



# Rural Housing

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**Housing Assistance Council**

**Federal Reserve**  
**Bank of Chicago**  
**March 2025**

**Housing Assistance Council** is a national nonprofit and Community Development Financial Institution helping local organizations build homes and communities in **Rural America**.



## Capacity Building

Train and develop local organizations to help their own communities



## Lending

Lend capital to build and preserve affordable housing in hard to serve places



## Research

Provide reliable information, data and analysis to improve rural living conditions



## Policy

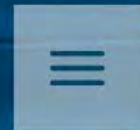
Inform policy to improve housing and communities across rural America







TAKING STOCK



# TAKING STOCK

Rural People | Rural Places | Rural Housing

The Decennial Publication of the Housing Assistance Council



INTRODUCTION  
AND EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY



THE NEW (AND  
EVOLVING)  
RURAL  
AMERICA



RURAL PEOPLE  
AND PLACES



THE RURAL  
ECONOMY



RURAL  
HOUSING

EXPLORE THE REPORT

[www.ruralhome.org](http://www.ruralhome.org)



HAC

Housing Assistance Council

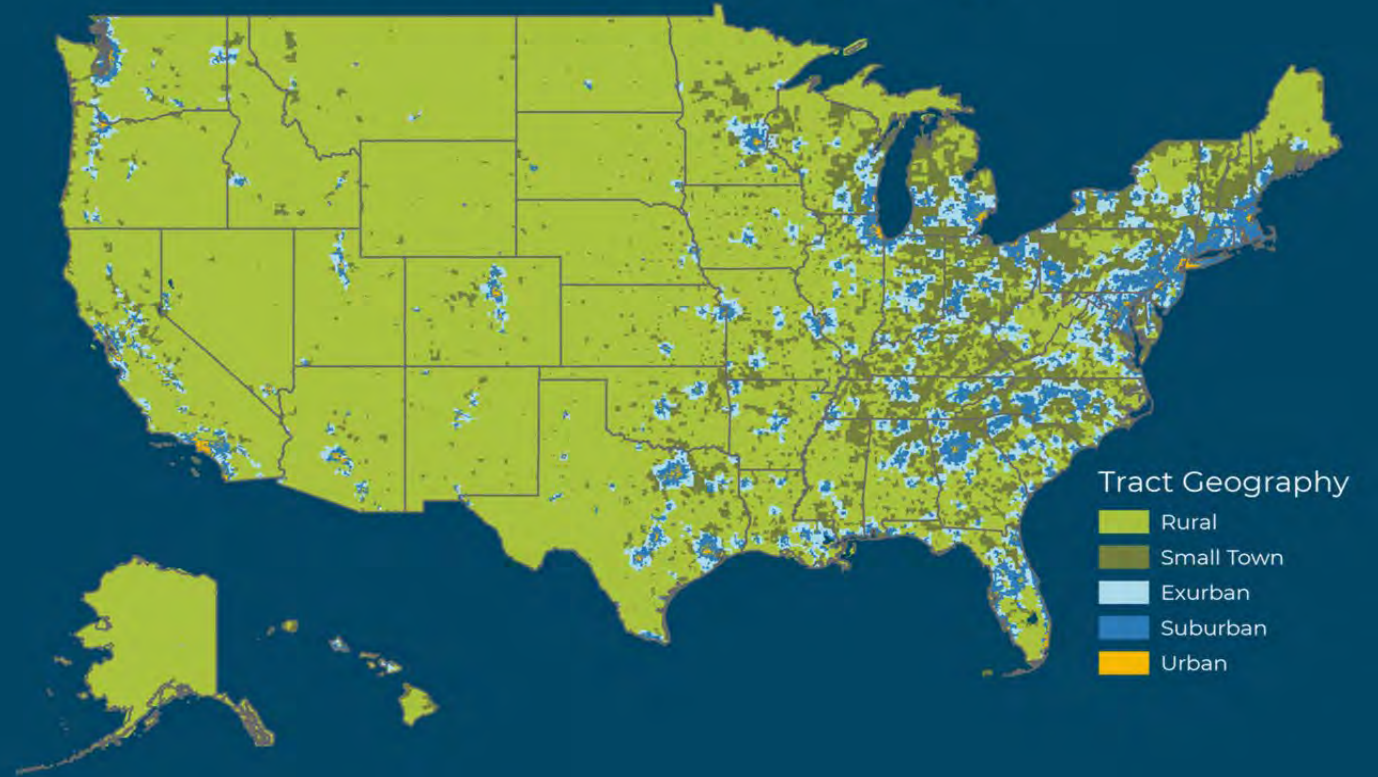


# WHAT IS RURAL?



Photo: Shawn Poynter, [There is More Work to be Done](#)

## HAC's Rural and Small Town Typology

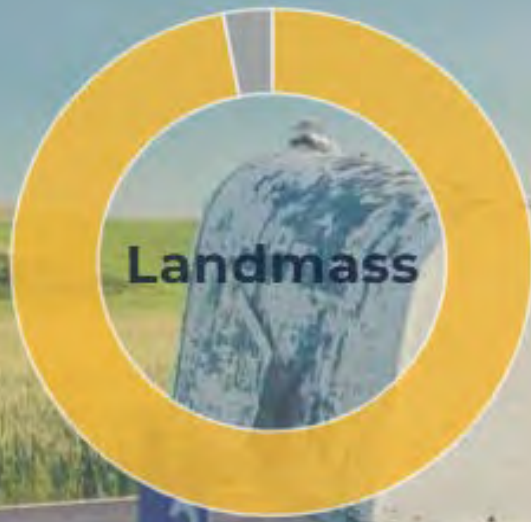


### Tract Geography

- Rural
- Small Town
- Exurban
- Suburban
- Urban

For more, see <https://ruraldatacentral.org/Content/WhatIsRural>





**97%**

97 percent of the U.S. landmass is rural



**21%**

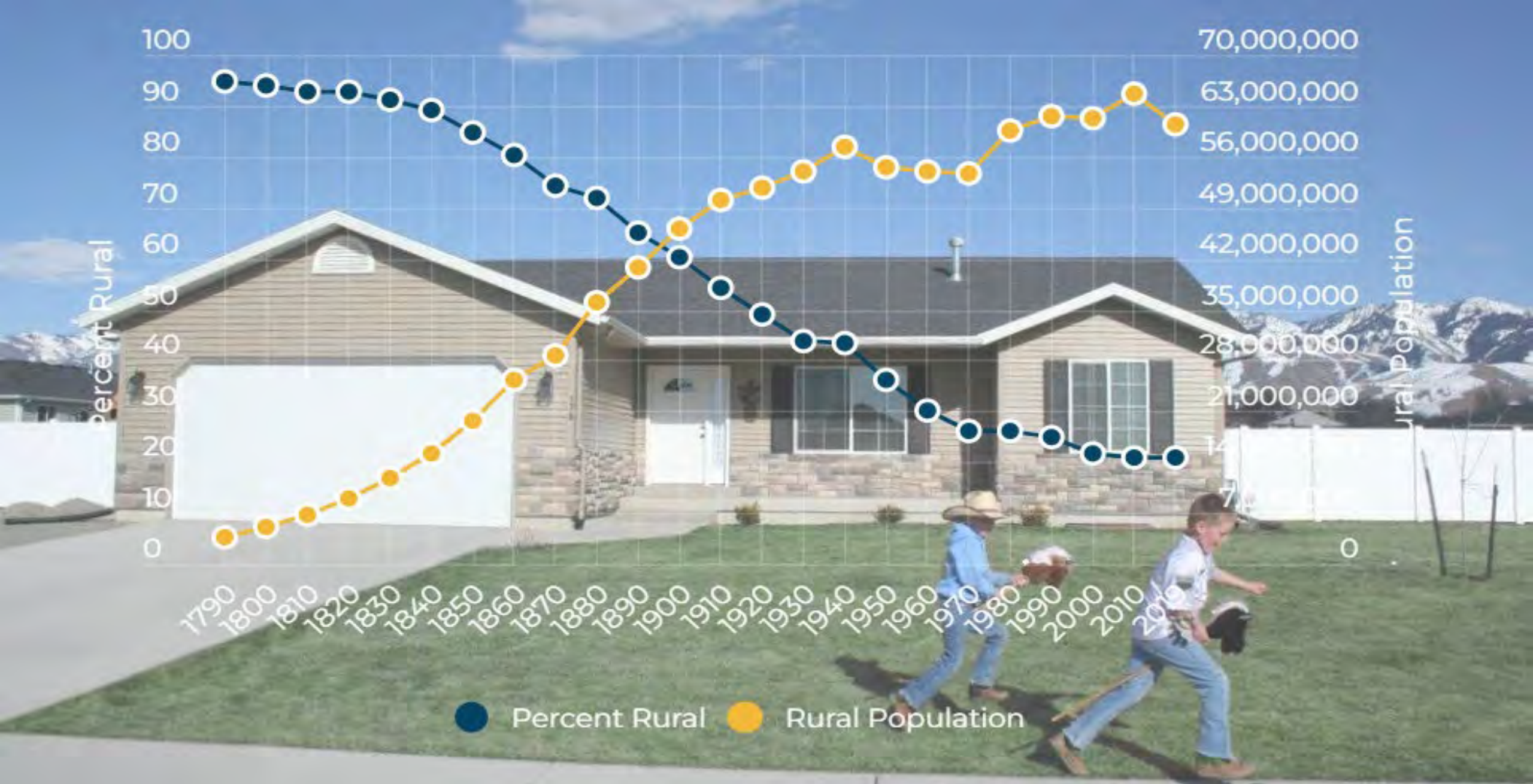
There are over 60 million people living in rural America



