNAP vouchers unless they clock at least 80 hours of work each month. Unemployed beneficiaries subject to this work-hours test who are unable to get hired are at risk of losing SNAP regardless of whether they are at fault for the inability to secure the required hours. Employed people who don't get sufficient hours to meet the test or who lose their job during the month will lose SNAP benefits unless they are able prove they have good cause for not working the required hours. People can meet the test by participating in a "work program" for 80 hours each month or in a "workfare" program for a specified number of hours. However, states are not obligated to provide either of these options under current law (Bolen and Dean 2018).

The maximum value of a SNAP voucher is currently $192 a month for one person, an amount equal to 26 hours of work at the federal minimum wage. The daily value of the maximum SNAP voucher is $6.40, or less than the federal minimum wage for one hour of work. Thus, the hours of work or training required to meet the monthly work-hours test each month are disproportionate to the value of the in-kind assistance provided by SNAP. Under current law (but not in the House proposal discussed below), there is one exception that is more proportionate: people in workfare (unpaid assignments to a public, private, or nonprofit employer) can meet the work-hours test by working a number of hours equal to their household's SNAP allotment divided by the minimum wage. But again, states have no obligation to offer such programs.

In June, the U.S. House of Representatives narrowly passed a farm bill that would expand and intensify the monthly work test by 1) extending it to parents of children age 6 and over, and to adults ages 50–59; 2) taking all SNAP assistance away from people who fail the test after one month (rather than three); 3) increasing the number of hours required to meet the test (to 25 hours a week in 2028); and 4) further limiting the authority of individual states to exempt people from the test based on local labor market conditions and other factors. In theory the bill would require states to offer work programs to those who are not employed. However, as we discuss further below, the funding provided is far less than is needed to serve everyone who would need to participate to retain SNAP benefits and, thus, it is likely that states will offer work programs that are of poor quality and will do little to help people succeed in them.

By contrast, the Senate passed a bipartisan farm bill that would leave SNAP's current monthly work test in place—without expanding and intensifying it as the House GOP would—and would fund additional pilot projects for SNAP work registrants, including pilots with mandatory requirements and "individualized case management designed to help remove barriers to employment for participants….."[6]

Medicaid and other means-tested health programs have never imposed work tests as a condition of eligibility. However, in January 2018, the Trump administration announced that it would consider granting states waivers that allow them to impose work tests as a

condition of eligibility. Since then, the administration has approved four state waiver requests to impose such mandates in Medicaid; seven more requests are currently pending including from states that did not expand Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act. In June 2018, a federal district court invalidated the administration's approval of a work-test waiver for Kentucky. The court ruled that the administration failed to "adequately consider the effect of any demonstration project on the state's ability to help provide medical coverage…." (Meyer 2018).

The details of the work-hours test waivers vary by state, but they are generally similar to the SNAP mandates. The administration's guidance allows states to apply these requirements to nonelderly adults not receiving disability assistance. In most states, individuals would need to work or participate in work activities for at least 80 hours each month or lose coverage.[7] As with SNAP, certain other intensive activities could also count toward the hourly work requirements, but absent funding for these activities, it seems unlikely that they will end up being viable options for most unemployed people. The administration has not required states to offer *any* work supports in tandem with instituting waivers and, in fact, prohibits them from using federal Medicaid funding to do so.

These kinds of rigid work-hours tests assume the following about adults receiving means-tested, in-kind assistance:

- They all can and should obtain stable employment with standard hours that are at least half time as a condition of eligibility for basic in-kind assistance.
- They should lose eligibility for in-kind assistance if they are unemployed in *any* month for almost *any* reason, or work less than the hours dictated.
- Their prior work; past caregiving responsibilities; health history; or recent crises, transitions, or other life experiences are generally irrelevant to whether they should lose eligibility for Medicaid and SNAP if they do not meet the work-hours test in a particular month.
- The public costs of administering works-hours tests in Medicaid and SNAP are reasonable and a better use of public funds and public employees' time than less punitive and more broad-based approaches to supporting employment and advancement.

As we discuss further below, these assumptions are largely incorrect.

Punitive work-hours tests ignore today's labor-market realities and would harm millions of poorly compensated workers

As Wilson and Jones (2018) have documented, we have "a divided workforce, with

different classes of workers: Those who are consistently working full time and earning wages at or above the median; those who earn below the median and are working more than they used to—when they can get jobs—but are still working less than full time; and those who face barriers that keep them out of the workforce full time." Job instability—including involuntary unemployment and involuntary part-time employment—and volatile hours with the associated unpredictable earnings are a fact of life for millions of working-class people. For these workers, the in-kind assistance provided by SNAP, Medicaid, and other programs is essential, and affirmatively supports work and education, as well as their health and well-being.

Will monthly work-hours tests improve health outcomes?

Trump administration officials have argued that imposing work-hours tests in Medicaid will "improve health outcomes." There is good reason to believe that involuntary unemployment—not having a job despite wanting one—is detrimental to health. But there is no reason to believe that conditioning basic health coverage on meeting a monthly work-hours test will reduce involuntary unemployment or improve health outcomes. A more sensible approach to improving health outcomes would be to provide unemployment insurance and reemployment services to people who are unemployed, while maintaining health coverage to avoid any adverse health effects during periods of involuntary unemployment.

Moreover, as noted by Fremstad (2018), the relationship between health and employment is more complicated than the administration suggests. Fremstad (2018) cites a recent rigorous review of evidence by van der Noordt et al. (2018), which found insufficient or inconsistent evidence that employment was beneficial for general health, except for lessening depression (see also Waters and Escoriaza 2018, pages 12-15):

"The authors also cautioned that selection effects—the fact that more healthy people are more likely to work—may have caused an 'overestimation' of their findings that work was beneficial for depression. In theory, one could conduct a demonstration study that denied employment to some people while providing it to others in order to isolate the causal effects of employment on health. But, as the authors note, this would be unethical." (Fremstad 2018)

A 2006 report commissioned by the United Kingdom's Department of Work and Pensions found that "the balance of the evidence" shows that work is "generally good for health and well-being, for most people" (Waddell and Burton 2006). But the report points out that any positive health effects hinge on "the nature and quality of work," its "social context," and whether jobs are "safe and accommodating." Similarly, van der Noordt et al. (2018) notes that research has shown that "low-quality jobs can lead to reduced health, while high-quality jobs can lead to improved health."

Figure A

Relationship between the probability that a worker experiences labor market churn and the worker's predicted wage

Notes: Churn is a transition from employment to nonemployment or nonemployment to employment at some point over either a one-month or three-month period. Nonemployment includes both unemployment and not in the labor force. The real wage is predicted by demographic characteristics, described in the methodology appendix to Cooper, Mishel, and Zipperer 2018.

Source: Real wage bins and churn rates are calculated by Cooper, Mishel, and Zipperer (2018) from monthly linked observations in the Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups and basic monthly CPS microdata files 1998–2016.

Economic Policy Institute

Figure A, adapted from Cooper, Mishel, and Zipperer (2018), examines one indicator of job instability by looking at the degree of labor market "churn" faced by workers in low-wage jobs compared with workers in middle- and higher-wage jobs. The churn measure is what share of workers (by predicted wage level) make an employment transition (from employed to either unemployed or not in the labor force, or vice versa) at some point over either a one-month or a three-month period. Lower-wage workers are two to three times as likely to experience churn as higher-wage workers. For example, about 1 in 10 workers earning $10 an hour makes an employment transition each month, compared with roughly 1 in 25 workers earning $20 an hour. If measured over a three-month period, the churn rate for workers being paid $10 an hour increases to one in five.

Volatile hours and unstable employment are particularly common in the kind of low-paying jobs that employ the largest numbers of working-class people who are likely to have Medicaid coverage and/or receive SNAP. In 2016, the four major industries employing workers who received SNAP or Medicaid were education and health services, wholesale and retail trade, leisure and hospitality, and professional and business services.[8] Within those industries, the most common occupations for workers receiving SNAP or Medicaid include home health care aides; personal care aides; child care workers and teacher assistants; cashiers; retail salespersons and first-line retail supervisors; cooks; waiters and

waitresses; cashiers; food preparation workers; maids, housekeeping cleaners, and grounds maintenance workers; janitors and building cleaners; security guards; and customer service representatives.[9]

One indicator that the industries employing Medicaid and SNAP recipients are unstable is the rate of involuntary part-time employment (involuntary part-time workers as a share of all workers) in these industries. Golden (2016) finds that the rate of involuntary part-time employment is highest in retail trade and in leisure and hospitality. And even as overall unemployment rates have returned to pre–Great Recession levels, involuntary part-time employment overall has increased. Golden found that this increase "is explained more by increasing rates within industries—in particular, within two major sectors, leisure and hospitality and retail trade—rather than a change in the composition of employment by industry (i.e., rather than leisure and hospitality and trade generating jobs at a faster clip than other industries)."

Besides providing insufficient hours, the jobs most typically available to working-class people who are likely to have Medicaid coverage or receive SNAP because of low incomes have other common characteristics that affect workers' ability to meet work requirements (and other nonfinancial eligibility requirements). Among private-sector workers in the bottom fourth of the wage distribution, 57 percent lack paid sick leave, nearly 100 percent lack access to paid family leave, and 20 percent lack access even to *unpaid* family leave.[10] Two-thirds of these workers lack access to health care benefits.[11] Moreover, for those who have access to health care benefits, employer-provided coverage is often unaffordable or inadequate.

In addition to being much less likely to have employee benefits, workers without college degrees are much more likely than workers with college degrees to face job conditions that would affect their ability to meet work requirements. As shown in **Table 1**, workers without college degrees are much more likely to have:

- schedules set by their employer with no possibility for changes, making it difficult to arrange for time off during work hours to take care of personal or family matters
- unpredictable or irregular work
- unpleasant or potentially dangerous work conditions, including substantial physical demands or the threat of physical violence
- a work environment that has subjected them to verbal abuse, sexual harassment, threats, or humiliating behavior

These characteristics of low-wage and working-class jobs, combined with the lack of paid sick leave and health benefits, surely explain much of the excess churn and hours volatility we see in this segment of the labor market. For example, Hill (2013) found that providing paid sick leave substantially reduces the likelihood of job separation, particularly for mothers. Dube, Lester, and Reich (2016) found that minimum wage increases result in reduced job separations as well.

Table 1

Job conditions for workers ages 25–71 in 2015, by education and gender

	No college degree		College degree		Percentage-point difference		Percent difference	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Working time arrangements are set by company with no possibility for changes	48%	40%	18%	27%	30 ppt.	14 ppt.	166%	51%
Work is unpredictable or irregular	10%	13%	8%	6%	2 ppt.	6 ppt.	21%	102%
Job involves:								
Lifting heavy loads or lifting people	68%	43%	27%	22%	41 ppt.	21 ppt.	150%	92%
Tiring or painful positions	57%	43%	26%	22%	30 ppt.	21 ppt.	115%	93%
Standing all or almost all of the time	50%	38%	16%	18%	34 ppt.	21 ppt.	222%	117%
At least one of the above	80%	63%	42%	39%	38 ppt.	24 ppt.	90%	60%
Repetitive hand/arm movements	82%	81%	60%	68%	21 ppt.	13 ppt.	35%	19%
Workers are subject to one or more of the following at work:								
Verbal abuse (in past month)	16%	14%	8%	10%	7 ppt.	4 ppt.	86%	39%
Humiliating behavior (in past month)	13%	8%	5%	7%	8 ppt.	1 ppt.	150%	12%
Unwanted sexual attention (in past month)	0.90%	6.30%	0.70%	2.70%	0.20 ppt.	3.60 ppt.	29%	133%
Bullying/harassment including sexual harassment (in past year)	11%	12%	8%	10%	3 ppt.	2 ppt.	36%	20%
Physical violence (in past year)	2.20%	1.70%	1.60%	0.20%	0.60 ppt.	1.50 ppt.	38%	750%
Any of the above	24%	19%	15%	18%	9 ppt.	2 ppt.	62%	10%

Source: American Working Conditions Survey 2015 data from Maestas et al. 2017

Economic Policy Institute

Moreover, higher incidences of churn and instability and challenging work conditions are facilitated by weakened or inadequate labor standards, including low minimum wages; barriers to collective bargaining that make it harder for workers to secure better working conditions; and insufficient health and safety protections, all of which also impact job stability.[12]

Recent work by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) and others has documented the extent to which low-income working people could lose Medicaid coverage and SNAP as a result of hourly work mandates. For example, as shown in **Table 2**, almost half of low-income workers would fail a work-hours test in at least one month over the course of the year (Aron-Dine, Chaudhry, and Broaddus 2018). This estimate excludes workers who are elderly or receive disability assistance.

Similarly, Acs, Wheaton, and Waxman (2018) estimate that about 10 million people would be subject to, but would not meet, the SNAP work-hours test in the proposed House farm bill in at least one month each year, and that most of them worked during the year.

Proponents of work-hours tests argue that people who are unemployed or underemployed could meet the work-hours test through participation in a work or job training program. In the case of SNAP, the House GOP farm bill provides grossly

Table 2

Work participation among low-income adults potentially subject to Medicaid work requirements

		Worked fewer than 80 hours in at least one month	
	Total number of workers (millions)	Number (millions)	Share
Worked (in the last year) ...			
Any hours	20.7	9.5	46%
At least 500 hours	18.1	6.9	38%
At least 1,000 hours	15	3.8	25%

Source: Data drawn from Aron-Dine, Chaudhry, and Broaddus (2018), who analyzed the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) for June 2012 to May 2013. Sample includes adults ages 19 to 64 not receiving disability assistance in families with monthly incomes below 138 percent of the federal poverty line; estimates are weighted by the number of months in which individuals had incomes below the Medicaid income limit.

Economic Policy Institute

inadequate funding for such programs. According to Acs, Wheaton, and Waxman (2018), if half of the roughly 10 million people "who are estimated to not meet the requirements in at least one month of the year were to seek education and training services, the average amount of federal funds available to states would be $204 per person." Using the current value of average costs of services provided by adult and dislocated worker programs operating under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, this is enough for a single one-on-one counselor meeting ($156) and one job club meeting ($41 per person).[13] As a result, most states would likely end up operating low-quality and heavy-handed work programs that aim to make accessing SNAP more burdensome, but provide little real assistance.

It is often claimed (implicitly or otherwise) that it is not the availability and conditions of work that drive employment in the low-wage workforce; rather it is the motivation of workers themselves. The claim is essentially that work is available, but potential workers are choosing "idleness" instead, potentially lured into this idleness by an increasingly generous transfer system.

However, this narrative is belied by evidence showing that the number of average annual hours worked by households in the bottom fifth of the income distribution has grown far more strongly than average annual hours worked by households in general over the past generation. **Table 3** below shows the growth of annual hours worked by working-age households in the bottom quintile of the income distribution compared with the average of all income quintiles in 1979, 1989, 1995, 2000, 2007, and 2016. The table shows clearly that annual hours for the bottom fifth rose significantly faster than average hours between 1979 and 2007. Hours fell faster for lower-income households between 2007 and 2016, but this is clearly a cyclical response to the Great Recession and slow recovery at that point.

Table 3

Before Great Recession hit, lower-income households expanded work hours more than average

Average annual hours worked, bottom 20 percent of working-age households by income and all households, selected years, 1979–2016

	Annual hours worked						Change		
	1979	1989	1995	2000	2007	2016	1995–2000	2007–2016	1979–2007
All	3,092	3,286	3,317	3,378	3,314	3,335	1.8%	0.6%	7.2%
Bottom fifth	1,716	1,884	1,837	1,977	1,880	1,829	7.6%	-2.7%	9.6%

Note: Working-age households are those headed by someone under age 65. Data are for money income. Percentage changes are approximated by taking the difference of natural logs of wages and hours.

Source: EPI analysis of Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement microdata

Economic Policy Institute

But even during times of overall labor market health, large groups of potential workers can find themselves locked out of stable employment through no fault of their own. Unemployment rates of workers over the age of 25 with just a high school diploma are nearly double rates for workers with at least a four-year college degree. Even if one is willing to claim that workers' access to educational credentials is entirely under their own control (and not conditioned by family resources or other influences), data show that labor market outcomes are clearly affected by barriers (like discrimination) that persist even during times of comparative labor market health. For example, the unemployment rate for African American workers with a high school diploma was 7.8 percent in 2017, nearly twice the unemployment rate for white workers with only a high school diploma (4.1 percent). Similarly, the unemployment rate for workers in fair or poor health in 2017 (8.3 percent) was more than double the unemployment rate for workers in excellent or very good health (3.0 percent) (BLS-CPS various years).

Finally, claims that potential low-wage workers are freely choosing not to work don't explain why it would be in their financial interest to maximize in-kind benefits by forgoing cash income from employment. There is no unconditional, means-tested "cash" assistance for unemployed people in the United States, except for the elderly and people with permanent and total disabilities. One consequence is that moral hazard in the form of people without disabilities intentionally avoiding employment is an extremely minor issue in today's system of means-tested social assistance. As long as out-of-pocket work expenses do not exceed earnings, working always provides more income than not working for a person receiving SNAP. Moreover, the one program that does provide a form of "cash" assistance—the earned income tax credit (EITC)—is conditioned on employment. Unlike cash benefits that are sharply reduced or quickly taken away as earnings increase, the EITC is structured as an after-tax wage subsidy for workers with incomes that can reach up to a modest middle-class level. For example, the EITC for parents doesn't completely phase out until earned income reaches roughly $40,000 to nearly $55,000 (depending on number of children and filing status).

SNAP and Medicaid work-hours tests will have little impact on the U.S. employment rate

Proponents of work-hours tests in SNAP and Medicaid sometimes argue that they will increase the labor force participation rate in the United States, particularly among prime-age workers (ages 25–54). They also commonly claim that "welfare" programs in the United States have depressed labor force participation (Wall Street Journal Editorial Board 2018). In a recent review of evidence on the trends in the employment-to-population ratio, Abraham and Kearney (2018) conclude that labor demand factors are the most important drivers of long-run declines in employment rates, and they find little support for the idea that SNAP and Medicaid have reduced employment. Even some proponents of work-hours tests come close to acknowledging this. Rachidi (2018) notes that people who are hoping that imposing work-hours tests in Medicaid will increase labor force participation "will likely be disappointed."

As we discussed in the previous section, among nondisabled, nonelderly adults receiving SNAP and Medicaid, most are already in the labor force. Moreover, estimates of the impact of the SNAP work requirements in the House farm bill suggest that among those not already in the labor force, most will lose benefits, and few will receive effective employment and training services. It is also worth noting that most wealthy countries have higher prime-age employment rates than the United States, despite also providing their citizens with a more adequate social-safety net, including universal health care, than the United States provides to U.S. citizens.[14]

Conclusion

In the final analysis, imposing work-hours tests in SNAP and Medicaid will have little to no impact on employment rates in the United States and will only add to the barriers that sit between low-income workers and decent employment. Further, such work tests will distract from real reforms that would improve the health, well-being, and employment outcomes of working-class people. SNAP and Medicaid provide a basic floor of protection that helps ensure that all families, including ones with workers in low-paying and often volatile occupations, have access to decent food and health care. We should strengthen that floor rather than weaken it with punitive and burdensome tests that seem designed to fail workers.

About the authors

Josh Bivens is the director of research at the Economic Policy Institute. **Shawn Fremstad** is a senior fellow with the Center for American Progress and a senior research associate with the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

Endnotes

1. Super (2004) argues that most Americans think of "welfare" as a "program that possesses, or is seen to possess, some combination of the following characteristics: It (1) provides ongoing cash assistance on the basis of need; (2) [is] based on eligibility criteria that take no account of, or penalize, employment; (3) [serves] an unpopular and unemployed population that seems foreign to much of the middle-class; (4) [is dispensed] through a public bureaucracy; (5) [is] administered in a manner that seems to encourage fraud and behavior abhorrent to middle-American values." Using an experimental survey design, Campbell and Gaddis (2016) find more support for means-tested in-kind assistance, particularly food assistance (SNAP) and child-care assistance, than for means-tested cash assistance (they did not ask about means-tested health insurance).

2. Beyond earnings, there are few other sources of income for nondisabled, working-age, working-class adults who are unemployed. Adults who lose a job may be eligible for up to 26 weeks of unemployment insurance in most states, but must have sufficient wages in covered employment in the 12 months prior to unemployment, and be able and available to work. The United States does not provide unemployment assistance or means-tested cash assistance to nondisabled, nonelderly adults without children. State Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) programs do provide short-term income assistance to some parents, but the number of parents receiving such assistance is very low (only about 500,000 in a typical month, which is roughly 1 percent of all parents living with minor children in the United States) due to onerous eligibility restrictions, and the amount of assistance provided is modest (Foster and Rojas 2018).

3. Nondisabled adults referenced in Garfield, Rudowitz, and Damico (2018) are adults whose Medicaid eligibility is not based on receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Workers include individuals who are working part-time or full-time.

4. The SNAP job requirements, as set out in the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR 273.7), are as follows. Household members who are elderly, disabled, or caring for young children, or meet other criteria, are exempt. Nonexempt participants must accept suitable employment. SNAP considers all employment suitable unless it meets at least one of the following criteria: pays less than the minimum wage; requires the employee to join, resign from, or refrain from joining any legitimate labor organization; is at a site subject to a strike or lockout; or fails to meet state-established suitability criteria. In a few other limited situations, a participant can decline a job, including if she or he can show it entails an unreasonable risk to health and safety, or that it interferes with his or her religious convictions or observances.

5. In seven of the states, participation in the SNAP employment and training pilot is voluntary; in two of the states it is mandatory, and one state is conducting both mandatory and voluntary pilots. All of the projects target adults receiving SNAP who are required to register for work, but most target subsets of this group. For example, Georgia targets nondisabled adults subject to the current 80-hour work requirement (a monthly work-hours test applied to adults under age 50 who are not living with children and do not have a medically certified work disability). For descriptions of these programs, see USDA 2015.

6. Section 4013 of S. 3042, Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018.

7. For a summary of this state variation, see Table 1 in Musumeci, Garfield, and Rubowitz 2018.

8. Measured in terms of numbers of workers in the industry receiving SNAP and Medicaid, based on authors' calculation using American Community Survey data from the IPUMS-USA database (Ruggles et al. 2017).

9. Authors' calculation using American Community Survey data from the IPUMS-USA database (Ruggles et al. 2017).

10. For this number, see table 32 in BLS 2017.

11. Authors' calculation using American Community Survey data from the IPUMS-USA database (Ruggles et al. 2017).

12. About 12 percent of nonelderly workers are union members. But among nonelderly workers receiving SNAP, less than 7 percent are union members (BLS 2018). Some of this difference is due to age, education, and other differences between union and nonunion members. But there is little question that part of the difference is due to positive impacts unions have on wages, benefits, and working conditions. In research examining the impact of unionization on compensation in 15 major low-wage occupations, Schmitt et al. (2007) found that wages of unionized workers were nearly $2 per hour more than wages of nonunion workers, while unionized workers were 25 percent more likely to have employer-provided health and pension benefits. Dube, Lester, and Reich (2016) have shown that increases in the minimum wage cause reductions in employee turnover and labor market churn.

13. To make these calculations, we take 2011–2012 costs from Mastri and McCutcheon (2015) and then adjust for inflation.

14. For example, see OECD 2018.

References

Abraham, Katherine, and Melissa Kearney. 2018. "Explaining the Decline in the U.S. Employment-to-Population Ratio: A Review of the Evidence." National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 24333, February 2018.

Acs, Gregory, Laura Wheaton, and Elaine Waxman. 2018. *Assessing Changes to SNAP Work Requirements in the 2018 Farm Bill*. Urban Institute, May 2018.

Aron-Dine, Aviva, Raheem Chaudhry, and Matt Broaddus. 2018. *Many Working People Could Lose Health Coverage Due to Medicaid Work Requirements*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 2018.

Bivens, Josh, Elise Gould, Lawrence Mishel, and Heidi Shierholz. 2014. *Raising America's Pay: Why It's Our Central Economic Policy Challenge*. Economic Policy Institute, June 2014.

Bolen, Ed, and Stacy Dean. 2018. *Waivers Add Key State Flexibility to SNAP's Three-Month Time Limit*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, February 2018.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). 2017. *Annual Bulletin on Benefit Coverage: Bulletin 2787,* September 2017.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). 2018. "Union Members – 2017" (news release). January 19, 2018.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (BLS-CPS). Various years. Data accessed through "One-Screen Data Search" tool, accessed July 2, 2018.

Campbell, Colin, and S. Michael Gaddis. 2016. "'I Don't Agree with Giving Cash': A Survey Experiment Examining Support for Public Assistance." *Social Science Quarterly,* vol. 98, no. 5,

1352–1373.

Cooper, David, Lawrence Mishel, and Ben Zipperer. 2018. *Bold Increases in the Minimum Wage Should Be Evaluated for the Benefits of Raising Low-Wage Workers' Total Earnings: Critics Who Cite Claims of Job Loss Are Using a Distorted Frame*. Economic Policy Institute, April 2018.

Dube, Arindrajit, T. William Lester, and Michael Reich. 2016. "Minimum Wage Shocks, Employment Flows, and Labor Market Frictions." *Journal of Labor Economics*, vol. 34, no. 3, 663–704. (An earlier working paper version of this article that is not behind a paywall can be found on the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment website at http://irle.berkeley.edu/files/2013/Minimum-Wage-Shocks-Employment-Flows-and-Labor-Market-Frictions.pdf.)

Foster, Ann, and Arcenis Rojas. 2018. "Program Participation and Spending Patterns of Families Receiving Government Means-Tested Assistance." *Monthly Labor Review*, January 2018.

Fremstad, Shawn. 2018. "No, Forced Labor Is Not Good for Your Health." *TalkPoverty* (a Center for American Progress blog), January 19, 2018.

Garfield, Rachel, Robin Rudowitz, and Anthony Damico. 2018. *Understanding the Intersection of Medicaid and Work*. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, updated January 2018.

Golden, Lonnie. 2016. *Still Falling Short on Hours and Pay: Part-Time Work Becoming New Normal*. Economic Policy Institute, December 2016.

Hill, Heather. 2013. "Paid Sick Leave and Job Stability." *Work and Occupations*, vol. 40, no. 2, 143–173.

Hoynes, Hilary, and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach. 2018. "Safety Net Investments in Children." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, March 8, 2018.

Jarosz, Beth, and Amanda Lee. 2017. *Majority of People Covered by Medicaid, and Similar Programs, are Children, Older Adults, or Disabled*. Population Reference Bureau, June 2017.

Lauffer, Sarah. 2017. *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Households: Fiscal Year 2016*. United States Department of Agriculture, November 2017.

Maestes, Nicole, Kathleen J. Mullen, David Powell, Till von Wachter, and Jeffrey B. Wenger. 2017. *Working Conditions in the United States: Results of the 2015 American Working Conditions Survey*. RAND Corporation. https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2014.

Mastri, Annalisa, and AnnaMaria McCutcheon. 2016. *Costs of Services Provided by the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs*. Mathematica Policy Research, November 2015.

Meyer, Harris. 2018. "Judge Blocks Kentucky's Medicaid Work Requirement." *Modern Healthcare*, June 29.

Musumeci, MaryBeth, Rachel Garfield, and Robin Rubowitz. 2018. *Medicaid and Work Requirements: New Guidance, State Waiver Details and Key Issues*. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2018.

Noon, James, Leticia Fernandez, and Sonya Porter. 2016. "Response Error and the Medicaid Undercount in the Current Population Survey." U.S. Census Bureau Working Paper, December 2016.

OECD. 2018. Employment Rate by Age Group (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/084f32c7-en.

Rachidi, Angela. 2018. "The Truth about Medicaid Work Requirements." American Enterprise Institute

blog, March 20, 2018.

Ruggles, Steven, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek. 2017. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 7.0 . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0.

Schmitt, John, Margy Waller, Shawn Fremstad, and Ben Zipperer. 2007. *Unions and Upward Mobility for Low-Wage Workers*. Center for Economic and Policy Research, August 2007.

Super, David. 2004. "The Quiet 'Welfare' Revolution: Resurrecting the Food Stamp Program in the Wake of the 1996 Welfare Law." *New York University Law Review*, vol. 79, 1270–1397.

U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement microdata (U.S. Census Bureau CPS-ASEC). Various years. Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics [machine-readable microdata file]. Accessed July 23, 2018, at https://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps_ftp.html.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2015. *SNAP E&T 2014 Farm Bill Pilot Summaries*, last updated March 20, 2015.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2017. "SNAP Increasingly Serves the Working Poor," (web page). USDA Economic Research Service, last updated March 14, 2017.

Van der Noordt, Maaike, Mariel Droomers, Wilhelmina Ijzelenberg, and Karin Proper. 2014. "Health Effects of Employment: A Systematic Review of Prospective Studies." *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, vol. 71, no. 10.

Waddell, Gordon, and A. Kim Burton. 2006. *Is Work Good for Your Health and Well-Being?* Report for the United Kingdom Department of Work and Pensions. London: The Stationery Office.

Wall Street Journal Editorial Board. 2018. "The GOP's Welfare to Work Pitch." *Wall Street Journal*, June 5, 2018.

Waters, Edward, and Philip Escoriaza. 2018. Brief for Deans, Chairs and Scholars as Amici Curiae in Support of Plaintiffs: Ronnie Maurice Stewart V. Alex Azar. United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Wilson, Valerie, and Janelle Jones. 2018. *Working Harder or Finding It Harder to Work: Demographic Trends in Annual Work Hours Show an Increasingly Fractured Workforce*. Economic Policy Institute, February 2018.

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for States, 2018 Annual Averages

Six alternative measures of labor underutilization have long been available on a monthly basis from the Current Population Survey (CPS) for the United States as a whole. They are published in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' monthly Employment Situation news release. (See table 15.) The official concept of unemployment (as measured in the CPS by U-3 in the U-1 to U-6 range of alternatives) includes all jobless persons who are available to take a job and have actively sought work in the past four weeks. This concept has been thoroughly reviewed and validated since the inception of the CPS in 1940. The other measures are provided to data users and analysts who want more narrowly (U-1 and U-2) or broadly (U-4 through U-6) defined measures.

BLS is committed to updating the alternative measures data for states on a 4-quarter moving-average basis. The use of 4-quarter averages increases the reliability of the CPS estimates, which are based on relatively small sample sizes at the state level, and eliminates seasonality. Due to the inclusion of lagged quarters, the state alternative measures may not fully reflect the current status of the labor market. The analysis that follows pertains to the 2018 annual averages. Data are also available for **prior time periods back to 2003**.

The six state measures are based on the same definitions as those published for the United States:

- U-1, persons unemployed 15 weeks or longer, as a percent of the civilian labor force;
- U-2, job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs, as a percent of the civilian labor force;
- U-3, total unemployed, as a percent of the civilian labor force (this is the definition used for the official unemployment rate);
- U-4, total unemployed plus discouraged workers, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus discouraged workers;
- U-5, total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other marginally attached workers, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers; and
- U-6, total unemployed, plus all marginally attached workers, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers.

Definitions for the economic characteristics underlying the three broader measures of labor underutilization are worth mentioning here. Discouraged workers (U-4, U-5, and U-6 measures) are persons who are not in the labor force, want and are available for work, and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months. They are not counted as unemployed because they had not searched for work in the prior 4 weeks, for the specific reason that they believed no jobs were available for them. The marginally attached (U-5 and U-6 measures) are a group that includes discouraged workers. The criteria for the marginally attached are the same as for discouraged workers, with the exception that any reason could have been cited for the lack of job search in the prior 4 weeks. Persons employed part time for economic reasons (U-6 measure) are those working less than 35 hours per week who want to work full time, are available to do so, and gave an economic reason (their hours had been cut back or they were unable to find a full-time job) for working part time. These individuals are sometimes referred to as involuntary part-time workers.

Generally, all six measures of labor underutilization move together over time, including across business cycles. Similarly, states that have low unemployment rates tend to have low values for the other five measures; the reverse is true for states with high unemployment rates. Note that, in the table and in the comparisons below, the unemployment rates (U-3) that are shown are derived directly from the CPS, because this is the only source of data for the various components of the other five measures. As a result, these U-3 measures may differ from

the official state unemployment rates for the same period. The official rates are developed from statistical models that greatly improve the reliability of the topside labor force and unemployment estimates. Those models, developed by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, incorporate CPS estimates, as well as input data from other sources. The model-based estimates are accessible through the LAUS program homepage. The official model-based annual averages for 2018 will be released on Thursday, February 28, 2019.

For additional information on state estimates derived directly from the CPS, see notes on subnational CPS data.

Alternative measures of labor underutilization by state, 2018 annual averages (percent)

State	Measure					
	U-1	U-2	U-3	U-4	U-5	U-6
United States	1.4	1.8	3.9	4.1	4.8	7.7
Alabama	1.5	1.8	3.9	4.3	5.0	7.3
Alaska	2.4	3.7	6.6	7.1	8.3	12.0
Arizona	1.6	1.8	4.7	4.8	6.0	9.1
Arkansas	1.2	1.7	3.8	4.1	4.7	7.7
California	1.6	2.1	4.2	4.4	5.1	8.8
Colorado	1.1	1.4	3.3	3.5	3.8	6.3
Connecticut	2.1	2.2	4.1	4.4	5.0	8.9
Delaware	1.3	1.8	3.8	4.1	4.4	7.4
District of Columbia	2.9	2.1	5.6	5.9	6.8	9.2
Florida	1.4	1.6	3.6	3.9	4.5	7.6
Georgia	1.4	1.5	3.9	4.3	5.0	8.0
Hawaii	0.9	1.3	2.6	2.8	3.5	6.1
Idaho	0.6	1.4	3.0	3.1	3.6	6.3
Illinois	1.6	2.1	4.2	4.4	5.1	8.1
Indiana	1.0	1.7	3.5	3.7	4.2	6.6
Iowa	0.7	1.4	2.5	2.7	3.0	5.2
Kansas	0.9	1.6	3.4	3.6	4.0	6.0
Kentucky	1.3	1.8	4.4	4.6	5.3	8.1
Louisiana	1.9	2.4	4.9	5.4	6.3	9.4
Maine	1.0	1.4	3.5	3.6	4.7	7.8
Maryland	1.7	2.2	4.2	4.4	5.3	8.0
Massachusetts	1.5	1.9	3.4	3.6	4.2	7.0
Michigan	1.3	1.8	4.1	4.4	4.9	7.9
Minnesota	0.8	1.4	2.8	2.9	3.2	5.4
Mississippi	2.0	1.8	4.8	5.3	5.9	8.7
Missouri	1.1	1.7	3.2	3.5	4.0	6.8
Montana	1.1	1.9	3.7	3.9	4.5	7.5
Nebraska	0.7	1.2	2.8	3.0	3.7	5.8
Nevada	1.3	1.9	4.5	4.9	5.8	9.5
New Hampshire	0.9	1.2	2.6	2.7	3.0	5.6
New Jersey	2.1	2.2	4.2	4.5	5.1	7.7
New Mexico	1.9	1.7	4.7	5.0	5.6	9.1
New York	1.7	2.0	4.1	4.5	5.3	8.1
North Carolina	1.4	1.5	3.8	4.2	4.9	7.5
North Dakota	0.8	1.5	2.8	2.9	3.2	4.7
Ohio	1.4	2.1	4.5	4.7	5.4	8.3
Oklahoma	1.1	1.6	3.4	3.7	4.5	7.5
Oregon	1.2	2.0	4.1	4.3	5.1	8.3
Pennsylvania	1.6	2.3	4.3	4.5	5.2	8.4
Rhode Island	1.7	2.2	4.1	4.2	4.8	7.4
South Carolina	1.4	1.4	3.5	3.9	4.7	6.9
South Dakota	0.9	1.1	2.9	3.1	3.6	5.8
Tennessee	0.9	1.5	3.5	3.8	4.5	6.8
Texas	1.3	1.8	3.8	4.1	4.6	7.4
Utah	0.6	1.6	3.3	3.4	3.8	6.1
Vermont	0.8	1.4	2.7	2.9	3.5	5.7
Virginia	0.9	1.1	2.9	3.0	3.6	6.4
Washington	1.6	2.2	4.4	4.7	5.6	8.4

State	Measure					
	U-1	U-2	U-3	U-4	U-5	U-6
West Virginia	1.9	2.6	5.3	5.6	6.3	9.8
Wisconsin	0.9	1.6	3.0	3.1	3.5	6.0
Wyoming	1.0	2.0	4.2	4.3	4.8	7.9
Substate areas						
Los Angeles County	1.8	2.4	4.7	4.9	5.6	10.4
New York City	2.0	2.0	4.2	4.7	5.4	8.4

In 2018, nine states had rates lower than those of the U.S. for all six measures, while three states had rates higher than those of the U.S. for all six measures. (See table A.)

The U-4 rate includes discouraged workers; thus, the difference between U-3 and U-4 reflects the degree of would-be job-seeker discouragement. At the national level in 2018, the difference between U-3 and U-4 was +0.2 percentage point. No state had a noteworthy difference between these two measures. (See table B.)

The U-5 rate includes all persons who are marginally attached to the labor force, and U-6 adds those who are involuntary part-time workers. Therefore, the larger the difference between U-5 and U-6, the higher the incidence of this form of "underemployment." In 2018, all states and the District of Columbia had differences between their U-5 and U-6 rates. Connecticut had the largest gap, +3.9 percentage points. North Dakota had the smallest gap, +1.5 percentage points, indicating comparatively low degrees of underemployment. At the national level, the difference between U-5 and U-6 was +2.9 percentage points.

Relative to 2017, three states (Florida, Illinois, and Texas) experienced decreases in all six measures of labor underutilization. For each measure, rates declined over the year for at least 11 states (U-1) and as many as 13 states (U-4 and U-5). No state had an over-the-year rate increase in any measure. (See table C.)

Some states with extreme measures, either low or high, maintained their general place in the rankings of alternative measures over the year. Hawaii, New Hampshire, and Vermont all had rates among the 10 lowest for each measure in 2017 and 2018. Similarly, three states (Alaska, Louisiana, and West Virginia) and the District of Columbia all had rates among the 10 highest for each measure in both periods.

The alternative measures for states are analyzed on a 4-quarter average basis in order to increase the reliability of the CPS estimates, which are based on relatively small sample sizes at the state level, and to eliminate seasonality. Due to the small state sample sizes, neither monthly nor quarterly statewide data from the CPS satisfy BLS publication standards. The analysis above is written with respect to statistical significance testing at the 90-percent confidence level for rate differences with respect to the U.S. (table A), sequential gaps in rates (table B), and over-the-year changes in rates (table C).

The next issuance of the alternative measures of labor underutilization for states, covering the four quarters ending in March 2019, is scheduled for Friday, April 26, 2019.

Last Modified Date: January 25, 2019

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics | Local Area Unemployment Statistics Information and Analysis, PSB Suite 4675, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20212-0001
www.bls.gov/LAU | Telephone: 1-202-691-6392 | Contact LAUS

Assessing Changes to SNAP Work Requirements in the 2018 Farm Bill

Proposal as Passed by the House Committee on Agriculture

Gregory Acs, Laura Wheaton, and Elaine Waxman

May 2018
Updated May 2018

Policymakers continually grapple with how best to structure safety net programs so that they provide adequate assistance to low-income people while encouraging them to work, save, and move toward self-sufficiency. In this brief, we examine legislation recently passed by the House Committee on Agriculture,[1] the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (the 2018 reauthorization of the farm bill), which significantly expands and intensifies work requirements in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known Food Stamps) and implements significant penalties for those who do not comply with those requirements.

The 2018 farm bill was approved by the House Committee on Agriculture in April 2018 and would change certain eligibility and benefit features and restructure work requirements for adults receiving SNAP benefits. The bill would require able-bodied adults ages 18 through 59 who are not pregnant, caring for a child under age 6, or caring for a person with substantial health limitations (i.e., someone deemed "incapacitated") to work or participate in employment and training activities for at least 20 hours per week.

Adults subject to the proposed work requirements would have one month to find employment that offers a sufficient number of hours or to enroll in employment or training programs; if they do not, they risk being excluded from benefits for 12 months unless they come into compliance or become exempt from the work requirement. States would be expected to provide an employment and training slot for any adult who is unable to find work that meets the required hours or is unable to obtain a slot in a program funded under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. States would also be able to request waivers of the requirement in areas with high unemployment and would be able to exempt up to 15 percent of those who would otherwise fail the work requirements.

We use the Urban Institute's newly developed ATTIS (Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security) microsimulation model and data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to assess how many people and households would likely be affected by the House Committee's farm bill proposal nationally as well as in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. We estimate the number of people who would participate in SNAP in 2018 if key eligibility and benefit provisions in the proposal were enacted, the number of people who would be subject to the work requirement, and the number of people who are not working or do not work enough hours to meet the work requirements.[2] Our goal is to examine how many people are potentially subject to proposed work requirements; how many would currently meet the work requirements; and how many would be at risk of losing SNAP benefits if they do not meet the work requirements, obtain a slot in an employment and training program, live in an area covered by a waiver, or receive an exemption.

Our estimates are an upper bound because we do not capture certain exemptions and do not account for the fact that states could seek waivers for areas of high unemployment. We therefore characterize the results as the number of people *potentially* subject to work requirements.

