

Overlooked Talent Pools Data Series

Rural Residents & Communities in STEM



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

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

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



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

U.S. Census Bureau, 2017

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



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

Pew Research Center, 2019

Rural Students in K-12 STEM



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

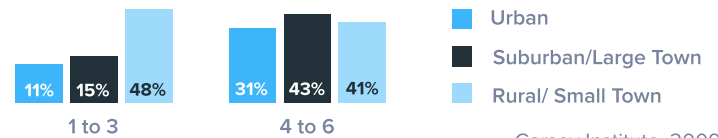


Rural students **perform near or above** the national average in math and science.

National Center for Education Statistics, 2015

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

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



Carsey Institute, 2009

Rural Postsecondary Students



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

Urban Institute, 2018

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

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

STEM Workforce in Rural Communities

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

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

■ **<2%** Farming ■ **17%** Production, Manufacturing, & Transportation

U.S. Census Bureau, 2018



Labor force in rural areas by occupation



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

U.S. Census Bureau, 2018

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