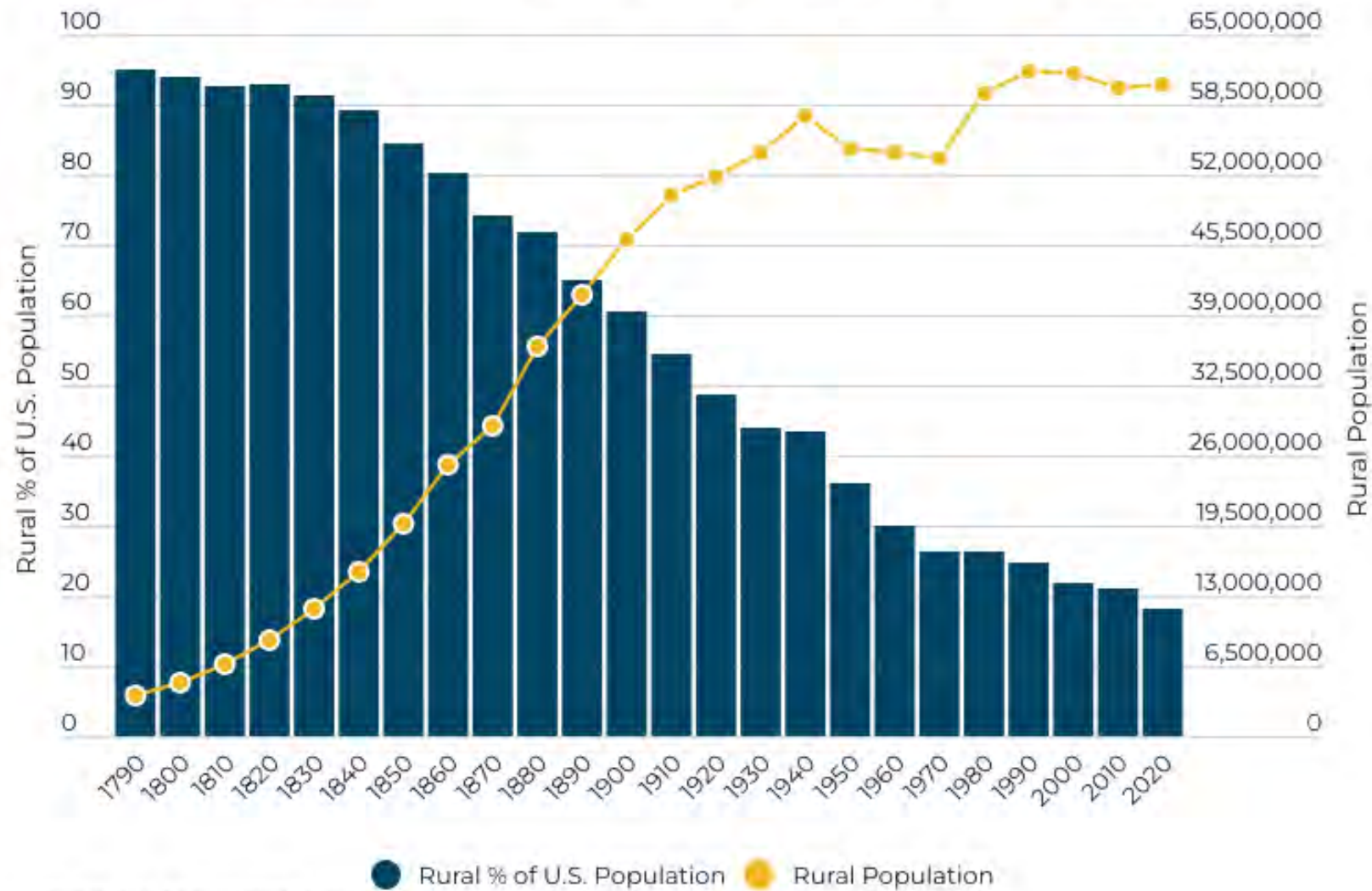
**25%**

One quarter, or 29 million US homes are in rural communities





## Rural\* Population in the United States, 1790-2020



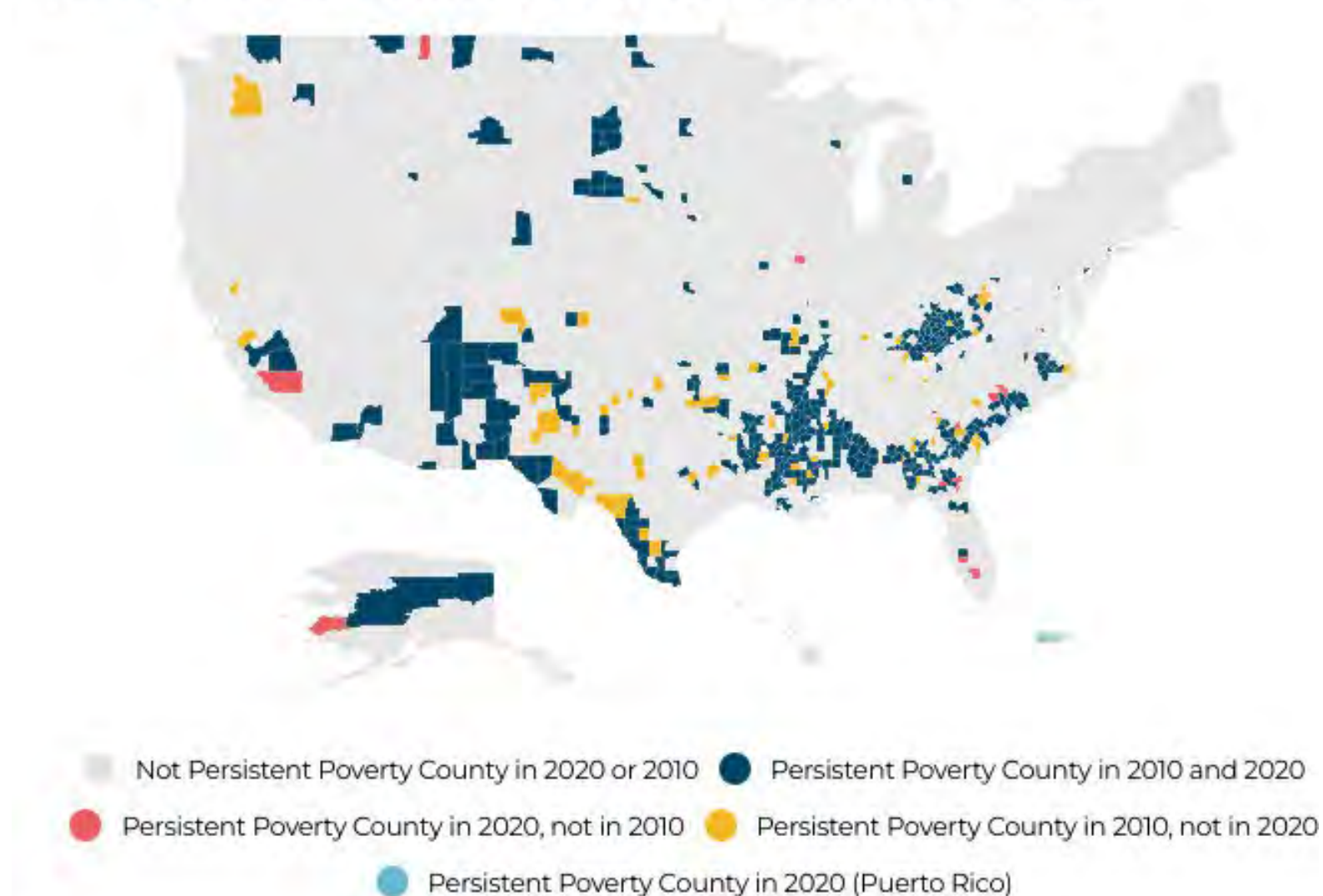
Source: HAC Tabulations of Historic Census Bureau Data.