We find the following:

- If key farm bill provisions (other than the work requirement) had been in effect in 2018, we estimate 38.9 million people would participate in SNAP in the average month of the year. Of these, 7.9 million (20 percent) would be potentially subject to the work requirements.
- Of the 7.9 million people who are potentially subject to the work requirement in the average month of the year, we estimate that 5.2 million (66 percent) do not currently work enough to satisfy the work requirement.
- Among SNAP households with children, we estimate that 2.7 million households have at least one adult member who is potentially subject to work requirements in the average month. Of these, an estimated 1.6 million (58 percent) have at least one adult who does not currently work enough to meet the requirements. These families may be at risk of having benefits reduced or losing them altogether if a parent or caregiver does not comply.
- Over half of SNAP participants who do not work enough to satisfy the work requirement in at least one month of the year *do* work enough to satisfy the requirement in another month. Over the course of a year, 9.8 million SNAP participants are potentially subject to the work requirement and do not work enough to meet the requirement in at least one month. Out of those 9.8 million, 5.1 million (52 percent) *do* work enough to satisfy the requirement in at least one other month of the year.
- Among SNAP households with children, 1.9 million units potentially subject to work requirements would have at least one month in which no adult would meet the work requirement. Of these, 1.1 million (60 percent) have at least one adult who worked enough to meet the work requirement in another month of the year.

- The share of people affected by the proposal's work requirements varies by state. In a given month, the national average share of SNAP participants who are potentially subject to work requirements but currently not meeting them is 66 percent, but shares across states range from 74 percent in Nevada and Washington to 46 percent in Hawaii.

The implications for states are as follows:

Because we do not capture certain exemptions or account for waivers from the work requirement in areas with high unemployment, our findings provide states with an upper-bound estimate of the number of people who may need the employment and training services states are expected to offer. The proposed legislation anticipates a growing demand for employment and training services and allocates $1 billion a year for them, but given the large number of SNAP recipients who we estimate do not currently work enough to comply with the new work requirements, that figure may be inadequate. For example, if states needed to provide employment and training services to half of the 9.8 million people we estimate do not work enough to meet the work requirement in at least one month of the year, the additional federal funding averages about $204 per person annually.

A 2017 report on SNAP Employment and Training services indicates that the most common service received by SNAP Employment and Training participants to date is job search training (62 percent), followed by skills assessment (33 percent). The closest job-related activity used by SNAP Employment and Training participants was workfare or community service (19 percent), which in most cases is unlikely to lead to permanent employment or significant skill development (Rowe, Brown, and Estes 2017). As a result, state SNAP Employment and Training programs have relatively little experience offering specific job training and skill development on a large scale.

States will also need to significantly scale their administrative capacity to monitor monthly compliance for all SNAP participants expected to be covered by the new work requirements, provide referrals to employment and training slots, and establish new procedures for enforcing lock-out periods. Consequently, the proposed expansions are likely to require new investments by states because states bear part of the administrative costs of SNAP even though the benefits are paid with federal dollars. Local economies may also lose resources if people who otherwise qualify for SNAP are excluded from the program and purchase less food at grocery stores and food retailers (Hanson 2010).

Proposed Changes to SNAP in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018

More than one in eight Americans[3] participated in SNAP in fiscal year 2017, and the average recipient household received approximately $254 a month in benefits, or about $126 a person (FNS 2017). SNAP benefits paid out to families in that year totaled nearly $64 billion. For individuals and households who qualify for the program, benefits are computed based on family size and income with various allowances for housing and other costs.

In April 2018, the US House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture approved a legislative proposal to reauthorize the farm bill; as of this brief's publication, the proposal is awaiting a vote by the full House. The legislation expands and intensifies work requirements for adults ages 18 to 59. Among other provisions, the proposed bill would also modestly increase the amount of benefits those with earned income could receive, narrow the categories of people considered eligible for benefits, and change the rules on the value of assets individuals and families can have and on the treatment of some expenses.

Under current law, most people ages 16 to 59 without health limitations face modest work requirements. If they are working, they may not leave their jobs or reduce their hours without good cause, and if they are not working, they must look for work and accept offered opportunities. A subset of these people are known as able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs). ABAWDs ages 18 to 49 currently face more stringent work requirements. They are restricted to three months of SNAP benefits in a 36-month period unless they work a monthly average of at least 20 hours a week, earn the equivalent of working 20 hours a week at the minimum wage, participate in a workfare program or a qualified training program for 20 hours a week, have received an exemption, or live in an area that has received a waiver from the requirements because of high unemployment or insufficient work.

Proposed Work Requirements and Penalties

Under the proposed legislation, adults ages 18 through 59 would need to work an average monthly minimum of 20 hours a week or earn the equivalent of working 20 hours a week at the federal minimum wage to qualify for SNAP benefits.[4] The requirement would go into effect in 2021 and would increase to 25 hours a week in 2026. If they are unable to meet the required hours, they must participate in an employment and training program to qualify for benefits. Exemptions can be granted for people who have a disabling health condition, who are pregnant, or who are caring for a child under age 6 or for a person with substantial health limitations (i.e., someone deemed "incapacitated"). People who are not exempt have one month to comply with the proposed work requirement or be excluded from benefits for 12 months unless they comply or become exempt from the work requirement. If a participant falls out of compliance a second time, they would be excluded from SNAP benefits for 36 months or until they comply or receive an exemption.

Proportion of Earnings Not Counted Toward Eligibility

Under current law, 20 percent of earnings are deducted from income when calculating the SNAP benefits a household can receive (termed an "earnings disregard"). The goal of this provision is to encourage work and reduce the adverse impact on benefits when participants increase their earnings from work. In the proposed legislation, this amount would increase to 22 percent.

Narrowing of Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility

The proposed legislation would significantly reduce the flexibility states currently have to increase the income eligibility limit and waive asset tests through an option known as broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE). Forty states (as well as SNAP programs in Guam and the Virgin Islands) currently use BBCE.[5]

Most states with BBCE eliminate the net income test and eliminate or increase the asset limit. Thirty-one states also use BBCE to increase the gross income limit for SNAP eligibility from the federal standard of 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) to a higher threshold, ranging from 150 percent of FPL up to the limit of 200 percent of FPL. The higher gross income limit helps avoid a "benefit cliff" faced by some households that have income modestly above the gross income limit but that also have shelter or child care expenses that are high enough to make them otherwise eligible for SNAP benefits. Because the benefit amount falls as income rises, BBCE does not substantially increase the number of participating households. In 2016, 5.8 percent of participating households had gross income above 130 percent of FPL (Lauffer 2017).[6]

The proposed legislation limits BBCE to households in which monthly gross income does not exceed 130 percent of FPL and that receive cash assistance or "ongoing and substantial services." We follow the Congressional Budget Office interpretation that states would continue to be able to waive the net income limit through BBCE but would no longer be able to raise the gross income limit above 130 percent of FPL (CBO 2018).[7] We further assume that states would no longer be able to eliminate or modify the asset test through BBCE.

Asset Limits

The proposed legislation also changes SNAP's asset limits. Asset limits reflect the assumption that families experiencing temporary income losses should draw on their savings to tide themselves over. However, expecting a family to spend down all their assets before qualifying for benefits discourages saving and potentially undermines a family's ability to manage future income shocks (Ratcliffe et al. 2016).

The proposed legislation raises the maximum value of financial assets a household can have and still qualify for benefits from $2,250 to $7,000 for households with no members with disabilities or members over age 60, and it raises that value from $3,500 to $12,000 for households with members with disabilities or members age 60 and higher.[8] Currently under BBCE, 34 states and DC (as well as SNAP programs in Guam and the Virgin Islands) have eliminated asset tests; another five have relaxed asset ceilings. Current law also allows states to altogether eliminate the federal asset tests for vehicles, exempt at least one vehicle from the test, or raise the allowed value. All states have taken some version of these options.[9]

The proposed legislation curtails that state flexibility regarding assets and vehicles. Consequently, if the 2018 farm bill is passed by Congress, many households in states that have adopted BBCE will face

stricter asset limits on both savings and vehicle values, although households in those handful of states that have not adopted BBCE and retained the federal asset limits would now have higher asset limits. Households will have to document their asset values, increasing the administrative steps needed to verify and complete a SNAP application.

Other Changes in Treatment of Expenses under SNAP

The proposed legislation includes other changes affecting how household eligibility for SNAP is determined. These include modifications to the military housing allowance, the homeless housing credit, and the standard utility allowance for nonelderly households receiving energy assistance. The legislation mandates three policies that were previously available as state options, requiring that child support payments be disregarded (rather than deducted) from income when determining eligibility and benefits, requiring that participants cooperate with child support enforcement, and providing five months of transitional benefits to families leaving TANF.

Methods for Assessing Impact of Proposed Changes to SNAP

To assess how many individuals and families will be affected by the proposed eligibility changes and the SNAP work requirements nationwide and in each state, we use the Urban Institute's newly developed ATTIS microsimulation model.[10] The model uses data from the ACS and assesses eligibility for and participation across multiple safety net programs, including SNAP. The model applies detailed state-level program rules to each household in the ACS and determines eligibility and benefits for the household based on its individual income and demographic characteristics. By varying the program rules, we can assess how proposed policy changes affect eligibility and participation in that program. Because the underlying ACS data are representative at the state level, we can assess how the impacts of policy changes vary by state.

Because the data underlying the current version of the model represent the US population in 2015, we "age" the data to better represent the US population and economy in 2018.[11] This means, in part, increasing observed employment and earnings to reflect 2018's stronger economy along with smaller program caseloads.

We begin by estimating the number of people who would participate in SNAP in 2018 if key provisions of the 2018 farm bill were implemented but before we apply the proposal's work requirements. Specifically, we consider the effects of changes in the earned income disregard, BBCE, asset limits, and transitional benefits for families leaving TANF. Because of data limitations, we do not capture changes in the proposed legislation to vehicle tests, the child support deduction or cooperation provisions, the military housing allowance, the homeless housing credit, or the standard utility allowance for nonelderly households receiving energy assistance.

After we simulate what the SNAP caseload would be in the average month of 2018 under the program rules proposed in the legislation, we assess the number of individuals and households who would be subject to the proposed work requirements that would go into effect in 2021. We assume that no individual or household has yet been disqualified for failure to comply with work requirements (except able-bodied adults who are not meeting work requirements and have already exceeded their three months of benefits).

We count SNAP participants as potentially subject to the proposed legislation's work requirements if they are ages 18 to 59 and are not receiving disability income or in a family with a child under age 6. The proposal provides an exemption for caretakers of a child under age 6, and we assume this exemption would be applied to all adults within the family. Because we lack information on full- versus part-time student status in the ACS data, we exclude students from the analysis.[12] We did not capture other potential exemptions, such as a person being physically or mentally unfit for work (unless he or she is receiving disability income), pregnant, a caregiver for an incapacitated person, or covered by a state's option to exempt 15 percent of those who would otherwise fail the work requirements. We also did not capture the ability for states to request waivers of the work requirements in areas with high unemployment. The results provide upper-bound estimates on the share of SNAP recipients potentially subject to work requirements.

We then assess the individuals and households potentially subject to the proposed work requirements to determine

- how many are meeting the requirement by working a monthly average of at least 20 hours a week or by having monthly earnings equivalent to working at least 20 hours a week at the minimum wage;
- how many are not working currently and would be likely to lose benefits under the one-month compliance rule unless they are able to quickly find work or a slot in an employment and training program; and
- how many do not have sufficient work hours to meet the requirements in at least one month but would meet the requirements in at least one other month over the course of the year.

Our goal is to provide insight into how many individuals are potentially subject to proposed work requirements, how many currently work enough hours to satisfy the work requirement, and how many are at risk of losing SNAP benefits unless they meet the work requirement or obtain a slot in an employment and training program. Additional details about the development of the estimates and data limitations can also be found in the appendix and in the companion technical report (Wheaton, Giannarelli, and Morton 2018).

How Many Individuals and Families Would Be Affected by Proposed SNAP Work Requirements?

National Findings for Individuals

We start from a 2018 baseline in which approximately 41.3 million people receive SNAP in the average month in 2018 *before* implementing the 2018 farm bill's proposed policy changes and work requirements.[13]

- After simulating the bill's policy changes affecting eligibility and benefit calculations, we estimate that 38.9 million individuals would be receiving SNAP benefits *in a given month* in 2018. This is approximately 2.4 million fewer recipients than would be expected to participate in 2018 under current law, and the estimate assumes no one was removed from the rolls for failure to comply with the new work requirements.[14]
- Of these 38.9 million SNAP recipients,
  - » 7.9 million (20 percent) are potentially subject to the proposed work requirements *in a given month*. Of those, 2.7 million (34 percent) are working enough hours to meet the threshold of 20 hours a week.
  - » Among the 7.9 million SNAP recipients potentially subject to work requirements, 5.2 million (approximately 66 percent) are not currently working enough to meet them and may not qualify for an exemption or reside in an area with a waiver. Unless they qualify for and obtain an exemption or reside in an area covered by a waiver, these individuals would need to find work or enroll in employment or training programs within one month of implementation of the proposed changes. Otherwise, they would be excluded from benefits for 12 months unless they comply with or become exempt from the work requirement. A subsequent failure to comply with work requirements would result in exclusion from SNAP benefits for 36 months or until they comply with or become exempt from the work requirement.
- We also examine the pattern of current work activity over the course of a year. We find that 9.8 million SNAP recipients would have at least one month in which they are potentially subject to the proposed work requirements but not meeting them. However, 52 percent of this group would meet the requirements in at least one other month during the year. In other words, these individuals are working the required number of hours under the proposed legislation, but they are doing so intermittently. Under the proposed work requirements, they would risk losing benefits in the months of the year in which they are working the least and in which their incomes are likely the lowest.

The proposed legislation anticipates a growing demand for employment and training services and allocates $1 billion a year for them, but given the large number of SNAP recipients who we estimate are

potentially subject to the work requirements and do not work enough to meet them, that figure may be inadequate. Indeed, even if states try to provide employment and training services to only half of the 9.8 million people we estimate do not work enough to meet the work requirements in at least one month of the year, the additional federal funding averages about $204 per person annually. Recent analysis of employment and training programs that promote opportunity suggest that most programs may cost from $7500 to more than $14,000 per participant (Pavetti 2018), far more than the additional funds allocated in the bill. Other data from selected Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs at the state level suggest that costs may range from $3000 to around $14,000 per person (Mikelson and Hecker, forthcoming).

Because people move into and out of jobs and onto and off of SNAP from month to month, the number of people who may find themselves out of compliance with work requirements in at least one month over the course of a year (9.8 million) is 24 percent higher than the number who would potentially fail the work requirement in the average month (7.9 million).

Given that the proposed legislation specifies that a person's first instance of failure to comply with work requirements would exclude him or her from SNAP benefits for up to 12 months, the proposed legislation appears to have minimal accommodation for people whose hours fluctuate or who work intermittently. Effective employment and training slots could reduce cycling in and out of benefits, but it is not clear that these programs can help participants find and retain jobs that would provide sufficient and stable hours over time. Concerns have previously been raised about the effectiveness of SNAP employment and training programs; in response, Congress authorized the creation of 10 pilot programs in the 2014 farm bill with the goal of identifying and testing the most effective strategies for achieving outcomes (Oliveira et al. 2018). The pilot results will not be available until 2021.

State-Level Findings for Individuals

The percentage of estimated SNAP participants who are estimated to be potentially subject to the new work requirements but not meeting them in the average month varies from 46 percent in Hawaii to 74 percent in Nevada and Washington (table 1).

In two states (Hawaii and Kansas), fewer than half of those subject to work requirements would fail to meet them based on their current work effort. In contrast, 70 percent or more of those who are potentially subject to the work requirements would not be meeting them in Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, New York, and Washington. The states with the largest SNAP caseloads are also the ones with the largest number of people not meeting the program's proposed work requirements. We estimate that 612,000 people in California and over 325,000 people each in Florida, New York, and Texas are not working enough to meet the proposed work requirements.

TABLE 1

People Participating in SNAP, by State

Thousands of people

State	Average Monthly Total	# potentially subject to work requirement	# potentially subject to work requirement and not meeting it	% of total potentially subject to work requirement who are not meeting it	% who did not meet the work requirement in one month who met it in another month[a]
Alabama	783	153	94	61	48
Alaska	97	25	16	66	61
Arizona	793	152	111	73	44
Arkansas	402	61	34	56	52
California	3,738	834	612	73	50
Colorado	456	91	60	66	59
Connecticut	342	70	44	63	54
Delaware	122	32	21	66	50
DC	96	22	16	70	60
Florida	2,962	559	326	58	52
Georgia	1,551	335	224	67	47
Hawaii	120	19	9	46	43
Idaho	175	27	16	59	58
Illinois	1,704	404	275	68	53
Indiana	647	95	57	60	52
Iowa	316	63	36	57	63
Kansas	225	32	16	49	62
Kentucky	644	127	86	68	53
Louisiana	896	220	158	72	45
Maine	152	27	16	59	55
Maryland	575	119	77	65	51
Massachusetts	678	130	83	64	55
Michigan	1,266	259	183	71	53
Minnesota	381	52	33	62	64
Mississippi	519	94	58	62	44
Missouri	761	142	85	60	61
Montana	109	23	16	69	57
Nebraska	174	25	15	57	57
Nevada	398	94	70	74	57
New Hampshire	79	15	9	63	71
New Jersey	720	130	84	65	52
New Mexico	441	104	71	68	45
New York	2,741	606	423	70	49
North Carolina	1,139	188	113	60	48
North Dakota	45	5	3	62	65
Ohio	1,448	237	149	63	56
Oklahoma	577	107	64	60	54
Oregon	581	130	86	66	58
Pennsylvania	1,648	345	231	67	56
Rhode Island	136	28	19	68	55
South Carolina	686	150	101	67	49
South Dakota	95	18	12	64	45
Tennessee	1,034	239	162	68	50
Texas	3,740	726	487	67	52
Utah	205	25	14	53	56
Vermont	62	13	7	55	61

State	Total	Average Monthly # potentially subject to work requirement	Average Monthly # potentially subject to work requirement and not meeting it	Average Monthly % of total potentially subject to work requirement who are not meeting it	% who did not meet the work requirement in one month who met it in another month[a]
Virginia	776	157	100	64	56
Washington	765	161	119	74	54
West Virginia	328	77	52	68	49
Wisconsin	581	104	53	51	61
Wyoming	33	5	3	59	71
US total	**38,941**	**7,861**	**5,207**	**66**	**52**

Source: Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security 2018 estimates based on 2015 ACS data aged to 2018.
Note: Work requirement is as proposed by the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, H.R. 2, 115th Congress (2018), as passed by the House Committee on Agriculture.
[a] The participant does not necessarily need to be receiving SNAP in the month he or she works enough to meet the work requirement.

These estimates do not account for the waivers that states would be able to obtain in areas with high unemployment or for states' ability to exempt up to 15 percent of participants who would otherwise fail the work requirement. Of the states where at least 70 percent of participants potentially subject to work requirements do not meet them, California, the District of Columbia, Louisiana, and Nevada currently receive waivers from ABAWD time limits for their entire state; the remaining states have waivers covering portions of the state.[15]

As with the national estimates, many participants who would not be estimated to meet the requirements in a given month *would* meet them in at least one other month during the year; the share of such people ranges from 71 percent in Wyoming and New Hampshire to 43 percent in Hawaii.

Findings for All Households and Households with Children

Focusing on households[16] receiving SNAP, we see much the same pattern as we do for individual adult participants. (See table 2 for both national and state-level findings.) Our model indicates that out of 18 million households expected to be receiving SNAP under the proposed legislation in the average month of 2018, 6.6 million (37 percent) would have at least one individual potentially subject to work requirements, and 4.7 million (71 percent) of those subject to work requirements would have at least one member not working enough to satisfy the work requirement. An estimated 7.7 million households potentially subject to the work requirement would have at least one month of the year in which nobody was meeting the work requirement. Of these, we estimate that 4.3 million (55 percent) have at least one month in the year where at least one member would meet the work requirement.

TABLE 2

Units Participating in SNAP, by State

Thousands of units

State	Average Monthly Total	# of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement	# of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement and not meeting it	% of units subject to work requirement that are not meeting it	% of units that did not meet the work requirement in one month that met it in another month[a]
Alabama	354	123	82	66	52
Alaska	44	20	14	71	67
Arizona	330	128	99	77	46
Arkansas	156	51	32	62	53
California	1,670	720	558	78	54
Colorado	211	79	55	70	62
Connecticut	186	59	39	66	57
Delaware	64	29	19	67	52
DC	54	21	15	71	62
Florida	1,441	456	286	63	55
Georgia	687	279	201	72	50
Hawaii	51	14	8	55	50
Idaho	70	23	15	64	56
Illinois	841	339	247	73	56
Indiana	251	82	53	65	54
Iowa	138	52	32	63	67
Kansas	87	27	14	53	65
Kentucky	291	103	74	72	56
Louisiana	420	186	140	75	48
Maine	83	23	15	63	58
Maryland	290	101	70	69	54
Massachusetts	375	112	76	68	57
Michigan	586	223	169	76	55
Minnesota	163	46	31	67	65
Mississippi	211	77	51	66	46
Missouri	337	118	76	64	65
Montana	48	18	14	74	60
Nebraska	74	22	14	63	60
Nevada	184	80	63	79	59
New Hampshire	41	12	8	67	74
New Jersey	336	110	77	70	56
New Mexico	209	82	60	73	51
New York	1,426	517	386	75	52
North Carolina	478	155	99	64	52
North Dakota	20	4	3	65	63
Ohio	635	203	137	67	59
Oklahoma	261	88	58	66	60
Oregon	302	111	78	70	61
Pennsylvania	861	291	206	71	59
Rhode Island	78	25	18	71	59
South Carolina	309	123	88	71	54
South Dakota	41	15	10	67	49
Tennessee	473	198	143	72	53
Texas	1,604	598	435	73	56
Utah	68	20	12	60	58

State	Total	Average Monthly # of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement	Average Monthly # of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement and not meeting it	Average Monthly % of units subject to work requirement that are not meeting it	% of units that did not meet the work requirement in one month that met it in another month[a]
Vermont	36	10	7	65	63
Virginia	357	133	92	69	59
Washington	381	136	107	78	56
West Virginia	165	62	45	73	54
Wisconsin	272	84	48	58	67
Wyoming	12	4	3	68	76
US total	**18,061**	**6,593**	**4,682**	**71**	**55**

Source: Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security 2018 estimates based on 2015 ACS data aged to 2018.
Note: Work requirement is as proposed by the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, H.R. 2, 115th Congress (2018), as passed by the House Committee on Agriculture.
[a] The unit does not necessarily need to be receiving SNAP in the month that a member works enough to meet the work requirement.

Among the 8.2 million SNAP households with children under age 18, almost 2.8 million would be potentially subject to work requirements, and 1.6 million (58 percent) of those subject to work requirements would have at least one member not meeting them in the average month of the year (see table 3 for both national and state-level findings). An estimated 1.9 million households with children that contain an adult potentially subject to work requirements would have at least one month of the year in which no adult would meet the work requirement. Of these, 1.1 million (60 percent) have at least one adult who worked enough to meet the work requirement in another month of the year.[17]

TABLE 3

Units with Children Participating in SNAP, by State

Thousands of units

State	Total	Average Monthly # of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement	Average Monthly # of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement and not meeting it	Average Monthly % of units subject to work requirement who are not meeting it	% of units that did not meet the work requirement in one month that met it in another month[a]
Alabama	171	66	39	58	53
Alaska	16	6	4	58	63
Arizona	172	54	33	62	54
Arkansas	96	32	17	53	68
California	966	262	171	65	56
Colorado	105	33	18	54	69
Connecticut	63	23	14	61	65
Delaware	25	12	6	51	47
DC	17	6	3	42	67
Florida	566	196	108	55	61

State	Total	Average Monthly # of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement	Average Monthly # of units with at least one participant subject to work requirement and not meeting it	Average Monthly % of units subject to work requirement who are not meeting it	% of units that did not meet the work requirement in one month that met it in another month[a]
Georgia	327	114	61	53	57
Hawaii	23	9	5	53	55
Idaho	41	15	8	55	67
Illinois	327	107	61	57	59
Indiana	155	56	33	59	56
Iowa	72	28	16	55	65
Kansas	55	20	9	47	67
Kentucky	139	48	27	56	63
Louisiana	175	64	37	57	55
Maine	26	10	6	56	54
Maryland	120	38	22	59	57
Massachusetts	121	46	27	58	63
Michigan	254	97	54	56	63
Minnesota	91	25	13	50	72
Mississippi	122	46	24	53	54
Missouri	159	57	32	56	65
Montana	22	7	5	65	59
Nebraska	42	12	6	47	73
Nevada	79	24	16	65	55
New Hampshire	16	6	4	55	72
New Jersey	164	56	34	61	59
New Mexico	79	25	14	55	55
New York	504	175	101	57	55
North Carolina	283	101	57	57	55
North Dakota	11	2	1	46	91
Ohio	321	108	57	53	66
Oklahoma	125	42	27	64	56
Oregon	105	32	19	61	60
Pennsylvania	295	101	61	61	62
Rhode Island	25	7	4	56	72
South Carolina	145	53	33	61	62
South Dakota	20	7	4	59	63
Tennessee	208	74	42	57	60
Texas	825	247	141	57	63
Utah	49	15	8	57	72
Vermont	10	4	3	74	69
Virginia	176	60	35	58	57
Washington	154	48	31	65	59
West Virginia	57	21	13	62	64
Wisconsin	117	43	21	49	77
Wyoming	8	3	2	61	89
US total	**8,245**	**2,745**	**1,584**	**58**	**60**

Source: Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security 2018 estimates based on 2015 ACS data aged to 2018.

Note: Work requirement is as proposed by the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, H.R. 2, 115th Congress (2018), as passed by the House Committee on Agriculture.

[a] The unit does not necessarily need to be receiving SNAP in the month that a member works enough to meet the work requirement.

Summary and Discussion

Using the Urban Institute's new ATTIS microsimulation model, we estimate that if the proposed 2018 farm bill as passed by the House Committee on Agriculture were in place in 2018, 5.2 million people potentially subject to work requirements would not satisfy the proposed SNAP work requirements in an average month. Over the course of the entire year, 9.8 million people would fail to meet the proposed work requirement in at least one month, but more than half work enough to satisfy the requirements in at least some point during the year. The impact of the proposed changes is expected to vary across states, an important consideration for assessing the proposal's potential impact. Note also that the current proposal significantly expands work requirements in SNAP for parents with school-age children and that failure to meet those requirements may put an estimated 1.6 million families at risk of reduced benefits or a loss of benefits altogether.

The proposed legislation provides for some exemptions to work requirements and allows states to request waivers of the work requirement in areas with high unemployment. We do not capture the effects of waivers and certain exemptions here. Therefore, our estimates may be considered an upper-bound estimate of those who may be affected by the proposed changes. The bill directs states to provide employment and training services to SNAP recipients who are affected by the work requirements but not satisfying them, and it adds $1 billion to support those training activities. However, that funding is likely to be insufficient given the significant number of people who may need those services, especially given the short time individuals have to find a job or risk losing their SNAP benefits. If half of the 9.8 million SNAP participants who are estimated to not meet the requirements in at least one month of the year were to seek education and training services, the average amount of federal funds available to states would be $204 per person. Given that other research has suggested that effective job training programs may cost from $3000 to $14,000 per person, the proposed investment may not be sufficient to meet the demand or produce the desired outcomes.

Further, states have little experience providing job-specific training or skill development on a large scale through their existing SNAP Employment and Training programs. A 2017 report on SNAP Employment and Training completed for USDA indicates that the most common service received by participants to date is job search training (62 percent), followed by skills assessment (33 percent). The closest job-related activity used by participants was workfare or community service (19 percent), which in most cases is unlikely to lead to permanent employment or significant skill development (Rowe, Brown, and Estes 2017).

Previous research has shown that by themselves, work requirements in safety net programs do not necessarily help people find well-paying jobs or lift them out of poverty (Hahn 2018). Therefore, policymakers need to carefully consider the pros and cons of various approaches as they consider the 2018 farm bill. The current proposal presents some challenges that policymakers may want to carefully consider, such as that the time period for considering an individual to be in compliance is relatively short (one month), that state administrative procedures and investments are expected to increase

considerably, that state flexibility to tailor program rules would be reduced, and that the need for high-quality employment and training programs is likely well beyond current capacity.

Appendix: Comparing Alternative Approaches to Estimating the Scale and Scope of Work Requirements

Different approaches to estimating the scale and scope of the number of people affected by the proposed work requirements yield different results. Here we compare our main findings at the national level to results using different data and a different microsimulation model.

Compared with work done by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP; see Bolen et al. 2018) and an analysis using the TRIM3 microsimulation model (authors' tabulations), the ATTIS model finds fewer people subject to the proposed work requirements, fewer people out of compliance with the requirements, and a slightly lower share out of compliance relative to the total number subject to the requirements (table A.1). Those differences are consistent with our expectations based on differences in the underlying data for each estimate. For example, the CBPP analysis (Bolen et al. 2018) used data from SNAP's quality control system for 2016 (which reflects the SNAP caseload under current law rather than simulating what the caseload would look like under the proposed changes to the program), and the TRIM3 analysis uses data for 2015. State and national SNAP caseloads were higher and employment rates were lower in 2015 and 2016 than we project them to be in 2018. Thus, it is not surprising that ATTIS for 2018 shows fewer people on SNAP, fewer people subject to work requirements, and fewer people out of compliance with the requirements than the other two analyses. Nevertheless, the share of people required to work but not working enough to satisfy the requirements is similar between the ATTIS and TRIM models (66 versus 70 percent, respectively) but somewhat lower than the share in the CBPP study (78 percent).

TABLE A.1

Estimates of People Subject to and Out of Compliance with Proposed SNAP Work Requirements, by Analysis Method

	2016 Quality Control data	2015 TRIM3 data	ATTIS 2018 data
Subject to work requirements	9.4 million	10.8 million	7.9 million
Out of compliance with work requirements	7.4 million	7.5 million	5.2 million
Percentage out of compliance	78%	70%	66%

Source: 2016 Quality Control information from Bolen et al. (2018); Transfer Income Model version, 3 and Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security calculations by authors.
Note: ATTIS 2018 estimates assume that all adults in unit with child under age 6 are exempt and students are exempt from SNAP work requirements.

As discussions about work requirements continue, it is important to understand how the data and assumptions used for analyses influence the results and how even the "best" estimates are subject to change and revision.

Notes

[1] See the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, H.R. 2, 115th Congress (2018), which recently passed the House Committee on Agriculture with a partisan 26–20 vote.

[2] Although the proposed bill would give states until 2021 to implement the revised work requirements, for simplicity, we model the changes based on 2018 baseline data.

[3] About 42.2 million people participated in the average month of fiscal year 2017.

[4] Estimate is for fiscal years 2021 to 2025; the threshold increases to 25 hours in fiscal year 2026.

[5] See "Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility," Food and Nutrition Service, last updated February 2018, accessed May 14, 2018, https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/BBCE.pdf.

[6] This estimate includes households with a member age 60 or older or a member with disabilities that are not subject to the gross income test as well as other households with incomes above the federal gross income limit that are eligible because of BBCE.

[7] The gross income test does not apply to households with a member age 60 or older or a member with disabilities.

[8] Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Resources (Rules on Resource Limits)," Food and Nutrition Service, last published October 2, 2017, https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/resources-rules-resource-limits.

[9] Statistics for states with BBCE include Guam and the Virgin Islands. See "Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility," Food and Nutrition Service, last updated February 2018, accessed May 14, 2018, https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/BBCE.pdf.

[10] For a description of ATTIS, see Wheaton, Giannarelli, and Morton (2018).

[11] For a description of the data "aging" process, see the appendix.

[12] College students attending school more than half time are ineligible for SNAP unless they meet certain exemptions. Among students who *are* eligible for SNAP, being in school at least half time provides an exemption from the work requirement.

[13] The baseline may slightly overstate SNAP participation in 2018. According to data from the Food and Nutrition Service, 41.4 million people received SNAP in December 2017, but this fell to 40.6 million in January 2018 and 40.0 million in February 2018. See "Program Data: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)," Food and Nutrition Service, last published May 4, 2018, https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap.

[14] Some people who were estimated to receive SNAP in 2018 (under current 2018 law) became ineligible, while some other people became eligible; in those cases, we selected a portion as receiving benefits consistent with observed participation rates in the 2015 un-aged baseline.

[15] "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Status of State Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limit Waivers – Fiscal Year 2018—3rd Quarter," Food and Nutrition Service, last updated April 6, 2018, https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/FY18-Quarter3-ABAWD-Waiver-Status.pdf.

[16] More specifically, focusing on units receiving assistance; a single household could contain more than one SNAP unit.

[17] When a family member loses eligibility because of a failure to meet the work requirement, eligibility and benefits are reassessed for the remaining unit members. The unit's size, which determines the income eligibility limit and maximum SNAP benefit, is reduced by the removal of the ineligible member, but a prorated share of the ineligible member's income and deductions continue to be counted as available to the unit. Thus, when a family member loses eligibility because he or she fails to meet the work requirement, the remaining unit members are likely to become eligible for a smaller benefit or may lose eligibility entirely; this includes households with children.

References

Bolen, Ed, Lexin Cai, Stacy Dean, Brynne Keith-Jennings, Catlin Nchako, Dottie Rosenbaum, and Elizabeth Wolkomir. 2018. *House Agriculture's Farm Bill Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

CBO (Congressional Budget Office). 2018. *Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate: H.R. 2 Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018*. Washington, DC: CBO.

FNS (Food and Nutrition Service). 2017. *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: State Activity Report, Fiscal Year 2016*. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Program Accountability and Administration Division.

Hahn, Heather. 2018. "Work Requirements in Safety Net Programs: Lessons for Medicaid from TANF and SNAP." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Hanson, Kenneth. 2010. *The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP*. Report 103. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

Lauffer, Sarah. 2017. *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2016*. Report SNAP-17-CHAR. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Mikelson, Kelly S., and Ian Hecker. Forthcoming. "Public Funding for Job Training at the State and Local Level: An Examination of , Massachusetts, Texas and Washington." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Oliveira, Victor, Mark Prell, Laura Tiehen, and David Smallwood. 2018. *Design Issues in USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Looking Ahead by Looking Back*. Report 243. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

Pavetti, LaDonna. 2018. "Opportunity-Boosting Job Preparedness Takes Significant Investment, Evidence Shows." Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Ratcliffe, Caroline, Signe-Mary McKernan, Laura Wheaton, Emma Kalish, Catherine Ruggles, Sara Armstrong, and Christina Oberlin. 2016. *Asset Limits, SNAP Participation, and Financial Stability*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture.

Rowe, Gretchen, Elizabeth Brown, and Brian Estes. 2017. *SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Characteristics Study: Final Report*. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Wheaton, Laura, Linda Giannarelli, and Joyce Morton. 2018. Methods for Estimating SNAP Policy Impacts with an ACS-Based Simulation Model. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Wheaton, Laura, and Victoria Tran. 2018. *The Antipoverty Effects of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Errata

This brief was updated on May 16, 2018. The full name of the ATTIS model was corrected to "Analysis of Transfers, Taxes, and Income Security"; typos were corrected on pages 3, 6, 8, 9, and 15; and tables 1 through 3 were amended to clarify that only some columns are monthly estimates.

About the Authors

Gregory Acs is vice president for income and benefits policy at the Urban Institute, where his research focuses on social insurance, social welfare, and the compensation of workers. Dr. Acs has studied the low-wage labor market, changes in welfare policies and how they have affected welfare caseloads and the well-being of low-income families, and how state and federal policies affect the incentives families face as they move from welfare to work. Acs holds a PhD in economics and social work from the University of Michigan.

Laura Wheaton is a senior fellow in the Income and Benefits Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she specializes in the analysis of government safety-net programs, poverty estimation, and the microsimulation modeling of tax and transfer programs. She has analyzed churning in the SNAP program, the effect of SNAP asset limits, the overlap of eligibility between Medicaid and SNAP, and is currently conducting research on the effect of time limits on able bodied adults without dependents. Ms. Wheaton received her MPP from Georgetown University.

Elaine Waxman is a senior fellow in the Income and Benefits Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Her expertise includes food insecurity, nutrition and the food assistance safety net, the social determinants of health disparities, and other issues affecting low-income families and communities. She holds an MPP and a PhD from the University of Chicago, where she is a lecturer.

Acknowledgments

This brief was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We are grateful to them and to all our funders, who make it possible for Urban to advance its mission.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, or the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute's funding principles is available at urban.org/fundingprinciples.

We would like to thank colleagues at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities for their helpful comments and suggestions. In addition, we would like to thank Genevieve M. Kenney, Heather Hahn, Linda Giannarelli, and Archana Pyati for additional comments and suggestions.

This work is part of the Urban Institute's 50-year history of forecasting and analyzing major shifts in federal policies, including remaking the safety net. As policymakers consider the profound changes in the safety net, our researchers remain committed to producing important evidence-based resources for policymakers and the American public to understand the implications of changing federal policy.

2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

www.urban.org

ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is a leading research organization dedicated to developing evidence-based insights that improve people's lives and strengthen communities. For 50 years, Urban has been the trusted source for rigorous analysis of complex social and economic issues; strategic advice to policymakers, philanthropists, and practitioners; and new, promising ideas that expand opportunities for all. Our work inspires effective decisions that advance fairness and enhance the well-being of people and places.

Appendix I

Franklin County

Work Experience Program

Comprehensive Report

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents

Work Experience Program
Ohio Association of Foodbanks
101 E. Town St. Ste, 540
Columbus, OH 43215
www.ohiofoodbanks.org
614.221.4336

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

For almost two years, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks has been assisting able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Franklin County with meeting the federal work requirement to maintain their food assistance as part of an ongoing partnership with the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services (FCDJFS). The association has been able to grow this Work Experience Program (WEP), offering more services and resources to ABAWDs in need. WEP provides work experience and job training for participants who are currently unemployed or underemployed, as a means to enhance their ability to secure sustainable employment.

Prior to assigning a client in a job placement within our network of partner nonprofit and faith-based organizations, the association meets with each ABAWD to perform an in-depth assessment. To date, we have assessed close to 5,000 individuals. The data we have collected through these assessments continue to reinforce what we have been able to identify as key barriers for many of our clients as they seek gainful employment. Our findings indicate that many of our clients struggle with accessing reliable transportation, unstable living situations, criminal records, education, and both physical and mental health problems. Our deeper understanding of these issues has led us to partner with organizations that can help ABAWDs navigate through many of their challenges, giving our clients a better chance at improving their lives and supporting themselves.

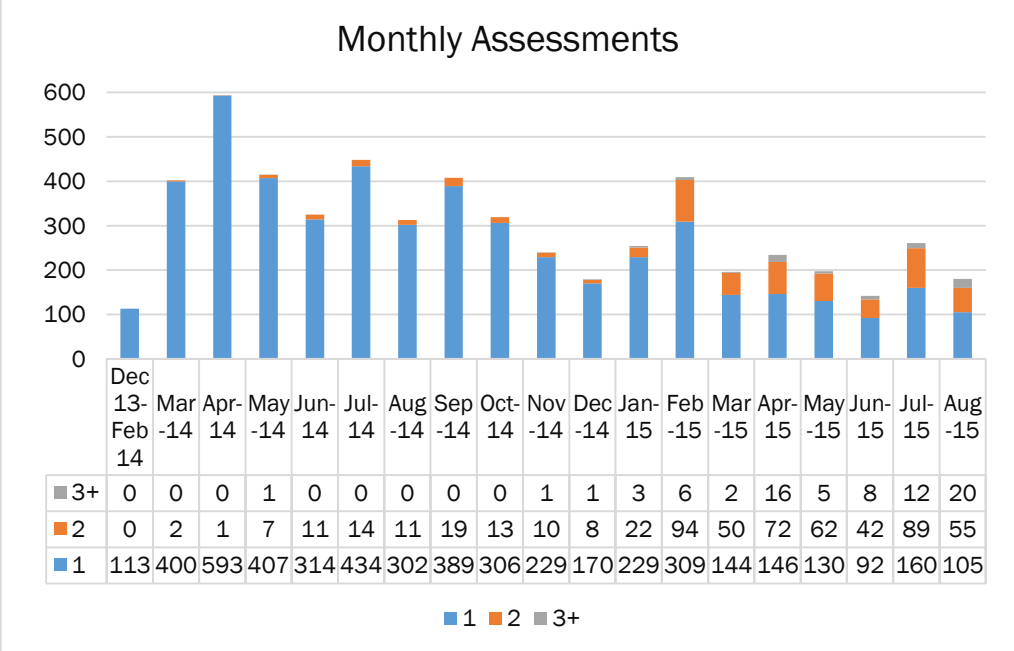
The data has prompted many recommendations to FCDJFS including but not limited to: providing additional funding for programs that support WEP participants and low-income households; expanding enrollment of nationally certified educational programs as well as programs for youth aging out of foster care; and creating an employment pipeline into strategic aspects of the job market.

Assessment of ABAWDs in Franklin County, OH

When Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services (FCDJFS) caseworkers make the determination that a client receiving SNAP benefits meets the criteria to be considered an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) and is required to work under federal regulations, the client is referred to their local opportunity center to meet with an Ohio Association of Foodbanks Work Experience Program (WEP) assessment specialist. Each specialist completes a comprehensive interview with each client using a series of questions on the Work Experience Assessment Portal. The assessment is designed to determine employability and identify barriers to employment.

The assessment process is part of an ongoing contract targeting clients who are subject to a strict, three-month time limit in every 36-month period for SNAP eligibility. As we approach the second anniversary of this program, we have closely examined the data collected from 4,827 ABAWDs and gathered from 5,434 self-reported employability and skills assessments that took place between December 10, 2013 and September 1, 2015. Over the past two years the information obtained for this ongoing project represents the most comprehensive and up-to-date information collected about this misunderstood population. These findings offer instructive, meaningful insight into who these individuals are and what will be needed to address the barriers and challenges faced by these individuals as they attempt to secure stable employment.

The chart depicts the number of ABAWD assessments performed by association staff for each month. Clients coming in for an initial assessment each month appear in blue, second time visits in any given month appear in orange, and clients who are completing the assessment for the third or more times appear in gray.

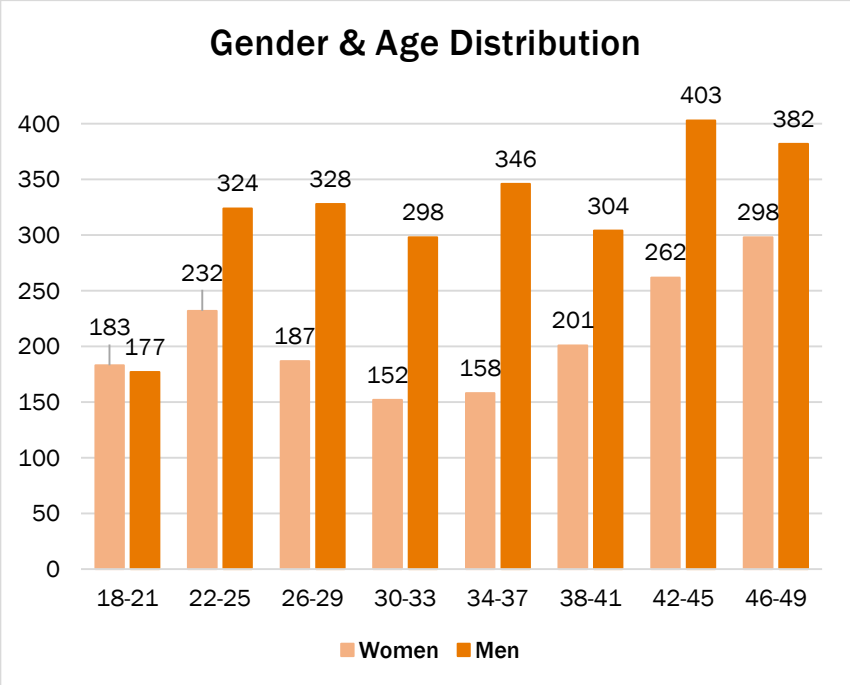


	Dec 13-Feb 14	Mar -14	Apr-14	May -14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug -14	Sep -14	Oct-14	Nov -14	Dec -14	Jan-15	Feb -15	Mar -15	Apr-15	May -15	Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug -15
3+	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	6	2	16	5	8	12	20
2	0	2	1	7	11	14	11	19	13	10	8	22	94	50	72	62	42	89	55
1	113	400	593	407	314	434	302	389	306	229	170	229	309	144	146	130	92	160	105

Age & Gender

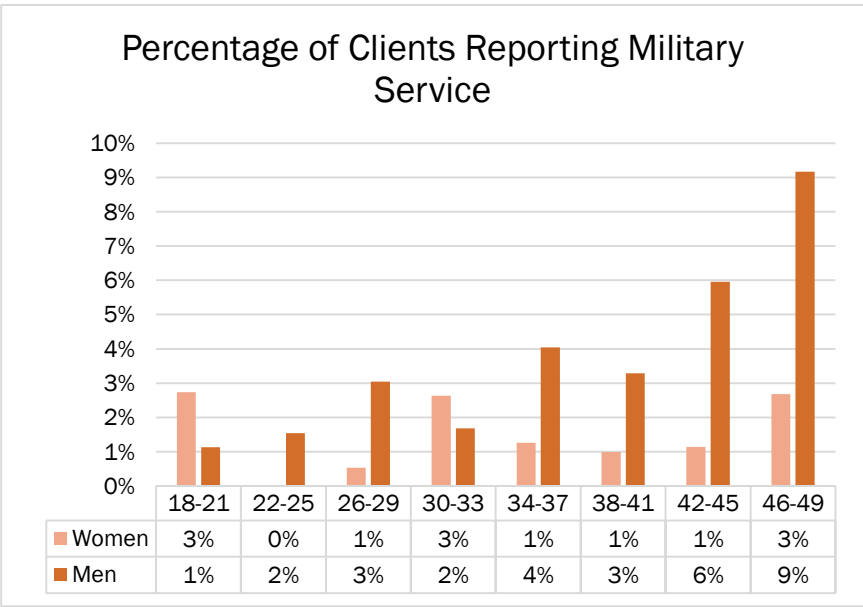
From the total population of 4,827 ABAWDs surveyed, **1,880** clients (**38.9%**) were **female,** and **2,945** clients (**61.0%**) were **male**. Two clients preferred to be identified as **transgender.**

The chart represents a distribution of the ABAWDs based on age and gender. This distribution does not include the 507 clients (176 female and 331 male) for which there was no age listed, nor does it include the 83 clients (31 female and 52 male) who were over 50 at the time of the assessment and therefore exempted from the program.



Veteran Status

Only 156 clients (3.2%) reported that they were **veterans**. While veterans make up a relatively small percentage of all ABAWD clients, they represent a significant portion of the male population over the age of 35 as represented in the chart. As we encounter veterans, we are able to help them find resources designated to assist them with housing, employment, and shelter.



	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-33	34-37	38-41	42-45	46-49
Women	3%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%
Men	1%	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%	6%	9%

Communication

Communication is critical to clients participating in WEP, and maintaining a reliable form of communication with clients has continued to be a challenge as FCDJFS and the association communicate with clients primarily by mail. Since we started collecting mailing information in April 2014, 65 clients have indicated that they do not have a mailing address, while 31 clients provided a mailing address and identified themselves as homeless. Additionally, 152 clients have provided a mailing address that is known to be a homeless shelter, check-in center, or mental health facility.

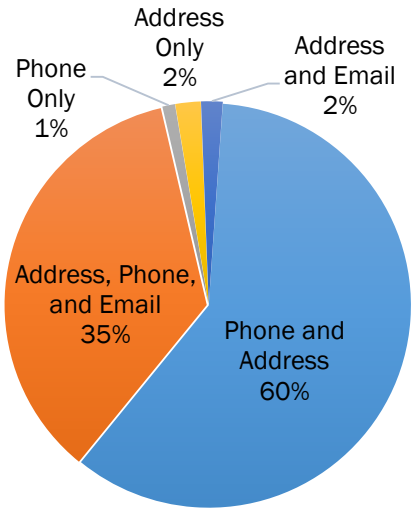
- Faith Mission (245 N Grant Ave) **16** Clients
- Friends of the Homeless (924 E. Main St.) **21** Clients
- Open Shelter (61 E. Mound St.) **24** Clients
- Holy Family Soup Kitchen and Shelter (57 S. Grubb St.) **17** Clients
- Star House (1621 N. 4th) **4** Clients
- YWCA (595 Van Buren) **17** Clients
- YMCA (40 W. Long) **39** Clients
- Southeast Community Mental Health Center (16 W. Long St.) **10** Clients
- North Central Mental Health (1301 N. High St.) **4** Clients

This indicates that at least 248 clients (5.1%) of our ABAWD clients are dealing with housing insecurity. These numbers do not capture the homeless clients who provide the mailing address of a relative or friend, and do not specifically identify that they are homeless.

Types of Communication Reported

- 4,625 clients (95.8%) listed phone numbers
- 1,800 clients (37.3%) listed e-mail addresses
- 4,381 clients (90.8%) listed mailing addresses
- 65 clients (1.3%) reported not having an address
- 380 clients (7.9%) were assessed before address information was asked

Communication Avenues



While 95.8% of clients reported having phone numbers, this does not mean that they have continuous access to a phone. Clients using subsidized government provided cell phones often run out of wireless minutes before the end of the month, or in many other cases their personal phones have been disconnected, or phone numbers are frequently changed due to using prepaid cellular devices. We can only assume that if we are unable to contact clients via phone, potential employers are also unable to reach them.

The association always offers clients the opportunity to register for an e-mail address as a viable, dependable alternative to a phone. Because most major employers require clients to fill out job applications online, having an e-mail address is critical to the application process. We encourage clients to visit their local libraries to check their messages, but find that some clients may not have reliable or readily available community-based access to the Internet. In this process, we also find that many clients struggle with using technology and computers.

Additional information gleaned from the 531 repeat ABAWD clients reinforces our findings, and provides insight into other forms of stable communication for this population. This 11% of ABAWD clients who have taken the assessment more than once shows:

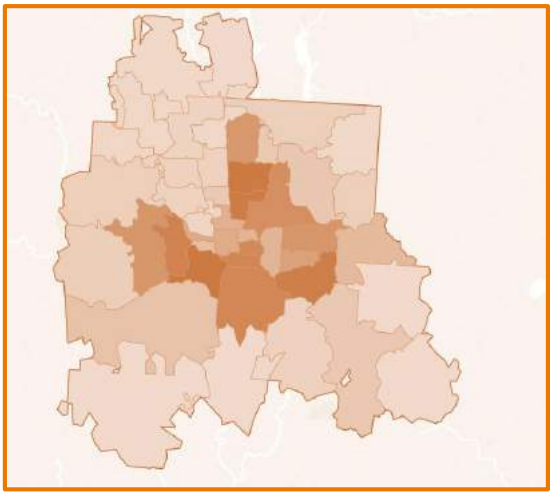
- 47% (253) have changed their phone number between assessments
- 34% (181) have changed their addresses between assessments

This transiency can have real consequences for ABAWD clients who are sanctioned (cut off from their benefits) because they did not receive an appointment or assignment notice from FCDJFS which required action to avoid a disruption in their benefits.

Client Locations

While the clients who have reported addresses represent 58 different zip codes in Franklin County, **over 55% of clients come from 9 zip codes**:

- 43223: 141 clients (7.0%)
- 43224: 140 clients (6.9%)
- 43211: 137 clients (6.8%)
- 43232: 133 clients (6.6%)
- 43204: 123 clients (6.1%)
- 43206: 117 clients (5.8%)
- 43207: 116 clients (5.7%)
- 43205: 112 clients (5.5%)
- 43219: 104 clients (5.1%)

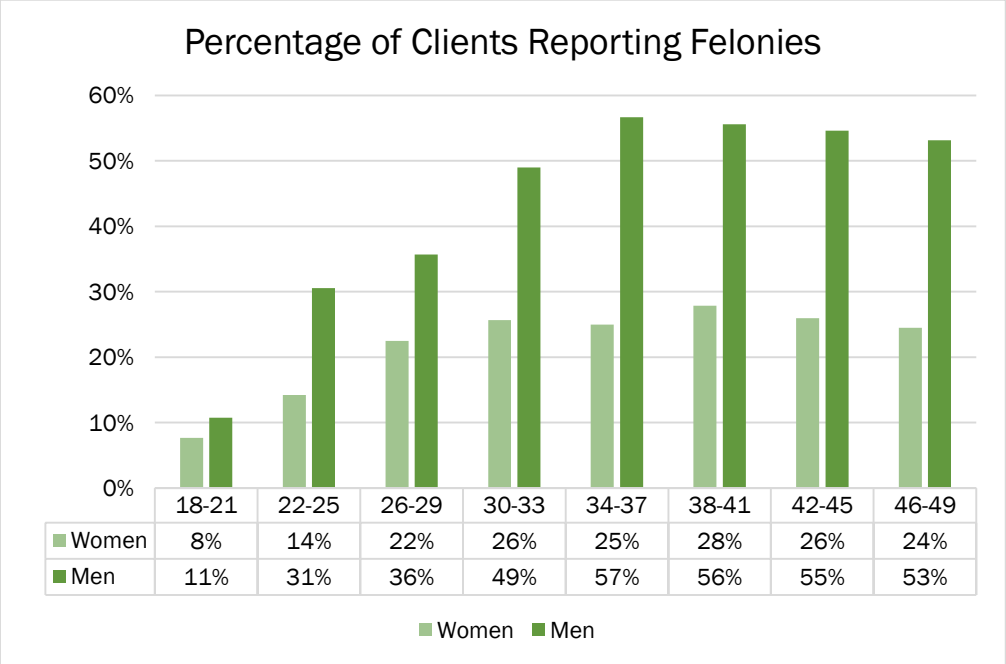


Criminal History

As part of the ABAWD assessment, clients are asked if they are willing to complete an FBI/BCI background check. Over 96% of clients agree to comply with this request.

A history of criminal activity or previous incarceration can have an incredibly damaging impact. The stigma of a felony conviction can follow someone for a lifetime, even if their release is meant to suggest that they have been rehabilitated. These restored citizens miss out on many opportunities, job related or otherwise.

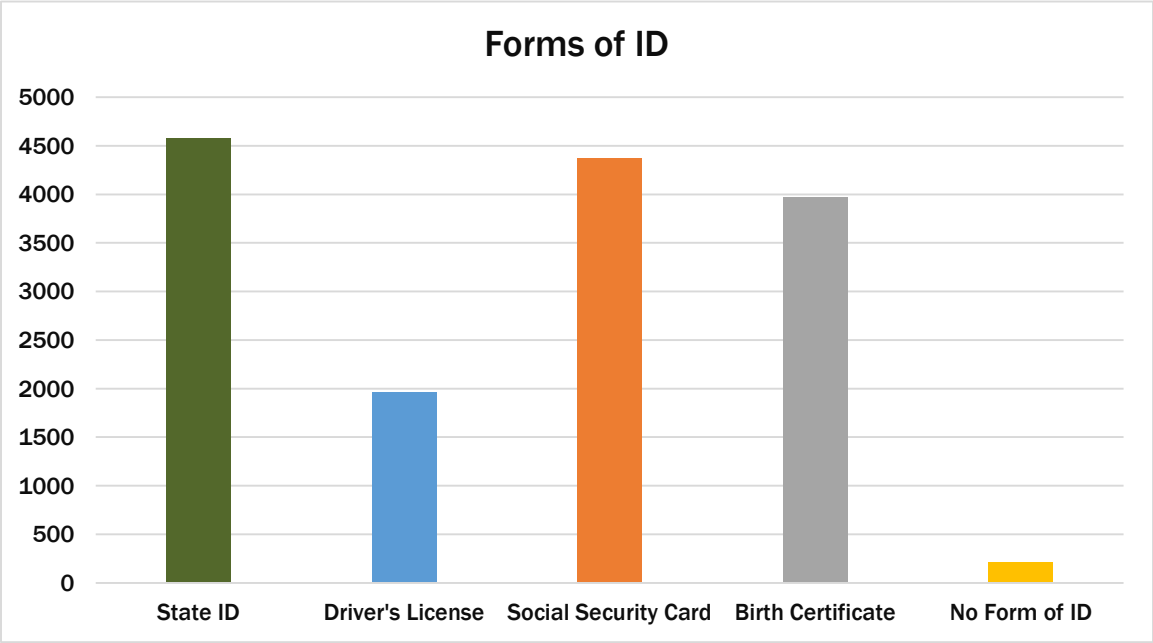
- Over 35.8% of the clients in our program reported having a felony conviction. Some clients have multiple felonies, or a combination of felonies and misdemeanors.
- Close to 12.8% of clients are on probation or parole which means they may not qualify for services offered through legal aid, such as record sealing.
- 541 clients (11.2%) have indicated that they have domestic violence charges.
- 709 clients (14.7%) reported having DUI or OVI violation. These types of violations can severely limit a client's ability to secure employment.



Forms of ID

To apply for jobs, housing, and government benefits, to vote, or to obtain a driver's license, most agencies usually require two forms of Identification (ID). Because the association requires all participants to have an FBI and BCI background check to be placed at one of our host organizations we offer vouchers for clients to receive government issued state IDs when they indicate that they do not already have an ID.

- **4,578** clients (94.8%) have some form of State Identification.
    - 1,963 (40.7%) of clients have indicated that they have a driver's license.
    - 2,615 have indicated that their primary form of identification is a State ID.
    - 206 clients 4.3% indicated that they did not have any form of state identification.
- **4,369** clients (90.5%) reported having access to their Social Security card.
    - 370 clients (7.7%) do not have access to their Social Security card.
- **3,969** clients (82.2%) reported having access to their birth certificate.
    - An additional 752 (15.6%) do not have a birth certificate.



Transportation

To assist with transportation, clients receive a monthly travel stipend from FCDJFS in the form of a $62 check. Many clients report that they have not received the travel stipend. This could be due to an inaccurate mailing address, the inability to contact their caseworker, or a delay in dispersing of funds. Some clients report that the travel stipend is not enough to cover travel to and from work sites. Some clients do not have bank accounts and have to pay a service fee to cash the check they receive from FCDJFS, leaving an insufficient amount to purchase a monthly bus pass which the stipend should cover.

2,749 clients (57.0%) said they have access to reliable transportation, whether it is their own vehicle, the COTA bus system, or a ride from friends and family members. It is important to note that the use of a friend or family member's vehicle may not always be reliable. Owning a vehicle may pose its own challenges for low-income populations, as the car could break down and the client may not have the means to fix it.

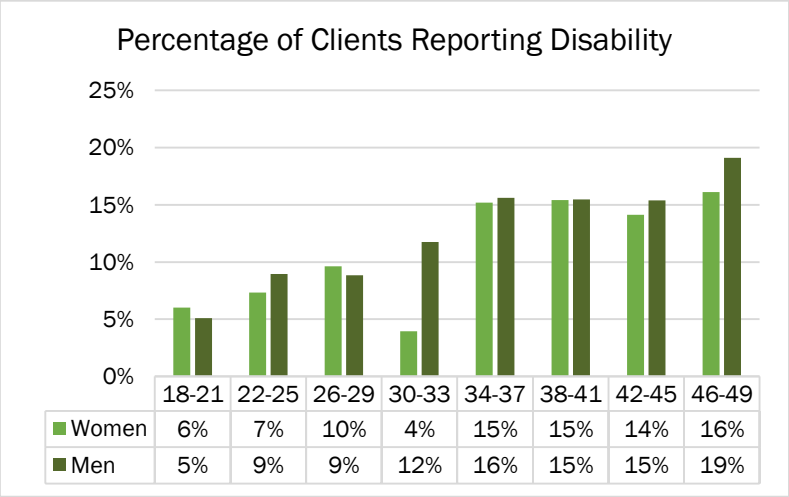
- 40% of clients said they do not have reliable transportation.
- **3,565** clients (73.9%) indicated that they live near a bus stop.
- 610 clients (12.6%) indicated that they did not live near a bus stop.
- Only **40%** of clients indicated that they have a valid driver's license, which indicates that clients are either using public transportation or are driving without a license.
    - Some clients may not be able to obtain a driver's license if they owe child support and have had their driving privileges suspended, or if they have outstanding tickets or unpaid fines which they may be unable to resolve with their limited income.
- **904** clients (18.7%) indicated that they did have car insurance.
    - An additional 3,232 clients (67.0%) indicated that they did not have car insurance, inferring that some are driving without insurance which can be attributed to a variety of factors, including affordability. As it is the law to maintain car insurance for any vehicles owned, some clients could be making the tough choice to pay for utilities, food, or medicine instead of car insurance.

Disabilities and Limitations

"Able-bodied" indicates that clients should not be medically certified and documented as physically or mentally unfit for employment. As part of the assessment, clients are asked to self-report disabilities or limitations, both physical and mental.

- **598** ABAWD clients (12.4%) have self-reported a disability. Of these clients, 261 clients (44%) have indicated that they are not able to work and earn $1010 a month, which could make them eligible for disability benefits.
    - 74 clients (12%) indicated that they are able to work and earn $1,010 per month.

- **1 in 3** ABAWD clients (32.5%) have self-reported some type of physical or mental limitation. Of these clients, 25% (392) have indicated that their condition limits their ability to perform daily activities.
- 70.3% (1,102) indicated some type of physical limitation.
- 30.1% (471) indicated some type of mental limitation.



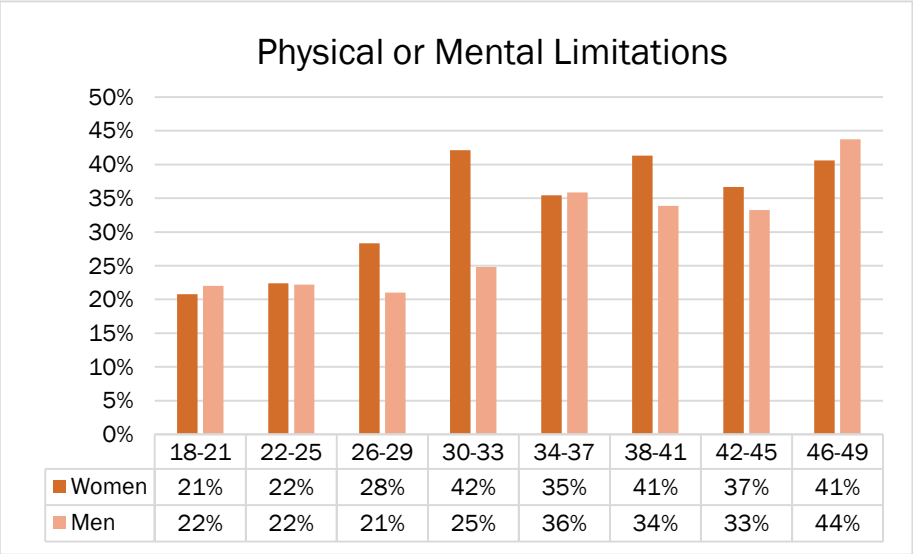
	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-33	34-37	38-41	42-45	46-49
Women	6%	7%	10%	4%	15%	15%	14%	16%
Men	5%	9%	9%	12%	16%	15%	15%	19%

Most Common Types of Physical and Mental Limitations Reported:

- Back Injuries 18.3%
- Respiratory Difficulties 6.0%
- Knee Injuries 5.9%
- Diabetes 3%
- Shoulder Injuries 2.8%
- Arthritis 2.5%
- Heart Conditions 2.3%
- Depression 10.1%
- Bipolar Disorder 9.3%
- Anxiety 8.1%
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder 3.1% (PTSD)
- Schizophrenia 1.5%

Additionally, a small percentage of clients reported physical difficulties due to crimes of violence.

- 27 reported physical difficulties as the result of gunshot wounds.
- 4 clients reported physical difficulties as the result of stab wounds.



	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-33	34-37	38-41	42-45	46-49
Women	21%	22%	28%	42%	35%	41%	37%	41%
Men	22%	22%	21%	25%	36%	34%	33%	44%

Social Security and Health Care

1 in 5 ABAWD clients (18.6%) have reported filing for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Of these clients, most have reported filing in the last two years:

- 82 (9%) reported filing in 2015
- 333 (37%) reported filing in 2014
- 155 (17%) reported filing in 2013
- 114 (13%) applied in 2012
- 223 (25%) applied in 2011 or earlier

1 in 4 clients (25.0%) indicated said they were under a doctor's care, and 1,347 clients (27.9%) indicated that they were currently on medications.

Nearly 6 in 10 clients (58.2%) have reported already applying for Medicaid, although all clients may be eligible to receive this expanded necessary health coverage due to their low-income status. 1,950 clients (40.4%) said they had not applied for Medicaid. As part of our outreach process, we invite health care navigators to our monthly WEP events to help clients sign up for health coverage.

Children and Families

According to the USDA definition of an ABAWD, it is assumed that all clients do not have dependents. We found that clients with children, although not in their custody, still spend time parenting their children on a regular basis while the custodial parent works.

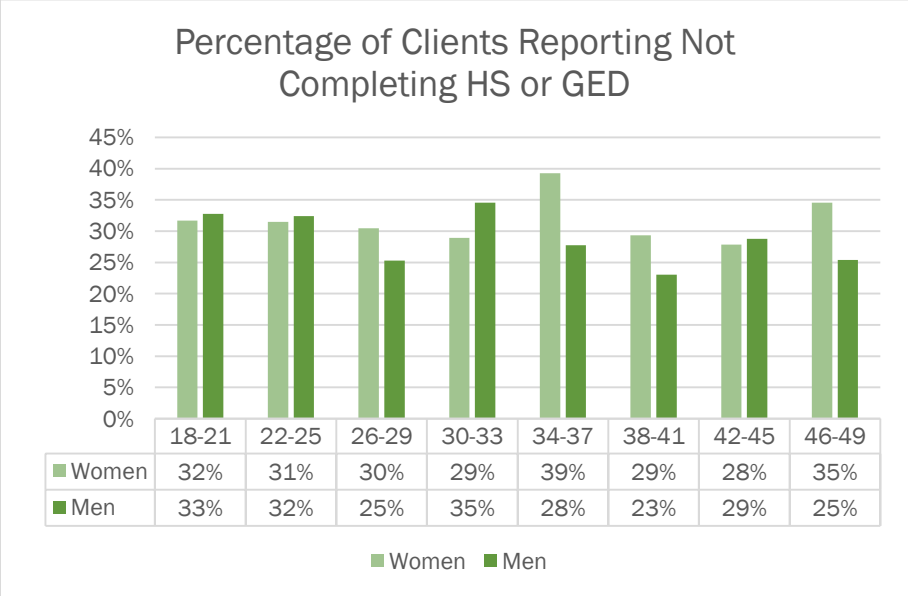
- **1 in 4** clients (**23.5%**) indicated that they had **children not in their custody**.
- **868** clients (**18.0%**) indicated that they **owe child support**.
- **86** clients (**1.8%**) indicated that they **need childcare**.

Having the status of caregiver to a relative should potentially exempt an individual from participating in WEP. Caregivers can often replace the services of a Medicaid or Medicare home-healthcare provider. **618** clients (**12.8%**) indicated that they are caregivers for a parent, friend, or relative.

Education

Many of the clients in this population have not earned a degree or certification to work in industries that pay more than entry level wages.

- **3,342** clients (69.2%) report having earned a high school diploma or GED.
- 1,424 (29.5%) of clients report never having graduated high school.

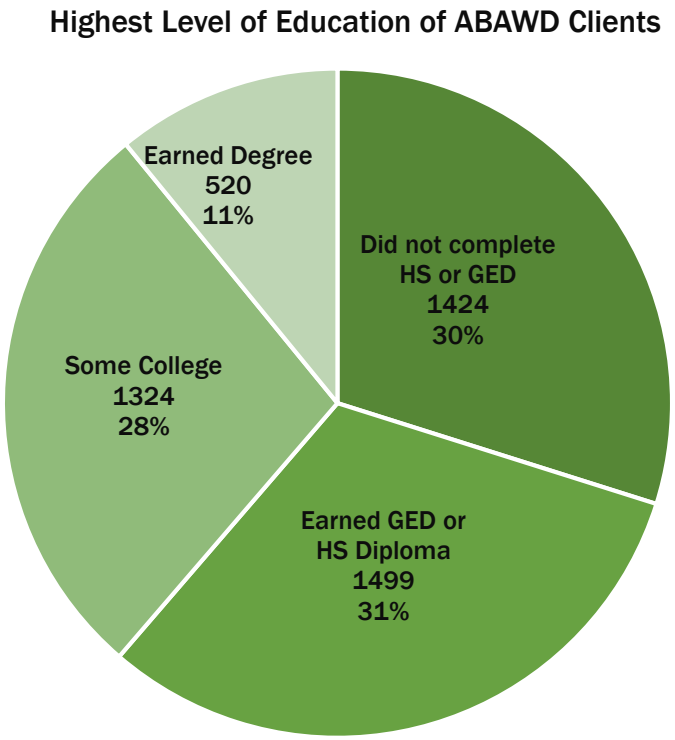


Of those students that did not earn a GED or high school diploma:

- 121 (2.5%) report having attended last in the 12th grade
- 404 (8.4%) report having attended last in the 11th grade
- 316 (6.5%) report having attended last in the 10th grade
- 190 (3.9%) report having attended last in the 9th grade
- 86 (1.8%) report having left school before high school
- 5 clients (0.1%) report never having attended school before

College Education

Of the students who earned either a high school diploma or GED, an additional 1,324 (28%) attended college, and an additional 520 (11%) earned some type of degree or certification.



Employment

Working 20 or more hours of paid employment per week, every week can exempt an ABAWD from participating in WEP.

- **547** clients (11.3%) indicated that they are **currently working**.
    - 16 clients (2.9%) indicate that they are working less than 10 hours per week
    - 62 clients (11.3%) indicate that they are working 10-20 hours per week
    - 75 clients (13.7%) indicate that they are working 20-30 hours per week
    - 34 clients (6.2%) indicate that they are working 30-40 hours per week
    - 23 clients (4.2%) indicate that they are working over 40 hours a week
    - 337 clients (61.1%) did not indicate how many hours they were working

At least 91 clients (**1.9%**) reported that they generally work for **temporary employment agencies** (including day labor and labor pool agencies). These clients may be unable to identify how many hours they work per week due to inconsistent scheduling and availability of consistent job assignments. Because of this, clients may not be able to regularly fulfill the 20 hour work requirement to qualify for an exemption.

Most Common Employment Industry

- Warehouse Work (including pick/pack, forklift)
- Customer Service
- Food Service (including fast food, restaurants, cooking, and food preparation)
- Janitorial and Cleaning
- Construction (including carpentry, masonry, drywall, and electric)

Employment History

Having gaps in a resume can influence an employer's decision in the hiring process, which can negatively impact a client's chances of obtaining employment. Of the 4,284 clients who reported the time since they were last employed, 1,579 (36.8%) reported working last sometime within the current year. An additional 1,216 clients (28.4%) reported working last in the previous year, 665 clients (15.5%) reported working last within the last 2-3 years, 429 (10.1%) reported working last within 4-6 years, 204 (4.8%) reported working last within the last 7-10 years, 109 clients (2.5%) reported working last between 11-15 years, 34 clients (0.7%) reported working last within the last 16-20 years, 12 clients (0.3%) reported working last over 20 years ago, and 36 clients (0.8%) reported having never worked before.

In-Kind Work

Just as traditional employment can exempt a client from participating in WEP, in-kind work may qualify clients from an exemption as well. **402** clients (8.3%) reported **working in-kind** for food or housing.

- 67 clients (16.7%) reported working less than 10 hours per week
- 84 clients (20.9%) reported working 10 to 19 hours per week
- 82 clients (20.4%) reporting working 20 to 29 hours per week
- 21 clients (5.2%) reported working 30 to 39 hours per week
- 28 clients (7.0%) reported working 40 or more hours per week
- 120 clients (29.8%) did not report the number of hours they were working per week

Employment Assistance

The ABAWD assessment screens for additional assistance or equipment clients may need to perform tasks at their worksite.

- **435** clients (9.0%) indicated that they needed **special accommodations** at their worksite in order to do a job. The most commonly requested accommodations were **no heavy lifting** and **no standing or walking** for long periods of time.
- **757** clients (15.7%) indicated that they need **supportive services** to obtain employment. The most commonly requested services were **language interpretation** (especially for Somalian refugees) and help with **transportation**.

Workforce Development

In an effort to offer more job seeking resources to clients, they are referred to Ohio Means Jobs (www.ohiomeansjobs.com). **7 in 10** clients indicated that they were not registered to work through Ohio Means Jobs website. This shows that the outreach for the Ohio Means Jobs website has been ineffective in reaching this population.

We assist clients with creating resumes so they are able to take them to career fairs and apply for jobs that require resumes.

- 2,594 clients (53.8%) indicated that they did not have a current resume.
- **2,183** clients (**45.2%**) indicated that they would like **help to write or update their resume.**
- 2,410 clients (49.9%) indicated that they were not interested in help to write or update their resume.

Unemployment Compensation Benefits

Many job applications ask if applicants have ever been fired or dismissed from a previous position. **1 in 4** clients (24.0%) reported having been previously **fired or dismissed from a job**. When this question appears on a job application it can be a deterrent for employers to hire an applicant.

We inquire if clients have ever received unemployment compensation benefits, as this can qualify them for an exemption in participating in WEP if they are still receiving it. Nearly **8 in 10** clients (**78.3%**) reported that they have **never received unemployment compensation benefits**.

- 886 clients (18.4%) reported that they are receiving or have received unemployment compensation, ranging in time from 1984 to February 2015.

Work Experience Program

Immediate program goals for WEP participants are to actively ensure viable work opportunities for ABAWDs in Franklin County to fulfill the work requirement to maintain their SNAP benefits and prepare ABAWDs for reentry into the workforce. The long-term goals and objectives for WEP participants are focused on decreasing unemployment among Franklin County ABAWDs to break systemic cycles of poverty and hunger and ensure clients can become economically self-sufficient.

Consistent Outreach

During the initial ABAWD assessment at the FCDJFS opportunity centers, clients are given information about job openings and job fairs in Franklin County. When we find that one of the many barriers the assessment is meant to capture is stifling a client in their attempt to secure employment, we refer them to clothing banks, resources for homelessness, mental health facilities, educational opportunities, and food pantries.

Many clients who attend our monthly job and resource fair leave with jobs!

All new clients are required to attend a WEP employment and resource fair their first month in the program. We bring together employers (with assistance from FCDJFS Workforce Development and Franklin County Economic Development), health care navigators and certified application counselors, Legal Aid Society of Columbus lawyers, workforce development agencies, GED and adult education or vocational training organizations, and many more stakeholders to ensure we are able to offer clients a variety of valuable services.

At this event, clients also receive a required background check for their job placements. They participate in hands-on activities and receive assistance with filling out job applications and creating or updating resumes, assistance with using computers, and referrals to obtain suiting for job interviews.

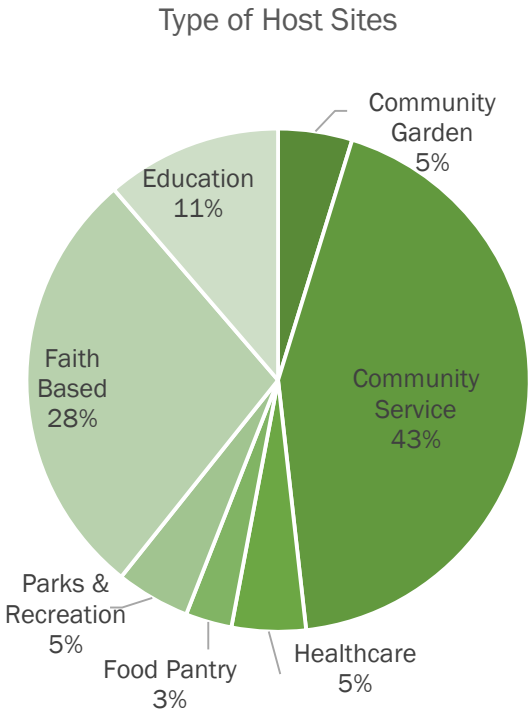
WEP Volunteer Host Sites

The recruitment process for developing new sites involves calling, mailing, e-mailing, and visiting numerous nonprofit and faith-based organizations in Franklin County. Each organization is required to sign a Memorandum of Agreement, establishing a strong partnership that also holds these organizations accountable for reporting hours for clients.

Each volunteer experience through WEP is intended to give participants training, education, or experience that would be beneficial in an ABAWD's search for future employment. Some sites even report hiring WEP workers when they have open positions available.

A list of possible volunteer roles could include but is not limited to:

- Janitorial Work
- Painting
- Grounds Maintenance & Landscaping
- Warehouse Positions
- Office and Clerical Work
- Manual Labor
- Customer Service
- Food Preparation and Service



"One of our WEP clients began working at the Broad Street Food Pantry in October 2014 as part of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks Work Experience Program. From the time she started, she demonstrated excellent work ethics – never missing a day, always working hard and making sure that customers were served efficiently, the shelves kept full, and the pantry kept clean and neat. Last winter when our assistant moved on to another job, our WEP client was one of the first candidates we identified. After a thorough search, we hired her for the permanent position."

-Kathy Kelly-Long, Broad Street Food Pantry Director

WEP participants paint a mural at Fusion Bakery and Cafe

Placements

Our network of nonprofits, workforce development partners, and faith-based organizations make it possible for Franklin County ABAWDs to obtain their required work hours through volunteer service or job readiness activities, while also offering work experience. Placements are made at these organizations after clients have completed a background check at the WEP monthly employment and resource fair.

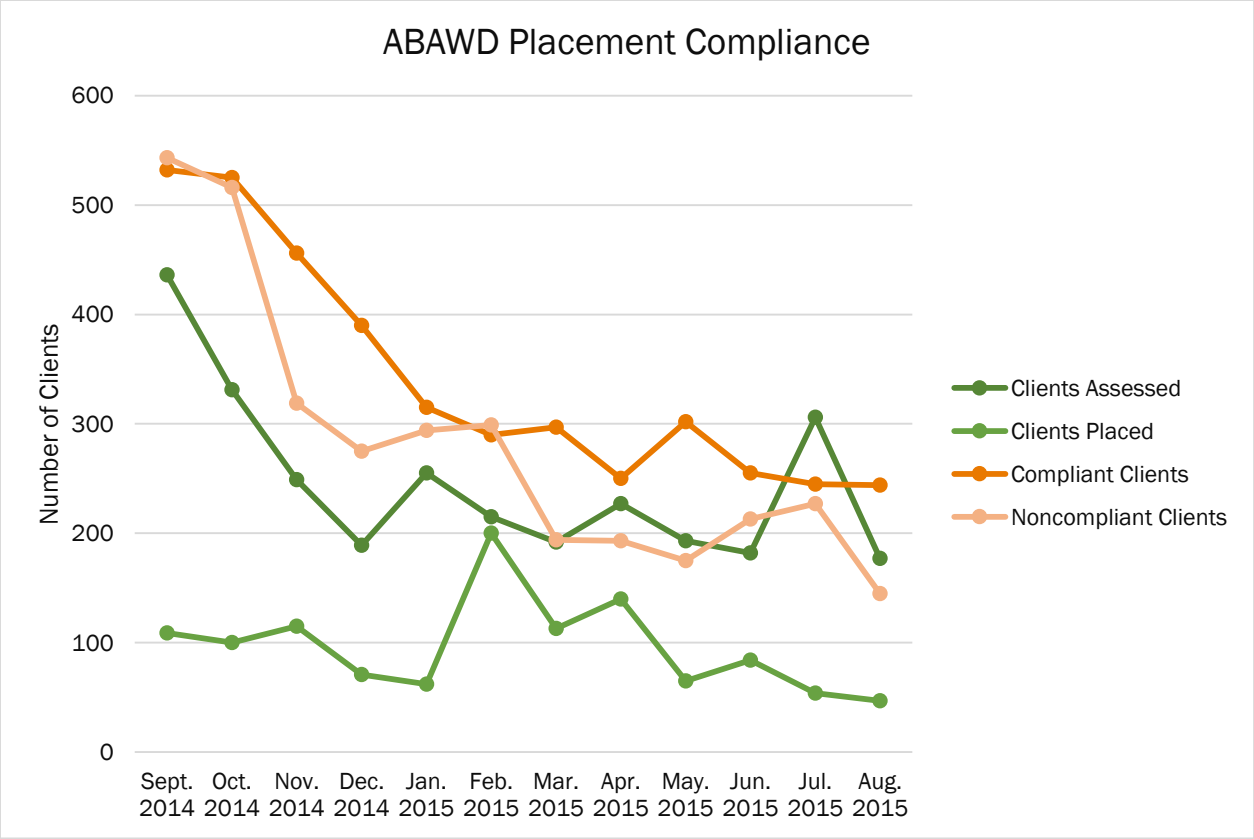
The Ohio Association of Foodbanks requires clients to have a background check to ensure that we are not placing clients in situations that may compromise the integrity of our partners, and to protect their clients and staff in the event of a known conflict of interest. Clients are not eligible to be placed at a volunteer host site until their FBI/BCI background check is received.

Through the assessment process we gather an inventory of job skills from each clients. We are able to determine what jobs would best suit that client, and strategically place them at sites where we believe they will thrive. We do make accommodations for any client that is already volunteering in the community, and make an attempt to bring their volunteer site on as a host organization so that the client can maintain their relationship with that organization.

ABWAD Placement Compliance

At times, it can be very difficult to place clients at a volunteer site. If the host location is not on the bus line or if it is not easily accessible by public transportation, clients can have a hard time getting to their placement. Some host sites even require a college education or degree, which many of our clients do not have. Some sites have a list of restricted felonies which would limit a large portion of our clients from volunteering with those sites. The same is true for workforce development programs. Many clients do not meet the minimum education requirements to enroll in such programs, or struggle with passing an entrance exam.

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks placement specialist makes every effort to place all clients, no matter how limiting their personal situations may be. Even with the best effort to make sure that a client's skills match the site's needs, and that the location is less than an hour bus ride from their address, not all clients report to their assigned placements each month. In order for a client to remain compliant with WEP they must report to their worksite for 23 hours per month. When a client fails their work requirement hours they are sanctioned and at risk of losing their monthly SNAP benefits.



Recommendations

As we bring light to the situations this population faces, we are able to make the following insightful recommendations which are supported by the findings of the WEP assessment data. These recommendations have been presented to FCDJFS after the first analysis of this information. They are meant to encourage other government organizations to consider a further examination of the implication of programs like WEP.

Program Next Steps

The specific program needs of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks will enhance the overall client experience while strengthening relationships with our partners.