\*Time series data include differing definitions of rural



# THERE ARE 455 PERSISTENT POVERTY COUNTIES IN THE UNITED STATES

## Change in Persistent Poverty Counties, 2010 - 2020



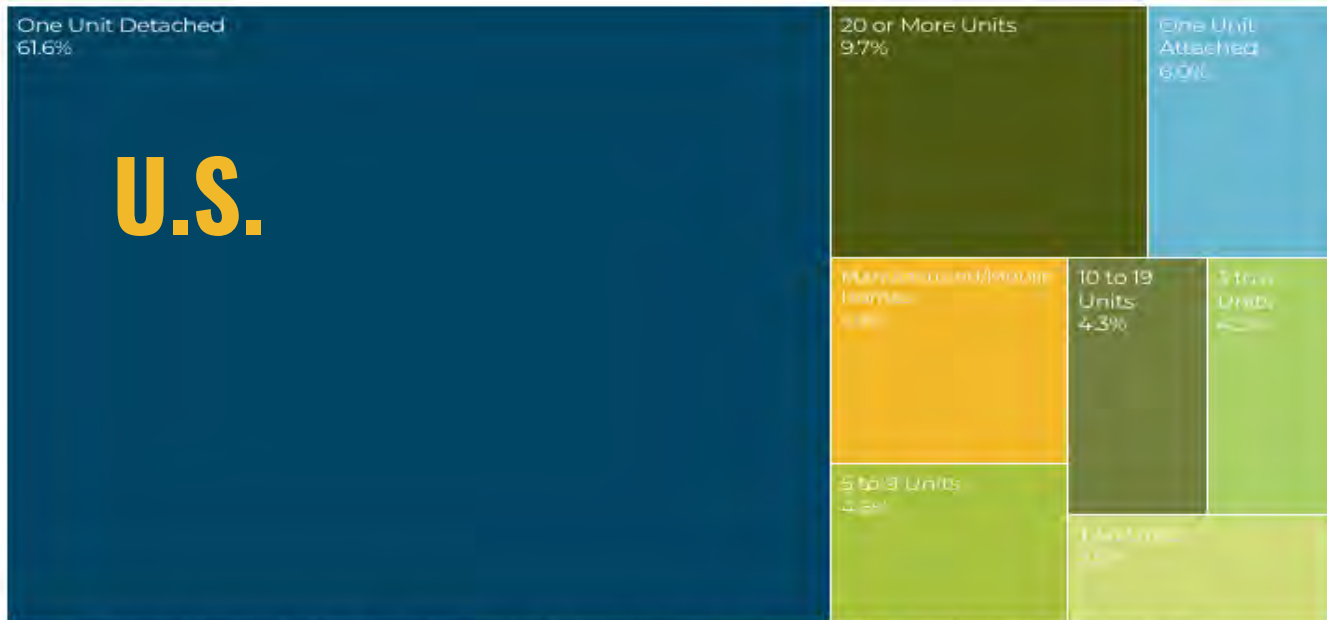
Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau's 1990, and 2000 Census of Population and Housing, and 2006-2010 American Community Survey, and 2016-2020 American Community Survey.



# RURAL HOUSING



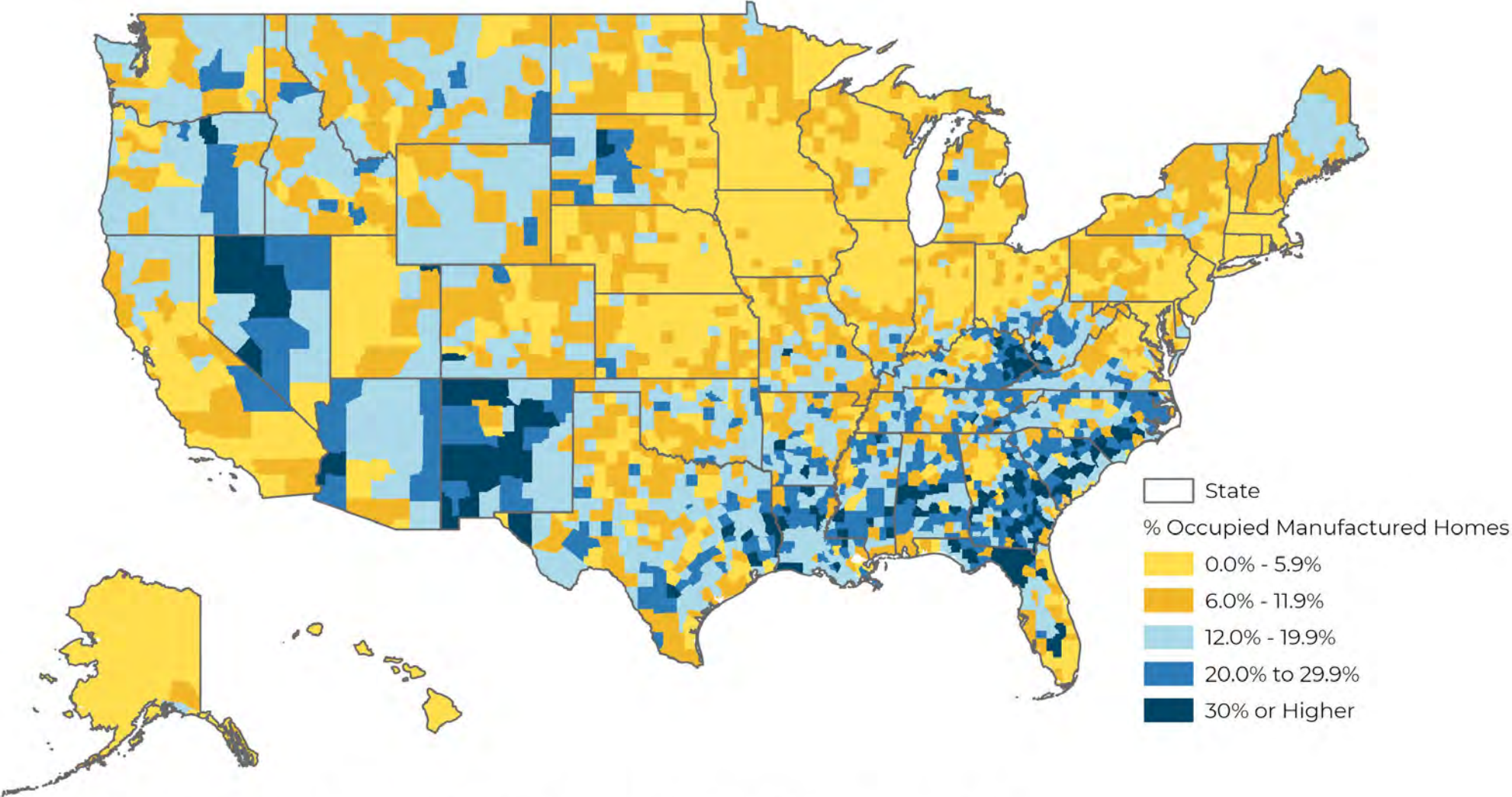
Photo: Shawn Poynter. [There is More Work to be Done](#)



	U.S.	Rural	Δ
<b>Ownership</b>			
<b>House</b>	<b>61.6%</b>	<b>72.1%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>
<b>Manufactured</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
<b>Rental (by units in building)</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>-3.9%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>-1.4%</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>
<b>10-19</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>-2.7%</b>
<b>20+</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>-7.2%</b>