- Coordinate with other Departments of Job and Family Services statewide in an effort to replicate the positive results we have seen in Franklin County, to expand this program to other metro and rural areas.

- Increase the efficiency of our program in order to enhance client satisfaction and success while working with very limited resources.

- Coordinate with Franklin County to offer more opportunities for clients to connect with available employment and training.

- Improve quality assurance measures and outcomes as well as communication channels between the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, clients, host sites, and Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services.

Increase Oversight to Improve Effectiveness

- Analyze the expenditures of Workforce Development Programs funded by FCDJFS compared to outcomes. WEP at the Ohio Association of Foodbanks has proven a 24% success rate, compared to a 16% success rate of similar government funded workforce programs in Franklin County.

Provide Additional Funding to Organizations Supporting WEP

- When clients fail a WEP assignment and do not have access to their food stamp benefits, they may begin utilizing the services of their local emergency food programs. This warrants more emergency funding to be provided to Mid-Ohio Foodbank to support the purchase, acquisition, and distribution of additional food for Franklin County food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and churches who are feeding the individuals affected.
- Utlize banked months of exemptions (estimated at 405,000) to reenroll participants in the food assistance program while Departments of Job and Family Services work to establish additional work experience program infrastructure.
- Provide additional funding to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks to support the cost of emergency vouchers for transportation, travel vouchers, and basic needs.
- To increase interest in becoming a part of the host site network, there needs to be more incentive for organizations to serve ABAWDs through WEP. By offering operating support to the nonprofit and faith-based organizations that are providing WEP services and slots, we can motivate more sites to partner with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, while current sites may be able to effectively increase their capacity to serve more ABAWDs.
- Provide supplemental support for the continuation, expansion, and analysis of workforce development programs operated by the Ohio Association of Foodbanks for young adults aging out of the foster care system. All youth who successfully complete these programs either enroll in school or start working, which in many cases exempts them from particpating in WEP as ABAWDs.
- Improve the funding and training of a specialized unit dedicated to the implementation of this work requirement and the ABAWD population's specific needs.

Study the Social and Economic Impact of WEP

- Monitor and report on the impacts to well-being, health, and safety of clients, WEP host site staff/volunteers, and the community at large.
- Conduct an Economic Impact Analysis on the loss of food assistance/SNAP benefit issuance on the Franklin County economy.
- Provide funding for comprehensive case-management, longitudinal tracking of employment, wages, public assistance participation, and well-being of the ABAWD population.

Provide More Work Support Opportunities for ABAWDs

- Expand enrollment, participation, and successful completion of nationally certified programs such as the FastPath program at Columbus State Community College, including ServSafe, customer service, advanced logistics, and STNA.

- Create an employment enterprise or pipeline into strategic aspects of the job market. This will help harder-to-employ individuals find opportunities to gain sustainable employment.

- Prioritize Workforce Investment Act funding to provide education, training, and supportive services to ensure a seamless delivery of services.

- Establish a relationship with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction in order to address the specific concerns of the employer community in regard to the future employment of felons.

- Examine opportunities to secure additional USDA/SNAP Employment and Training funds to enhance service delivery.

Examine and Evaluate the Needs of Special Populations

- Provide support and funding for a study on the mental and physical health status and outcomes of the ABAWD population and their utilization of Medicaid.

- Fund person-centered, community-based case management of ABAWDs applying for SSI/SSDI, and supportive services including Legal Aid assistance to non-custodial parents and individuals with criminal charges and felony convictions.

- Convene a study group to examine the impact of temporary and day labor employment services and its effects on this population.

- The Ohio Association of Foodbanks will continue to analyze assessments and data including current and previous encounters with the criminal justice system, community impact, and these associated costs.

Host Site Partner Organizations

Without the support of our wonderful network of nonprofit and faith-based organizations we could not offer so many meaningful volunteer opportunities to ABAWDs in Franklin County. We extend our sincere gratitude to each organization for their continued partnership and dedication to serving the community.

- Agora Ministries
- Authority of the Believers
- Beatty Recreation Center
- Brice UMC
- Bridge Community Center
- Broad Street Food Pantry
- Broad Street UMC
- Calhoun Memorial Temple
- Cat Welfare Association
- Catique
- Center for Family Safety
- Chalmers P Wylie VA Ambulatory Care Center
- Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio, Inc.
- Child Development Council of Franklin County
- Christ Harvest Church
- City of Whitehall
- Clintonville Beechwold
- Colony Cats (& dogs)
- Columbus Arts Technology Academy
- Columbus Chosen Generation Ministries
- Columbus Growing Collective
- Columbus Humanities Arts & Technology Academy
- Columbus Urban League
- Community Kitchen, Inc.
- Core Resource Center, Inc.
- East Columbus Development Company
- EL Hardy Center
- Family Missionary Baptist Church
- Franklinton Gardens
- Genesis of Good Samaritans Ministries
- Glory Praise & Help Center
- Greater Ebenezer Cathedral of Praise and Kingdom Kids Daycare
- Habitat for Humanity's ReStore
- Hands On Central Ohio
- Heart Food Pantry
- Heart of Christ Community Church
- Helping Hands Health And Wellness Center, Inc.
- Holy Family Soup Kitchen
- House of Refuge for All People
- HUB Community Development Corporation
- J Ashburn Jr Youth Center
- King Arts Complex MLK
- Kingdom Alive Word Church

- Libraries for Liberia Foundation
- Long Lasting Community Development
- Loving Hands Learning Center
- Lutheran Social Services Ohio Benefit Bank – SOUTH
- Lutheran Social Services Ohio Benefit Bank – WEST
- Magic Johnson Bridgescape Academy - New Beginnings
- Mock Rd University for Children
- National Parkinson Foundation Central & Southeast OH
- New Salem Baptist Church and Community Development
- NNEMAP, Inc.
- Ohio Association of Foodbanks
- Ohio Business Development Center
- Ohio Empowerment Coalition
- Pri-Value Foundation
- Project Redeem
- R F Hairston Early Learning Center
- Reeb-Hossack Community Baptist Church
- Seven Baskets Community Development Corp
- Shiloh Christian Center
- Short North Stage at The Garden Theater
- Society Of St Vincent De Paul
- Soldiers of Life Food Pantry
- Somali Bantu Youth Community of Ohio
- Southeast Friends of the Homeless
- Southeast, Inc.
- St Dominic Roman Catholic Church
- St Marks United Methodist Church
- St Philip Episcopal Church Food Pantry
- St Stephens Community House
- Stoddart Avenue Community Garden
- Temple Israel
- Trinity Assembly
- United House of Prayer
- Unity of Columbus
- Welcome Home Ohio
- Wesley Church of Hope UMC

RURAL TRANSIT FACT BOOK | 2015

NDSU
UPPER GREAT PLAINS
TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Acknowledgements

This document was funded in whole, or part, by the Small Urban and Rural Livability Center (SURLC), which is a partnership between the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University and the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University. The Center is funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of the Assistant Secretary of Research and Technology as a University Transportation Center.

Photo Credits: Iowa DOT (p. 2, 10, 20, and 25) and River Cities Transit–Pierre, SD (p. 5).

Disclaimer

The content presented in this report is the sole responsibility of the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute and the authors.

Rural Transit Fact Book 2015

Prepared by:

Jeremy Mattson
Associate Research Fellow

Small Urban and Rural Transit Center
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute
North Dakota State University
Fargo, ND

www.surtc.org

SURLC 15-001
June 2015

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

INTRODUCTION

Public transportation plays a fundamental role in the livability of all communities. The Rural Transit Fact Book provides information on transit service availability and cost to help the transit industry in the United States provide efficient and effective service to meet rural community mobility needs. Financial and operating statistics can be used by agency managers, local decision makers, state directors, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and lawmakers to assist in policy making, planning, managing operations, and evaluating performance.

The Rural Transit Fact Book serves as a national resource for statistics and information on rural transit in America. This publication includes rural demographic and travel behavior data as well as financial and operating statistics for agencies receiving section 5311 funding. In addition to national level data, statistics are presented by state, FTA region, tribe, and mode, as well as other agency characteristics.

The rural transit data presented in this report were obtained from the Rural National Transit Database (NTD). The 2011 edition of the Rural Transit Fact Book was the first published by SURTC and included Rural NTD data for 2007-2009. Since 2011, annual updates have been made to the Fact Book to provide updated data. The 2015 edition includes 2013 data from the Rural NTD as well as additional data from the American Community Survey, American Housing Survey, and National Household Travel Survey.

As noted, this publication presents data for transit providers receiving section 5311 Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program funding. This program provides funding to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000. A number of rural transit providers also receive funding under the section 5310, Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Program. However, nationwide data for 5310 services are not available, as providers are not required to report such data to the NTD. Therefore, rural transit providers not funded by the 5311 program but receiving funding from section 5310 are not included in this report. Also excluded from the report are providers that receive both section 5311 funds and section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program funding and report their data in the urban NTD.

RURAL AMERICA

Geography influences the type and level of transit service that best serves a community. About 60 million Americans, or close to one fifth of the country's population, live in rural areas, according to data from the American Community Survey (ACS). Table 1 shows select demographic data from the 2011-2013 ACS 3-year estimates for the United States and for urban and rural areas. As defined by the Census, "urban" includes urban areas and urban clusters. Urbanized areas have 50,000 or more people and urban clusters have at least 2,500 people but less than 50,000 people, and both areas have a core area with a density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. All other areas are defined as rural.

Rural populations tend to be older. The median age is 43 in rural areas and 36 in urban areas. Approximately 16% of residents in rural areas are 65 or older, compared to 13% of those in urban areas. The percentage of residents aged 85 or older, on the other hand, is approximately the same in urban and rural areas. The percentage of people with disabilities is slightly higher in rural areas (15%) than in urban areas (12%).

An aging population in rural areas presents a number of transportation challenges. Figure 1 illustrates the growing population of older adults in both urban and rural areas. Median age and the percentage of population aged 65 or older has increased in both urban and rural areas over the past decade, but the increase has been greatest among the rural population. (Note that the significant increases for rural areas from 2011 to 2012 shown in Figure 1 may be partly due to a change in geographic classifications rather than an actual increase.)

Rural areas tend to be less ethnically diverse. Urban residents are more likely than their rural counterparts to be non-white or Hispanic, and the foreign-born population is much higher in urban areas (15%) than in rural areas (3%).

Education levels vary somewhat between urban and rural communities. The percentage of individuals that have completed high school in rural areas is about the same as that for urban areas, but urban areas tend to have a higher percentage of residents with a bachelor's or advanced degree.

Median household income is slightly higher in urban areas, but a higher percentage of urban residents live below the poverty line.

Urban residents are more likely to move than those in rural areas (see Table 2). About 16% of urban residents have moved during the last year, compared to 10% of rural residents. Rural residents are more likely than those in urban areas to live in the state in which they were born.

Table 1. Characteristics of U.S. Urban and Rural Populations

	United States	Urban	Rural
Total Population (million people)	314	254	60
Average Household Size	2.64	2.65	2.62
Gender (%)			
Male	49.2	48.9	50.6
Female	50.8	51.1	49.4
Age			
Median age	37.4	36.2	42.9
65 or older (%)	13.7	13.1	16.4
85 or older (%)	1.9	1.9	1.7
Population with a Disability (%)	12.3	11.7	14.9
Race (%)			
White	76.3	73.1	90.1
Black or African-American	13.7	15.4	6.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.7	1.4	2.6
Asian	5.9	7.0	1.1
Hispanic or Latino	16.9	19.5	5.8
Foreign Born (%)	13.0	15.3	3.3
Highest Education Level Completed (%)			
Did not complete high school	13.7	13.6	13.8
High school	28.0	26.1	35.8
Some college, no degree	21.2	21.1	21.5
Associate's degree	7.9	7.8	8.5
Bachelor's degree	18.2	19.4	13.1
Advanced degree	10.9	11.9	7.2
Economic Characteristics			
Individuals below the poverty line (%)	15.9	16.4	13.7
Median household income (thousand dollars)	52.2	52.5	51.0

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2013

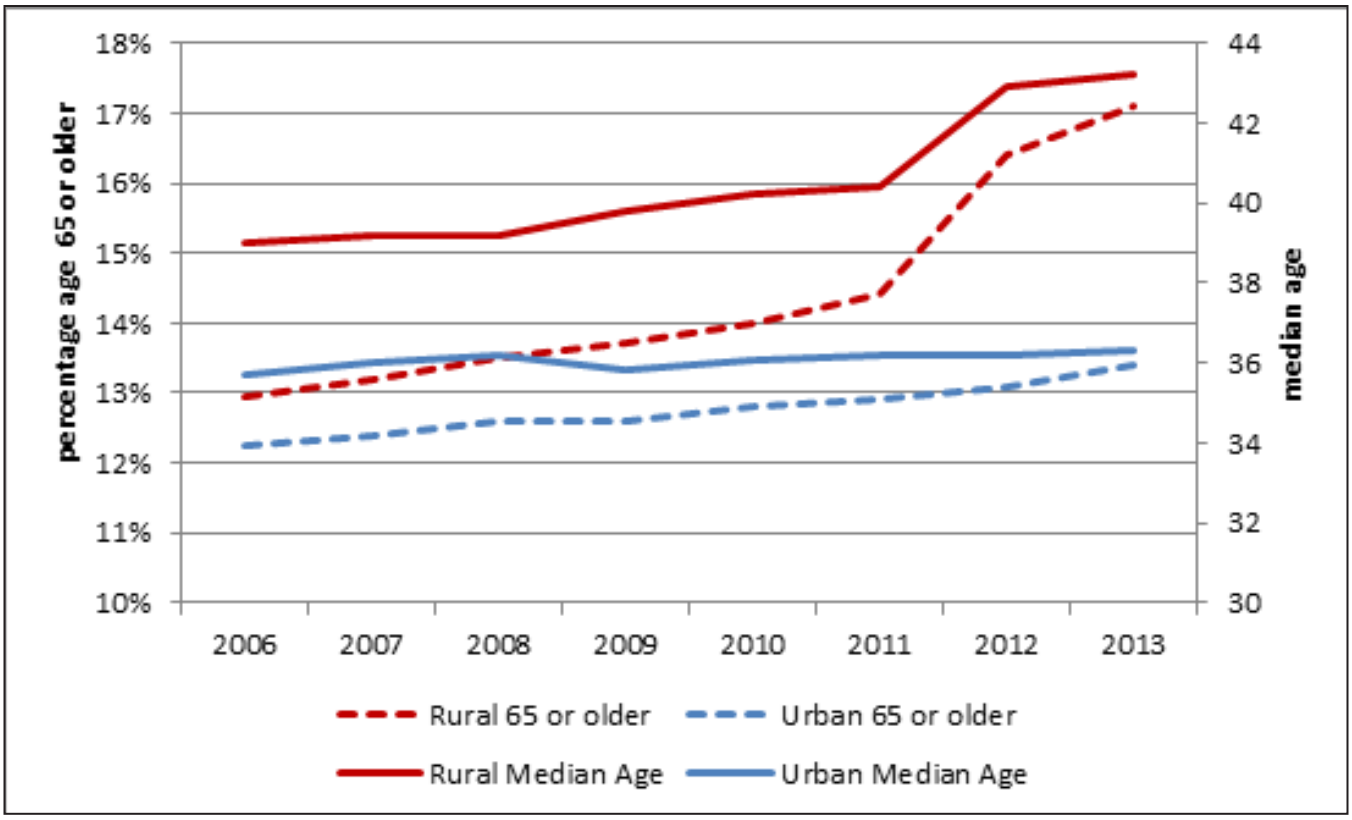


Figure 1. Median Age and Percentage of Population Aged 65 or Older, 2006-2013
Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2006-2013

Table 2. Geographic Mobility

	United States	Urban	Rural
	---------- percentage ----------		
Native population born in their state of residence	58.8	56.2	69.7
Lived in a different house 1 year ago	15.1	16.2	10.2
Lived in a different state or abroad 1year ago	2.9	3.2	1.8

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2013

RURAL TRANSPORTATION

Data from the ACS, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), National Household Travel Survey (NHTS), and American Housing Survey (AHS) show there are differences in transportation and travel behavior between urban and rural areas. One notable difference is a greater reliance on automobiles by rural residents (see Tables 3-7). Just 4% of rural households do not have a vehicle available, compared to 10% of urban households. Meanwhile, 70% of rural households have two or more vehicles, while only 54% of urban households have two or more vehicles.

Table 3. Vehicles Available in Household

	United States	Urban	Rural
	---------- percentage ----------		
None	9.2	10.4	4.2
1	34.0	36.0	25.6
2	37.4	36.7	40.3
3 or more	19.4	16.9	29.9

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2013

Rural workers are more likely to drive alone to work and less likely to commute by public transportation than those in urban areas (see Table 4). Only 0.5% of rural residents use public transportation to travel to work, compared to 6% of urban residents, and just 1.5% of rural workers aged 16 or older do not have access to a vehicle, compared to 5.3% of their urban counterparts. Rural residents also tend to have slightly longer commutes (measured in minutes).

Table 4. Commuting to Work

	United States	Urban	Rural
Mode Used			
Car, truck, or van – drove alone	76.4%	75.2%	81.4%
Car, truck, or van – carpooled	9.6%	9.6%	9.8%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	5.1%	6.1%	0.5%
Walked	2.8%	3.0%	2.0%
Other means	1.8%	1.9%	1.3%
Worked at home	4.3%	4.2%	5.1%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	25.7	25.4	26.9

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2013

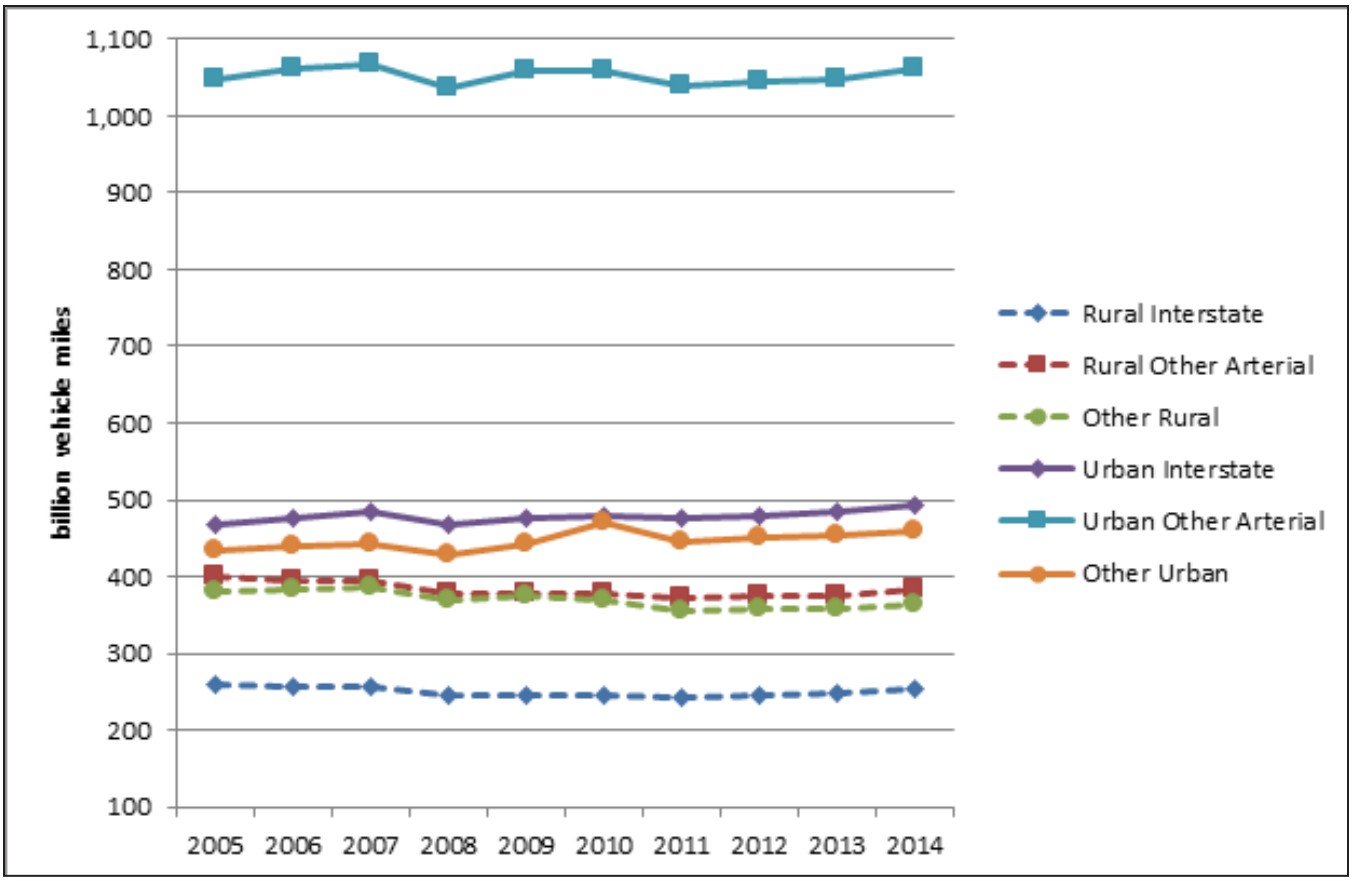


Figure 2. Vehicle Miles Traveled on Urban and Rural Roadways
Source: Federal Highway Administration

Despite heavy reliance on automobiles, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on rural roads had been slowly declining during the previous decade before starting to increase again after 2011 (see Figure 2). VMT on urban roads had been steadily increasing until dropping or leveling off after 2007, and it also began increasing again after 2011. In 2014, VMT increased 2.1% on rural roads and 1.5% on urban roads. The VMT depicted in Figure 2 includes both personal and commercial travel and is total VMT, as opposed to per capita VMT.

The NHTS contains a variety of statistics on travel behavior. The NHTS is a periodic national survey sponsored by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics and the FHWA. The most recent NHTS was conducted in 2009. The dataset also classifies respondents as urban or rural using the same definition used by the ACS.

Data from the NHTS show that rural residents drive more, on average, than their urban counterparts; are less likely to use public transportation; and drive vehicles that tend to be a bit older with more miles and have slightly lower fuel economy. Table 5 provides data on differences in trips per day, VMT, and use of transit between urban and rural residents by age group. Urban residents, on average, make more trips per day. Although urban residents may make more trips, the distance traveled per individual trip is longer in rural areas. As a result of longer trip distances and greater reliance on the automobile, rural residents drive more miles per year than their urban counterparts. As shown in Table 5, annual VMT per person peaks for those in the 34-49 age group at 15,079 miles for rural residents and 10,999 miles for urban residents.

Table 5. Travel Behavior for Urban and Rural Residents, by Age Group

	Number of Trips Per Travel Day		Annual VMT Per Person		Used Transit on Travel Day	
Age	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
19-33	3.9	3.6	7,898	12,246	7.8%	1.0%
34-49	4.4	4.0	10,999	15,079	5.9%	0.7%
50-64	4.1	3.9	9,412	13,862	5.6%	0.8%
65-74	3.7	3.5	6,458	9,735	4.0%	0.4%
> 74	2.7	2.7	3,459	5,535	3.8%	0.7%

Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey

Driving rates are shown in Table 6 to be higher in rural areas. For example, 96% of men and 95% of women aged 19-64 in rural areas drive, compared to 93% of men and 90% of women of similar age in urban areas. A significant difference is also shown for older women, as 82% of women 65 or older drive in rural areas, compared to 71% of similarly aged women in urban areas.

Table 6. Percentage Who Drive by Age, Geography, and Gender

	Urban		Rural	
Age	Male	Female	Male	Female
19-64	93.2	89.6	95.6	95.0
65+	87.3	70.5	92.8	82.0
65-74	91.7	82.0	96.2	91.1
75-84	86.3	67.0	90.9	74.9
85+	68.4	38.3	63.6	40.9

Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey

Differences in mode shares are illustrated in Table 7 and Figure 3, which show how the percentage of trips made by public transportation increases from rural to larger urban areas. In non-metro areas, just 0.4% of trips are made by public transportation, while 4.6% of trips are made by public transportation in metro areas with a population of 3 million or more.

Table 7. Mode Shares

	Total	Urban	Rural
	---------- percentage ----------		
Auto	85.1	83.6	90.3
Transit	2.3	2.9	0.4
Bicycle	0.7	0.8	0.5
Walking	10.0	11.0	6.4

Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey

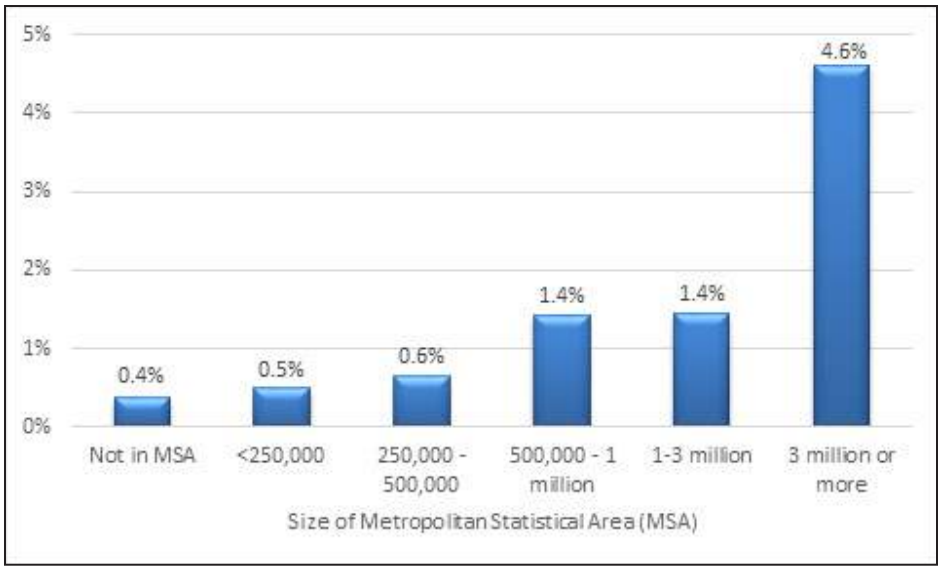


Figure 3. Percentage of Trips by Public Transportation, by Size of Metro Area
Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey

Table 8 shows the general purposes for transit and non-transit trips in urban and rural areas, according to data from the NHTS. For rural transit trips, the highest percentage of trips is for work or school/church. Medical trips account for 7.4% of transit trips in rural areas, but only 2.4% of non-transit trips are for medical, indicating a higher propensity for these types of trips to be made by transit. Other reports have found a higher percentage of rural transit trips being for medical purposes. Based on a study of on-board surveys, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) (2007) found that in areas with a population below 200,000, 8.6% of transit trips are for medical purposes. These percentages vary significantly between individual transit providers depending on the type of service provided. Some rural transit systems provide a significantly higher percentage of trips for medical purposes, while others provide a higher percentage of work trips.

Table 8. Trip Purpose for Transit and Non-Transit Trips

	Transit Trips		Non-Transit Trips	
Trip Purpose	Urban	Rural*	Urban	Rural
	---------- Percentage ----------			
Work	27.3	27.4	15.3	16.5
Work-related business	4.0	1.7	2.8	4.0
Shopping	17.6	7.8	21.3	20.9
Other personal/business	9.7	11.5	19.5	19.1
School/church	10.4	20.4	9.6	9.7
Medical/dental	6.3	7.4	2.5	2.4
Vacation	1.6	4.7	1.1	1.2
Visit friends/relatives	6.6	4.3	6.7	7.3
Other social/recreational	12.2	12.3	20.4	18.3
Other	4.4	2.5	0.7	0.6

*Transit in rural areas is defined to include just bus and paratransit.
Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey

The data indicate that work, school, and medical trips comprise a much higher percentage of transit trips than non-transit trips, and the opposite is true for shopping and social trips.

The American Housing Survey (AHS) also provides data on availability and use of transit services in urban and rural areas. The AHS is a survey funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in odd-numbered years. This survey collects data on transportation alternatives and travel behavior, including transit availability, accessibility, desirability, and use. A recent SURTC study (Ripplinger et al. 2012) used data from the 2009 AHS to calculate a series of transit livability statistics, with the intent of investigating and measuring the relationship between transit and community livability.

Data from the 2013 AHS are presented in Table 9 showing the availability, use, and desirability of transit in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Specifically, it shows the percentage of population that can access different amenities by public transit, the percentage of population that uses transit, and the percentage of population that considered convenience to public transportation as a factor when choosing their present neighborhood. Differences are shown between those living in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) central city, a MSA outside the central city, and rural areas not in a metropolitan area. As the table shows, 24%-27% of rural residents are able to access the different amenities by public transit, compared to 71%-74% of urban residents and 44%-47% of suburban residents. Household use of transit and the consideration of transit in choice of neighborhood are also much higher in urban areas.

Table 9. Amenities Accessible by Transit, Use of Transit, and Desirability of Transit in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas

	MSA-Central City	MSA-Not Central City	Outside MSA
	---------- Percentage ----------		
Amenities Accessible by Public Transportation			
Grocery store	73	47	27
Personal services	71	45	25
Retail Shopping	74	46	25
Entertainment	73	46	24
Health care services	71	44	27
Personal banking	71	44	26
Household Uses Public Transportation	31	15	4
Convenience to Public Transportation a Factor in Choice of Present Neighborhood	7	3	1

Source: 2013 American Housing Survey

NATIONAL RURAL TRANSIT

This section describes the characteristics of rural transit systems receiving section 5311 funding, using data submitted by these systems to the Rural NTD. Data for 2013 are the most recent data available at the time of publication.

The number of agencies providing rural transit service, as reported in the Rural NTD, decreased slightly from 1,357 in 2012 to 1,317 in 2013 (see Table 10). However, this does not include urban agencies that also receive 5311 funding to provide service in rural areas, as these agencies report their data to the urban NTD. As shown in Table 10, the number of urban systems providing service in rural areas has increased in recent years to 231 in 2013.

Many rural transit agencies offer strictly a demand-response service, while 278 offer both demand-response and fixed-route, and some offer just fixed-route.[1] A total of 438 systems provided fixed-route service in 2013, including either a traditional fixed-route service or deviated fixed-route service.

Table 10. Number of Rural Transit Providers Nationwide

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Type of Service Provided:					
Fixed-route	429	472	464	430	438
Demand-response	1,169	1,180	1,121	1,108	1,094
Fixed-route and demand-response	*235*	*253*	*262*	*246*	*278*
Demand-response taxi	-	-	78	56	52
Ferryboat	-	-	4	6	6
Commuter bus	-	-	58	60	56
Van pool	14	16	18	21	24
Other	22	21	15	13	11
Total Rural General Public Transit	**1,358**	**1,403**	**1,392**	**1,357**	**1,317**
Urban Systems Providing Rural Service	-	107	143	204	231

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

[1] Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit agencies to provide paratransit services that complement their fixed-route services, it is not required for those that provide deviated fixed-route or commuter bus services. Many of those agencies identified as offering just fixed-route service provide these types of services, and some may actually provide demand-response paratransit but did not have the data reported.

Nationwide, 79% of counties had some level of rural transit service in 2013, a slight increase from the previous year (see Table 11).

Table 11. Counties with Rural Transit Service

State	Number of counties in state	Counties with 5311 Service				
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Alabama	67	50	50	51	51	51
Alaska	29	12	12	12	12	12
Arizona	15	10	10	10	10	11
Arkansas	75	42	42	42	51	51
California	58	56	56	56	56	56
Colorado	64	38	38	38	38	38
Connecticut	8	8	8	8	8	8
Delaware	3	1	1	1	1	1
Florida	67	62	62	62	62	62
Georgia	159	110	110	110	110	112
Hawaii	4	3	3	3	3	3
Idaho	44	22	43	43	43	43
Illinois	102	64	73	78	86	87
Indiana	92	66	66	66	68	68
Iowa	99	99	99	99	99	99
Kansas	105	87	87	87	87	87
Kentucky	120	89	103	103	103	103
Louisiana	64	31	32	32	32	32
Maine	16	16	16	16	16	16
Maryland	24	20	20	20	20	20
Massachusetts	14	10	10	10	10	10
Michigan	83	72	72	72	72	72
Minnesota	87	73	73	73	73	73
Mississippi	82	47	47	47	47	47
Missouri	115	114	114	114	114	114
Montana	56	39	39	30	30	30
Nebraska	93	74	74	74	74	74
Nevada	17	11	11	11	11	11
New Hampshire	10	6	6	6	6	7
New Jersey	21	14	15	15	15	15
New Mexico	33	17	24	23	23	26
New York	62	44	44	44	44	45
North Carolina	100	80	97	97	97	97
North Dakota	53	53	53	53	53	53
Ohio	88	36	36	36	36	36
Oklahoma	77	67	67	73	73	73
Oregon	36	32	31	31	31	31
Pennsylvania	67	27	29	29	30	29
Rhode Island	5	2	2	2	2	2
South Carolina	46	37	37	37	37	37
South Dakota	66	50	59	59	59	59
Tennessee	95	95	95	95	95	95
Texas	254	247	247	247	247	247
Utah	29	4	4	6	6	6
Vermont	14	14	14	14	14	14
Virginia	95	55	55	57	57	57
Washington	39	24	24	36	36	35
West Virginia	55	24	25	25	25	25
Wisconsin	72	44	44	44	46	60
Wyoming	23	13	13	13	13	13
Total	3102	2311	2392	2410	2432	2453
Percentage of counties served		74.5%	77.1%	77.7%	78.4%	79.1%

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

OPERATING STATISTICS

Total annual ridership for rural transit systems decreased 3% in 2013, from 135 million rides in 2012 to 131 million rides (see Table 12).[2] Meanwhile, total vehicle miles decreased 5% and vehicle hours decreased 4%. Rural transit agencies provided 495 million miles of service and 28 million hours of service in 2013.

Table 12. Rural Transit Operating Statistics

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2012-2013
	---------- millions ----------					
Annual Ridership						
Fixed-route	71.7	76.1	69.2	66.0	63.0	-4%
Demand-response	57.9	61.0	57.4	55.8	55.5	-1%
Van pool	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.8	-9%
Commuter bus	-	-	8.4	7.0	6.5	-6%
Demand-response taxi	-	-	2.3	2.0	1.6	-21%
Ferryboat	-	-	0.8	1.2	1.2	-3%
Bus rapid transit	-	-	-	-	0.1	
Aerial tramway	-	-	-	-	2.3	
Other	1.0	1.2	0.4	2.2	0.0	
Total	131.1	138.9	139.4	135.1	131.1	-3%
Annual Vehicle Miles						
Fixed-route	114.1	133.8	125.8	111.6	105.9	-5%
Demand-response	357.3	389.3	376.2	372.1	358.1	-4%
Van pool	2.8	3.6	4.8	4.9	5.2	7%
Commuter bus	-	-	16.7	17.4	15.9	-8%
Demand-response taxi	-	-	6.7	9.3	6.2	-33%
Ferryboat	-	-	0.4	0.1	0.1	4%
Bus rapid transit	-	-	-	-	0.4	
Aerial tramway	-	-	-	-	3.3	
Other	24.2	23.4	0.2	3.4	0.0	
Total	498.4	550.1	530.8	518.9	495.2	-5%
Annual Vehicle Hours						
Fixed-route	6.6	7.4	6.9	6.1	5.8	-5%
Demand-response	22.3	23.9	22.7	21.8	20.8	-5%
Van pool	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	-12%
Commuter bus	-	-	0.7	0.7	0.6	-8%
Demand-response taxi	-	-	0.9	0.8	0.5	-28%
Ferryboat	-	-	0.1	0.0	0.0	-2%
Bus rapid transit	-	-	-	-	0.0	
Aerial tramway	-	-	-	-	0.3	
Other	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Total	29.6	32.0	31.5	29.6	28.3	-4%

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

[2] Previous editions of the Rural Transit Fact Book did not include sponsored or coordinated trips, so total reported trips was lower, especially for demand-response service. The current edition includes these trips.

The data in Table 12 do not include rural services provided by transit agencies that also provide urban service. Service statistics for those urban operators providing rural service is shown in Table 13. Rural passenger trips, vehicle miles, and vehicle hours provided by urban operators has increased significantly in recent years to 36 million trips, 79 million miles, and 4.3 million hours in 2013. Combining the data from Tables 12 and 13 shows that 167 million rural transit trips were provided in 2013.

Table 13. Rural Service Provided by Urban Operators

	2010	2011	2012	2013
	----------millions----------			
Unlinked Passenger Trips				
Fixed-route	10.9	19.4	18.5	19.7
Demand-response	2.6	4.1	5.0	5.9
Vanpool	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.3
Ferry boat	6.9	7.1	7.3	7.5
Other	1.7	1.1	1.5	1.9
Total	23.2	33.3	33.7	36.2
Vehicle Revenue Miles				
Fixed-route	11.5	18.4	21.8	22.0
Demand-response	17.4	28.2	34.0	44.4
Vanpool	6.6	8.9	7.6	7.0
Ferry boat	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Other	1.2	1.8	2.8	5.3
Total	36.9	57.6	66.5	79.0
Vehicle Revenue Hours				
Fixed-route	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.3
Demand-response	1.1	1.7	2.1	2.5
Vanpool	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Ferry boat	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Total	2.1	3.2	3.7	4.3

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2010–2013

Changes in ridership and service provided are partly due to changes by existing agencies and partly due to the addition or subtraction of transit providers. A small difference could also be due to measurement error, or the possibility that not all agencies reported their data in a given year. To determine the degree to which ridership and service provided has changed for existing agencies, data for individual transit providers were tracked over time. The data reveal that 49% of existing providers experienced an increase in ridership from 2012 to 2013, while 52% and 51% increased vehicle miles and hours, respectively (see Table 14). The median change from 2012 to 2013 was a 0.3% increase in vehicle miles, a 0.1% increase in vehicle hours, and a 0.4% decrease in ridership. Some agencies experienced more significant gains. Thirty-one percent had an increase in ridership of 5% or more, 22% increased ridership by 10% or more, and 13% experienced an increase of 20% or more. Some agencies also experienced significant decreases in ridership.

Table 14. Agency Level Changes in Service Miles, Hours, and Trips, 2011-2012

	Vehicle Miles	Vehicle Hours	Total Trips
Median Change	+3.0%	+1.0%	-0.4%
Percentage of Agencies with an Increase	52%	51%	49%
Percentage of Agencies with an Increase of:			
5% or more	33%	31%	31%
10% or more	22%	23%	22%
20% or more	12%	12%	13%
50% or more	4%	5%	5%
100% or more	2%	2%	2%
Percentage of Agencies with a Decrease of:			
5% or more	29%	30%	37%
10% or more	19%	20%	25%
20% or more	7%	10%	12%
50% or more	1%	2%	3%

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2012, 2013

Table 15 shows median and percentile rankings for vehicle miles and hours and passenger trips per agency in 2013. The data show that the median vehicle miles provided per system was 184,506, the median hours of service was 10,869, and the median number of trips provided was 33,520. For systems providing fixed-route service, the median fixed-route miles provided was 149,873, the median fixed-route hours of service was 8,061, and the median number of rides provided was 43,270. For demand-response operations, the median values were 133,833 miles, 8,410 hours, and 22,938 rides. These median numbers changed slightly from the previous year. However, as Table 15 shows, there is significant variation between agencies. For example, 10% of the agencies provided 809,584 or more miles of service, and the smallest 10% provided 24,813 miles or less.

Table 15. Rural Transit Operating Statistics, Median and Percentile Rankings per Agency, 2013

	Vehicle Miles			Vehicle Hours			Regular Unlinked Trips		
Percentile	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response	Total	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response	Total	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response	Total
10th	27,982	17,625	24,813	1,884	1,442	1,877	4,130	3,202	4,448
25th	62,240	49,242	68,070	3,658	3,279	4,237	11,913	8,727	12,087
50th	149,873	133,833	184,506	8,061	8,410	10,869	43,270	22,938	33,520
75th	332,821	328,272	415,162	18,630	18,881	24,374	130,237	53,636	95,350
90th	533,830	713,867	809,584	31,237	40,629	47,743	343,990	118,733	209,177
Number of agencies reporting	436	1,092	1,303	436	1,091	1,303	436	1,092	1,303

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

FINANCIAL STATISTICS

Federal funding for capital projects decreased in 2013 because of a drop in spending from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), but funding from other federal programs increased (see Table 16). Meanwhile capital funding increased 19% from state governments and 37% from local sources in 2013.

Federal support of operating costs increased 6% in 2013, from $499 million to $529 million. State funding for operations increased 22% to $288 million and local funding increased 30% to $425 million. Total fare revenues increased 35% to $145 million and contract revenues decreased 42%. Meanwhile, total operating expenses increased 8%.