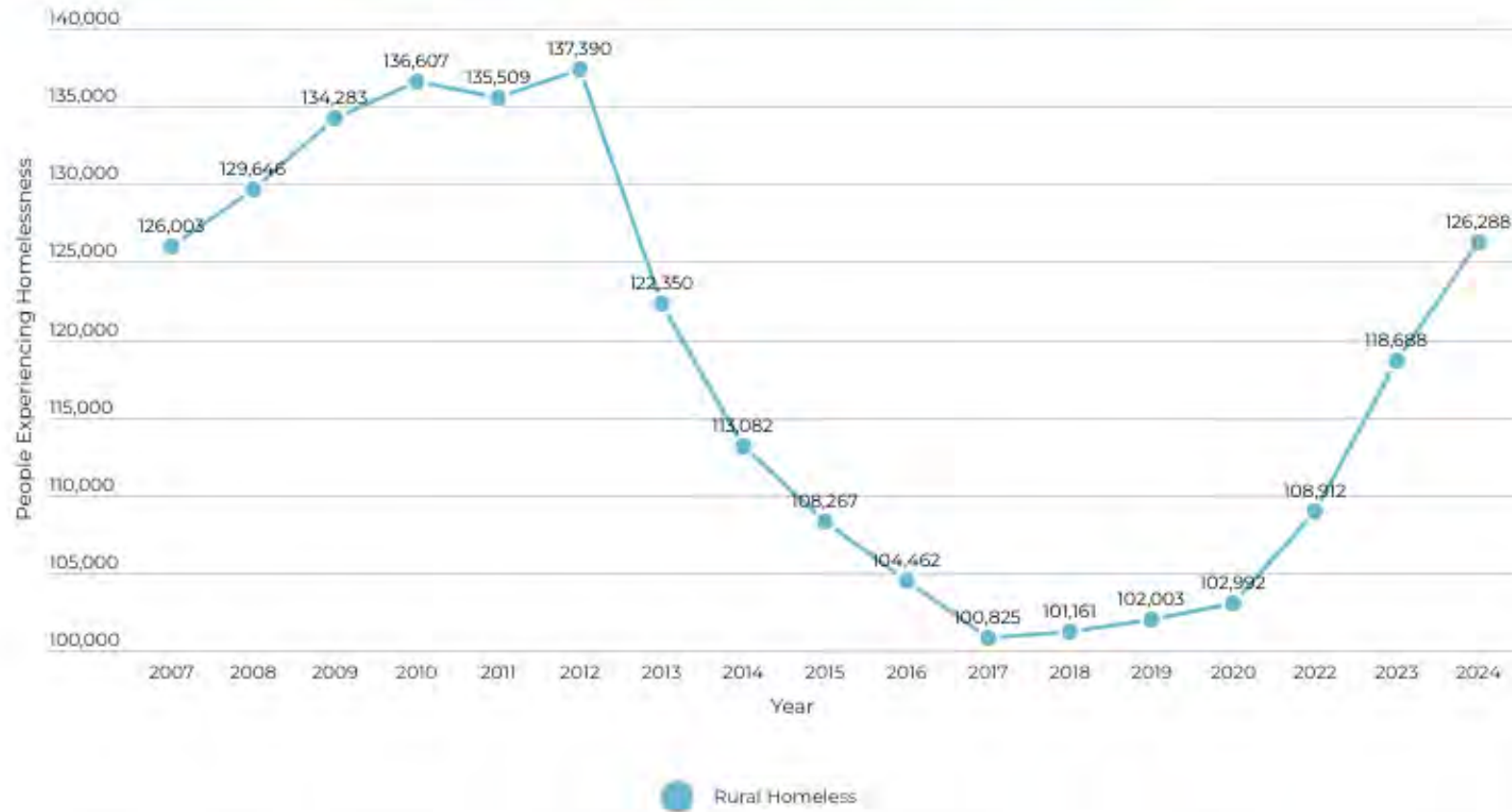


# Manufactured Homes, 2022



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 - 2022 American Community Survey

# Trends in Rural Homelessness



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Annual Homeless Assessment (AHAR) Report to Congress NAEH Analysis.

Note: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress; NAEH analysis. Note: Starting in 2018, HUD used geographic data published by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to determine the urbanicity of CoCs instead of using the Balance of State (BoS) designation to denote rural CoCs. CoCs with a designation of "largely rural" means only that a plurality of those geographies' population lives in rural areas. PIT Count data represent a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness in a single night in January and may not reflect everyone experiencing homelessness in a jurisdiction.

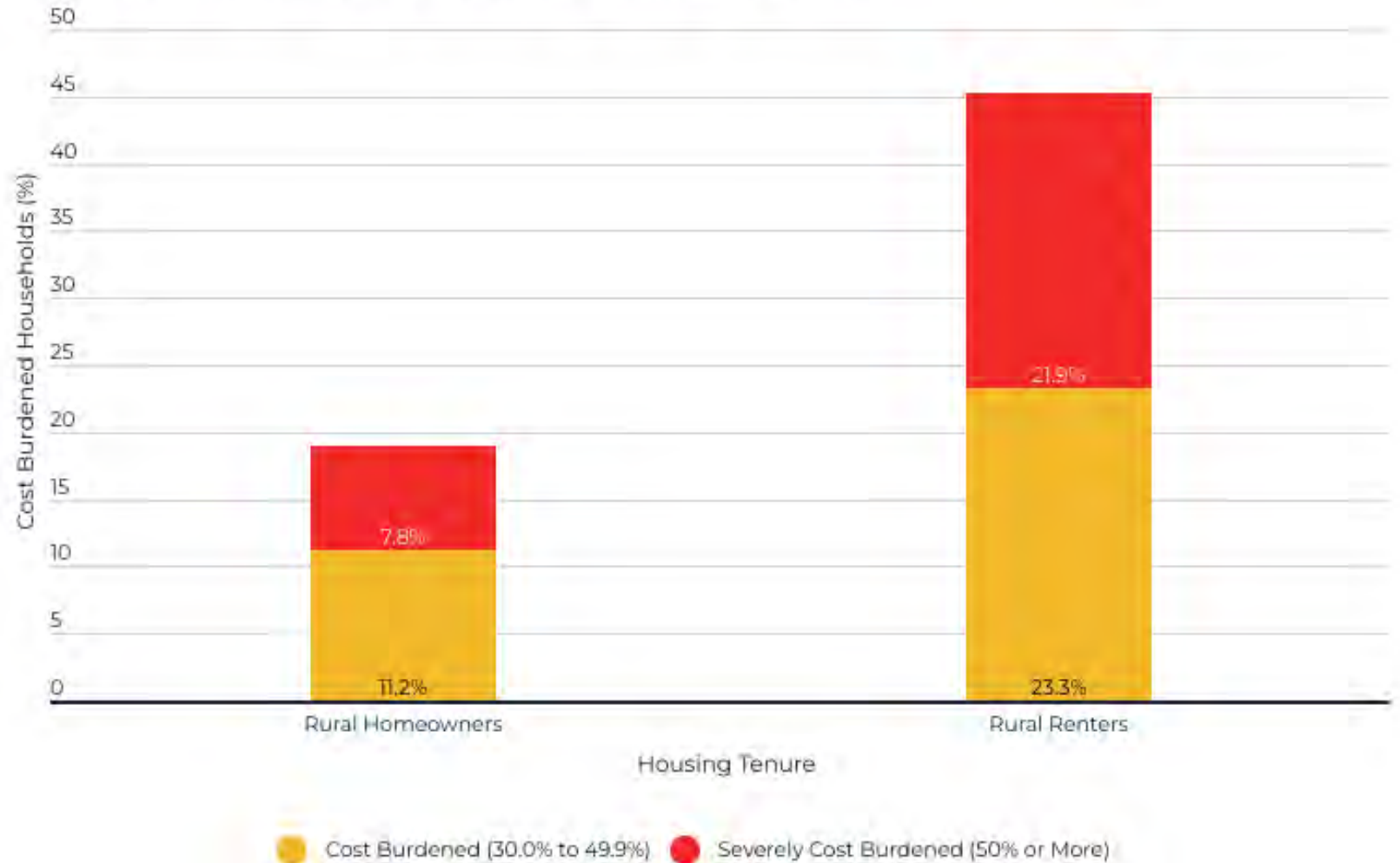


# AFFORDABILITY

IS THE GREATEST  
HOUSING CHALLENGE  
IN RURAL AMERICA

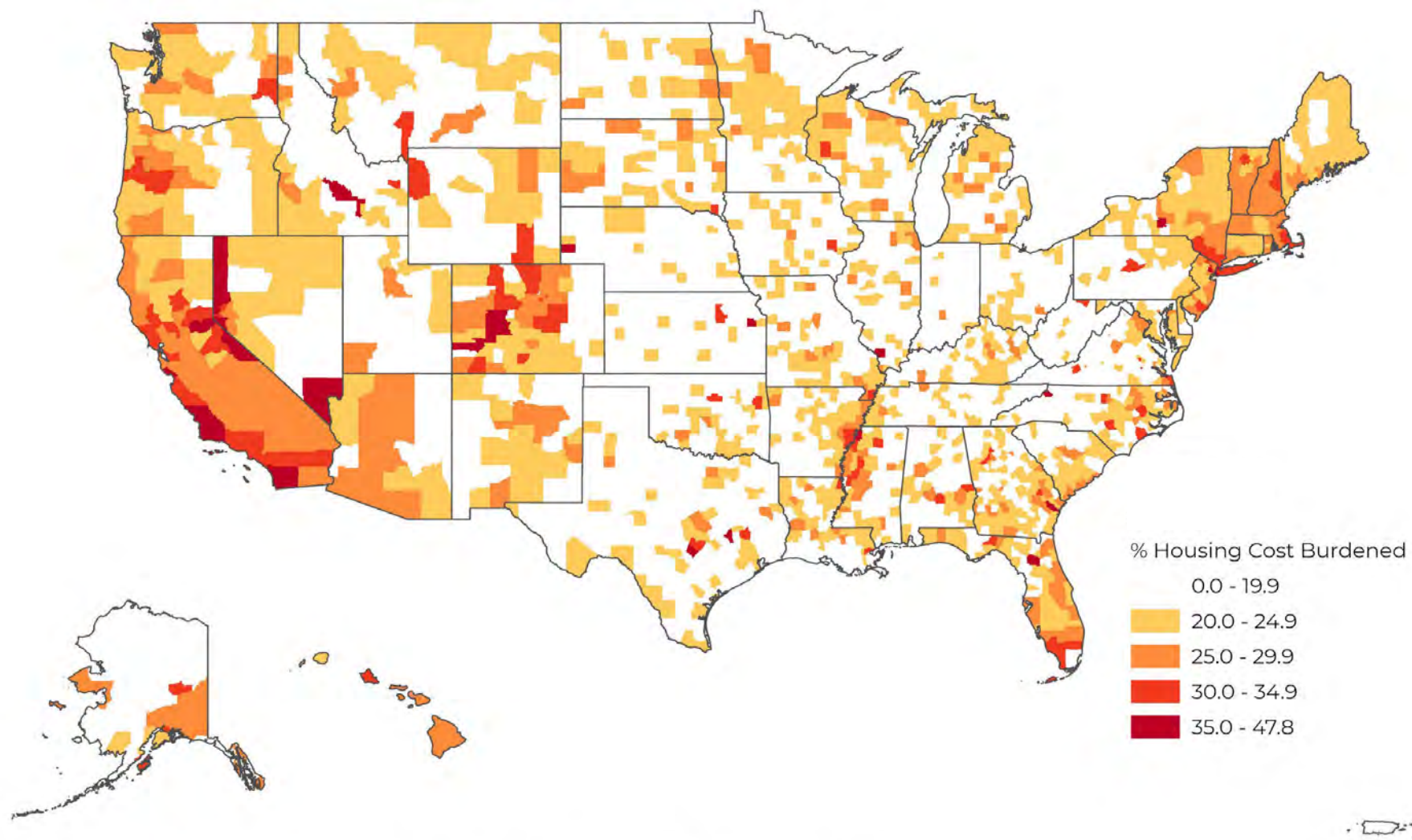
(BY FAR)

Rural Housing Cost Burden by Tenure, 2023



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey

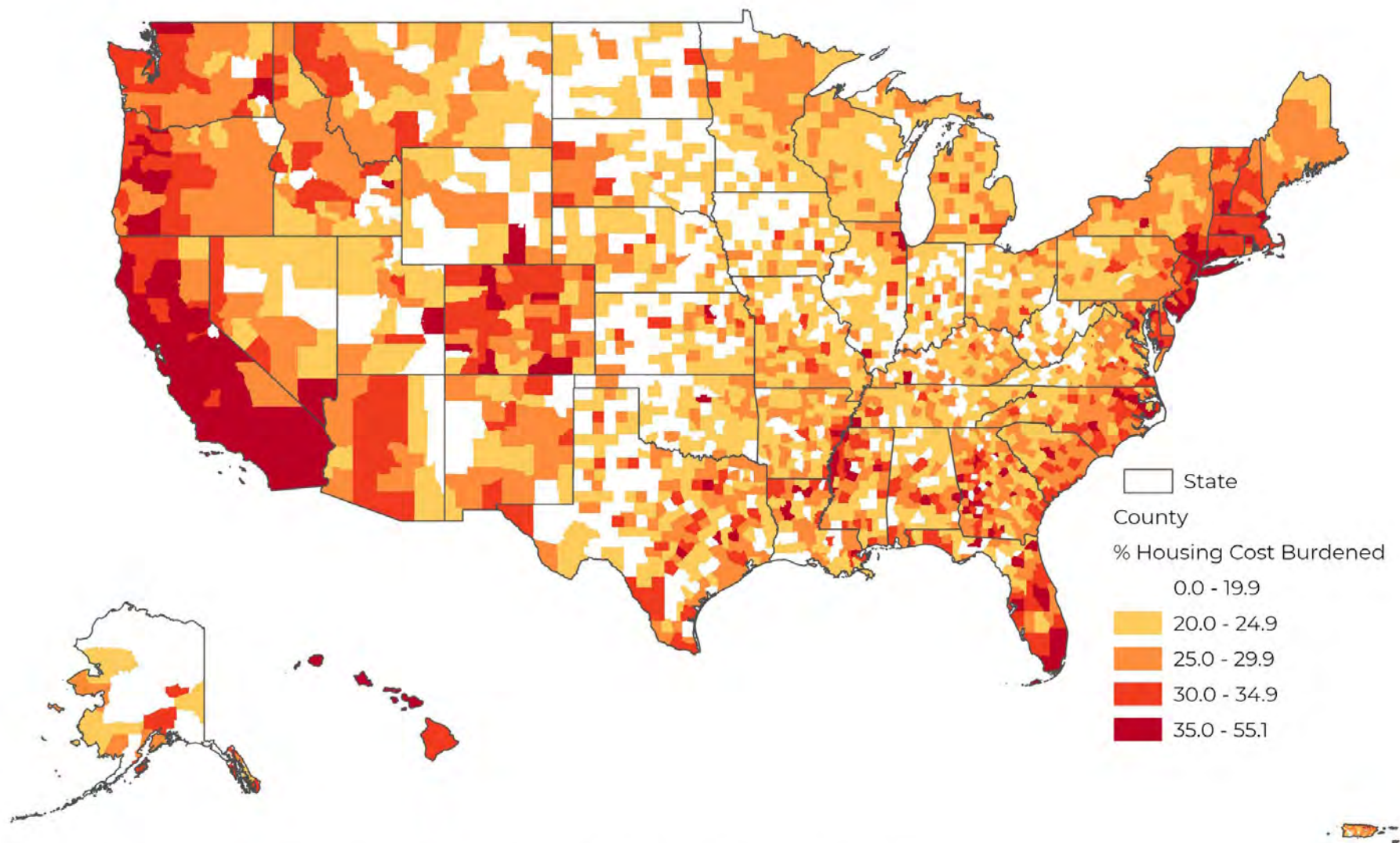
## Housing Affordability, 1980



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of Census Bureau's 1980 Census of Population and Housing.



## Housing Affordability, 2021



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of Census Bureau's 2017-2021 American Community Survey .