Table 16. Rural Transit Financial Statistics: Sources of Funding

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change 2012-2013
	---------- million dollars ----------					
Capital Funding						
Federal						
5309	49.7	45.8	41.3	58.0	58.9	2%
5310	12.8	11.7	8.5	11.2	10.2	-9%
5311	58.7	47.5	46.6	52.1	58.8	13%
5316	1.1	3.2	1.4	3.1	2.5	-18%
5317	2.0	1.2	1.4	1.8	1.8	0%
5320	0.0	0.1	0.2	6.0	0.0	100%
Other Federal	0.5	5.3	1.4	9.1	31.5	244%
ARRA	34.5	253.6	152.1	84.2	38.6	-54%
Total Federal	159.3	368.4	253.0	225.5	202.2	-10%
State	40.6	24.5	22.8	24.6	29.3	19%
Local	30.1	19.2	23.3	30.3	41.6	37%
Operating						
Federal Assistance						
5309	5.5	2.1	3.0	0.9	0.4	-61%
5310	7.6	10.2	10.4	15.7	12.4	-21%
5311	279.8	307.3	370.6	400.8	414.5	3%
5316	10.1	12.7	14.8	15.0	14.5	-3%
5317	1.5	3.6	5.4	7.2	6.1	-15%
5320	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	
Other Federal	30.6	24.8	39.4	53.1	72.9	37%
ARRA	3.8	10.7	12.3	6.4	8.3	30%
Total Federal	339.0	371.7	455.9	499.1	529.1	6%
State Assistance	213.8	235.8	242.5	236.9	287.9	22%
Local Assistance	296.1	322.1	323.0	326.1	424.8	30%
Fare Revenues	97.4	99.9	99.9	107.0	144.7	35%
Contract Revenues	198.1	243.7	246.5	250.7	144.8	-42%
Total Operating	1,144.4	1,273.1	1,367.8	1,419.9	1,531.3	8%

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

The data in Table 16 reflect the dollar amounts reported by rural transit providers to the rural NTD, but the numbers reported could differ from the actual spending totals if any agencies did not report their data. Figure 4 shows actual federal spending levels by the FTA under the section 5311 Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program, not including ARRA funding. As shown, federal funding steadily increased from 2005 through 2008 before dropping in 2009 and then increasing significantly in 2010. The figure shows decreases in spending in 2011 and 2012 and an increase in 2013.

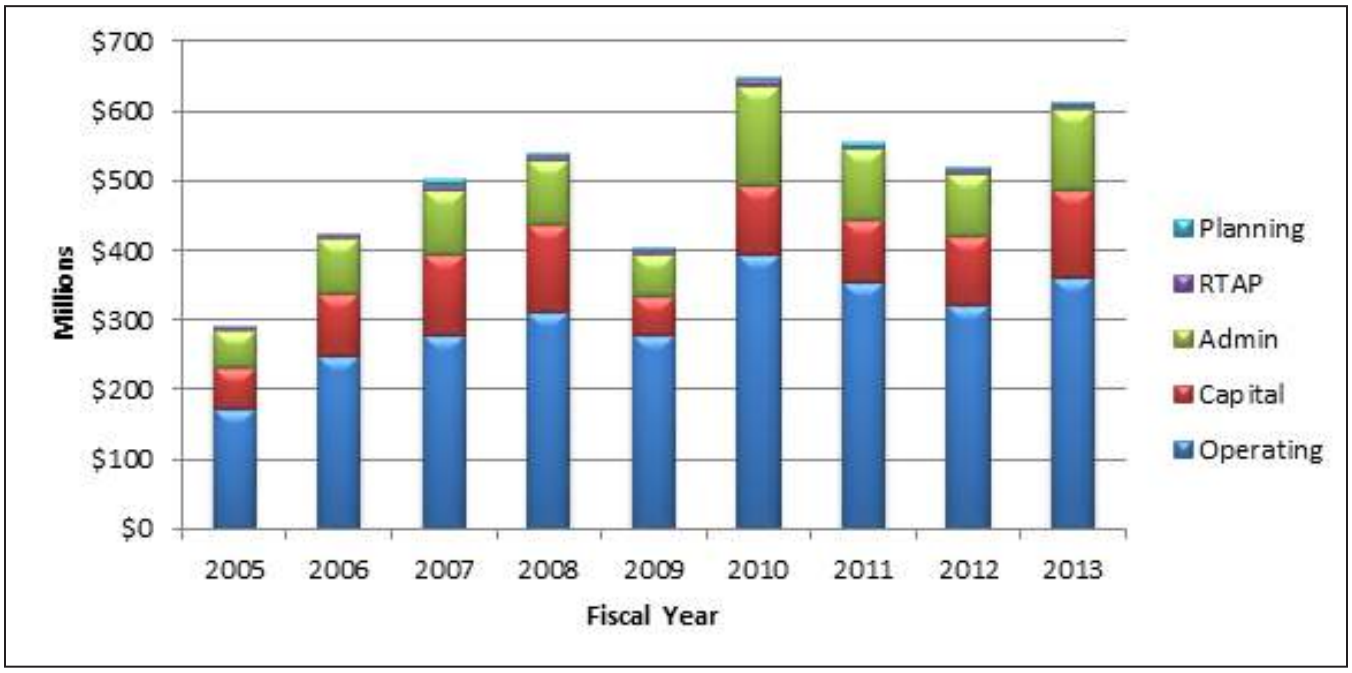


Figure 4. FTA Spending under the Section 5311 Program, FY2005–FY2013
Source: Federal Transit Administration. Grants Data. 2015.

FLEET STATISTICS

Average fleet size was 16.7 vehicles in 2013, about the same as in previous years, and rural transit providers operated a total of 22,018 vehicles in 2013 (see Tables 17 and 18). Figure 5 shows the fleet composition of rural transit agencies. Cutaways comprise the largest portion (49%) of the vehicle fleet, while minivans account for 17% of the vehicles, vans 16%, and buses 16%. Eighty-three percent of these vehicles are ADA accessible (see Table 19). Most buses (95%) and cutaways (94%) are ADA accessible, whereas 69% of minivans and 64% of vans were ADA accessible in 2013.

Table 17. Average Fleet Size

	Vehicles per Agency
2008	14.7
2009	15.4
2010	16.5
2011	16.6
2012	16.4
2013	16.7

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2008–2013

Table 18. Number of Vehicles in Operation

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	20,890	23,133	23,132	22,225	22,018
Buses	3,640	3,904	3,605	3,309	3,400
Cutaways	8,474	10,621	10,907	10,668	10,627
Vans	4,927	4,459	4,350	3,993	3,535
Minivans	3,025	3,422	3,496	3,521	3,685
Automobiles	446	420	413	359	358
School Bus	68	73	74	69	43
Over-the-road bus	57	84	94	86	86
Sport utility vehicle	106	146	187	208	216
Other	147	4	6	2	2

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

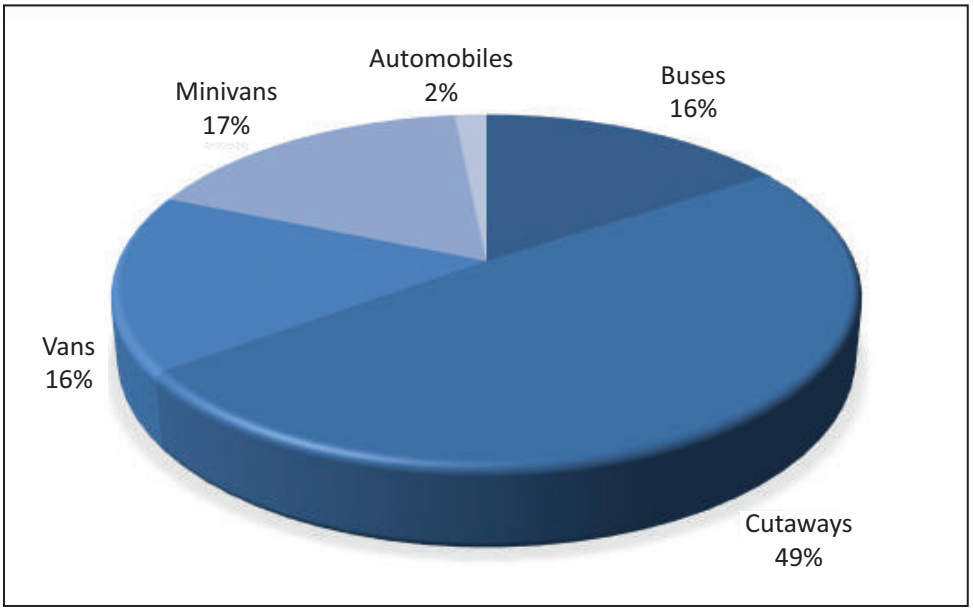


Figure 5. Fleet Composition, 2013

Table 19. Percentage of Rural Transit Vehicles that are ADA Accessible

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
		---------- Percentage ----------			
Total	77	82	82	82	83
Bus	92	95	95	95	95
Cutaway	91	94	93	94	94
Van	63	66	65	64	64
Minivan	56	62	65	66	69
Automobiles	4	11	13	13	13
School Bus	22	15	30	28	30
Over-the-road bus	79	85	82	88	86
Sport utility vehicle	12	5	8	14	13

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

The average age of the vehicles was 6.2 years in 2013. The average vehicle length was 22.6 feet with an average seating capacity of 14.3 (see Tables 20-22). The average bus is 30.6 feet and has a seating capacity of 26.5, while the average cutaway is 23.5 feet with a seating capacity of 14.8. Average vehicle length and seating capacity were mostly the same in 2013 as in the previous year, while average age increased slightly.

Table 20. Average Vehicle Age

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	---------- Years ----------				
Total	6.2	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.2
Bus	6.9	6.8	6.4	6.8	7.2
Cutaway	5.9	5.1	5.4	5.6	6.0
Van	6.3	5.7	5.7	5.9	6.2
Minivan	5.5	4.9	5.2	5.3	5.5
Automobiles	7.4	6.9	7.2	6.9	7.5
School Bus	9.3	9.7	10.9	11.6	12.9
Over-the-road bus	10.1	6.6	7.5	7.4	8.3
Sport utility vehicle	4.0	3.6	4.0	4.6	5.5

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

Table 21. Average Vehicle Length

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	---------- Feet ----------				
Total	22.3	22.6	22.5	22.5	22.6
Bus	29.9	30.6	30.5	30.5	30.6
Cutaway	23.3	23.4	23.5	23.5	23.5
Van	19.1	18.9	19.0	18.8	18.9
Minivan	16.1	16.2	16.2	16.2	16.3
Automobiles	15.0	15.5	15.4	15.4	15.5
School Bus	33.6	34.2	30.8	30.1	33.8
Over-the-road bus	41.4	43.6	42.3	42.4	43.2
Sport utility vehicle	-	14.7	14.4	14.6	15.4

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

Table 22. Average Seating Capacity

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	14.8	15.0	14.6	14.3	14.3
Bus	26.0	27.2	26.6	26.5	26.5
Cutaway	14.9	15.1	14.9	14.7	14.8
Van	11.4	10.9	10.8	10.4	10.4
Minivan	6.3	6.1	6.0	5.7	5.7
Automobiles	4.8	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3
School Bus	45.0	46.5	40.3	39.2	40.0
Over-the-road bus	45.1	48.7	45.0	45.1	45.7
Sport utility vehicle	-	4.7	4.7	4.9	5.3

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

Sixty-nine percent of the vehicles are owned by the transit provider, while most of the remainder is owned by a public agency for the service provider (see Table 23). One percent of the vehicles are leased. Buses and vans are less likely to be owned by the transit provider.

Table 23. Vehicle Ownership, 2013

	Owned by provider	Leased by provider	Owned by public agency
	---------- Percentage ----------		
Total	69	1	30
Bus	60	1	39
Cutaway	73	1	26
Van	57	1	41
Minivan	74	1	25
Automobiles	68	3	28
School Bus	81	2	16
Over-the-road bus	74	0	21
Sport utility vehicle	75	1	24

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

The FTA is the primary funding source for 84% of rural transit vehicles, including 82% of buses, 88% of cutaways, and 81% of vans (see Table 24). State or local sources provide the primary funding source for 11% of the vehicles.

Table 24. Primary Funding Source for Vehicles, 2013

	FTA	Other Federal	State or Local	Private
	---------- Percentage ----------			
Total	84	2	11	3
Bus	82	3	13	2
Cutaway	88	2	9	1
Van	81	1	14	4
Minivan	84	2	11	3
Automobiles	40	3	32	25
School Bus	23	21	56	0
Over-the-road bus	48	16	23	13
Sport utility vehicle	86	1	7	6

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

NATIONAL RURAL TRANSIT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A few performance measures can be calculated using the data from the Rural NTD. These include two measures of service effectiveness: trips per mile and trips per hour; one measure of service efficiency: cost per mile; and one measure of cost effectiveness: cost per trip. In addition, trips per vehicle, hours of service per vehicle, miles of service per vehicle, and the farebox recovery ratio can be measured.

Trips per mile remained at 0.26 in 2013. As Table 25 shows, trips per mile is significantly higher for fixed-route service (0.60) than it is for demand-response (0.15). Trips per hour remained at 4.6 in 2013. The number of trips per hour was 10.8 for fixed-route service and 2.7 for demand-response.

Table 25. Trips per Mile and Trips per Hour

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2012–2013
Trips per Mile						
Fixed-route	0.63	0.57	0.55	0.59	0.60	1%
Demand-response	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.15	3%
Van pool	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.18	0.16	-15%
Commuter bus	-	-	0.50	0.40	0.41	2%
Demand-response taxi	-	-	0.34	0.22	0.26	18%
Total	0.26	0.25	0.26	0.26	0.26	2%
Trips per Hour						
Fixed-route	10.9	10.2	10.0	10.8	10.8	0%
Demand-response	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	4%
Van pool	18.5	7.9	3.1	5.9	6.0	3%
Commuter bus	-	-	12.4	10.6	10.8	2%
Demand-response taxi	-	-	2.6	2.7	3.0	10%
Total	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.6	1%

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

These numbers represent industry averages, but there is variation between individual providers. There tends to be some variation in these measures based on the size of the operation. Table 26 groups the transit systems into six categories based on the number of vehicle miles provided. Trips per mile tends to increase with vehicle miles provided for fixed-route systems, as the larger systems provide more trips per mile, though some of the smallest systems also provide a high number of trips per mile. For demand-response systems, on the other hand, trips per mile continually decreases with increases in vehicle miles. The smaller demand-response systems provide more trips per mile, possibly because they serve a smaller area with more concentrated service.

There is a similar trend for trips per hour (see Table 27). For fixed-route systems, trips per hour is the highest for the largest systems providing the greatest number of service hours, while for demand-response systems, the number of trips per hour decreases with increases in hours of service provided.

Table 26. Trips per Mile by Number of Miles Provided, 2013

Percentile Rank	Vehicle Miles Provided	Average Trips per Mile
Fixed-Route		
1–10	<26,474	0.41
11–25	26,474–61,665	0.33
26–50	66,666–149,634	0.39
51–75	149,635–331,496	0.52
76–90	331,496–533,818	0.58
>90	>533,818	0.82
Demand-Response		
1–10	<17,363	0.41
11–25	17,363–48,993	0.29
26–50	48,994–133,353	0.24
51–75	133,354–327,943	0.20
76–90	327,944–713,754	0.17
>90	>713,754	0.14

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

Table 27. Trips per Hour by Number of Hours Provided, 2013

Percentile Rank	Vehicle Hours Provided	Average Trips per Hour
Fixed–Route		
1–10	<1,790	3.54
11–25	1,790–3,612	5.45
26–50	3,613–7,986	5.87
51–75	7,987–18,600	7.54
76–90	18,601–31,123	9.49
>90	>31,123	14.95
Demand–Response		
1–10	<1,408	4.04
11–25	1,408–3,253	3.80
26–50	3,254–8,314	3.41
51–75	8,315–18,851	3.07
76–90	18,852–40,487	3.19
>90	>40,487	2.40

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

Trips per vehicle decreased 2% in 2013 to 5,954. Meanwhile, rural transit vehicles averaged 22,491 miles and 1,284 hours of service in 2013, small decreases from 2012 (see Table 28).

Operating cost per trip was $9.74 in 2013, a 1% increase from the previous year. The costs were significantly higher for demand-response service. The rural NTD does not report cost data by mode, so it is not possible to compute average fixed-route and demand-response costs. However, many providers offer just one type of service, so averages can be calculated for those systems that offer just demand-response or just fixed-route service. In 2013, 793 such systems operated just demand-response service, and 155 offered just fixed-route service. Their average costs are shown in Table 29. The average operating cost for fixed-route-only systems decreased 3% to $7.18 per trip in 2013, while that for demand-response-only systems was nearly unchanged at $13.72 per trip. Operating cost per mile in 2013 was $3.09 for fixed-route-only systems, $2.18 for demand-response-only systems, and $2.58 per mile overall. These were all slight increases from 2012. Costs tend to be higher per mile for the fixed-route operators but lower per trip because of the greater number of rides provided.

Fare revenues in 2013 covered 9% of the operating costs. The farebox recovery ratio had been averaging 8% for several years before increasing in 2013. The ratio is higher for fixed-route-only systems, increasing to 12% in 2013, while the ratio for demand-response-only systems remained at 6%.

Table 28. Trips, Miles, and Hours per Vehicle

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2012-13
Trips per Vehicle	6,278	6,003	6,024	6,081	5,954	-2%
Miles per Vehicle	23,857	23,778	22,947	23,345	22,491	-4%
Hours per Vehicle	1,418	1,383	1,364	1,331	1,284	-4%

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2009–2013

Table 29. Operating Costs per Trip and per Mile and Farebox Recovery Ratio

	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2012-13
Operating Expense per Trip					
Total	9.09	9.54	9.67	9.74	1%
Fixed-route-only	6.84	6.96	7.42	7.18	-3%
Demand-response-only	12.21	12.85	13.78	13.72	0%
Operating Expense per Mile					
Total	2.32	2.49	2.52	2.58	2%
Fixed-route-only	2.93	2.83	3.04	3.09	2%
Demand-response-only	2.02	2.06	2.10	2.18	4%
Farebox Recovery Ratio					
Total	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.09	19%
Fixed-route-only	0.08	0.08	0.11	0.12	9%
Demand-response-only	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.06	-2%

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2010–2013

While Table 29 shows overall averages, there is significant variation in costs between transit agencies across the country. Table 30 shows percentile rankings for operating costs per trip and per mile and for farebox recovery ratio, including both demand-response and fixed-route service. (The percentile rank is the percentage of transit operators with results at or below the reported number. For example, 10% of transit operators have an operating expense per trip at or below $5.72, while 50% have an operating expense per trip at or below $13.42, and 90% are at or below $31.07.)

Table 30. Operating Costs per Trip and per Mile and Farebox Recovery Ratio, Percentile Rankings, 2013

Percentile Rank	Operating Expense		Farebox Recovery Ratio
	Per Trip	Per Mile	
Total			
10th	5.72	1.40	0.02
20th	8.51	1.86	0.04
50th	13.42	2.66	0.07
75th	20.24	3.70	0.13
90th	31.07	5.13	0.20
Fixed-route-only			
10th	4.16	1.83	0.02
20th	6.26	2.56	0.03
50th	10.34	3.36	0.07
75th	21.44	4.36	0.14
90th	39.93	6.10	0.20
Demand-reponse-only			
10th	6.59	1.32	0.02
20th	9.69	1.68	0.04
50th	14.40	2.40	0.07
75th	21.51	3.37	0.11
90th	30.86	4.72	0.17

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

Some of the variations could be explained by the size of the operations. Table 31 categorizes transit agencies based on the number of vehicle miles provided. The operating expense per mile is lower for the larger systems, but expense per trip does not appear to be influenced by the number of miles provided, as the larger demand-response systems tend to have fewer trips per mile of service.

Table 31. Operating Statistics and Performance Measures by Size of Operation, 2013

Size of Agency*	Number of Agencies	Vehicle Miles		Total Miles	Total Trips	Fare revenues	Operating expenses	Operating Expense		Farebox recovery ratio
		Min	Max					Per Trip	Per Mile	
		----------Thousands----------								
Very small	130	0	25	1,806	733	1,275	8,300	11.32	4.60	0.15
Small	195	25	68	8,580	2,667	5,717	33,969	12.74	3.96	0.17
Medium-small	326	68	185	38,277	11,141	10,428	113,620	10.20	2.97	0.09
Medium-large	326	185	415	91,238	27,892	24,987	256,670	9.20	2.81	0.10
Large	195	415	810	113,248	34,768	29,504	303,371	8.73	2.68	0.10
Very large	130	810	-	241,867	53,860	45,904	559,698	10.30	2.31	0.08

*Agency size is determined by vehicle miles of service provided using the following categorization: smallest 10% is very small, 10th to 25th percentile is small, 25th to 50th percentile is medium-small, 50th to 75th percentile is medium-large, 75th to 90th percentile is large, and largest 10% is very large.

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

REGIONAL AND STATE STATISTICS

The data described in the previous sections are aggregate national data, but there may be some regional differences. Therefore, data in this section are presented at the regional and state levels. The regions used are based on the FTA's regional classification. The FTA divides the country into 10 regions, as shown in Figure 6. Table 32 shows how rural transit statistics vary between those regions.

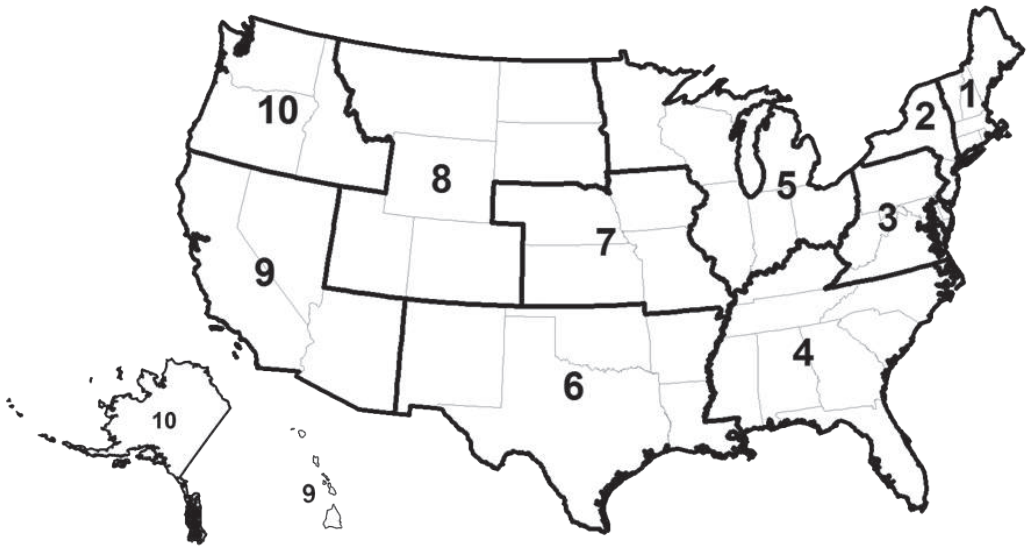


Figure 6. FTA Regions

The greatest number of rural transit agencies is in regions 4, 5, and 7, followed by regions 8 and 6. The operators in these regions are mostly demand-response providers. The northeast and far western regions have a greater orientation toward fixed-route service.

Annual ridership in 2013 was highest in regions 5 (22.8 million rides) and 8 (20.9 million rides). Region 4 provided the highest level of service, by a significant margin, with 134 million vehicle miles and 7.7 million vehicle hours of service, most of it being demand-response. Region 4 also had the greatest number of vehicles in service, many of them being vans.

Trips per mile and per hour were highest in region 8, according to the data, and regions 8 and 9 provided the most rides per vehicle.

Operating cost per trip was the highest in region 4 and lowest in region 8. For the fixed-route-only agencies, cost per trip was highest in region 1 at $12.43 and lowest in region 6 at $2.06. The lowest cost for demand-response-only providers was $8.81 per trip in region 2. Cost per mile ranged between $1.91 in region 4 to $3.74 in region 9.

State-level statistics are shown in Tables 33-37.

Table 32. Regional Data, 2013

	FTA Region									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of Agencies										
Fixed-route	27	46	47	48	52	29	15	41	66	67
Demand-response	30	14	40	246	224	108	178	117	63	74
Total	35	49	55	253	278	114	190	138	102	103
Counties Served	85%	72%	54%	82%	76%	85%	91%	68%	86%	82%
Annual Ridership (million rides)										
Fixed-route	4.9	3.2	8.9	5.0	5.5	3.3	2.0	11.9	8.1	10.2
Demand-response	1.3	0.7	1.7	14.2	15.0	7.7	7.0	4.4	1.8	1.5
Total	6.7	4.0	10.7	19.5	22.8	11.3	9.1	20.9	12.9	13.2
Annual Vehicle Miles (million miles)										
Fixed-route	6.2	11.1	19.1	6.8	9.2	5.8	3.5	11.2	17.0	15.9
Demand-response	18.8	4.4	12.3	125.2	72.4	55.9	39.2	14.5	6.0	9.4
Total	26.7	15.8	31.9	133.8	87.6	63.6	43.2	32.5	29.3	30.9
Annual Vehicle Hours (million hours)										
Fixed-route	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.8
Demand-response	0.7	0.3	0.7	7.2	4.3	3.1	2.3	1.1	0.4	0.6
Total	1.2	0.9	1.6	7.7	5.4	3.6	2.6	2.2	1.5	1.6
Number of Vehicles										
Total	751	557	1,380	5,097	4,011	3,408	2,509	1,696	1,168	1,441
Bus	222	347	424	494	621	103	93	406	384	306
Cutaway	429	201	668	1,965	1,905	1,981	1,642	585	605	646
Van	48	9	145	1,741	549	350	173	198	60	252
Minivan	41	0	94	716	741	875	578	376	66	198
Other	8	0	49	181	191	98	23	70	49	36
Vehicles ADA Accessible	94%	99%	94%	74%	89%	84%	85%	72%	85%	78%

Table 32. Regional Data, 2013 (continued)

	FTA Region									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Vehicle Age	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.4	6.1	6.0	6.6	8.3	6.6	6.9
Average Vehicle Length	25.4	25.9	23.9	20.8	22.5	21.2	22.3	23.5	26.9	24.0
Average Vehicle Capacity	18.7	17.9	16.8	12.2	13.4	12.2	12.6	17.0	21.6	17.4
Trips Per Mile										
Total	0.25	0.25	0.34	0.15	0.26	0.18	0.21	0.64	0.44	0.43
Fixed-route	0.79	0.29	0.46	0.74	0.60	0.56	0.57	1.06	0.48	0.65
Demand-response	0.07	0.16	0.14	0.11	0.21	0.14	0.18	0.31	0.31	0.16
Trips Per Hour										
Total	5.8	4.4	6.6	2.5	4.2	3.2	3.5	9.3	8.7	8.4
Fixed-route	12.5	5.4	9.5	11.1	10.0	9.7	8.4	17.1	9.7	13.0
Demand-response	1.9	2.4	2.5	2.0	3.5	2.4	3.0	4.0	4.5	2.5
Trips Per Vehicle	8,892	7,146	7,787	3,826	5,695	3,315	3,612	12,307	11,055	9,169
Miles Per Vehicle	35,564	28,364	23,102	26,242	21,850	18,652	17,199	19,145	25,073	21,472
Hours Per Vehicle	1,545	1,608	1,187	1,517	1,353	1,043	1,032	1,317	1,266	1,090
Operating Expense Per Trip										
Total	9.92	12.21	8.24	13.11	10.38	12.65	10.63	5.62	8.48	8.66
Fixed-route only	12.43	12.30	7.43	4.88	7.86	2.06	5.44	5.97	8.90	5.78
Demand-response only	34.32	8.81	15.39	14.60	12.68	16.54	12.10	10.88	12.64	22.48
Operating Expense Per Mile										
Total	2.48	3.08	2.78	1.91	2.70	2.25	2.23	3.61	3.74	3.70
Fixed-route only	3.28	3.03	1.78	3.62	3.10	2.14	3.39	4.20	3.71	4.31
Demand-response only	1.73	3.03	1.91	1.78	2.60	2.11	2.16	2.83	4.53	3.39
Farebox Recovery Ratio	0.06	0.12	0.26	0.05	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.12	0.11

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

Table 33. Rural Transit Vehicle Revenue Miles of Service by State, 2010-2013 (million miles)

	Total				Fixed-Route Service				Demand-Response Service				Other Service			
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013
Alabama	5.9	5.3	4.8	4.6	.0	.0	.0	.0	5.9	5.3	4.8	4.6	.0	.0	.0	.0
Alaska	1.8	2.7	2.2	2.6	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	.5	.8	.7	.7	.0	.5	.1	.4
Arizona	3.2	3.7	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.6	1.9	2.1	.4	.6	.2	.2	.0	.6	.2	.2
Arkansas	8.1	8.1	8.7	9.1	.0	.2	.1	.2	8.1	7.9	8.6	8.9	.0	.0	.0	.0
California	20.0	18.5	17.0	16.2	15.2	9.8	9.9	10.0	4.8	4.8	4.0	3.3	.0	3.9	3.2	2.9
Colorado	11.0	10.7	14.5	14.5	8.3	5.7	5.3	5.6	2.7	2.5	3.1	2.6	.0	2.4	6.1	6.2
Connecticut	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	.7	.7	.7	.7	.7	.8	.8	.8	.0	.1	.1	.1
Delaware	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
Florida	14.5	17.2	14.3	15.3	3.0	5.2	2.2	2.8	11.4	11.8	11.7	11.8	.0	.2	.5	.7
Georgia	15.1	16.3	16.8	16.5	.0	.0	.0	.0	15.1	16.3	16.8	16.5	.0	.0	.0	.0
Hawaii	5.0	7.0	7.8	4.9	5.0	3.3	2.6	1.4	.0	1.7	2.0	.3	.0	2.1	3.1	3.1
Idaho	2.8	2.7	2.3	2.4	1.9	1.8	1.1	1.1	.7	.7	.8	.7	.0	.2	.3	.5
Illinois	12.8	15.0	13.9	15.0	1.0	.0	1.1	.9	11.7	13.7	12.7	14.1	.0	1.4	.0	.0
Indiana	14.9	15.0	15.1	14.5	.8	.7	.7	.8	14.1	14.3	14.4	13.6	.0	.0	.0	.0
Iowa	15.1	14.7	14.8	13.6	.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	15.1	12.7	12.8	11.8	.0	.0	.0	.0
Kansas	6.3	6.9	6.0	6.2	.6	.8	.9	.9	5.7	6.1	5.1	4.7	.0	.0	.0	.5
Kentucky	30.4	27.2	31.3	30.9	.8	.6	.6	.8	29.6	26.6	30.7	30.2	.0	.0	.0	.0
Louisiana	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.8	.0	.1	.0	.0	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.8	.0	.0	.0	.0
Maine	41.3	14.1	10.1	8.8	1.0	2.8	.9	.9	17.1	10.1	8.2	7.7	23.2	1.2	1.0	.2
Maryland	9.4	7.0	4.0	3.9	5.4	4.2	2.1	2.1	3.9	2.6	1.8	1.8	.0	.2	.2	.0
Massachusetts	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	.4	.5	.5	.5	.0	.0	.0	.0
Michigan	23.8	23.7	22.6	23.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	23.8	23.7	22.6	23.1	.0	.0	.0	.0
Minnesota	12.6	13.9	12.6	12.4	3.0	3.7	3.7	3.7	9.6	10.2	8.9	8.8	.0	.0	.0	.0
Mississippi	8.6	8.1	8.8	10.0	8.6	8.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	8.8	10.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
Missouri	23.4	23.0	22.0	20.1	.0	.0	.5	.5	23.2	22.8	21.5	19.6	.2	.2	.0	.0
Montana	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.8	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.9	2.0	.0	.4	.3	.5
Nebraska	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.6	.0	.0	.0	.0	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.6	.0	.0	.0	.0
Nevada	1.6	1.4	2.3	2.1	.9	.9	.9	.9	.7	.5	1.3	1.1	.0	.0	.0	.0
New Hampshire	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	.4	.4	.5	.5	.0	.0	.0	.1
New Jersey	7.3	7.5	2.4	2.2	1.4	1.2	.5	.5	5.9	6.3	1.9	1.7	.0	.0	.0	.0
New Mexico	6.2	5.0	5.2	5.0	4.5	3.0	2.6	2.6	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.6	.0	.5	1.0	.8
New York	13.7	13.8	14.5	13.6	13.7	13.4	14.4	10.6	.0	.0	.0	2.7	.0	.4	.1	.3
North Carolina	44.4	41.4	39.1	29.3	3.2	1.6	1.5	1.1	41.2	39.9	35.1	27.6	.0	.0	2.5	.5
North Dakota	2.9	3.1	2.9	2.7	.2	.0	.2	.2	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.4	.0	.1	.1	.0
Ohio	10.9	11.2	10.0	11.1	.7	.6	.5	.5	10.2	10.6	9.5	10.6	.0	.0	.0	.0
Oklahoma	17.1	18.7	19.5	19.7	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.0	15.7	17.6	18.5	18.7	.0	.0	.0	.0
Oregon	8.8	9.6	7.3	7.4	5.0	4.4	3.8	3.7	3.8	4.4	2.8	2.9	.0	.8	.6	.8
Pennsylvania	13.2	11.8	10.7	10.7	4.9	4.4	4.7	4.4	8.3	7.0	6.0	5.9	.0	.4	.0	.4
Rhode Island	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
South Carolina	7.4	7.5	6.9	5.9	2.3	1.2	1.2	.6	5.1	5.2	4.9	4.9	.0	1.1	.9	.5
South Dakota	4.0	4.2	4.6	4.2	.0	.0	.0	.0	4.0	4.2	4.6	4.2	.0	.0	.0	.0
Tennessee	26.3	29.4	30.2	19.3	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.5	25.0	27.7	28.9	17.8	.0	.6	.3	.1
Texas	21.2	21.4	21.7	20.7	.0	1.4	1.8	1.1	21.2	19.1	17.4	18.8	.0	.8	2.5	.8
Utah	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	.1	.1	.1	.1	.0	.0	.2	.0
Vermont	11.6	8.8	9.3	12.5	2.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	8.8	5.7	6.3	9.3	.0	1.2	1.2	1.3
Virginia	8.5	11.4	13.2	12.9	5.4	8.2	9.2	9.5	3.1	3.1	3.9	3.4	.0	.0	.0	.0
Washington	16.0	16.9	15.8	16.0	8.6	8.0	7.4	7.7	4.7	5.4	4.7	4.7	.0	3.5	3.7	3.6
West Virginia	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.5	3.1	.0	.0	.0	1.2	.0	.0	.0	.0
Wisconsin	7.5	8.3	8.0	7.9	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.5	5.1	.6	.3	.3	.0	5.0	5.0	5.1
Wyoming	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.5	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3	.0	.0	.0	.0

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2010-2013

Table 34. State Operating Statistics, 2013

	Number of Agencies	Counties Served (%)	Annual Ridership			Annual Vehicle Miles			Annual Vehicle Hours		
			Total	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response	Total	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response	Total	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response
			---------thousand rides---------			---------thousand miles---------			---------thousand hours---------		
Alabama	23	76%	1,413	-	1,413	4,594	-	4,594	281	-	281
Alaska	14	41%	2,087	1,813	144	2,610	1,460	719	155	83	59
Arizona	13	73%	921	804	39	2,475	2,077	179	138	116	15
Arkansas	8	68%	1,030	132	898	9,118	203	8,915	569	17	553
California	54	97%	7,230	4,951	1,131	16,203	9,970	3,341	864	505	267
Colorado	26	59%	13,203	8,084	668	14,487	5,628	2,640	1,020	372	234
Connecticut	4	100%	507	328	139	1,633	738	777	98	43	48
Delaware	0	33%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	22	93%	1,843	657	1,102	15,250	2,769	11,795	855	143	697
Georgia	79	70%	1,767	-	1,767	16,508	-	16,508	933	-	933
Hawaii	2	75%	2,256	782	75	4,851	1,392	312	206	61	15
Idaho	10	98%	946	778	106	2,353	1,120	735	132	66	55
Illinois	38	85%	4,496	2,178	2,318	14,991	918	14,073	823	74	749
Indiana	43	74%	2,541	675	1,866	14,467	821	13,646	989	64	924
Iowa	22	100%	4,550	1,464	3,087	13,613	1,856	11,757	945	146	799
Kansas	81	83%	1,435	408	934	6,168	937	4,730	339	61	255
Kentucky	24	86%	3,462	443	3,019	30,930	775	30,155	2,338	64	2,275
Louisiana	29	50%	520	-	520	5,798	-	5,798	281	-	281
Maine	11	100%	1,086	573	460	8,777	904	7,715	325	55	263
Maryland	7	83%	3,397	3,123	274	3,935	2,150	1,785	278	164	113
Massachusetts	3	71%	1,629	1,573	57	2,114	1,664	450	130	100	30
Michigan	57	87%	6,809	-	6,025	23,125	-	23,097	1,397	-	1,371
Minnesota	48	84%	3,558	1,201	2,357	12,416	3,662	8,754	735	207	528
Mississippi	18	57%	2,310	-	2,310	10,012	-	10,012	388	-	388
Missouri	23	99%	2,348	86	2,262	20,065	470	19,596	1,090	22	1,068
Montana	30	54%	1,349	669	631	3,824	1,387	1,972	178	75	98
Nebraska	60	80%	679	-	679	2,555	-	2,555	192	-	192
Nevada	12	65%	1,453	947	506	2,070	942	1,127	135	67	67
New Hampshire	7	70%	1,138	1,073	63	1,593	1,021	518	130	77	50
New Jersey	5	71%	461	170	292	2,175	464	1,710	150	23	127
New Mexico	18	79%	1,664	1,222	320	4,981	2,588	1,582	291	151	112
New York	43	73%	3,518	3,010	425	13,603	10,580	2,694	745	568	166
North Carolina	55	97%	4,590	1,744	2,814	29,274	1,122	27,614	1,470	89	1,368
North Dakota	23	100%	641	128	497	2,663	225	2,390	207	18	180
Ohio	33	41%	2,452	259	2,193	11,129	491	10,639	682	34	647
Oklahoma	19	95%	3,252	758	2,493	19,691	962	18,729	1,115	64	1,051
Oregon	27	86%	2,787	1,723	612	7,370	3,681	2,863	406	177	194
Pennsylvania	15	43%	3,537	2,521	871	10,748	4,404	5,899	610	275	322
Rhode Island	0	40%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Carolina	13	80%	948	402	433	5,930	605	4,873	298	41	241
South Dakota	19	89%	1,424	-	1,424	4,198	-	4,198	326	-	326
Tennessee	10	100%	2,924	1,684	1,230	19,333	1,459	17,791	1,066	107	952
Texas	25	97%	4,290	859	3,203	20,737	1,107	18,790	1,142	65	1,028
Utah	3	21%	1,887	1,865	22	1,366	1,244	122	99	88	11
Vermont	9	100%	2,316	1,398	593	12,502	1,919	9,269	476	122	305
Virginia	22	60%	2,740	2,369	371	12,885	9,478	3,407	503	322	182
Washington	25	90%	6,985	5,585	640	15,995	7,677	4,669	710	323	277
West Virginia	11	45%	1,071	870	201	4,312	3,077	1,235	247	174	73
Wisconsin	47	83%	2,520	1,051	62	7,897	2,468	293	639	136	28
Wyoming	16	57%	1,969	1,044	924	2,546	1,207	1,338	243	92	150

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

Table 35. State Financial Statistics, 2013

	Capital Funding			Operating Funding		
	Local	State	Federal	Local	State	Federal
	----------thousand dollars----------					
Alabama			1,824	4,116		5,832
Alaska		14	389	4,972	1,137	5,300
Arizona	59	6	1,190	2,540	22	3,810
Arkansas		330	1,728	4,947	963	7,223
California	3,421	9,118	4,865	31,381	11,427	12,043
Colorado	17,986	4,300	17,970	34,581	635	6,959
Connecticut		23	1,500	524	1,780	2,108
Delaware						
Florida	290	1,133	1,872	4,427	16,443	14,066
Georgia	22	15	5,242	6,556		16,501
Hawaii	486		1,273	9,758		1,639
Idaho	5		78	1,782		4,047
Illinois		381	6,806	2,617	23,606	8,147
Indiana	16	10	311	8,950	6,301	12,250
Iowa	708	5	3,486	7,195	6,604	9,236
Kansas	231	7	956	3,595	1,396	5,602
Kentucky	290	276	8,814	43,307		13,854
Louisiana			2,008	3,868	401	6,656
Maine	256	36	1,251	2,116	2,496	11,058
Maryland		251	2,026	3,389	1,980	1,790
Massachusetts	19	642	2,086	1,596	2,448	2,408
Michigan		1,074	5,552	25,366	27,908	10,775
Minnesota	1,228	677	4,272	2,120	17,778	7,135
Mississippi	533	154	4,738	3,531	432	10,137
Missouri	294		4,874	3,031	1,155	14,057
Montana	175	1	921	3,722	82	5,508
Nebraska				1,542	1,524	7,899
Nevada	10	122	252	2,303	1,384	4,735
New Hampshire	7	7	587	1,121	80	4,109
New Jersey	89		130	1,647	2,593	1,173
New Mexico	954		2,982	5,105		6,991
New York	182	182	1,454	6,665	12,180	4,734
North Carolina	899	1,174	7,164	5,907	10,434	10,894
North Dakota	74	72	1,365	1,023	2,356	2,769
Ohio	1,346	21	5,205	3,223	3,084	13,494
Oklahoma	609	65	2,953	2,872	3,015	12,886
Oregon	494	398	2,086	5,595	3,229	11,418
Pennsylvania	200	2,793	5,146	1,089	15,530	8,550
Rhode Island						
South Carolina		38	878	1,550	2,517	5,830
South Dakota	157		629	1,193	953	5,846
Tennessee	343	497	4,025	2,540	6,813	10,319
Texas	588	284	5,359	2,856	13,666	38,693
Utah	179		1,242	7,514		1,944
Vermont	842	783	6,502	2,603	6,488	16,347
Virginia	151	470	2,731	6,916	4,226	11,104
Washington	4,394	444	18,220	32,851	11,513	7,720
West Virginia		191	897	4,272	1,407	3,924
Wisconsin			4,648	3,493	4,371	8,125
Wyoming	945	32	1,663	2,740	433	3,687