# USDA Multifamily Housing



# **USDA Multifamily Housing (Section 515) is Rural America's Housing of Last Resort Before Homelessness**

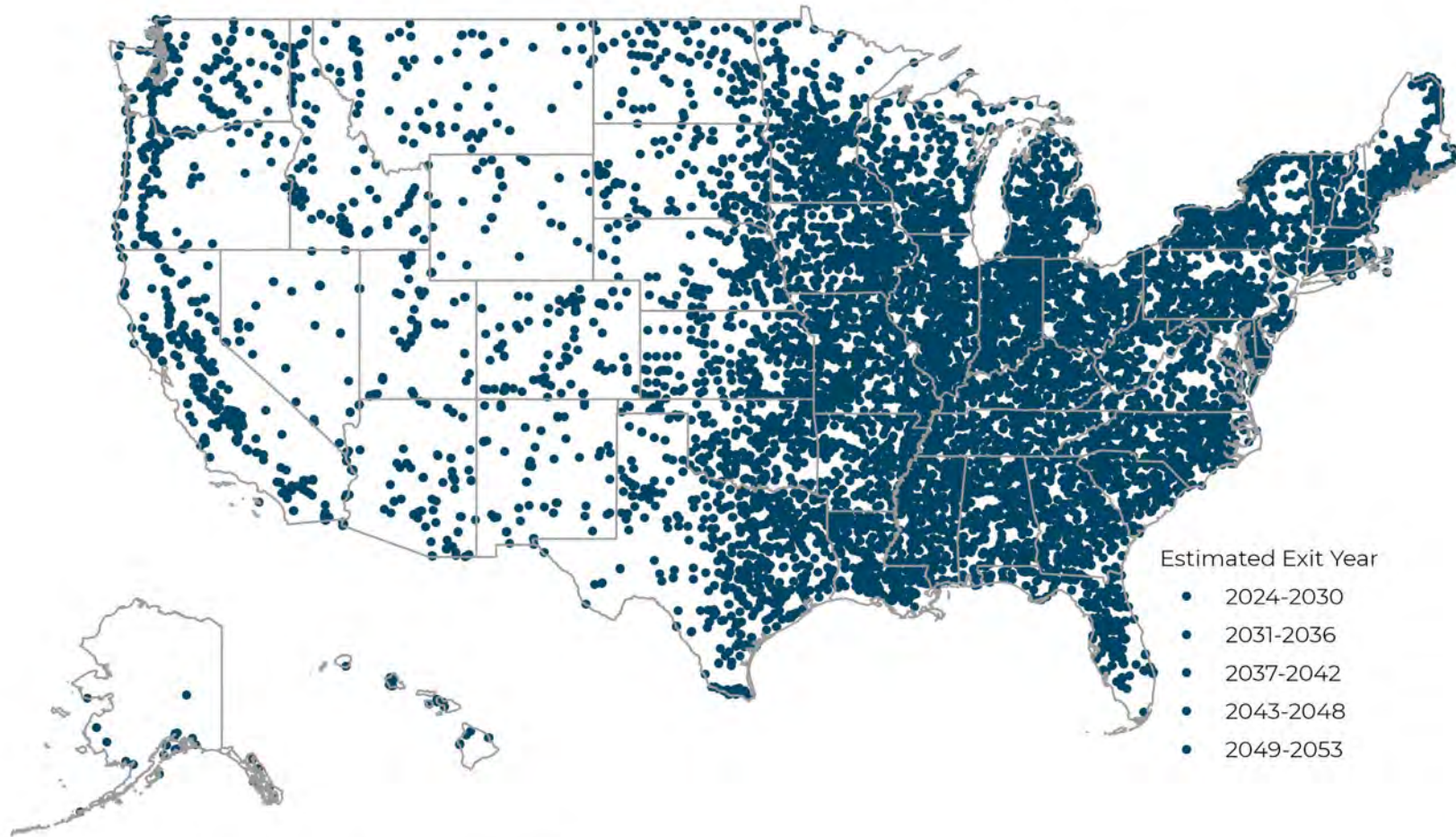
**\$12,708**

average annual income of USDA  
Section 515 tenants

**2/3**

of USDA Section 515 tenants are  
elderly or disabled

## USDA Section 515 Rental Properties, 2024



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data

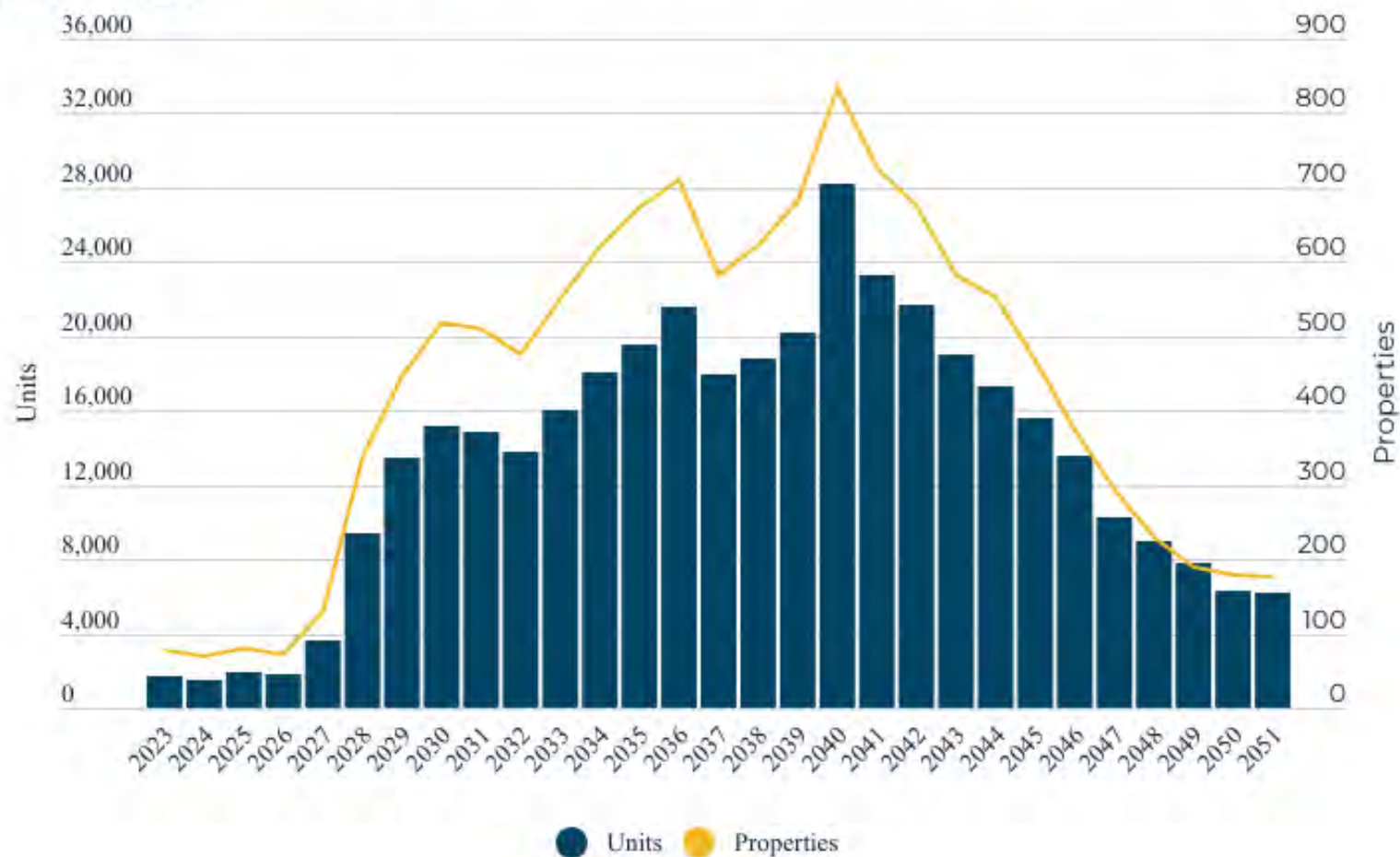
**87% of all U.S. counties have at least one USDA Section 515**

Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA data.



## Maturing USDA Section 515 Multifamily Loans

### Estimated Loss of Properties and Units From Loan Maturity, 2023 - 2052



# RURAL AMERICA IS LOSING AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING AT AN ALARMING RATE

USDA Section 515 Rental Properties, 2024



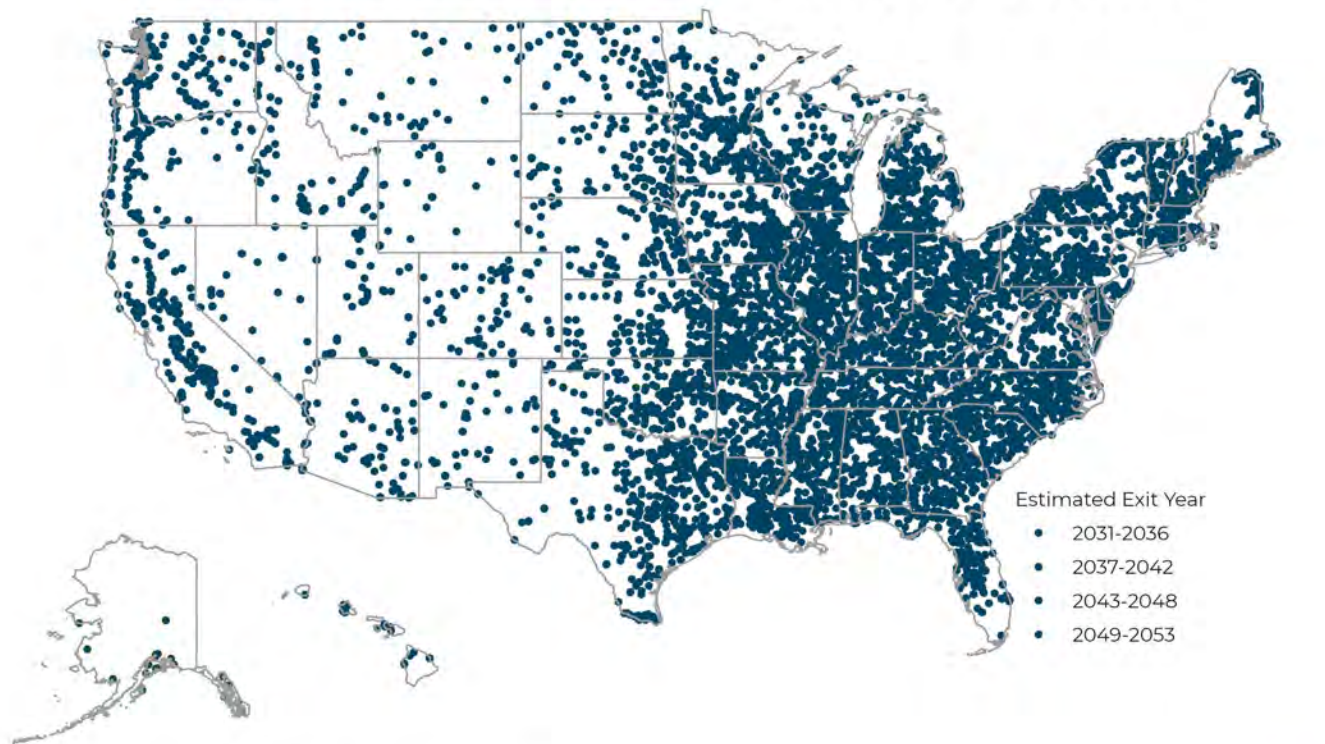
Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data