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

Table 36. State Fleet Statistics, 2013

	Number of Vehicles	ADA Vehicles (%)	Average Vehicle Age	Average Vehicle Length	Average Vehicle Capacity	Trips Per Vehicle	Miles Per Vehicle	Hours Per Vehicle
						----------thousands----------		
Alabama	312	72%	5.9	22.7	18.0	4.5	14.7	.9
Alaska	109	89%	7.0	28.6	21.0	19.1	23.9	1.4
Arizona	85	100%	5.6	24.6	18.0	10.8	29.1	1.6
Arkansas	431	69%	6.3	21.4	11.6	2.4	21.2	1.3
California	715	86%	6.0	27.3	22.0	10.1	22.7	1.2
Colorado	575	73%	9.5	26.1	21.9	23.0	25.2	1.8
Connecticut	78	100%	4.2	24.4	16.9	6.5	20.9	1.3
Delaware	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	615	81%	5.4	21.3	11.9	3.0	24.8	1.4
Georgia	497	77%	4.2	21.2	13.1	3.6	33.2	1.9
Hawaii	116	82%	7.6	27.9	26.0	19.4	41.8	1.8
Idaho	119	73%	6.7	24.1	17.4	7.9	19.8	1.1
Illinois	744	100%	7.2	22.9	13.7	6.0	20.1	1.1
Indiana	813	83%	6.0	19.1	9.0	3.1	17.8	1.2
Iowa	913	91%	7.5	25.0	15.8	5.0	14.9	1.0
Kansas	357	77%	7.0	19.3	11.5	4.0	17.3	.9
Kentucky	1,258	70%	6.2	20.4	10.7	2.8	24.6	1.9
Louisiana	320	94%	5.0	21.0	10.4	1.6	18.1	.9
Maine	197	82%	7.5	23.5	16.7	5.5	44.6	1.7
Maryland	230	93%	7.9	26.1	20.8	14.8	17.1	1.2
Massachusetts	112	100%	5.5	25.9	19.3	14.5	18.9	1.2
Michigan	1,010	90%	5.6	25.8	18.2	6.7	22.9	1.4
Minnesota	480	99%	6.6	25.0	16.9	7.4	25.9	1.5
Mississippi	283	73%	5.3	22.4	17.8	8.2	35.4	1.4
Missouri	1,041	87%	5.8	21.3	10.5	2.3	19.3	1.0
Montana	232	67%	7.6	23.6	15.1	5.8	16.5	.8
Nebraska	178	67%	6.7	19.8	10.6	3.8	14.4	1.1
Nevada	128	90%	7.3	25.3	17.7	11.4	16.2	1.1
New Hampshire	77	100%	5.9	28.1	20.9	14.8	20.7	1.7
New Jersey	114	99%	6.3	23.9	16.3	4.0	19.1	1.3
New Mexico	264	83%	5.4	23.3	15.4	6.3	18.9	1.1
New York	441	99%	5.7	26.4	18.4	8.0	30.8	1.7
North Carolina	1,013	72%	4.8	20.1	10.8	4.5	28.9	1.5
North Dakota	165	88%	6.6	21.1	11.7	3.9	16.1	1.3
Ohio	520	87%	5.1	19.4	9.9	4.7	21.4	1.3
Oklahoma	1,031	84%	5.8	20.7	11.6	3.2	19.1	1.1
Oregon	330	97%	6.8	23.7	16.3	8.4	22.3	1.2
Pennsylvania	532	100%	5.7	24.7	17.2	6.6	20.2	1.1
Rhode Island	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Carolina	223	76%	6.0	23.9	16.7	4.3	26.6	1.3
South Dakota	379	59%	9.1	19.8	12.6	3.8	11.1	.9
Tennessee	819	80%	5.5	19.7	10.4	3.6	23.6	1.3
Texas	1,243	89%	6.7	21.4	12.7	3.5	16.7	.9
Utah	51	98%	7.2	30.1	25.2	37.0	26.8	1.9
Vermont	280	100%	4.9	26.2	19.9	8.3	44.7	1.7
Virginia	395	95%	4.9	22.7	15.3	6.9	32.6	1.3
Washington	754	69%	7.3	23.6	17.8	9.3	21.2	.9
West Virginia	223	81%	5.2	22.1	14.5	4.8	19.3	1.1
Wisconsin	336	66%	6.1	20.3	9.1	7.5	23.5	1.9
Wyoming	164	84%	7.2	23.9	17.3	12.0	15.5	1.5

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

Table 37. State Performance Measures, Median Agencies Values, 2013

	Trips Per Mile			Trips Per Hour			Operating Expense Per Trip	Operating Expense Per Mile	Farebox Recovery Ratio
	Total	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response	Total	Fixed-Route	Demand-Response			
Alabama	0.20	-	0.20	3.34	-	3.34	15.81	2.65	0.10
Alaska	0.37	0.51	0.25	5.21	7.76	2.29	18.56	5.63	0.12
Arizona	0.24	0.35	0.25	5.10	5.40	2.53	10.24	3.29	0.08
Arkansas	0.09	0.55	0.08	1.55	7.52	1.56	18.21	1.91	0.06
California	0.34	0.35	0.28	6.23	6.86	3.43	14.00	4.44	0.11
Colorado	0.48	1.37	0.23	5.91	18.94	2.51	10.36	3.90	0.06
Connecticut	0.24	0.30	0.16	4.07	4.33	2.76	13.21	3.17	0.09
Delaware	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	0.09	0.19	0.09	1.88	3.76	1.65	23.86	2.48	0.03
Georgia	0.12	-	0.12	2.01	-	2.01	13.83	1.73	0.06
Hawaii	0.47	0.56	0.24	11.01	12.78	4.94	5.97	2.87	0.09
Idaho	0.21	0.69	0.19	2.77	10.91	2.13	14.49	2.53	0.03
Illinois	0.15	2.34	0.15	2.62	27.51	2.62	16.54	2.31	0.04
Indiana	0.15	0.48	0.14	2.40	5.61	2.23	14.23	2.13	0.08
Iowa	0.35	0.85	0.25	5.36	10.42	4.09	8.22	2.94	0.10
Kansas	0.26	0.34	0.25	3.62	5.08	3.39	8.37	2.08	0.12
Kentucky	0.10	0.34	0.09	1.45	4.41	1.38	15.31	1.98	0.03
Louisiana	0.10	-	0.10	2.09	-	2.09	25.93	2.45	0.03
Maine	0.14	0.36	0.07	2.34	4.62	1.82	29.32	3.70	0.05
Maryland	0.18	0.23	0.16	3.67	4.34	1.94	8.73	1.97	0.10
Massachusetts	0.94	1.00	0.15	14.05	16.44	2.39	5.94	4.46	0.23
Michigan	0.25	-	0.24	4.00	-	4.00	11.83	3.15	0.08
Minnesota	0.34	0.31	0.34	4.79	4.54	4.79	10.50	3.21	0.13
Mississippi	0.16	-	0.16	3.94	-	3.94	12.08	1.83	0.04
Missouri	0.28	0.34	0.28	2.97	4.72	2.95	10.57	2.66	0.06
Montana	0.15	0.23	0.16	3.01	3.07	3.31	12.08	2.28	0.05
Nebraska	0.22	-	0.22	3.17	-	3.17	15.11	3.02	0.10
Nevada	0.31	1.11	0.26	4.03	13.58	3.67	12.01	4.59	0.07
New Hampshire	0.20	0.28	0.15	1.97	4.32	1.40	13.70	3.39	0.04
New Jersey	0.23	0.25	0.14	2.59	3.93	2.25	15.18	2.95	0.03
New Mexico	0.29	0.39	0.20	4.28	5.73	2.83	9.75	2.90	0.07
New York	0.22	0.22	0.17	4.22	4.22	2.17	14.97	3.38	0.07
North Carolina	0.11	0.23	0.11	2.17	3.58	2.11	15.67	1.77	0.03
North Dakota	0.23	0.57	0.22	2.83	7.30	2.62	12.28	3.04	0.10
Ohio	0.18	0.51	0.18	2.68	7.25	2.61	15.68	2.90	0.05
Oklahoma	0.15	0.38	0.15	2.50	5.97	2.50	11.22	1.65	0.07
Oregon	0.33	0.42	0.25	4.98	8.34	3.28	11.04	3.36	0.09
Pennsylvania	0.38	0.46	0.20	4.81	7.14	3.10	11.68	4.41	0.41
Rhode Island	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Carolina	0.09	0.28	0.08	1.86	4.36	1.67	21.55	1.95	0.05
South Dakota	0.40	-	0.40	4.50	-	4.50	7.76	3.32	0.11
Tennessee	0.07	0.29	0.07	1.36	3.20	1.25	24.61	1.65	0.04
Texas	0.17	0.34	0.16	2.56	5.48	2.43	18.06	3.06	0.04
Utah	0.27	0.31	0.18	2.98	3.68	2.06	9.35	6.43	0.02
Vermont	0.20	0.50	0.07	4.58	7.69	2.02	13.46	2.01	0.03
Virginia	0.22	0.28	0.19	4.19	5.88	2.86	9.90	2.32	0.05
Washington	0.18	0.41	0.15	4.14	8.13	2.08	14.84	3.15	0.05
West Virginia	0.17	0.18	0.15	3.23	3.14	2.57	14.55	2.53	0.08
Wisconsin	0.28	0.27	0.21	2.80	6.27	2.19	9.22	2.63	0.28
Wyoming	0.28	0.43	0.27	3.28	3.89	2.74	10.42	2.75	0.03

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

TRIBAL TRANSIT

The number of tribal transit providers has grown significantly over the past decade (Mielke 2011). A SURTC report published in 2011, titled "5311(c) Tribal Transit Funding: Assessing Impacts and Determining Future Program Needs," provides information about existing tribal transit services and funding and discusses transportation needs of Native American and Alaska Native communities. The report provided data for the 180 rural reservations that had at least 500 residents, showing there are several geographic and demographic indicators that suggest that the provision of transit services should be a high priority on many reservations. These indicators include low population densities, long travel distances, and a higher percentage of older adults and low-income households. According to Mielke et al. (2011), there were 118 tribal transit services existing at the time, with an additional 45 tribes in the planning stage. Of these rural tribal transit providers, 103 submitted data to the 2013 rural NTD. Statistics for these transit agencies are shown in Table 38. These 103 agencies provided a total of 2.8 million rides in 2013.

Table 38. Tribal Transit Statistics, 2013

	Tribal
Number of Agencies	103
Annual Ridership (thousand rides)	
Total	2,841
Fixed-route	1,348
Demand-response	973
Annual Vehicle Miles (thousand miles)	
Total	17,897
Fixed-route	7,447
Demand-response	9,151
Annual Vehicle Hours (thousand hours)	
Total	856
Fixed-route	340
Demand-response	455
Number of Vehicles	674
% Vehicles ADA	67%
Average Vehicle Age (years)	5.3
Average Vehicle Length (feet)	22.2
Average Vehicle Capacity	14.6
Trips per Vehicle	4,227
Miles per Vehicle	26,632
Hours per Vehicle	1,274
Trips per Mile	
Total	0.16
Fixed-route	0.18
Demand-response	0.11
Trips per Hour	
Total	3.3
Fixed-Route	4.0
Demand-Response	2.1
Operating Expense Per Trip	14.74
Operating Expense Per Mile	2.34
Farebox Recovery Ratio	0.05

Source: Rural National Transit Database, 2013

REFERENCES

American Public Transportation Association. A Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics Reported in On-Board Surveys. May 2007.

Federal Transit Administration. U.S. Department of Transportation. 2009-2013 Rural National Transit Database. Retrieved February 2015, from http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/data.htm

Federal Transit Administration. U.S. Department of Transportation. Grants Data. Retrieved March 2015, from http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13442.html

Mielke, Jon. (October 2011) 5311(c) Tribal Transit Funding: Assessing Impacts and Determining Future Program Needs. UGPTI Report DP-243, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Ripplinger, David, Elvis Ndembe, and Jill Hough. (December 2012) "2011 Transit and Community Livability Report." UGPTI Report DP-262, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. Retrieved February 2015, from factfinder.census.gov

U.S. Census Bureau. American Housing Survey. National Summary Tables – AHS 2013. Retrieved March 2015, from http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/2013/national-summary-report-and-tables---ahs-2013.html

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. (February 2011) 2009 National Household Travel Survey, Version 2.1. Retrieved April 2011, from http://nhts.ornl.gov/download.shtml

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Highway Policy Information. Traffic Volume Trends. Various Issues. Retrieved March 2015, from http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/travel_monitoring/tvt.cfm

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ARRA – The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act: Signed into law in February 2009, it included $48.1 billion for transportation spending, including $8.4 billion for transit.

Cutaways – Bus bodies mounted on varying sizes of truck chassis.

Demand-response – Non-fixed-route service with passengers boarding and alighting at pre-arranged times at any location within the system's service area.

Deviated fixed-route – Service in which a vehicle operates along a standard route at generally fixed times, from which it may deviate in response to a demand for its service, after which it returns to its standard route.

Fixed-route – Service in which a vehicle operates along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule.

Section 5309 – Provides capital assistance for new and replacement buses and facilities, as well as fixed-guideway systems.

Section 5310 – Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities: Formula funding to states for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Section 5311 - Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas: Provides funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in rural areas with population of less than 50,000.

Section 5311(c) – Tribal Transit Program: A transportation funding program for Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages.

Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program: Address transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment.

Section 5317 - New Freedom Program: Additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and society.

Section 5320 - Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program: Addresses the challenge of increasing vehicle congestion in and around national parks and other federal lands.

Van pool – A ride sharing service to and from pre-arranged destinations in which a number of people travel together on a regular basis in a van which is designed to carry 7 to 15 passengers.

October 2018

State of Rural West Virginia

WEST VIRGINIA CENTER ON BUDGET & POLICY

American Friends Service Committee

By: Sean O'Leary, Rick Wilson and Ted Boettner

Overview

It is fairly common for rural areas, like much of West Virginia, to be forgotten by the nation at large. All that changed in the wake of the 2016 elections. Suddenly, Appalachia was in.

Those familiar with West Virginia's history are aware that such periodic "rediscoveries" of Appalachia are seldom an unmixed blessing. They often contribute to the creation and reinforcement of stereotypes that paint over the complexities and nuances of life in rural West Virginia, creating the image of an Appalachian "Other" far removed from mainstream America.

This report will attempt to go beyond old and new stereotypes of rural West Virginia and examine its complexities, its challenges and grievances as well as its potential to thrive. It will also examine rural West Virginia by comparing economic and demographic data within the urban and rural areas of the state. As policy discussions unfold, it is important to understand the economic dichotomy between urban and rural West Virginia. By illustrating how economic conditions in rural West Virginia differ from the rest of the state, a conversation can begin about the demographic and economic vitality of these areas.

Key Findings

- The share of West Virginia's population is becoming increasingly urban, with the urban areas of the state seeing nearly all of the state's job growth in the past quarter century.
- Incomes and wages are higher in urban areas, with rural areas experiencing greater poverty and fewer people working.
- Health care, trade and services make up major sources of jobs in both urban and rural areas of the state, with mining playing an outsized role in rural West Virginia.
- In order to have sustainable and broader economic growth in rural West Virginia, policies that invest in the people and public structures that provide a foundation for economic opportunity and improve quality of life are needed. These can include expanding high-speed internet, addressing the opioid crisis and improving rural health, enacting polices to boost wages and labor force participation, tax reforms that would provide revenue to invest in the state and policies that would reduce racial disparities.

Section 1:
What is Rural Anyway?

There are many ways of defining the word "rural," but it is clear that large chunks of West Virginia would fit into most of them. In popular culture, rural has been defined as a place that has more people in a parade than watching it.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, it is defined as any population, housing or territory outside urban areas. It defines urbanized areas as those with 50,000 or more people and urban clusters as areas of at least 2,500 but less than 50,000 people. The Office of Management and Budget defines rural as all places outside of a metro area with a core urban population of 50,000 or more.[1]

Such definitions do not often mesh with the lived experience of West Virginians. It is easy to find areas that would pass as rural to most observers only a short drive away from urban cores.

The characteristics of West Virginia's terrain only enhances the feeling of its rurality. It is classified as the third most forested state, trailing only Maine and New Hampshire, with forests covering 78 percent of the state's rugged and mountainous 24,038 square miles.[2] According to the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), the state is also ranked as the third most rural by the Census Bureau.[3] In the 2010 census, 34 of West Virginia's 55 counties were considered rural, according to the Office of Rural Health Policy.[4]

Industrialization and Its Paradoxes

While in many places industrialization is linked to urbanization, in the Mountain State, some of the most rural areas in the state have been industrialized due to extractive industries. And some counties that were once urban have reverted to rural.

This is particularly true of coalfield counties. In 1850, for example Logan County had a population of 3,260 people. A century later, its population peaked at 77,391, due to the expansion of the coal industry. As the industry declined, so did the population, which is currently estimated to be around 32,925, lower than its 1920 level.[5]

The case of McDowell County is even more dramatic. In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War and two years after its creation, the county's population was around 1,500. In 1950, it peaked at nearly 100,000.[6] In 2017, it was estimated to be 18,456 or about the same level as 1900.[7]

Industrialization is not always linked to major expansions and contractions of population. Doddridge County in north-central West Virginia has historically been a leader in oil and gas production. Today, its population is estimated to be 8,560, near its level in the late 1800s.[8]

Indeed, Wetzel County provides a paradoxical example of major recent industrialization combined with long-term population loss. The county was ground zero of economic activity associated with the resource extraction of the Marcellus Shale, although it has seen little permanent employment or population growth.[9] Its 2017 population is estimated to be 15,437, near its 1890 level.[10]

These trends should not surprise those familiar with "the resource curse" which characterizes colonial economies based on resource extraction, as we have argued at length elsewhere.[11]

Other West Virginia industrialized counties, which developed non-extractive industries, such as Brooke, Cabell, Hancock, Ohio and Wood, are not classified as rural by the Census Bureau.

Left Behind?

Differences and tensions between urban and rural are probably as old as the emergence of cities and have been felt to some degree wherever urbanization has occurred. However, there is evidence that this divide is growing.

A recent survey conducted by the Washington Post and Kaiser Family Foundation found that many rural respondents felt "a strong sense of estrangement from people who live in urban areas. Nearly 7 in 10 rural residents say their values differ from those who live in big cities, including about 4 in 10 who say their values are 'very different.'"[12]

Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow, author of the recent book, "The Left Behind: Decline and Rage in Rural America," based on hundreds of interviews of rural residents around the nation, argues that many rural residents see themselves as members of moral communities under siege from outside forces.[13]

Noted politico and Trump advisor Steve Bannon has even attributed the Trump presidency to the outrage of middle America over the bailouts of financial elites on Wall Street while much of the country suffered.[14]

No doubt in West Virginia residents of rural communities are subject to multiple stressors beyond cultural ones, such as the opioid epidemic, economic changes, a poor and often decaying infrastructure and an aging as well as declining population.

Economic factors, some systemic and some deliberate, contributed to the stresses on rural communities. Deindustrialization, including the mechanization of mining, has had a ripple effect throughout many rural communities, leading to the decline of other businesses. Assaults on union membership in the coalfields and elsewhere diminished the ability of working people to respond collectively to these challenges. The rise of mega-stores and banks has helped to empty many rural communities and small towns of locally owned businesses and sources of capital. These, in turn, provide "push" factors for out-migration.

In West Virginia, state tax cuts enacted over the last 10 years have removed $425 million per year in revenue. This policy has failed to create new jobs but has made it harder for the state to respond to the needs of rural communities.[15]

Despite recent growth in state Gross Domestic Product (GDP), poverty levels in West Virginia remain higher than the national level while incomes continue to lag, according to the Census Bureau. In 2017, the national poverty rate was 13.4 percent, compared to 19.1 percent in West Virginia.[16] The state had the lowest median household income in the nation at $43,649, and nearly one-in-four children lived at or below the federal poverty level.[17]

According to The Pew Charitable Trusts, West Virginia was one of only two states to lose population in 2017 (the other was Michigan). The state has lost population for five years in a row and deaths now outnumber births. "These demographic trends can lead to strains on social services with a growing high-need/fixed- or low-income population and limited revenues and a declining tax base."

"Population trends are tied to states' economic fortunes and government finances, and are therefore useful for understanding both. The states with the fast-growing populations typically have strong labor force growth, which fuels economic growth and helps generate tax revenue to fund increased demands for services. The reverse is usually true for states with shrinking or slow-growing populaces," according to Pew.[18]

"Close The Schools and You Close The Community"

Probably the most dramatic example of losses inflicted on rural communities in West Virginia—and one that has contributed to the spiral of decline—is school consolidation, a policy deliberately imposed on a massive scale during the 1990s and early 2000s.

The well-intentioned policy was a major initiative of then Governor Gaston Caperton, who governed from 1989 to early 1997. It was driven by a concern for the quality of education in rural schools which often had limited resources and a decaying physical structure.

The School Building Authority was created in 1989 at Caperton's urging. This was to be "a board that would distribute state funds to counties to build and modernize schools. It was a quasi-independent agency that could allocate money based on the merit of individual building and renovation proposals and encourage school consolidation," according to the West Virginia Encyclopedia.[19]

In 2002, an award winning investigative series by Charleston Gazette reporters Eric Eyre and Scott Finn, found the promises of consolidation largely unfulfilled but the damage all too real. The report, titled "Closing Costs," found that between 1990 and 2002, over 300 schools were closed and that the state had spent more than $1 billion on consolidation. In addition, longtime SBA director Clacy Williams admitted that consolidation had not saved the state money. Maintenance and transportation costs increased, as did the number of administrators. The report also found little evidence for improved student well-being or academic improvements.[20]

The unintended consequences of these changes included longer bus rides for thousands of students. Many also felt lost in the new large schools and had less opportunity to participate in student leadership or extracurricular activities. As a parent was quoted in a 2004 report by Challenge West Virginia, "Close the schools and you close the community."[21]

While the number and location of schools in West Virginia has fluctuated from the beginning with changes in technology, industry and demographics—and though some consolidation would have been inevitable—it would be hard to overestimate the collateral damage and long-term effects of the 1990s consolidation wave. As recent controversies in counties like Nicholas and Fayette demonstrate, consolidation continues to be a contentious issue in the Mountain State.

Growing Up Rural

The thought of childhood in rural American can conjure idyllic images of children growing up in safety surrounded by the beauty of the countryside. While that is certainly part of the picture, the reality is more complicated.

A nationwide study by Save the Children released in 2018 found that poverty rates were higher for children in rural areas, and particularly in the most rural areas. It also tends to be more persistent.[22]

Rural counties, nationwide, had higher infant mortality rates than non-rural counties. They tended to have higher food-insecurity rates. Children growing up in rural areas were less likely to go to college and faced a higher risk of death due to injury than non-rural children. And, while teen pregnancy rates have declined across the board in recent years, they remained higher in rural counties.

The effects of poverty and other stressors on young children can have lifelong effects. Studies of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have shown that childhood experiences such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse; physical or emotional neglect; loss of a parent; parental substance abuse; mental illness; and/or the incarceration of a household member are associated with many negative health, educational, behavioral and economic outcomes.

"Poverty is a strong reinforcing factor in the accumulation of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and subsequent toxic stress correlated with unfavorable health outcomes in adulthood. Being poor is associated with so many childhood adversities that it may be considered an ACE in itself, more pervasive and persistent than all others," according to the North Carolina Medical Journal.[23]

A relatively simple survey can quantify these experiences and arrive at an "ACEs score." The greater the number of ACEs, or the higher the ACEs score experienced by a child, the higher the child is at risk for negative consequences across a lifetime. Poverty can both increase the risk of ACEs in childhood and be a lingering effect in adulthood.

"Individuals with four or more ACEs were found to be substantially more likely to have serious health concerns. ACE scores have also been shown to correlate with poor academic performance, dropping out of high school, self-mutilation, persistent post-traumatic stress disorder, drug and alcohol abuse, increased risk for abuse in subsequent relationships, difficulty in forming meaningful and trusting relationships, cognitive deficits, depression, dissociative symptoms and suicide," according to the West Virginia ACES Coalition. [24]

It is likely that the number of West Virginia children who experience ACEs is increasing in the wake of the opioid crisis, as is the number of ACEs experienced by individual children.

Fortunately, the evidence suggests ACEs are not destiny. Their effects can be mitigated by protective factors such as parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need and the social and emotional competence of children.[25]

West Virginia ranked 40th in overall child well-being, 47th in economic well-being, 39th in education, 35th in health and 35th in family and community well-being, according to the 2018 Kids Count Data Book.[26]

Several indicators reflected some improvement over 2016, the strongest being in education and health. Improvements were shown in a modest reduction in child poverty; a decrease in the number of children whose parents lack secure employment; children living in a household with a high housing cost burden; teens in school and not working; fourth-grade reading proficiency; eighth-grade math proficiency; high school graduation on time; child health insurance coverage; children living in families in which a head of household lack a high school diploma; and teen births.

On the other hand, indicators were worse in the number of three and four year olds not in school, low-birth weight babies, children in single-parent families and children living in high-poverty areas.[27]

All told, there are many disturbing trends in child well-being, but there is also good news.

Rural Health

Assessing the health of rural West Virginia is a huge and complex subject, but trends can be identified in the following topic areas:

BAD NUMBERS

Given the many challenges facing rural West Virginia, it is no surprise that the state's health statistics are problematic. In 2017, the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provided an alarming summary of the data.

In comparison to the national mortality rate, West Virginia's:

*is 19 percent higher for heart disease;

*17 percent higher for cancer;

*70 percent higher for injury deaths;

*19 percent higher for stroke deaths;

*110 percent higher for poisoning;

*27 percent higher for suicide; and

*53 percent higher for diabetes deaths.

In terms of years of potential life lost due to these factors, West Virginia was 47 percent higher than the national rate.

In comparison with the national morbidity rate, West Virginians were significantly more likely to report feeling physically and/or mentally unhealthy and had higher risk rates for diabetes and obesity. State residents were also more likely than the national average to smoke and be physically inactive.[28]

DISABILITY ISSUES

Given these trends, it is also not surprising that West Virginia has long had low rates of workforce participation and high rates of disability, a trend compounded by the prevalence of jobs with high rates of disability-causing injuries such as mining, logging and truck driving. In 2016, 74,665 West Virginians received Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Of these, 72,284 were in the "Blind and Disabled" category and 54,751 were aged 18-64, according to the Social Security Administration (SSA).[29] The number of working-age state residents receiving Social Security Disability Insurance, a safety net for those who have paid into the Social Security System, was 97,467 in 2016.[30]

"Disabled beneficiaries aged 18–64 in current-payment status accounted for 4.7 percent of the population aged 18–64 in the United States. In three states, they represented less than three percent of the state population. The states with the highest rates of disabled beneficiaries—7 percent or more—were Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, and West Virginia."[31] In general, disability rates in rural areas are nearly twice as high as in urban areas nationwide, according to the SSA.[32]

The state's low rates of educational attainment are a complicating factor when it comes to employment for people with disabilities. In general, people with lower levels of educational attainment have a higher rate of disability. Of those with disabilities, those with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to be employed. In 2015, 84 percent of people with disabilities with a bachelor's degree or higher were employed, compared with 62 percent for those with less than a high school diploma and 73 percent for high school graduates.[33]

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Between the late 1990s and the present, Appalachia and much of middle America was hit by a one-two opioid punch from which it has not begun to recover. A revolution in pharmaceuticals and pain treatment led to the production and aggressive distribution of synthetic opioids widely claimed to be non-addictive for most patients.

Partly due to its high proportion of residents dealing with injuries, chronic illnesses and disabilities, rural West Virginia was flooded with opioid prescription medicines like Oxy-Contin. As Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Eric Eyre reported in the Charleston Gazette-Mail, between 2007 and 2012, drug companies pumped 780 million hydrocodone and oxycodone pills into the state—and 1,728 West Virginians died of overdoses. Eyre noted that, "The unfettered shipments amount to 433 pain pills for every man, woman and child in West Virginia."[34]

Just when the supply of prescription opioids began to lessen, the slack was taken up by relatively low-cost heroin. The epidemic was on.[35] Between 2001 and 2015, 6,001 West Virginians died from opioid overdoses.[36] The rate increased in 2016[37] and 2017.[38]

The collateral damage caused by this on-going epidemic would be hard to overstate. It has contributed to the massive growth of the foster care population. By May 2018, there were around 6,500 children in foster care—and only 1,350 foster families.[39] In 2015, there were 4,956 kids in foster care.[40] According to the DHHR, there has been a 34 percent increase in Child Protective Services (CPS) cases over the last three years, with drugs being involved in 83 percent of these.[41]

This epidemic creates the potential for a vicious cycle. If individuals with high ACEs scores are more likely to become addicted, the children impacted by this epidemic will have higher ACEs scores.

However, as with ACEs, history does not have to be destiny. In addition to prevention and treatment for substance use disorder, the same protective factors that provide a buffer against ACEs can also help communities and individuals dealing with this crisis.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH.

Health outcomes are not simply a matter of clinical conditions. Research shows that social factors such as relative social status, poverty, income levels, educational attainment, relationships, the natural and build environment and the community in which one lives has a huge impact on health and longevity.[42]

Studies by British epidemiologist Michael Marmot suggests that the key ingredients to longevity and health are a sense of control over one's life and the ability to fully participate in society. These diminish as we move down the ladder. It is inequality in these that plays a big part in producing the social gradient in health. The wider the divide, the sharper are the effects, according to Marmot.[43]

In "The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better", epidemiologists Richard G. Wilkinson and Kate E. Pickett expand on these themes. Using international data, they found that high degrees of inequality have negative effects, not just on mental and physical health, but also on things like substance abuse and addiction, education, incarceration, obesity, social mobility, violence, social trust, teen pregnancies and child well-being.[44]

Fortunately, as powerful as social forces are, they are created by people and can be changed by them.

Bright Spots

Not all the news from and about rural West Virginia is bad. In fact, the state is a national leader in several positive areas and could provide a positive model for other rural states.

Medicaid expansion, announced by then West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin in 2013, led to a dramatic increase in health coverage for low-income working West Virginians. Between 2013 and 2015 alone, the number of uninsured dropped from 255,000 to 108,000 people.[45] The additional federal funding has provided a boost to rural hospitals and primary care centers and has opened the door of medically assisted treatment for opioid addiction to thousands of West Virginians.

The state is also a leader in covering children, thanks largely to traditional Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. The uninsured rate for West Virginia children is 2.1 percent,[46] compared to five percent nationally, according to the Georgetown Center for Children and Families.[47]

For several years, West Virginia has been a national leader in school breakfast participation.[48] The state passed innovative legislation aimed at increasing participation in 2013 with the Feed to Achieve Act. For each of the last six years, more county school boards have expanded free breakfast and lunches to all students via the Community Eligibility Provision of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act.[49] West Virginia was also a pioneer in establishing universal pre-kindergarten education in all 55 counties[50] and has a strong network of home-visiting family support and early childhood education programs.

Non-governmental organizations and grassroots groups are also working for positive change at the community and policy level. A few examples include Try This West Virginia, which is promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting community projects around the state and Our Children Our Future, which has won numerous policy victories aimed at reducing child poverty since its start in 2013.

Groups such as the West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition and the West Virginia Farmers Market Association are working to expand the state's agricultural economy and access to local foods. The West Virginia Community Development HUB works to revitalize communities, while Create West Virginia is advocating for broadband expansion and economic innovation. The Coalfield Development Corporation is providing paid job training and post-secondary education for disadvantaged workers in several southern counties.

The opioid crisis has prompted faith organizations such as the West Virginia Council of Churches and the Partnership of African American Churches to combat addiction and support recovery. The ACEs Coalition and related groups are promoting greater awareness of trauma, prevention and protective factors that reduce the harm it does.

Groups such as the CARE Coalition (Call to Action for Racial Equality), Hope Community Development, and the NAACP, and community efforts such as Race Matters, are working to educate the public about systemic racism.

There are many more inspiring examples. Given strong civic engagement, community involvement and sound public policies, a better future is possible.

Section 2:
The Rural Landscape

What is Rural West Virginia

Each year, the State of Working West Virginia provides an update on the various economic and demographic data in West Virginia. Often the focus of the data is to compare West Virginia's economy to the nation's or track how the state's economy has changed over time. This section of the report takes a slightly different approach, by comparing the economic and demographic data within the urban and rural areas of West Virginia. As the data show, there is a clear economic dichotomy between urban and rural West Virginia. By illustrating how economic conditions in rural West Virginia differ from the rest of the state, we can begin to explore ways to improve the economies of these areas.

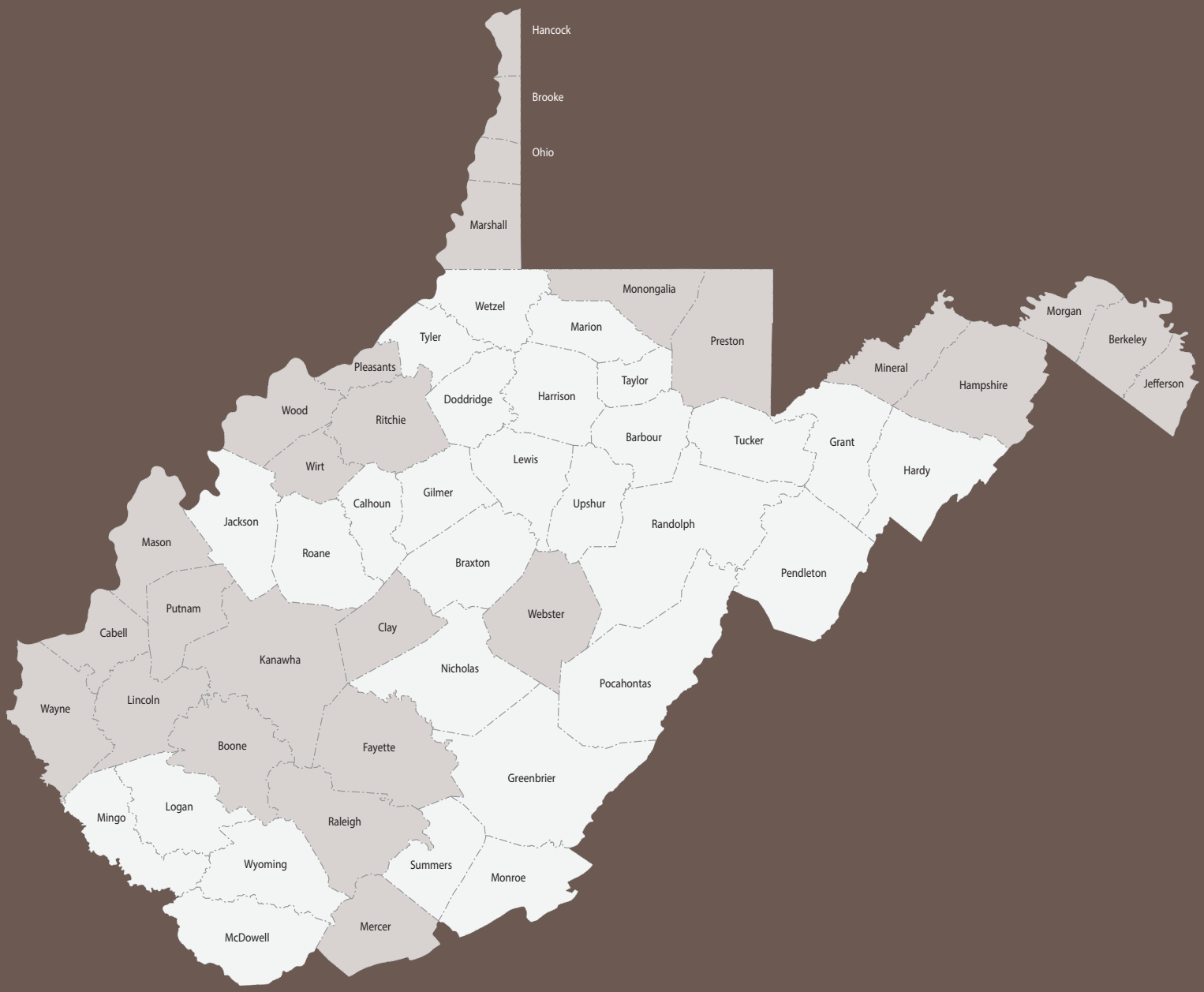
It is important to understand that there is no one agreed upon definition of what makes an area "rural." Everyone has their own idea and definition of rural based on their own perceptions, one person's small town is another person's city center.

This report defines rural areas in West Virginia using the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) metro and nonmetro classification. OMB defines metro areas by considering population density, administrative boundaries, commuting patterns, trade patterns and media markets. For this report, rural areas are defined as those areas that are not part of a metro area.

The metro areas in West Virginia include the Beckley, WV; Charleston, WV; Huntington-Ashland, WV-KY-OH; Morgantown, WV; Parkersburg-Vienna, WV; Weiton-Steubenville, WV-OH; and Wheeling, WV-OH. Below is a map of the rural counties in West Virginia that are not part of an OMB metro area.

Map 1

West Virginia's Rural Counties

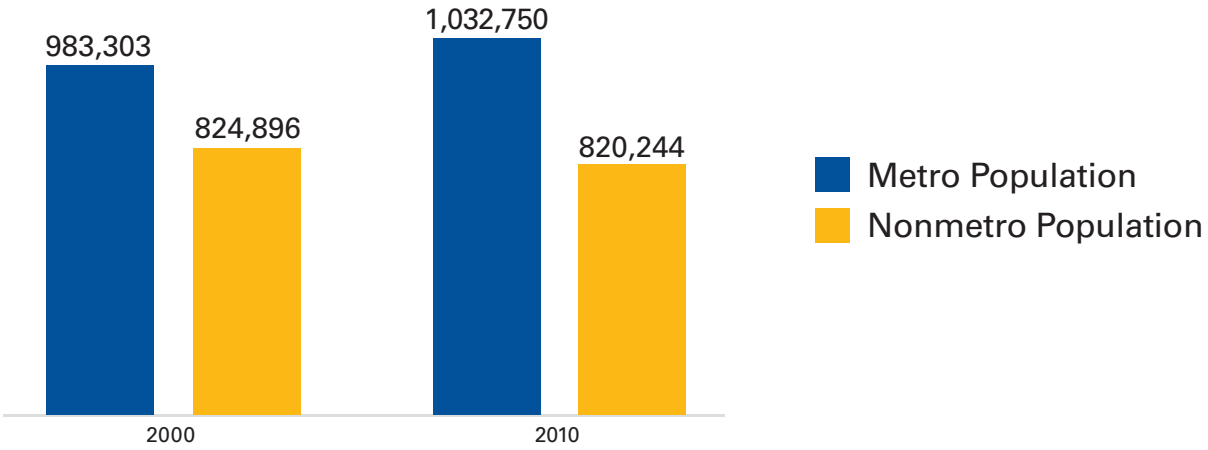


Rural West Virginia Is Shrinking

Over the past decade, West Virginia has been one of the few states to lose population.[51] And that population loss has largely occurred in the state's rural areas. Between the 2000 and 2010 decennial Census, West Virginia's metro areas saw an increase in population of nearly 50,000 people, a five percent increase. In contrast, the state's nonmetro areas experienced a population loss of roughly 4,600 people, a 0.6 percent decline **(Figure 1)**.

Figure 1

Rural Areas in West Virginia are Losing Population

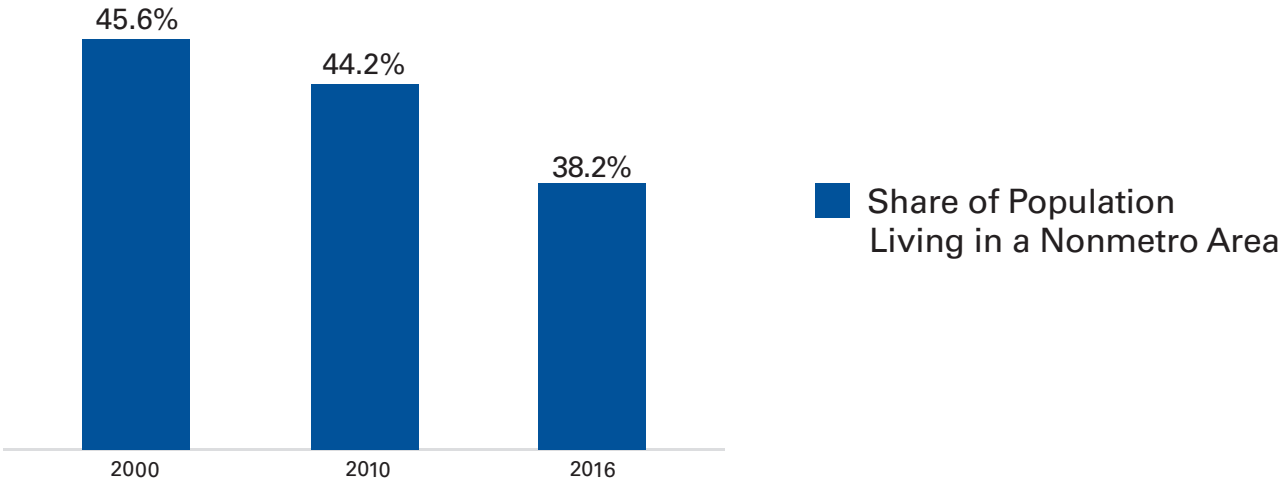


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

With declining population in rural areas and increases in more urban areas, the state's population has become more concentrated in its metro areas. The share of the state's population in rural or nonmetro area in 2010 was 46 percent. A decade and a half later, the share in a rural area had fallen to 38 percent **(Figure 2)**.

Figure 2

Share of West Virginians Living in a Rural Area is Shrinking



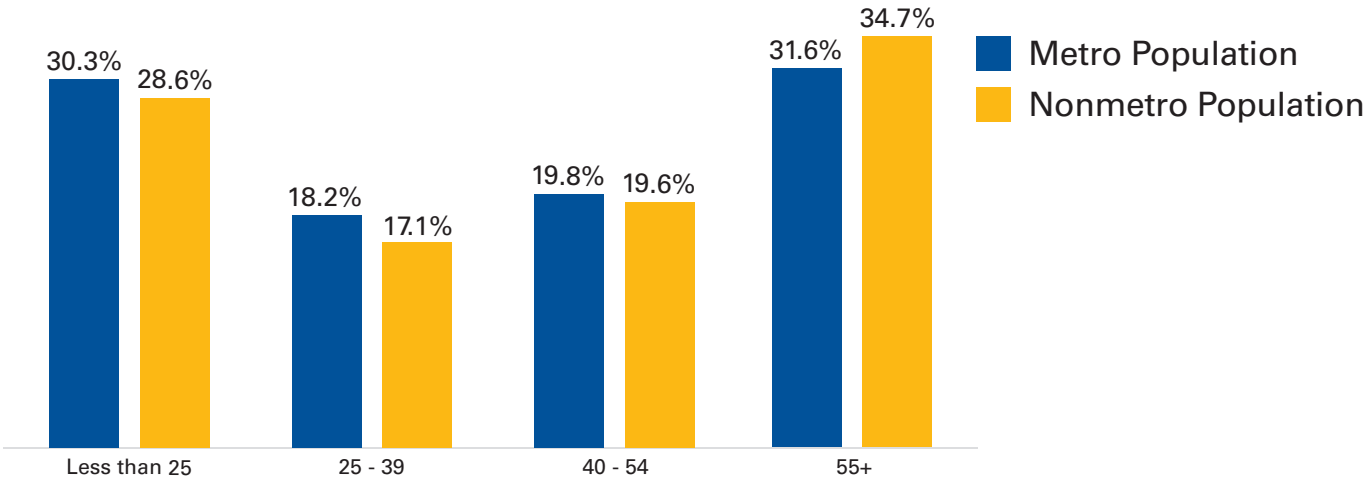
Source: U.S. Census Bureau and EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

Who is Rural West Virginia?

As whole, West Virginia has an older, less diverse population than most other states. This is also more true for the state's rural population, which is slightly older with a smaller minority population than the urban areas of the state. About 35 percent of the population living in rural West Virginia is over the age of 55, compared to 32 percent in the state's metro areas. The shares of population below 25, and in the prime-working age (25 to 54 years old), are also similar in both the nonmetro and metro areas of the state **(Figure 3)**.

Figure 3

Rural West Virginia is Slightly Older
Share of Population by Age Group in Metro and Nonmetro Areas, 2014-2016

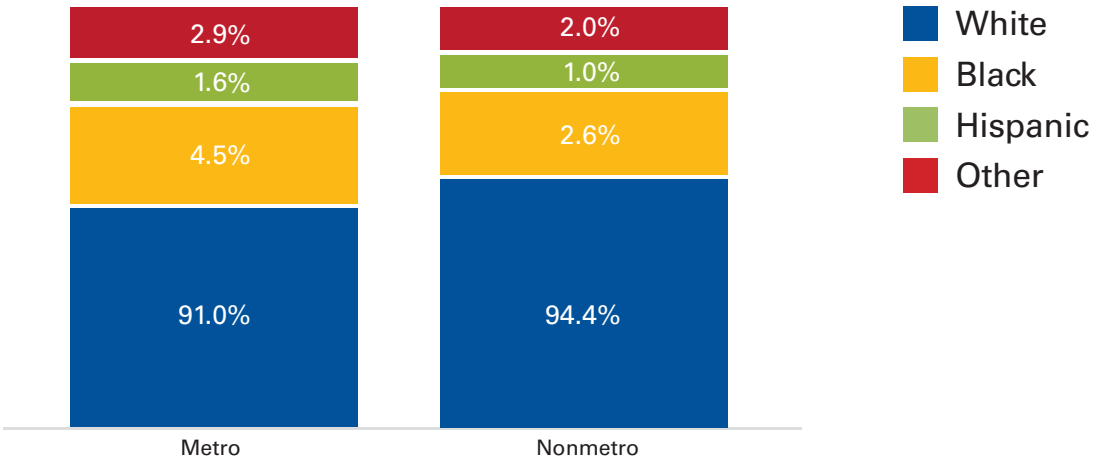


Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

Rural and urban West Virginia also share similar racial and ethnic demographics. Both are over 90 percent white, with only small minority populations **(Figure 4)**.

Figure 4

Both Rural and Urban West Virginia Lack Racial Diversity
Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity in Metro and Nonmetro Areas, 2014-2016

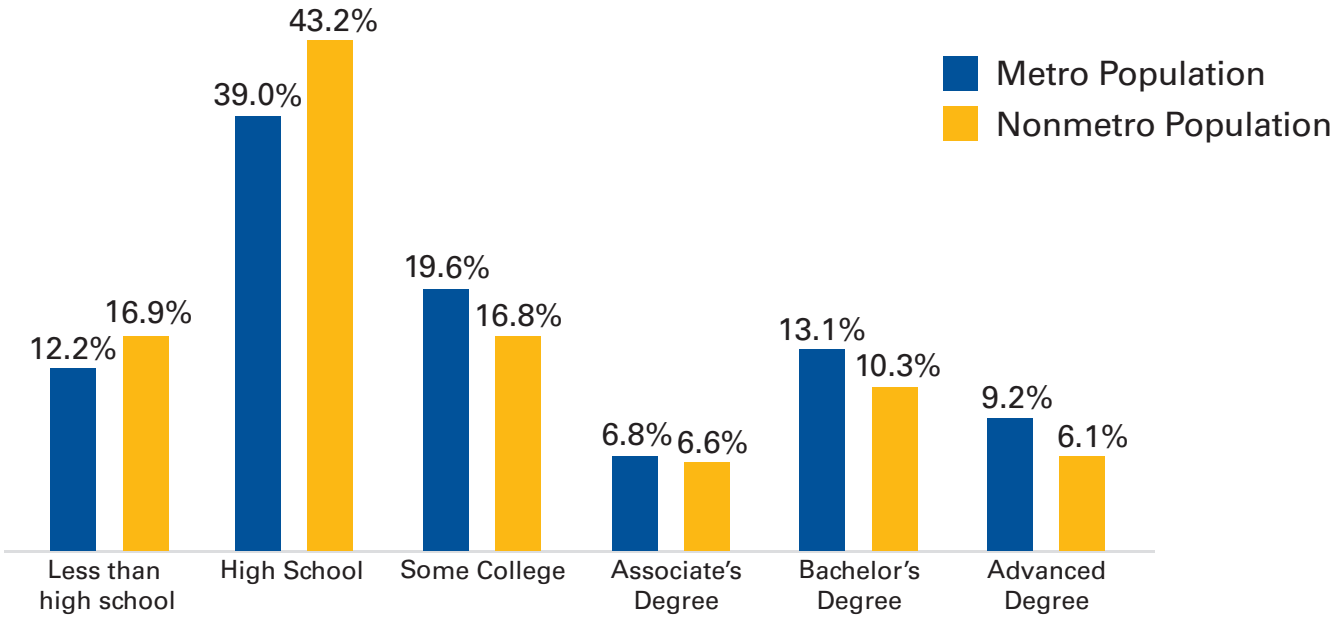


Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

While rural and urban West Virginia are similar when it comes to age and race, there are larger differences when it comes to education attainment. West Virginia's rural population has much lower levels of educational attainment, with more people with a high school degree or less, and fewer people with a college degree. In rural West Virginia, 16.5 percent of people older than 24 have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 22.3 percent in the state's urban areas. **(Figure 5)**.

Figure 5

Lower Levels of Educational Attainment in Rural West Virginia
Educational Attainment of Population Over 24, 2014-2016



Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

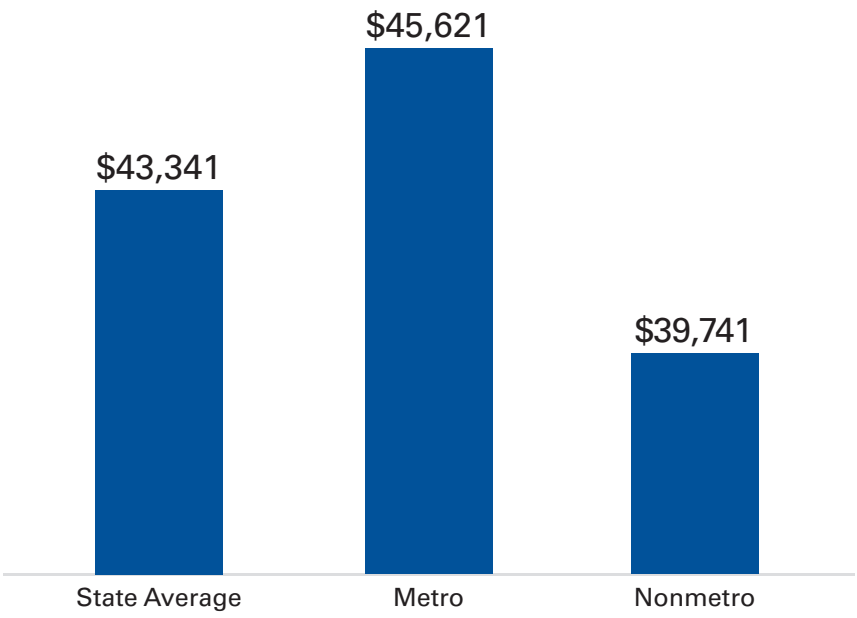
Lower Incomes, Higher Poverty

West Virginia has historically been one of the poorest states in the country, a fact that is even more true for the state's rural areas. Median household income, which measures the income of the typical household – or the household in the middle of the income distribution – and serves as a good indicator for how the middle class is faring, is substantially lower in rural West Virginia than in the state's urban areas.

The median household income in rural West Virginia of $39,741 is $5,880 lower than median household income in the state's urban areas, and $3,600 lower than the state average **(Figure 6)**.

Figure 6

Incomes Lower in Rural West Virginia
Median Household Income, 2014-2016

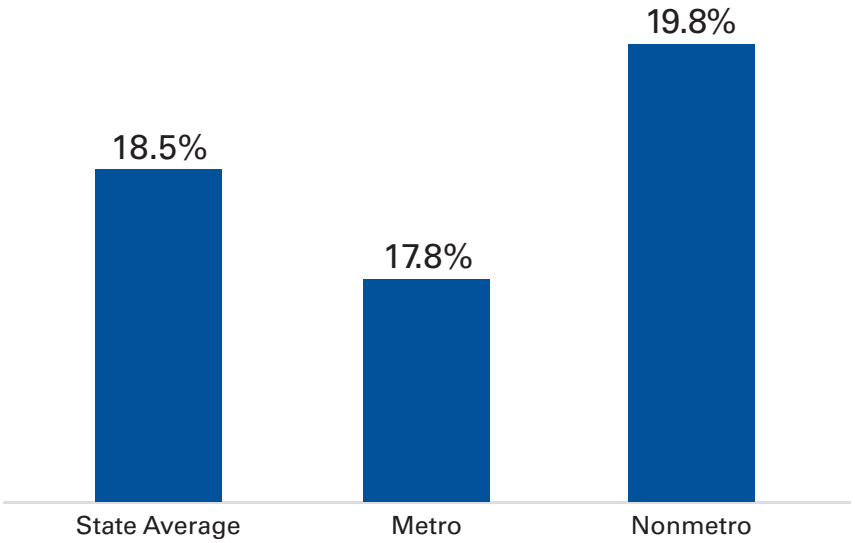


Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

With low-income levels, it is unsurprising that thousands of West Virginians are struggling to make ends meet. In 2016, the state's poverty rate was 17.9 percent, the fifth-highest in the country, with more than 319,000 West Virginians living in poverty. In rural West Virginia, poverty is even more prevalent. The poverty rate for rural West Virginia is just under 20 percent, two percentage points higher than the urban poverty rate **(Figure 7)**.

Figure 7

Poverty More Prevalent in Rural West Virginia
Total Poverty Rate, 2014-2016



Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

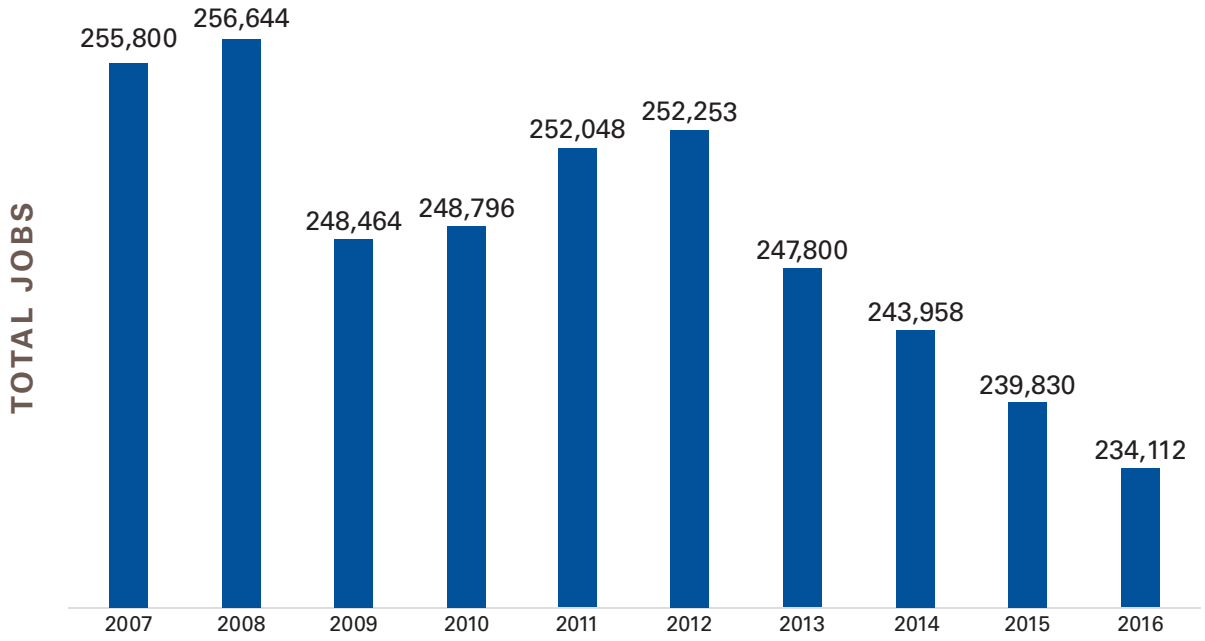
The Rural Economy

West Virginia has seen relatively weak job growth in recent years, with the state yet to gain back the jobs lost during the recession. West Virginia has about 9,000 fewer jobs today than it did in 2007, and its labor force has shrunk by about 34,000 workers.[52]

While job growth has been largely stagnant in the state's urban areas in the 10 years since the recession, the state's rural areas have experienced a sharp decline in jobs. Between 2007 and 2016, rural West Virginia lost more than 21,000 jobs, a loss of over eight percent **(Figure 8)**. The weak recovery statewide has not been felt in rural West Virginia.

Figure 8

Sharp Job Loss in Rural West Virginia
Overall Employment, West Virginia Nonmetro Areas, 2007-2016

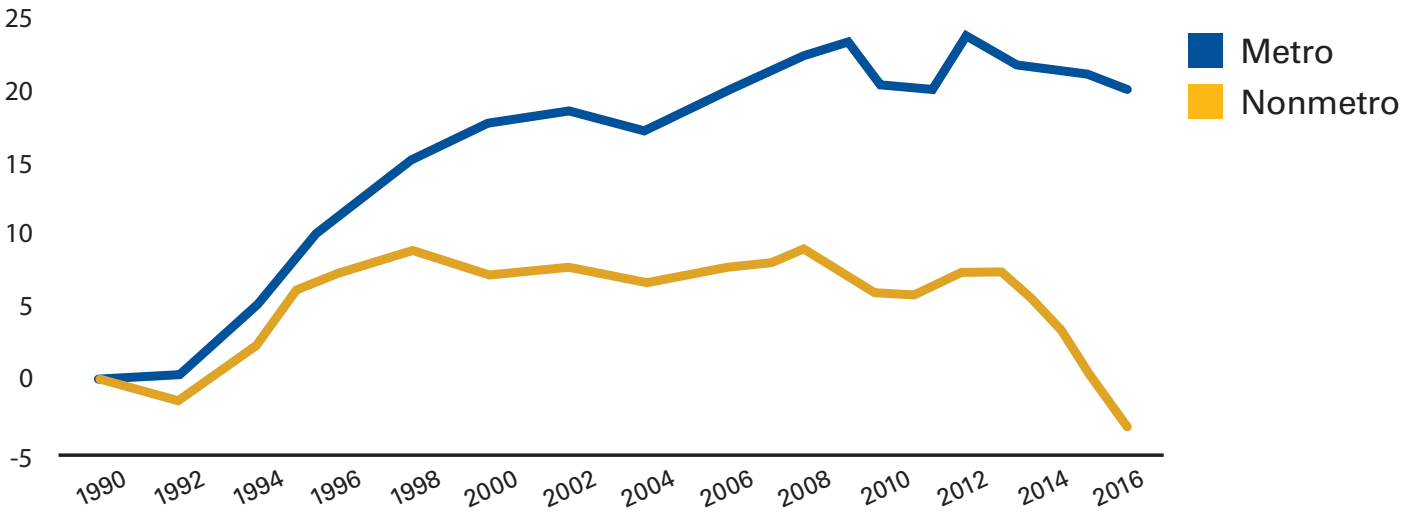


Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

But even before the recession, job growth in rural West Virginia lagged far behind the urban areas of the state. Between 1990 and 2007, total employment in urban West Virginia increased by nearly 23 percent, while only increasing by less than nine percent in rural West Virginia. And with the losses since 2007, rural West Virginia had fewer jobs in 2016 than in 1990. In other words, all of the job growth in West Virginia over the past quarter century has occurred in the state's urban areas **(Figure 9)**.

Figure 9

No Net Job Growth in Rural West Virginia Since 1990
Percent Change in Total Employment, 1990-2016



Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

Variations in the composition of industry employment play an important role in the differences in the urban and rural economies in West Virginia. Overall, West Virginia's industrial mix reflects a largely service-based economy, with retail trade and professional services making up roughly half of West Virginia jobs in both the urban and rural areas of the state.

The different industry composition of rural parts of the state compared to urban West Virginia helps explain some of the divergence in employment growth between cities and the countryside. Overall, urban West Virginia has a disproportionately larger share of the state's health care, finance/insurance/real estate and retail trade employment. Those industries, in particular health care, have seen stronger growth.

In contrast, rural West Virginia is much more reliant on the extraction industry as a source of jobs. In rural West Virginia, 3.3 percent of the jobs are in the coal mining sector, with another 2.3 percent in natural gas extraction. In comparison, mining jobs as a whole make up just 2.5 percent of total employment in the state's urban areas. As previous editions of "The State of Working West Virginia" have explored, a reliance on mining as a source of employment has historically led to an underperforming economy, as the booms and busts of the mining industry has not lead to stable growth and economic diversity.[53]

Public investment plays a significant and direct role in a number of the major employers in both cities and rural areas — such as through funding public schools and universities, making payments to hospitals and providing public safety. The top overall employers in rural and urban West Virginia are listed in the table below.

Table 1

Mining Jobs More Prevalent in Rural West Virginia
Top Employers in Urban and Rural West Virginia, 2014-2016

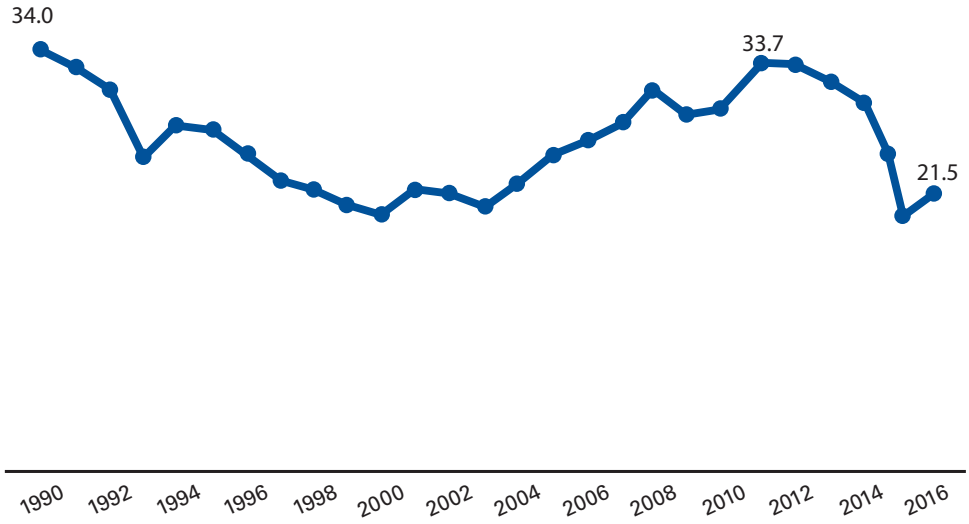
Nonmetro		Metro	
Industry	**Share of nonmetro employment**	**Industry**	**Share of metro employment**
All Construction	7.0%	Hospitals	7.5%
Elementary and Secondary Schools	6.5%	Eating and drinking places	6.9%
Hospitals	6.3%	Elementary and secondary schools	6.8%
Eating and drinking places	5.6%	Health services, not elsewhere classified	3.3%
Health services, not elsewhere classified	3.9%	Colleges and universities	3.2%
Coal Mining	3.3%	Justice, public order, and safety	2.6%
Justice, public order, and safety	3.2%	Grocery stores	2.0%
Oil and gas extraction	2.3%	Department stores	1.9%
Nursing and personal care facilities	2.1%	Coal mining	1.8%
Trucking service	2.1%	Nursing and personal care facilities	1.8%
Social services, not elsewhere classified	2.1%	Trucking serivce	1.5%
Grocery stores	2.1%	Insurance	1.4%
Department stores	2.0%	Offices and clinics of physicians	1.4%
Colleges and universities	1.7%	Social services, not elsewhere classified	1.3%
Sawmills, planing mills, and millwork	1.3%	Banking	1.2%

Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

Job losses in recent years in the mining industry have hurt the state, and rural West Virginia in particular. West Virginia is down 14,000 mining jobs since 2011, and had 12,200 fewer mining jobs in 2017 than it did in 1990 **(Figure 10)**.

Figure 10

Mining Job Losses Hurting Rural West Virginia
Total Mining Employment, 1990-2017 (thousands)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Rural West Virginia's reliance on the construction sector has also explained its divergence in employment growth. Between 2012 and 2016, West Virginia lost 5,300 construction jobs, a loss of 15 percent. Since then the state has gained those lost jobs due to gains in natural gas pipeline construction. Despite the recent gains, the construction industry is still down 6,300 jobs from its pre-recession peak.[54]

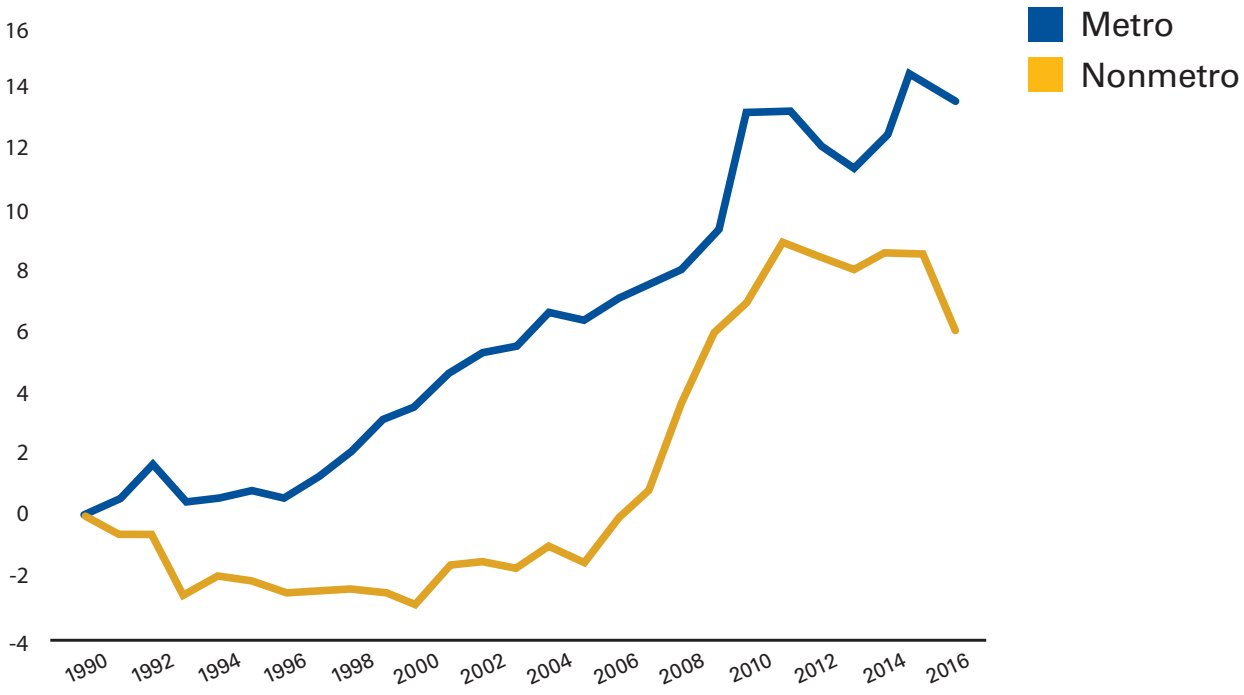
Stagnant Wages for Rural West Virginia

Along with a lack of job growth, rural West Virginia has experienced very little wage growth over the past quarter century. Wage growth in rural and urban West Virginia has followed nearly an identical pattern as job growth. Wages grew much slower in rural West Virginia than in urban West Virginia throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, and has been stagnant since the recession. Since 1990, average wages in rural West Virginia have increased by only 6.1 percent, compared to 13.6 percent in urban West Virginia **(Figure 11)**.

Figure 11

Little Wage Growth in Rural West Virginia

Percent Change in Total Real Wages per Worker, 1990-2016 (2016 Dollars)



Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

The relative strength of West Virginia's urban and rural economies also shows up in wages. Whereas the median wage in metro West Virginia is $23.07 per hour hour, it is only $21.04 per hour in nonmetro West Virginia. A big pay penalty exists for those living in nonmetro areas who have more education. Median wages for West Virginians with a high school degree are only five percent less in rural areas than in urban areas, but are 17 percent less for those with an advanced degree **(Table 2)**.

Table 2

Wage Gap Between Urban and Rural West Virginia

Median Hourly Wages of Full-time, Year-round Workers, by Educational Attainment, 2014-2016

	Metro	Nonmetro
Total	$18.76	$16.87
Less than high school	$14.46	$12.68
High school	$15.41	$14.70
Some college, no degree	$16.86	$15.22
Associate degree	$19.50	$18.29
Bachelor's degree	$22.30	$21.95
Advanced degree	$29.16	$24.12

Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

Employment and Unemployment

West Virginia's unemployment rate has been steadily, slowly, declining from its peak of 10 percent in early 2010, reaching 5.4 percent in 2018. Unemployment remained higher in the state's rural areas during the recovery, averaging 8.5 percent from 2014 to 2016, compared to 6.5 percent in the state's urban areas.

Perhaps one of the best labor force measures is the employment to population ratio (EPOP), which simply looks at the share of people who have a job. EPOP provides a broader picture than the unemployment rate, which only counts people as unemployed who have looked for work in the last four weeks. In an extended weak economy like West Virginia has experienced, EPOP importantly takes into account so-called discouraged workers — or people who are not currently searching for employment, but most all of whom have been employed at some time in the past.

Urban West Virginia has a substantially stronger EPOP than rural West Virginia, among all age groups, again underlying the relative weakness of the state's rural economy. The EPOP for urban West Virginia is 5.6 percentage points higher than in rural West Virginia. Among prime-age workers (ages 25 to 54) the gap is 5.9 percentage points **(Table 3)**.

Table 3

Employment Rates Higher in Urban West Virginia
Employment to Population ratio, by age group, 2014-2016

	Metro	Nonmetro
Total	51.6%	46.0%
Less than 25	45.0%	41.5%
25 to 54 (prime age)	70.9%	64.9%
55+	30.9%	27.4%

Source: EPI analysis of American Community Survey data

Conclusion

West Virginia's economy has trudged along since the end of the Great Recession, as the nation has enjoyed eight years of one of the longest economic recoveries on record. But while some have declared the state is making an economic comeback, a closer look shows two very different economies in the state. The state's urban areas, characterized by health care jobs, moderate growth, more educated workers and higher incomes, contrasts sharply with the mining jobs, higher poverty and lack of growth of rural West Virginia. Instead of celebrating minor successes, policymakers must give greater attention to building a stronger economy that works for all West Virginians.

Section 3:

Bringing Shared Prosperity to (Rural) West Virginia

The experience of rural West Virginia over the last several decades has been one of little growth and development with large population loss, no employment and little wage growth, poor health outcomes and an economy that has been largely based on resource extraction that has become more mechanized and capital intensive supporting fewer rural families. The deindustrialization of rural West Virginia has left many rural West Virginia towns abandoned and stranded economically and socially, as unions, factories and mass employment in extractive industries have continued to decline.

In order to have sustainable and broader economic growth in rural West Virginia, policymakers at the state and federal levels will need to diversify the economy by building local wealth and economic ownership, fostering more locally driven development and by investing in people and public structures that provide a foundation for economic opportunity and improve the quality of life.

Expand High-Speed Internet: Access to broadband internet is essential for economic growth, education, health care and quality of life. Despite being a necessity, only 75.2 percent of West Virginians have access to high-speed internet, according to Broadband Now.[55] West Virginia ranked 45th least connected in the nation. A 2018 Federal Communications Commission report found that 17.8 percent or 326,000 West Virginians lacked access to fixed highspeed wireless internet.[56] However, in rural areas of West Virginia, that number was just 30.8 percent, with 11 counites having less than 50 percent of its population with access to high-speed internet.

One central reason for the lack of connectivity in West Virginia is that it is often not economically profitable for an internet provider to invest services in rural areas of the state. State policymakers should expand high-speed internet through a public provision and enhanced competition with rural cooperatives (e.g. People's Rural Telephone Cooperative in Kentucky) to ensure access in hard to reach communities with last-mile broadband access. Last year, the West Virginia policymakers took some steps in this direction but failed to provide funds needed to make it happen.[57]

Tackle Opioid Crisis and Improve Rural Health: West Virginia leads the nation in opioid drug overdose rates,[58] is considered the most at risk state for an HIV or Hepatitis C outbreak from drug use,[59] has the highest incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS)[60] and has the second highest rate of opioid prescriptions in the nation.[61] The Center of Disease Control and Prevention have estimated that opioid use (not including heroin or fentanyl), dependence and overdoses have cost the United States $78.5 billion in 2013 or $4.8 billion per overdose.[62] In 2016, West Virginia had 340 people overdose from prescription opioids. Using the above CDC cost figure, the estimated cost in West Virginia could be in the range of $1.6 billion in 2015 or over $29 billion between 2001 and 2015.[63] One recent study that included other factors, such as heroin and fentanyl, estimated that the opioid crisis has cost West Virginia $8.8 billion in 2015.[64]

West Virginia policymakers need to boost investment in the best evidence-based practices that include the "four pillars" approach, which address prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement.[65] For example, medication-based treatment (MAT), psychosocial treatment, needle exchanges, supervised consumption spaces, and Naloxone (opioid overdose antidote) availability would fall under the four pillars.[66] Policymakers could also look to Vermont's hub and spoke model that centers around MAT at regional treatment centers (Hubs) and physician offices (spokes).[67] Lastly, policymakers need to treat drug addiction as a health issue or illness, not just a criminal justice one, and explore ways to decriminalize drug addiction, which will save the state money in the long-term and lead to a healthier, stronger West Virginia.

Make Work Pay Go Further: Nearly a quarter of jobs in West Virginia are low wage.[68] The prevalence of low-wage employment is especially present in rural areas of the state where low-wage retail giants like Wal-Mart and Dollar General are a major source of employment.[69] Along with low-wage jobs, the lack of post-secondary educational attainment and job training contribute to the state's large surplus labor and high rural unemployment and low-labor force participation rates.[70]

To boost wages, labor force participation and economic security it is important for workers to be able to earn enough money to stay above water through enacting policies aimed at achieve that end. These policies include:

- **Raising the minimum wage** to $15 an hour by 2025 and doing away with the two-tiered system of the tipped minimum wage would lift pay for over a third of West Virginia's workers. This would allow working people to better support their families and would stimulate local economies while improving long-term outcomes.[71]
- Establishing a refundable state **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** would lift low-income families out of poverty while boosting long-term earnings and workforce participation. An EITC also improves health and educational outcomes while providing a boost to rural economies.
- Raising the salary threshold that workers are eligible for **overtime pay** would benefit 66,000 West Virginia workers. This rule change would put more money in the pockets of working people, either through overtime pay or increased salaries to meet the new threshold.
- Expanding access to **affordable, quality child care** would boost labor force participation, improve long-term child outcomes, help businesses thrive and improve the quality of life for working families. For far too many parents, the high cost of child care is a financial barrier to joining the workforce – especially those families between 150 and 400 percent of the federal poverty line.
- **Raise the pay of public employees, teachers and school workers.** West Virginia teachers and other public employees are paid lower than most states.[72] While the legislature passed a five percent pay raise for teachers, state employees and school service personnel following a nine-day, statewide teachers' strike, it is only a first step and more needs to be done to retain and attract a talented public workforce.
- **Boost post-secondary education** by investing more in four-and two-year public colleges and universities. The level of educational attainment has profound implications for the earning potential - as well as health and longevity – of working West Virginians. Despite this, funding for post-secondary education has declined dramatically over the last 10 years. State budget priorities must be reversed to improve the access to, and affordability, of post-secondary education. This could include ensuring that the PROMISE scholarship fully covers tuition and fees, offering tuition-free community colleges and providing more financial assistance to students with college debt.
- **Invest in workforce development and job training** by reinvesting in customized job training, scaling-up programs such as the West Virginia Manufacturing Extension Partnership and increase support that allows people with disabilities to find work.[73] One direct way to increase participation in the workforce is for the state to place people in private- or public-sector jobs who cannot find

them in the regular labor market through a subsidized employment program. For example, in the 1980s Minnesota ran a successful state-funded subsidized employment program called MEED (Minnesota Emergency Employment Development) that provided wage subsides to about 19,000 unemployed workers (two-thirds of which were in the private sector) not receiving unemployment insurance. Other successful state models include Florida Back to Work, Mississippi STEPS and Put Illinois to Work.

- **Rollback anti-labor policies,** including "right-to-work" and the repeal of prevailing wage. Both of these laws are aimed at putting downward pressure on wages.[74]

Invest in Rural West Virginia with Tax Reform: Over the last decade, West Virginia has cut hundreds of millions in business taxes that have led to deep cuts in higher education as well as other important programs and services. This includes eliminating the business franchise tax and reducing the corporate net income tax rate from nine to 6.5 percent. This, along with other tax reductions from 2005 to 2015, means the state has had less funds to invest in its people and communities. In order to make investments in education, it will require a break with the failed tax and austerity policies of the past. The state has a number of revenue enhancement options, some of which can ensure that the wealth that is being created in rural areas off of the land and workers, goes back, such as:

- Raising the **Corporate Net Income Tax** rate back to nine percent could increase revenue by an estimated $62 million in the next fiscal year, while ensuring that large (mostly out-of-state) corporations pay their fair share.[75]

- Increasing the **Natural Gas Severance Tax** from five to 7.5 percent could generate over $80 million in additional revenue, some of which could be shared with local governments. The severance tax is highly exportable, and studies have shown that has little to no impact on production.[76]

- States can now collect **sales taxes from online remote retailers.** This could yield an estimated $50 to $100 million per year in additional revenue, a portion of which would go the municipalities that have adopted a local sales tax on top of the state sales tax.[77]

- Modernize the state **Excess Acreage Tax.** Since 1905, West Virginia has had a tax on large tracks of land purchased (10,000 acres) by corporations. Unfortunately, it has not been updated to reflect modern times and its application is too small. If West Virginia modernized the tax by, making it an annual tax where the tax rate would increase with increased land ownership (e.g. starting at 50 cents per acre corporations that own between 1,000-2,499 acres and ending with $5 per acre for corporate land owners above 250,000 acres), it could yield an estimated $10.6 million annually.[78] The revenues could be used at the state level or be distributed back to the county of origin.

Pass policies aimed at reducing racial disparities: West Virginia is just one of four states that has a lifetime ban on drug felons from receiving Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).[79] SNAP enrollment is not only higher in rural areas and small towns in West Virginia, but it an important source of income and food assistance for rural areas of West Virginia.[80] African Americans in West Virginia are more likely than Whites to be targeted and arrested for drug related crimes, and are therefore more likely to face felony drug convictions. As a result, African Americans are more likely to face the state's lifetime ban on accessing food assistance through SNAP. On top of opting out of this ban, policymakers should also make it easier for people about to be released from prison to obtain a state ID. Again, because African Americans are disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system, they are more likely to face barriers to work and housing post-release because they lack an official identification like a state ID, birth certificate or social security card. Other paths to reduce racial disparities would include drug decriminalization and broader criminal justice reform, along with targeted investments and hiring and bettering labor standards that are mentioned above.

Policymakers should also be exploring ways to boost the local food economy, improve banking access, preserve viable small towns, enhance renewable energy development and distribution, cooperative models of business ownership, assisting workers from declining industries and preparing for the growth in the health care industry as the state ages, to name just a few. At the federal level, passing the bipartisan Revitalizing the Economy of Coal Communities by Leveraging Local Activities and Investing More Act (RECLAIM), which would use $1 billion from the Abandoned Mine Lands Fund to clean up and repurpose old coal mines to benefit coal communities, would be one step to add millions of dollars to West Virginia's economy to help rural areas transition. Other policies that would greatly benefit West Virginia are expanding the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and Social Security, passing Medicare for All and exploring the potential of a federal job guarantee and/or Green New Deal.

Until West Virginia policymakers champion policies that support rural West Virginia, the economic, health and well-being divide between rural and urban areas of the state will continue.

Endnotes

1 Health Resources and Services Administration, "Defining Rural Population," *https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/about-us/definition/index.html*

2 West Virginia Department of Commerce, "Natural Resources," http://www.wvcommerce.org/resources/forestry/default.aspx

3 Ibid.

4 Office of Rural Health Policy, "List of Rural Counties and Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties," https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/ruralhealth/resources/forhpeligibleareas.pdf

5 Population.us "Population of Logan County," http://population.us/county/wv/logan-county/

6 The West Virginia Encyclopedia, "McDowell County," https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1631

7 U.S. Census Bureau, "QuickFacts, McDowell County, West Virginia," https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mcdowellcountywestvirginia/PST045217

8 U.S. Census Bureau, "QuickFacts, Doddridge County, West Virginia," https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/doddridgecountywestvirginia/PST045217

9 Sean O'Leary, "Impacts of Gas Drilling in Wetzel County" (Charleston, West Virginia: West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, April, 2014).

10 U.S. Census Bureau, "QuickFacts, Wetzel County, West Virginia," https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wetzelcountywestvirginia/PST045217

11 West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, "The State of Working West Virginia 2016: Why is West Virginia So Poor?" (December 2016).

12 Jose A. DelReal and Scott Clement, "The Rural Divide," The Washington Post, June 17, 2017

13 Robert Wuthnow, The Left Behind: Decline and Rage in Rural America, Princeton University Press, 2018, p. 4, 6.

14 Noah Kulwin, "Steve Bannon on How 2008 Planted the Seed for the Trump Presidency," New York Magazine, August 10, 2018.

15 Ted Boettner and Sean O'Leary, "The Governor's 2016 Budget: More Austerity, Less Prosperity," (Charleston, West Virginia: West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, March 2015).

16 U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey

17 Ibid.

18 Matt McKillop and Daniel Newman, "Years of Slower Population Growth Persisted in 2017," (The Pew Charitable Trusts, June 20, 2018.)

19 The West Virginia Encyclopedia, "William Gaston Caperton III," https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/933

20 The Rural School and Community Trust, "Closing Costs: A Summary of an Award Winning Look at School Consolidation in West Virginia, a State Where It Has Been Tried Aggressively" (November 2002) http://www.ruraledu.org/articles.php?id=2043

21 Jim Lewis, "The Long and Winding Road: Consolidation – The Separation of School and Community," (Challenge West Virginia).

22 Save the Children, "Growing Up in Rural America" (2018).

23 Michelle Hughes and Whitney Tucker, "Poverty as an Adverse Childhood Experience," The North Carolina Medical Journal (March-April 2018)

24 Adverse Childhood Experiences Coalition of West Virginia, "Findings on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in West Virginia" (January 2018).