# RURAL AMERICA IS LOSING AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING AT AN ALARMING RATE

Estimated USDA Section 515 Rental Properties, 2030

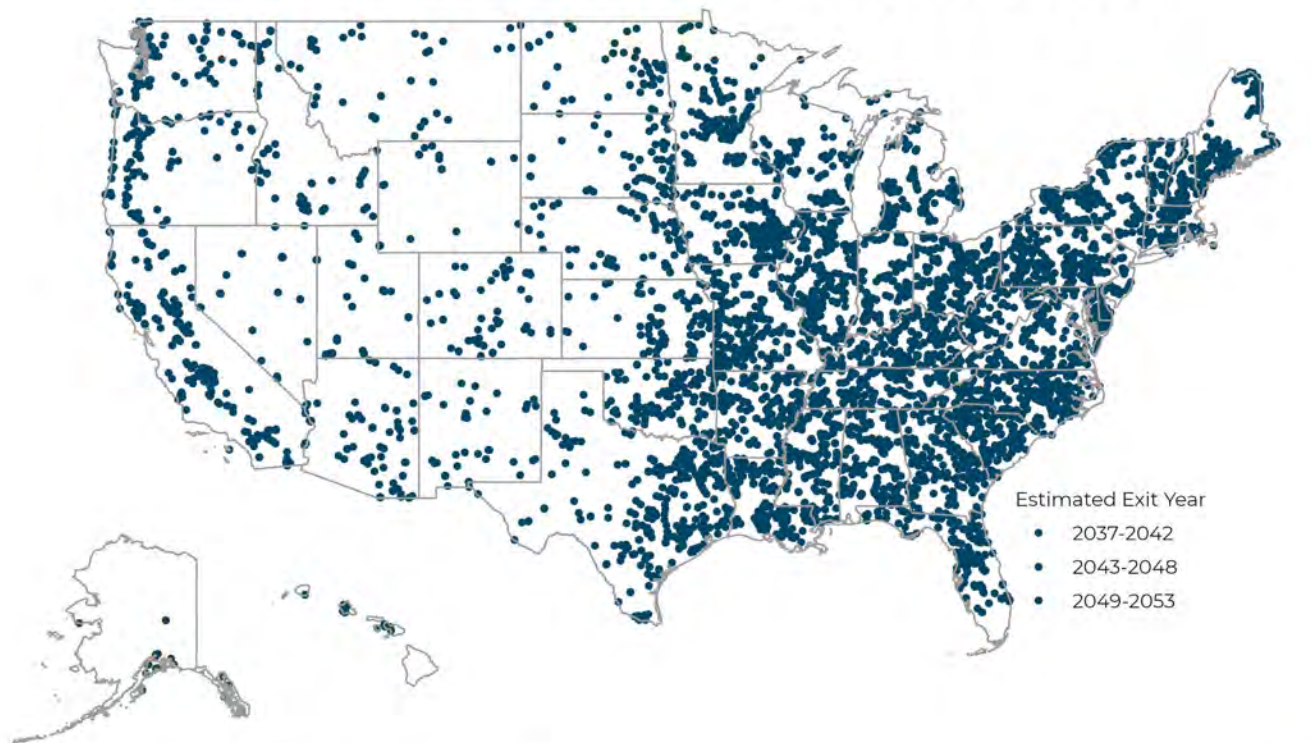


Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data



# RURAL AMERICA IS LOSING AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING AT AN ALARMING RATE

Estimated USDA Section 515 Rental Properties, 2036

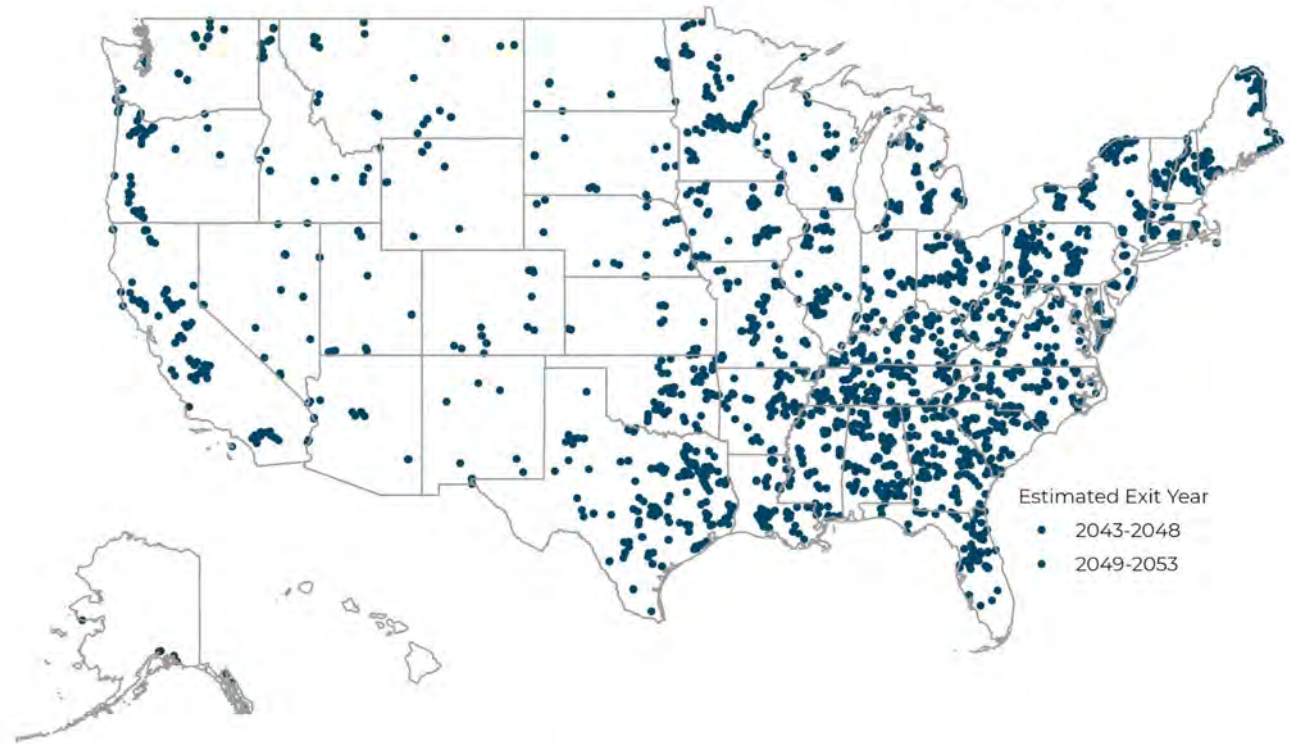


Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data



# RURAL AMERICA IS LOSING AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING AT AN ALARMING RATE

Estimated USDA Section 515 Rental Properties, 2042

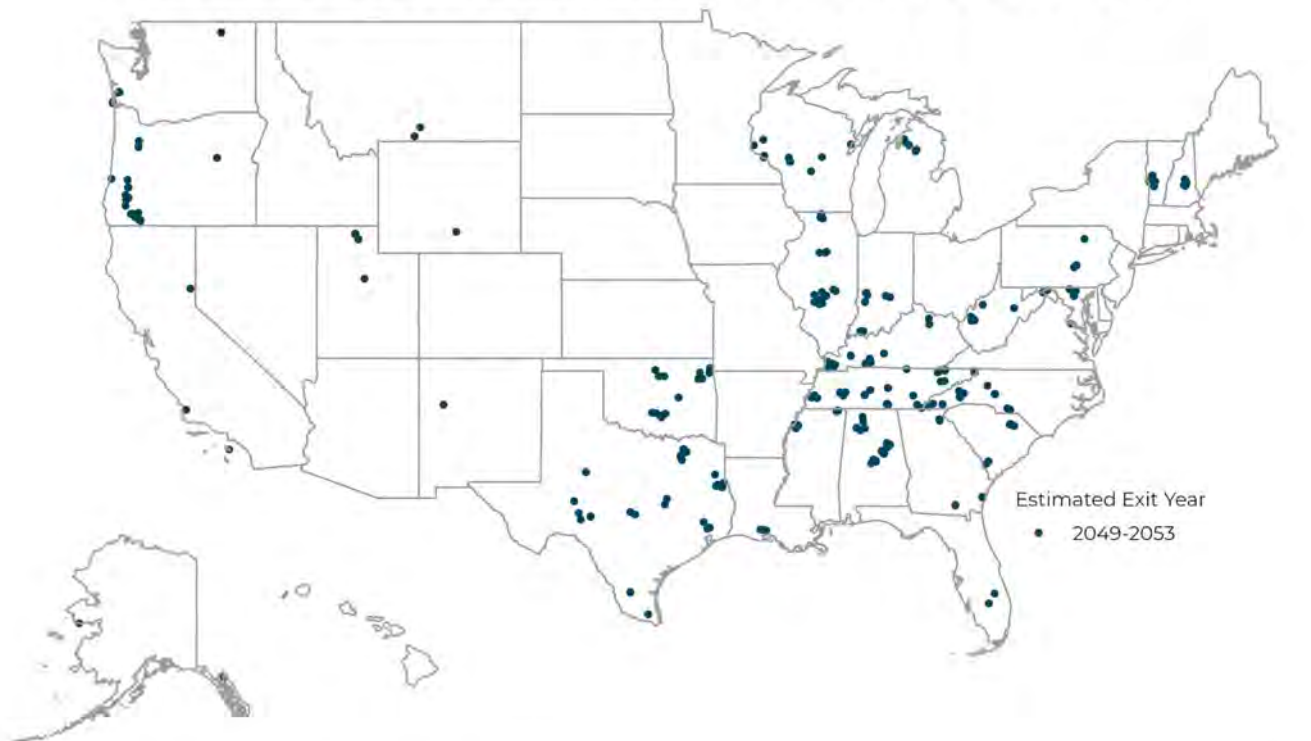


Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data



# RURAL AMERICA IS LOSING AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING AT AN ALARMING RATE

Estimated USDA Section 515 Rental Properties, 2048



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data





# RURAL AMERICA IS LOSING AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING AT AN ALARMING RATE

Estimated USDA Section 515 Rental Properties, 2054



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data



# Recent Policy Momentum



Modernizing USDA's rural housing programs has been a recent bipartisan focus for Congress, most specifically in the popular **RHS Reform Act**.

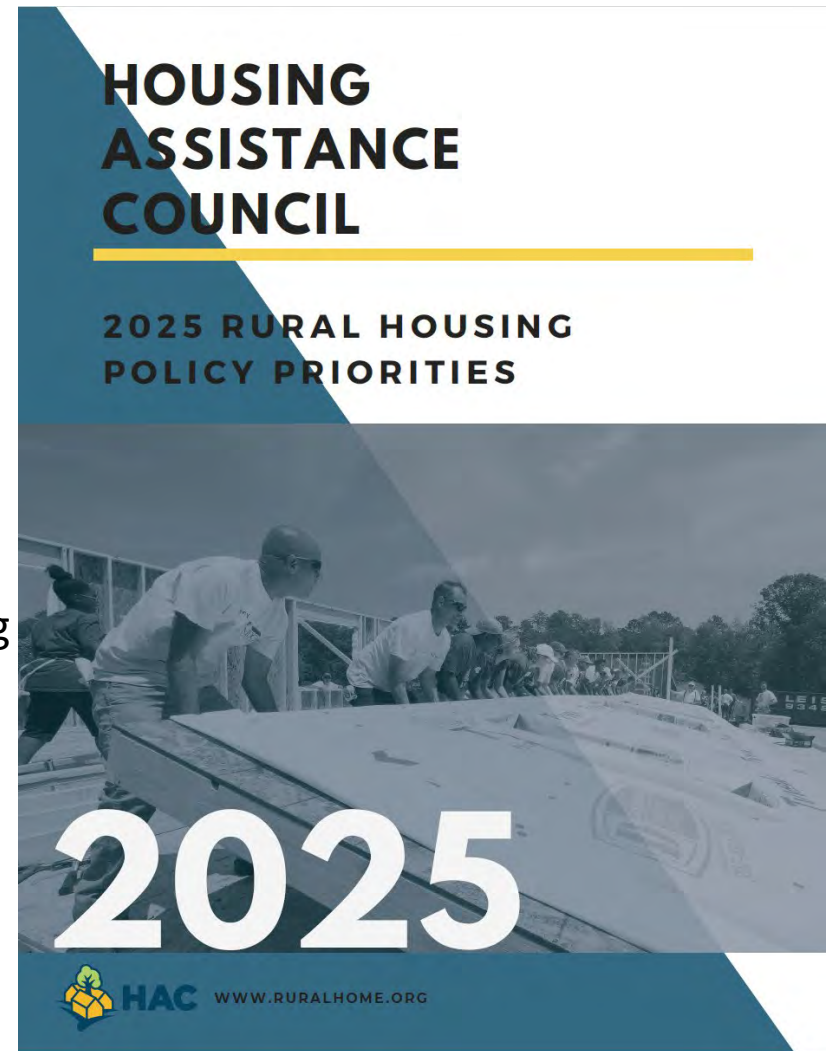


# HAC's Policy Priorities

Each year, HAC publishes our annual Policy Priorities, giving a high-level overview of our top priorities for the year.

Our current priorities fall under five main pillars:

- **Building the capacity** of local affordable housing and community development organizations deeply rooted in rural places;
- **Expanding access to capital** and safe, affordable lending in underserved rural communities;
- **Preserving the critical stock of USDA multifamily homes** amid the growing maturing mortgage crisis;
- **Improving the overall quality, availability and affordability of housing** to buy and rent in small towns and rural places; and
- **Preserving, increasing and tailoring resources** for federal affordable housing programs serving rural populations.





# HAC News

*Information on Rural Housing and Rural America*

May 23, 2024

Volume 53, Number 11

Funding opportunities, national program and policy updates, findings from recent research reports, and much more...Free!!