[25] Ibid.

[26] The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "2018 Kids Count Data Book" (June 2018).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Appalachian Regional Commission, 'Creating a Culture of Health in Appalachia, Key Findings West Virginia," https://www.arc.gov/images/appregion/fact_sheets/HealthDisparities2017/WVHealthDisparitiesKeyFindings8-17.pdf

[29] Social Security Administration, "SSI Recipients by State and County, 2016" https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_sc/2016/wv.pdf

[30] Social Security Administration, "Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Program, 2016" (October 2017)

[31] Ibid.

[32] Terrence McCoy, "Did you know in rural America, disability benefit rates are twice as high as in urban areas?" The Washington Post, July 22, 2017

[33] National Center for Education Statistics, "Disability Rates and Employment Status by Educational Attainment," https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tad.asp

[34] Eric Eyre, "Drug firms poured 780M painkillers into WV amid rise of overdoses," Charleston Gazette-Mail, December 17, 2016.

[35] Sam Quinones, Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic, (Bloomsbury Press, 2015).

[36] West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health, "West Virginia Drug Overdose Deaths Historical Overview 2011-2015" (August 2018).

[37] National Institute on Drug Abuse, "West Virginia Opioid Summary" (February 2018).

[38] Eric Eyre, "WV overdose deaths set record in 2017, despite decrease after July," Charleston Gazette-Mail, April 16, 2018.

[39] Caity Coyne, "WV DHHR, others brace for federal lawsuit over foster care," Charleston Gazette-Mail, May 24, 2018.

[40] Child Trends, "West Virginia Foster Care Fact Sheet 2015https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/West-Virginia-Foster-Care-Factsheet_2015.pdf

[41] West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, "DHHR to Add 48 Child Protective Services Positions" (March 2018) https://dhhr.wv.gov/News/2018/Pages/DHHR-to-Add-48-Child-Protective-Services-Positions.aspx

[42] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, " Sources for Data on Social Determinants of Health" (February 2018) https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/data/index.htm

[43] Michael Marmot, "Status Syndrome: A Challenge to Medicine," Journal of the American Medical Association, vol. 295, number, 11, p. 1304, March 15, 2006.

[44] Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, "The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone" (Bloomberg Press 2009).

[45] Andrew Brown, "West Virginia continues to see drop in number of uninsured people," Charleston-Gazette Mail, September 16, 2016

[46] Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, "West Virginia State Highlights" https://ccf.georgetown.edu/location/west-virginia/

[47] Karina Wagnerman, "New Data Show Progress Covering Uninsured Children Stalled," Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, June 2018).

[48] Food Research Action Center, "Annual Scorecard Reveals More Low-Income Children Start Their Day with a Healthy School Breakfast; Too Many Still Missing Out," (February 2018).

[49] United States Department of Agriculture, "The Community Eligibility Provision, What Does It Mean For Your School or Local Educational Agency?) https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/CEPfactsheet.pdf

[50] West Virginia Department of Education, "WV Universal Pre-K," https://wvde.us/early-and-elementary-learning/wv-universal-pre-k/

[51] Staff Reports, "WV one of two states with population decline over past decade," Charleston Gazette-Mail, July 8, 2018

[52] Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

[53] West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, "The State of Working West Virginia 2016: Why is West Virginia So Poor?" (December 2016).

[54] Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

[55] BroadbandNow, "Internet Access in West Virginia," last updated 11/30/2017, downloaded from

https://broadbandnow.com/West-Virginia

[56] Federal Communications Commission, "2018 Broadband Deployment Report," (February 2, 2018), downloaded from https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/reports/broadband-progress-reports/2018-broadband-deployment-report

[57] Lisa Gonzalez, "Unpacking Policies In West Virginia's HB 3093," Community Network, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, March 29, 2017, blog post, downloaded from https://muninetworks.org/content/unpacking-policies-west-virginias-hb-3093

[58] Kaiser Family Foundation, "Opioid Overdose Death Rates and All Drug Overdose Death Rates per 100,000 Population (Age-Adjusted)," State Health Facts, 2017, downloaded from https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/opioid-overdose-death-rates/?activeTab=map&currentTimeframe=0&selectedDistributions=opioid-overdose-death-rate-age-adjusted&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D

[59] Ted Boettner,"Safe Injection Places Remove Needles, Save Lives and Money," Gazette-Mail, April 23, 2018, downloaded from http://www.wvpolicy.org/supervised_injection_places_remove_needles_save_lives_and_money

[60] Jean Y. Ko et al, "Incidence of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome – 28 States, 1999-2013," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, August 12, 2016, downloaded from https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6531a2.htm

[61] Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention, "U.S. State Prescribing Rates, 2013," July 31, 2017, downloaded from https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/maps/rxstate2013.html

[62] Floarence CS et al, "The Economic Burden of Prescription Opioid Overdose, Abuse, and Dependence in the United States, 2013," Medical Care, (October 2016), downloaded from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27623005

[63] West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, "West Virginia Drug Overdose Deaths Historical Overview 2001-2015," August 17, 2017, downloaded from https://dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/ob/documents/opioid/wv-drug-overdoses-2001_2015.pdf https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6712a1.htm and Puja Seth et al, "Overdose Death Involving Opioids, Cocaine, and Psychostimulants – United States, 2015-2016," Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly, March 30, 2018, downloaded from

[64] Alex Brill and Scott Ganz, "The Geographic Variation in the Cost of the Opioid Crisis," American Enterprise Institute, March 2018, downloaded from https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Geographic_Variation_in_Cost_of_Opioid_Crisis.pdf

[65] Donald MacPherson and Mari-Louise Rowley," A Framework for Action: A Four-Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver," City of Vancouver, April 24, 2001 (Revised), download from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Donald_Macpherson2/publication/242480594_A_Four-Pillar_Approach_to_Drug_Problems_in_Vancouver/links/55ca4a3c08aeca747d69e597/A-Four-Pillar-Approach-to-Drug-Problems-in-Vancouver.pdf

[66] Pitt, Humphreys, and Brandeau,"Modeling Health Benefit and Harms of Public Policy Responses to the US Opioid Epidemic," American Journal of Public Health, August 23, 2018, downloaded from https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304590

[67] Vermont Department of Health, "Hub and Spoke Evaluation Shows Significant Impact Being Made on Opioid Addiction," January 22, 2018, downloaded from http://www.healthvermont.gov/media/newsroom/hub-and-spoke-evaluation-shows-significant-impact-january-22-2018

[68] Sean O'Leary and Rick Wilson, "2017 State of Working West Virginia: Understanding Low-Wage Work in West Virginia," WV Center
on Budget and Policy and American Friends Service Committee, September 08, 2017, downloaded from https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/wvcbp/pages/502/attachments/original/1511178460/WVCBP_SOWWV2017-FINAL-.pdf?1511178460

[69] Workforce West Virginia, "Top Employers in West Virginia," November 1, 2017, download from http://lmi.workforcewv.org/EandWAnnual/TopEmployers.html

[70] U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, "Labor Surplus Areas: Fiscal (FY) 2018 Labor Surplus Areas (LSA)," October 2, 2017, downloaded from https://www.doleta.gov/programs/pdf/2018_LSA_List.xlsx

[71] O'Leary, Boettner, and Rubin," Strengthening West Virginia Families: Seven Policies to Build Shared Prosperity," West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, August 2018, download from https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/wvcbp/pages/2463/attachments/original/1533822792/Strengthening_WV_Families_.pdf?1533822792

[72] Ted Boettner, "Is West Virginia's Budget Crisis Over?: A Closer Look at Governor's Justice's FY 2019 State Budget & West Virginia's Economy," West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, January 17, 2018, downloaded from http://www.wvpolicy.org/is_west_virginia_s_budget_crisis_over

[73] O'Leary, Boettner, and Price," 2015 State of Working West Virginia: Answers and Solutions to West Virginia's Low Labor Force Participation," WV Center on Budget and Policy, November 9, 2015, downloaded from https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/wvcbp/pages/483/attachments/original/1511178106/SWWV-2015.pdf?1511178106

[74] Sean O'Leary, "West Virginia's Prevailing Wage: Good for Business, Good for Workers," WV Center on Budget and Policy, Janurary 28, 2015, downloaded from http://www.wvpolicy.org/west_virginias_prevailing_wage_good_for_business_good_for_workers and Ted Boettner," "Right-to-Work" Won't Boost West Virginia's Economy, WV Center on Budget and Policy, July 16, 2015, downloaded from http://www.wvpolicy.org/fast_facts_right_to_work_wont_boost_west_virginias_economy

[75] Ted Boettner, "Two Options for Addressing PEIA Revenue Shortfall," WV Center on Budget and Policy, March 30, 2018, downloaded from http://www.wvpolicy.org/two_options_for_addressing_peia_revenue_shortfall

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ted Boettner, "West Virginia should tax internet retailer," WV Center on Budget and Policy, June 25, 2018, downloaded from http://www.wvpolicy.org/west_virginia_should_tax_internet_retailers

[78] Ted Boettner, "Time to modernize West Virginia's Excess Acreage Tax," WV Center on Budget and Policy, April 12, 2015, downloaded from http://www.wvpolicy.org/time_to_modernize_west_virginias_excess_acreage_tax

[79] Elizabeth Wolkomir, "How SNAP Can Better Servce the Formally Incarcerated," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 16, 2018 (updated), downloaded from https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/how-snap-can-better-serve-the-formerly-incarcerated

[80] Food Research & Action Center (FRAC),"West Virginia Facts," downloaded from http://www.frac.org/wp-content/uploads/snap-facts-wv.pdf

WEST VIRGINIA CENTER ON
BUDGET & POLICY

8 Capitol Street, Fourth Floor
Charleston, WV 25301
304.720.8682 | Info@wvpolicy.org
@WVCBP • www.wvpolicy.org

American Friends
Service Committee
1201 Porter Creek | Milton, WV 25541
304.529.3890
www.afsc.org

Lincoln County

Public Transportation

TriRiver Transit
753 Marconi Drive
P. O. Box 436
Hamlin, WV 25523
Phone: 304-824-2944; Toll Free: 1-877-212-0815
Fax: 304-824-3889
E-Mail: trtpaula@zoominternet.net
Website: tririver.org

Description: General public bus transportation for Lincoln, Logan and Boone Counties. Operates nine major routes: Logan to Barboursville, Barboursville to Logan, Logan to Charleston, Delbarton to Williamson, Gilbert to Williamson, West Hamlin to Hamlin, West Hamlin to Southridge, Clothier to Southridge, and Wharton to Southridge. TriRiver Transit passengers can transfer to The Transit Authority (TTA) in Barboursville or Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KRT) in South Charleston to make trips into downtown Huntington and Charleston respectively. TriRiver Transit provides route-deviated service as far as ¾ of a mile (requires 24 hour advance notice) for any passenger. Non-emergency Medicaid transportation provider.

Service Area: Lincoln, Boone , Logan and Mingo Counties

Days and Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. – 7:55 p.m., Monday – Friday; Saturday – NEMT only.

Number of Vehicles:
10 15-passenger ADA lift equipped buses
5 18-passenger ADA lift equipped buses
3 ADA lift equipped vans
3 mini vans
1 4-wheel drive vehicle

Specialized Transportation

Lincoln County Opportunity Company, Inc.
360 Main Street
Hamlin, WV 25523
Phone: 304-824-3448
Fax: 304-824-7662
Email: lcoc@zoominternet.net
Website: www.lincolncountyopportunity.net

Description: Services operating for elderly, disabled and economically disadvantaged in Lincoln County. Primary service for medical care. Non-emergency Medicaid transportation provider.

Service Area: Lincoln County

Lincoln County (cont.)

***Lincoln County Opportunity Company, Inc*. (cont.)**

Days and Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday – Friday

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living
Phone: 304-525-3324
See Cabell County Listing

MTS Ambulance
Phone: 304-523-1000
See Cabell County Listing

Prestera Center
Phone: 304-525-7851
See Cabell County Listing

Taxi

None

Limousine

Classy Limo
Phone: 606-232-0049
See Cabell County Listing

Head Start Program

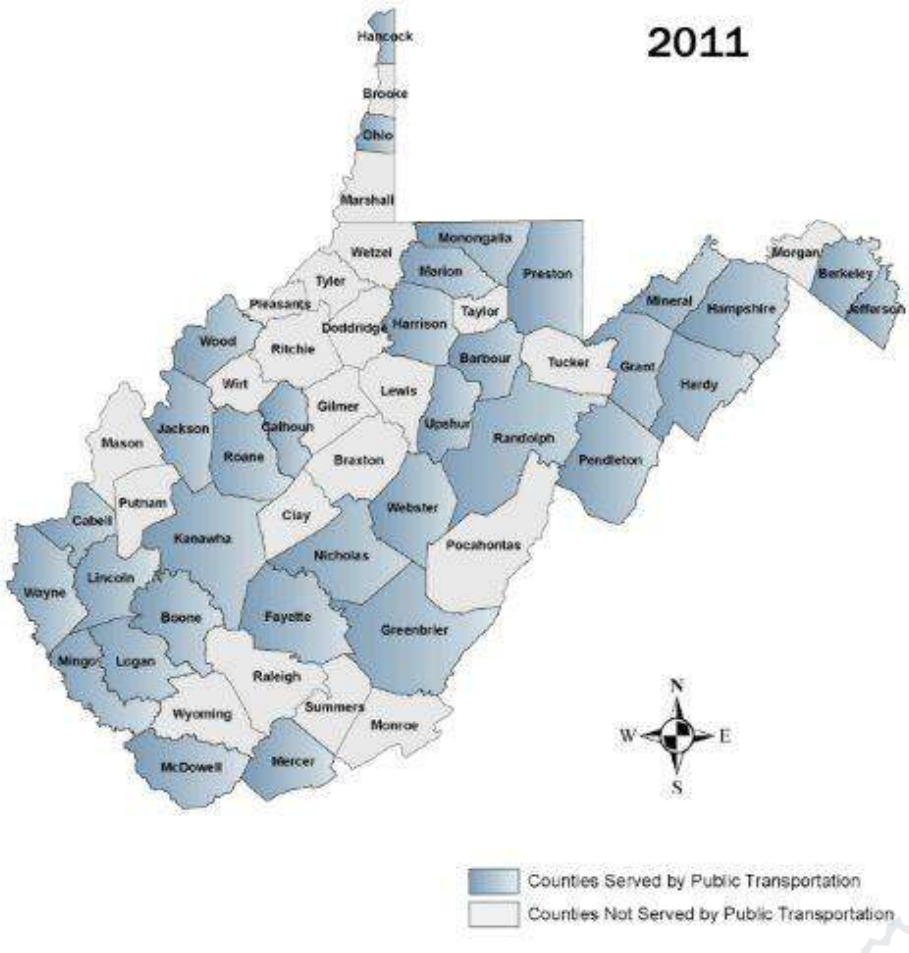
Southwestern Community Action Council, Inc.
Child & Family Development Program
Phone: 304-697-4600
See Cabell County Listing

(https://vimeo.com/wvdot) (https://www.flickr.com/photos/wvdot) (https://twitter.com/wvdot)
(https://www.facebook.com/WVDOT/)
(https://transportation.wv.gov/_layouts/feed.aspx?xsl=1&web=%2Fcommunications%2FPressRelease&page=b1b20da4-08de-4e43-84fa-feb75964adf6&wp=694e9fa3-d542-47ae-929f-deb86ac6f5b9)

Map of Counties with Transit Services

WV DOT Division of Public Transit

Counties Served by Public Transportation



25.3 SNAP E&T ACTIVITIES

All clients will complete a Self-Sufficiency Plan. The activities available for placement are listed below. Clients must be placed in existing activities provided at no charge to the individual, or payment must be provided through other funding sources such as WIB or PELL grants, etc.

A. JOB SEARCH ACTIVITY

Job Search is a qualifying E&T Participants activity only when it immediately precedes a qualifying placement.

Individuals who are determined to be job ready or individuals who have satisfactorily completed another program activity are placed in this activity. This activity consists of counseling on an as needed basis. The duration of this activity must not exceed one month.

Participants are required to make a pre-determined number of employer contacts in a month, not to exceed 12 per month. Job contacts must be recorded on the Job Search Employer Contact Verification Form, DFA-WVW-25, and returned to the SNAP E&T Worker at the end of the Job Search period. Contacts are verified on a random sample basis. When feasible, one contact should be with Job Service to register for work and to obtain WIB and WOTC certification. If the required contacts have not been made or if other questions arise, an interview is scheduled to determine good cause or to discuss other concerns when the DFA-WVW-25 is not returned.

Participants are to be paid a $25 transportation reimbursement for the month's of activity. Payment will be made prior to, or when Job Search begins, and must be taken into consideration when scheduling the Job Search activity.

It may not always be feasible for a participant to complete the required number of contacts. The SNAP E&T Worker must determine on a case by case basis if good cause exists for not completing the required number of contacts. An example of good cause is a lack of employers within a reasonable distance to the individual. Also, the individual must possess the skills normally required by the local employers.

When the Worker determines that an insufficient number of employers are available, the individual satisfies the requirements for Job Search if he/she has contacted the available employers and attended the scheduled classroom training.

B. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

This activity includes placement in existing structured activities that such as High School, GED, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Literacy, English as a Second Language and post secondary education. High School, GED, English as a second language and Adult Basic Education classes are operated by the County Board of Education. In some counties, private not-for-profit groups offer this type of activity with Workforce Investment Board (WIB) funding. Individuals in college and other post-secondary activities must use private funds, existing grants such as PELL, and loans to cover the cost of tuition, books, and fees. Skills training may be paid after all other resources are exhausted for vocational training not including college.

Individuals under the age of 30 without a High School Diploma or GED are required to enter remedial or secondary education activities if they are not working part time or involved in another activity. Individuals who are already in college courses are expected to continue participating or, as required, participate in another activity. Individuals are required to participate a minimum of six hours per week or 24 hours of classroom time in a four week period.

Only those scheduled to attend classes at least 24 hours each month will receive reimbursement for transportation.

The SNAP E&T Worker must refer individuals to the appropriate program, such as ABE, GED, or post-secondary, and must monitor progress on a monthly basis. A time sheet, DFA-TS-12, must be completed for each month's participation and signed by each service provider. The SNAP E&T Worker must also work with participants to help eliminate barriers to participation by making referrals to other services available in the community. The SNAP E&T Worker must work with each service provider to determine the level of progress being made. I

Individuals who participate in these activities are expected to improve basic functioning levels and/or obtain a GED. Upon completion, individuals may be required to enter either the Job Skills/Vocational Training or EIP.

In order to meet the E&T participation requirement, the individual must attend the educational facility 20 hours per week.

EXAMPLE: Twelve hours per week are available in the educational component. The participant may be placed into an EIP for at least 8 hours a week in order to meet the 20-hour participation requirement.

Participants are paid a $25 transportation reimbursement for each month of participation.

The following lists educational activities that may meet an individual's work requirement.

1. Literacy Program

   When the client cannot read, he may be placed in a Literacy Program. To qualify for such placement, the individual must test at or below standards set by the literacy program.

2. High School

   The student must adhere to the established attendance policy of the institution.

   When the individual is no longer eligible to be in the school system, or placing him back in the school system is inappropriate, he must be placed in Adult Basic Education (ABE), vocational training or an alternative school setting.

3. English As A Second Language

   Those adults who cannot read, write, and/or speak English, may receive education in English language skills. This is considered ABE/GED for coding purposes.

4. Adult Basic Education (ABE)

   ABE includes training in basic skills. It may also be used to help prepare for the GED test.

5. College

NOTE: Student policy applies. See Section 9.1,A.

Attending undergraduate college classes part-time may meet the work requirement for an individual if the 20 hours per week requirement is met. Otherwise, hours spent in class may help meet the requirement. If the 20-hour requirement is not met, the individual may be subject to a penalty. No hours of credit are given for study time.

Some undergraduate courses require that students be placed in an unpaid work environment. Such undergraduate placements may also be used to meet the work requirement. These placements include, but are not limited to: student teaching, internships, clinical work assignments and unpaid work experience. When the student does not participate in such activities for a sufficient number of hours to meet his participation requirement, the individual must also participate in another activity.

NOTE: Participation in College Work Study is considered employment for coding purposes.

A release of information form may be used to obtain information about a client's participation in education from institutions and other education activity providers. The form authorizes the SNAP E&T Worker to request such information.

The form must be read and explained to the client prior to a specific placement or requirement. The form is signed by the client at the time the SNAP E&T Worker needs to obtain specific information. After completion, the form is filed in the case record.

A transportation payment of $25 may be made for each month of participation.

C. JOB SKILLS/VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Jobs Skills/Vocational Training enables individuals to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to compete in a specific occupation. This component may only be used when the training is likely to lead to employment. This activity is provided through existing resources available in the community on a non-reimbursable basis, until the resources have been exhausted.

This training must be preparation for a specific occupation and conducted by an instructor in a non-work site or classroom setting. Entry into this activity is selective and training is authorized only for programs that can be completed in one year or less.

NOTE: Exceptions may be made by DFA Policy Unit.

Participants enrolled in Vocational Training are required to participate a minimum of 80 hours per month. The Vocational Training component is used to train participants in specific job skills for jobs that exist in the local labor market area. Participants in need of skill training must be referred to available vocational training schools, WIB sponsors and industrial training programs that provide the training free to the individual. The individual may be referred to a facility that charges a fee, only after it is determined that cost free training is not available.

The SNAP E&T Worker refers suitable candidates to Vocational Training. Attendance and progress must be reported on a monthly progress report, DFA-TS-12, completed by the vocational training facility. The SNAP E&T Worker must monitor and review the progress on a monthly basis. Vocational Training will vary according to training availability and the labor market needs of a particular area.

Individuals who have obtained a GED or certification to become employed in a particular occupation, or to learn a skill in order to become employable, are referred to Vocational Training facilities operated on the local level by the Board of Education and the State Board of Education Bureau of Vocational Education.

The SNAP E&T Worker must determine who should be referred to outside sources for training during the assessment process, See Section 25.4, and the development of the Personal Responsibility Plan. Referrals are made to WIB for certification and to specific programs located on the local level. The SNAP E&T Worker must monitor the attendance sheets, DFA-TS-12, monthly. The SNAP E&T Worker must maintain contact with the participant and service provider to insure satisfactory progress is being made and to help eliminate barriers when needed. Individuals who fail to meet the required 80 hours cannot be considered as making satisfactory progress, unless they are also in another component and the total hours of participation equal 80 or more monthly.

Each participant receives a $25 transportation reimbursement for each month of participation.

1. Placement Criteria

   An individual, who is determined to have the ability to complete the course work and meets the entrance requirements, may participate when:

- The goal is to enter an occupation that requires completion of a vocational course prior to employment; or

- Has no job skills, obsolete or non-marketable skills, and must be retrained to find employment; or

- Does not have a High School Diploma/GED, and the skill training has been identified as an alternative which will lead to employment.

Participation hours for Job Skills are governed by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The maximum monthly participation obligation is determined by dividing the amount of SNAP benefits by either of the state or federal minimum wage, whichever is higher.

Participants are deemed to have met the required number of hours in the component if they participate for the maximum number of hours permitted by FLSA.

2. Placement Standards

The training institution and instructor must meet the licensing and certification standards of the appropriate governing agency. Unlicensed or uncertified instructors are not approved for training when licensing or certification standards exist.

3. Contracts

Participants must be placed into training positions on a no-cost basis, if such positions are available through WIB, the Department of Education, Veterans Administration and other providers, before additional training positions may be considered. These providers are not reimbursed unless all existing training positions have been filled.

The SNAP E&T Worker may write contracts for individuals, without DFA approval, for an amount not exceeding $600. Individual contracts exceeding $600 must be approved by DFA.

The SNAP E&T Worker uses the Training Agreement, DFA-TA-34.

4. Payment Limitations

Payments are limited to tuition, books, supplies and expenses associated with completing the course of study. Costs for medical procedures, such as Hepatitis B vaccines or physical exams, are not included. There is a limit of $600 per individual contract. This limit cannot be exceeded without approval from DFA. To obtain approval, a written request must be

submitted to the Director of DFA and include the client's name, address, SSN, name of the training facility and the occupation for which training is sought. The request must also include the usual pay rate for the occupation, as well as the current employment prospects and labor demands.

A transportation payment of $25 may be made for each month of participation.

D. COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAM

This program is for non-exempt E&T Participants. These individuals must be placed with agencies described below in order to meet the work requirement. The primary purpose of Community Service is to provide work experience and training to assist a client who has limited work experience, is under-employed or has no immediate employment opportunities.

Placements are only made with private not-for-profit agencies or public agencies. The SNAP E&T Worker is responsible for approving all work positions and for collecting monthly time sheets for each participant.

Each participant receives a $25 transportation reimbursement for each month of participation.

Participation hours for Community Services are governed by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The maximum monthly participation obligation is determined by dividing the amount of SNAP benefits by either of the state or federal minimum wage, whichever is higher.

Participants are deemed to have met the required number of hours in the component if they participate for the maximum number of hours permitted by FLSA.

The SNAP E&T Worker must work closely with the local WV WORKS staff in making Community Service Placements. An E&T Participant cannot be placed with an existing CWEP sponsor.

1. Who May Be A Community Service Sponsor

Community Service sponsors are limited to public agencies, such as federal, local, state and not-for profit employers. It is limited to public services projects in fields such as health, social services, environmental protection, education, urban and rural development and re-development, welfare, recreation, public activities, public safety and child care.

2. Requirements Of The Sponsor

The Community Services Sponsor must meet the following requirements:

- Provide the client with guidance and supervision necessary to participate in the work experience project;

- Provide safety equipment, special clothing and tools needed to perform the assigned duties;

- Assume the cost of any required pre-employment medical examinations;

- The agency should provide medical coverage in the event the individual is injured while volunteering at the work site; and

- Not schedule clients to work split shifts during the work period.

E. EMPLOYMENT

The first priority of the SNAP E&T Program is placement of the individual into full-time unsubsidized employment. When this is not possible, part-time unsubsidized, part-time or full-time subsidized employment and other activities can be explored.

The client's entry into employment may be the result of job development by the SNAP E&T Worker, efforts of other employment agencies, or the result of the client's own efforts.

Items 1 and 2 below define unsubsidized and subsidized employment and provide other necessary information.

1. Unsubsidized Employment

Unsubsidized employment is when earnings are provided by an employer who does not receive a subsidy for the creation and maintenance of the employment position.

NOTE: Any tax credits received by the employer are not considered subsidies.

a. Displacement/Replacement

There is no consideration of the displacement of other employees when the client is placed in unsubsidized employment.

b. Employment Standards

Unsubsidized employment must provide the starting wage at or above the applicable state or federal minimum wage. When employment does not meet this criterion, it is considered good cause for refusing or failing to take action to secure the employment.

2. Subsidized Employment

Subsidized employment is work with earnings provided by an employer who receives a subsidy for the creation and maintenance of the employment position. To place an individual in subsidized employment, the displacement/replacement policy and the employment standards below apply.

a. Displacement/Replacement

Placement of SNAP E&T clients into subsidized employment and on-the-job training must not dislocate, displace, or otherwise have an adverse effect on an employer's regular labor force.

The following requirements apply:

- All regular employees of this employer must not suffer a reduction in work hours, overtime, fringe benefits or the opportunity for advancement.

- The employer must not refuse to hire a regular employee in lieu of a SNAP E&T placement.

- The employer cannot reduce the normal labor force positions by increasing open positions with SNAP E&T placements.

- SNAP E&T placements must not cause a relocation of workers from one geographical area to another.

- The regular employees at a work site must be informed that SNAP E&T placements may not cause any dislocation and that they may file a grievance if they feel their job has been adversely affected by SNAP E&T placements.

- SNAP E&T placements cannot be made with employers involved in any abnormal labor condition, such as a strike or lockout.

b. Employment Standards

Subsidized employment must meet the employment standards listed below. When the subsidized employment does not meet all of the criteria, the client has good cause for refusing or failing to accept the position.

- The employer must not be in violation of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act or any other law governing the equal treatment of employees in the workplace.

- The employment must not impair existing contracts for service or collective bargaining.

- The starting wage must be at or above the applicable state or federal minimum wage.

- The recipient is not eligible for a $25 transportation payment.

F. EMPLOYER INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EIP)

EIP provides participants hired by either public or private employers, with subsidized training and employment. Prior to the placement, the employer must commit to retain the employee after the completion of the contract. It is a hire-first program with training paid for by the Department.

EIP provides the participants with structured skills training, an opportunity to improve skill levels, and provides the marginally employable with an opportunity to become employed. The expected outcome at the conclusion of the contract is unsubsidized employment.

1. Who May Be An EIP Employer

Any employer, including a public agency, not-for-profit organization, and private business which is licensed to conduct business in West Virginia is eligible to be an EIP employer, provided all business tax payments are current. In addition, the employer must agree to the requirements specified below.

2. Employer Requirements

The employer must meet the following requirements:

- The employer must guarantee appropriate standards for employment.
- The employer must guarantee there will be no displacement/replacement.
- EIP placements must not provide more than 50% of the employer's labor force.
- The contract must be for at least 20 hours per week.
- Out-of-state training sites must be within 15 miles of the WV border.
- The employer must make a commitment to retain the client at the conclusion of the contract.
- The employment must be permanent and not on a seasonal basis.
- The number of EIP training hours are based upon the starting wage as shown:

Beginning Hourly Wage	EIP Training Hours
$8.00 through $8.99	200
$9.00 through $9.99	300
$10.00 through $10.99	400
$11.00 through $11.99	500
$12.00 or more	600

Contracts are not written for the following:

- Employers in a highly mobile industry
- Contracts are not written for occupations that require certification and/or licensure, such as for a CNA, LPN or RN, if the schooling/training results in a certificate or license.
- Occupations requiring minimal training
- A transportation payment of $25 may be made for each month of participation.

G. DRIVER'S EDUCATION

This program is for E&T Participants. Individuals, without a driver's license, may be placed in a class to learn how to drive. The instructor must be a certified driver's education instructor. The class must be designed to teach driving skills for beginning drivers. This component does not include classes designed to reduce driver's "points" received for traffic violations, nor does it include regaining a driver's license after losing it for a driving violation.

A transportation payment of $25 may be made for each month of participation. A tuition payment may be made once during the lifetime of the participant. The tuition payment is limited to no more than $350.

WEST VIRGINIA Department of Health & Human Resources

Legislative ABAWD Briefing – 2017 Regular Session

Background/Requirements

- Federal requirements limit receipt of SNAP benefits to 3 months for persons between the age of 18-49 without dependents or disabilities, known as Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD).
- Waivers for this requirement can be granted in states experiencing a recent unemployment rate of over 10 percent, a recent 24-month average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national unemployment rate for that same 24-month period, or designation as a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- To maintain eligibility after the 3 month period, ABAWD SNAP recipients must meet at least one of the Federally defined work requirements:
  - Working at least 80 hours per month;
  - Participating in qualifying education and training activities at least 80 hours per month;
  - Complying with a State-approved workfare program;
  - Participating in the SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T).
- The first set of ABAWD SNAP recipients were slated to become ineligible for benefits on March 18th, 2016; however, BCF utilized a Federally-authorized "15% exemption" to extend the deadline through the month of April in order to allow effected ABAWDs to prepare.
- BCF conducted an extensive media, telephone, and mailing outreach campaign to inform SNAP recipients of the ABAWD requirements.

SNAP Cases	
# of SNAP Individuals	**Description**
44,404	Non-Exempt ABAWDs in 9 County Pilot as of January 2016
8,795	Non-Exempt ABAWDs in 9 County Pilot at Close of Outreach Campaign
3,326	Non-Exempt ABAWDs in 9 County Pilot as of January 2017
5,417	SNAP Cases Closed in 9 County Pilot, May 2016-January 2017
7,310	Non-Exempt ABAWDs Statewide as of January 2017 (Estimated)
741	Cases Reopened After ABAWD Non-Compliance Closure
176,064	Total Open SNAP Cases Statewide as of January 2017

	Total SNAP Recipients in ABAWD Age Range												
	Jan-16	**Feb-16**	**Mar-16**	**Apr-16**	**May-16**	**Jun-16**	**Jul-16**	**Aug-16**	**Sep-16**	**Oct-16**	**Nov-16**	**Dec-16**	**Jan-17**
Berkley	7,298	7,336	7,325	7,277	6,878	6,613	6,572	6,534	6,401	6,231	6,029	5,899	5,911
Cabell	8,481	8,472	8,340	8,210	7,859	7,505	7,355	7,399	7,400	7,212	7,039	7,046	6,950
Harrison	4,601	4,593	4,610	4,550	4,320	4,256	4,279	4,284	4,291	4,282	4,204	4,202	4,122
Jefferson	2,480	2,464	2,448	2,395	2,234	2,101	2,118	2,117	2,089	2,035	1,962	1,950	2,018
Kanawha	13,151	13,033	12,971	12,859	12,259	11,854	11,844	11,887	11,953	11,852	11,578	11,475	11,334
Marion	4,472	4,456	4,485	4,441	4,297	4,245	4,133	4,229	4,202	4,141	4,052	4,023	4,054
Monongalia	3,885	3,892	3,908	3,839	3,734	3,547	3,519	3,510	3,440	3,358	3,298	3,227	3,206
Morgan	1,092	1,121	1,121	1,074	1,019	937	923	910	921	910	877	883	916
Putnam	2,736	2,710	2,696	2,661	2,590	2,569	2,568	2,595	2,575	2,534	2,434	2,425	2,400
Grand Total	**48,196**	**48,077**	**47,904**	**47,306**	**45,190**	**43,627**	**43,311**	**43,465**	**43,272**	**42,555**	**41,473**	**41,130**	**40,911**

	Total Count of Non-Exempt ABAWDs												
County	**Jan-16**	**Feb-16**	**Mar-16**	**Apr-16**	**May-16**	**Jun-16**	**Jul-16**	**Aug-16**	**Sep-16**	**Oct-16**	**Nov-16**	**Dec-16**	**Jan-17**
Berkley	6,741	1,571	1,400	1,173	650	421	360	383	385	424	405	406	423
Cabell	7,932	2,635	2,251	1,924	1,303	879	674	706	673	606	589	633	619
Harrison	4,204	1,029	906	743	423	280	225	241	245	268	281	304	323
Jefferson	2,304	595	544	445	236	124	108	117	132	155	144	153	172
Kanawha	11,938	2,944	2,656	2,489	1,630	1,248	1,060	1,019	1,033	989	959	940	982
Marion	4,152	1,085	966	818	489	354	267	268	283	334	324	314	322
Monongalia	3,587	1,020	945	723	407	273	227	235	242	256	267	247	248
Morgan	1,021	241	217	179	96	65	59	63	66	76	58	70	78
Putnam	2,525	506	427	301	185	123	96	123	145	141	145	146	159
Grand Total	**44,404**	**11,626**	**10,312**	**8,795**	**5,419**	**3,767**	**3,076**	**3,155**	**3,204**	**3,249**	**3,172**	**3,213**	**3,326**
	3 Month Warning Outreach Campaign Oct 2015-Mar 2016			Extra Month (15% Exemption)	Active Closure for Non-Compliance								

	Total SNAP (ABAWD) Case Closures									
County	**May-16**	**Jun-16**	**Jul-16**	**Aug-16**	**Sep-16**	**Oct-16**	**Nov-16**	**Dec-16**	**Jan-17**	**Grand Total**
Berkley	189	203	112	60	64	62	52	57	49	848
Cabell	179	244	179	135	89	64	66	100	75	1,131
Harrison	91	78	49	19	12	13	24	23	29	338
Jefferson	94	83	25	19	22	14	17	24	10	308
Kanawha	418	331	212	130	98	133	140	119	96	1,677
Marion	55	71	77	17	37	35	34	34	31	391
Monongalia	47	126	66	36	50	34	24	38	33	454
Morgan	15	33	11	4	5	7	15	6	6	102
Putnam	28	24	7	23	26	9	12	22	17	168
Grand Total	**1,116**	**1,193**	**738**	**443**	**403**	**371**	**384**	**423**	**346**	**5,417**

Employment & Training Services Provided

- The SNAP E&T program is designed to help SNAP recipients find ways to meet the participation requirements detailed above.
- BCF, with guidance from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), partnered with the regional Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) covering the 9 issuance-limited counties.
- BCF funded the hiring of 11 additional WIB staff to operate the SNAP E&T program. The new WIB staff were trained on the SNAP E&T program during December 2015 and January 2016.
- The maximum monthly reimbursement for SNAP E&T participants is **$25**.
- An expansion of the ABAWD program statewide will require FNS approval of an updated SNAP E&T State Plan. If FNS determines that existing SNAP E&T services are insufficient to support the needs of ABAWD clients statewide, BCF could be subject to financial sanction.
- Estimated costs for extending the SNAP E&T program statewide range from **$2,034,409** with the hiring of additional personnel to support the expansion to **$369,687** without hiring additional personnel.
- Current Federal match for SNAP E&T administrative costs is **100%** up to **$800,000**. Administrative Costs **> $800,000** are a **50%** Federal match.

SNAP E&T Costs – 9 County Pilot – FFY 2016				
Grantee	**Grant Amount**	**Reported Expenditures**	**Source of Funding**	**Counties Served**
Reg. III WIB of Kanawha County	$224.667.00	$100,553.27	Federal	Kanawha
Southern WV Reg. II WIB	$184,191.00	$184,191.00	Federal	Cabell
Eastern WV Community Action Reg. VII	$209,471.00	$118,721.78	Federal	Berkeley, Jefferson, Morgan
WV Reg. VI WIB	$212,515.00	$127,845.10	Federal	Harrison, Marion
TOTAL	$830,844.00	$531,311.50		

Appendix P

Search

QuickFacts

West Virginia

QuickFacts provides statistics for all states and counties, and for cities and towns with a ***population of 5,000 or more***.

Table

All Topics	West Virginia
Population estimates, July 1, 2018, (V2018)	**1,805,832**
PEOPLE	
Population	
Population estimates, July 1, 2018, (V2018)	**1,805,832**
Population estimates, July 1, 2017, (V2017)	1,815,857
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2018)	1,853,001
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2017)	1,853,006
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2018, (V2018)	-2.5%
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2017, (V2017)	-2.0%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	1,852,994
Age and Sex	
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.4%
Persons under 18 years, percent	20.4%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	19.4%
Female persons, percent	50.5%
Race and Hispanic Origin	
White alone, percent	93.6%
Black or African American alone, percent (a)	3.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a)	0.2%
Asian alone, percent (a)	0.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a)	Z
Two or More Races, percent	1.7%
Hispanic or Latino, percent (b)	1.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	92.2%
Population Characteristics	
Veterans, 2013-2017	138,508
Foreign born persons, percent, 2013-2017	1.6%
Housing	
Housing units, July 1, 2017, (V2017)	892,226
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2013-2017	72.7%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2013-2017	$111,600
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2013-2017	$997
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2013-2017	$309
Median gross rent, 2013-2017	$681
Building permits, 2017	2,719
Families & Living Arrangements	
Households, 2013-2017	737,671
Persons per household, 2013-2017	2.42
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2013-2017	88.3%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2013-2017	2.5%
Computer and Internet Use	
Households with a computer, percent, 2013-2017	79.8%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2013-2017	70.3%
Education	
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2013-2017	85.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2013-2017	19.9%
Health	
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2013-2017	14.4%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	7.5%
Economy	
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2013-2017	55.5%

In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2013-2017	49.0%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	4,036,333
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	12,259,395
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	24,553,072
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	14,295,437
Total retail sales, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	22,637,923
Total retail sales per capita, 2012 (c)	$12,201
Transportation	
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2013-2017	25.7
Income & Poverty	
Median household income (in 2017 dollars), 2013-2017	$44,061
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2017 dollars), 2013-2017	$24,774
Persons in poverty, percent	⚠ 19.1%

BUSINESSES

Businesses	
Total employer establishments, 2016	36,607[1]
Total employment, 2016	558,905[1]
Total annual payroll, 2016 ($1,000)	21,637,981[1]
Total employment, percent change, 2015-2016	-1.2%[1]
Total nonemployer establishments, 2016	87,671
All firms, 2012	114,435
Men-owned firms, 2012	63,112
Women-owned firms, 2012	39,065
Minority-owned firms, 2012	5,777
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	104,785
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	12,912
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	94,960

GEOGRAPHY

Geography	
Population per square mile, 2010	77.1
Land area in square miles, 2010	24,038.21
FIPS Code	54

About datasets used in this table

Value Notes

1. Includes data not distributed by county.

⚠ Estimates are not comparable to other geographic levels due to methodology differences that may exist between different data sources.

Some estimates presented here come from sample data, and thus have sampling errors that may render some apparent differences between geographies statistically indistinguishable. Click the Quick Info left of each row in TABLE view to learn about sampling error.

The vintage year (e.g., V2018) refers to the final year of the series (2010 thru 2018). *Different vintage years of estimates are not comparable.*

Fact Notes

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race
(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories
(c) Economic Census - Puerto Rico data are not comparable to U.S. Economic Census data

Value Flags

- Either no or too few sample observations were available to compute an estimate, or a ratio of medians cannot be calculated because one or both of the median estimates falls in the lowes interval of an open ended distribution.
D Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information
F Fewer than 25 firms
FN Footnote on this item in place of data
NA Not available
S Suppressed; does not meet publication standards
X Not applicable
Z Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

QuickFacts data are derived from: Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, Current Population Survey, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, Small Area Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits.