

Changes in the Supply and Rural-Urban Distribution of Counselors in the U.S., 2014-2021

KEY FINDINGS

- The number of counselors per 100,000 population in rural U.S. counties (87.7) was about two thirds that of urban counties (131.2).
- The ratio of counselors to population increased in both rural and urban counties from 2014 to 2021, but the increase has been larger in urban counties (87.8% vs. 103.4%).
- The 2021 supply of counselors per 100,000 population varied substantially across different types of rural places. Rural counties adjacent to metro counties had a ratio of 78.2, and small and remote counties adjacent to micro counties had a ratio of 65.9. These ratios were lower than those of nonadjacent micropolitan (116.4) and nonadjacent small and remote (132.4) counties.
- Nearly one fifth (18.4%) of rural counties did not have a counselor in 2021 compared to 4.6% of urban counties.

This report describes the rural-urban distribution of counselors in U.S. counties from 2014 to 2021. The following behavioral health and social service providers were included: counselors, addiction (substance use disorder) counselors, pastoral counselors, professional counselors, school counselors, marriage and family therapists, poetry therapists, psychoanalysts, behavioral analysts, and clinical neuropsychologists. Counties were categorized using the U.S. Department of Agriculture Urban Influence Codes (UIC). For detailed county designations, see page 4.

Figure 1. Counselors per 100,000 Population in U.S. Rural and Urban Counties, 2014, 2018, and 2021

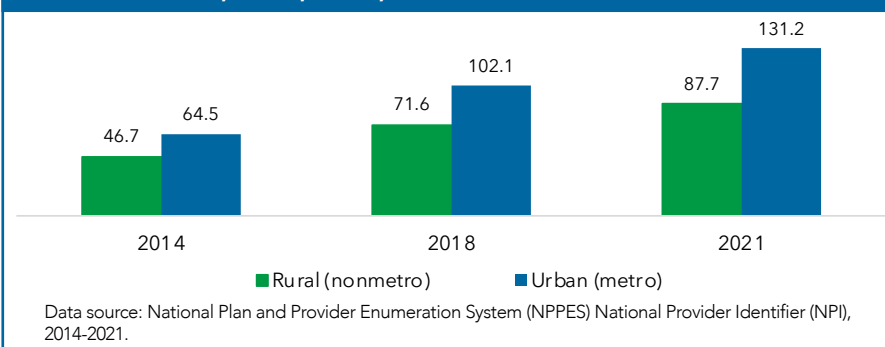


Figure 2. Counselors per 100,000 Population in U.S. Rural and Urban Counties, 2014-2021

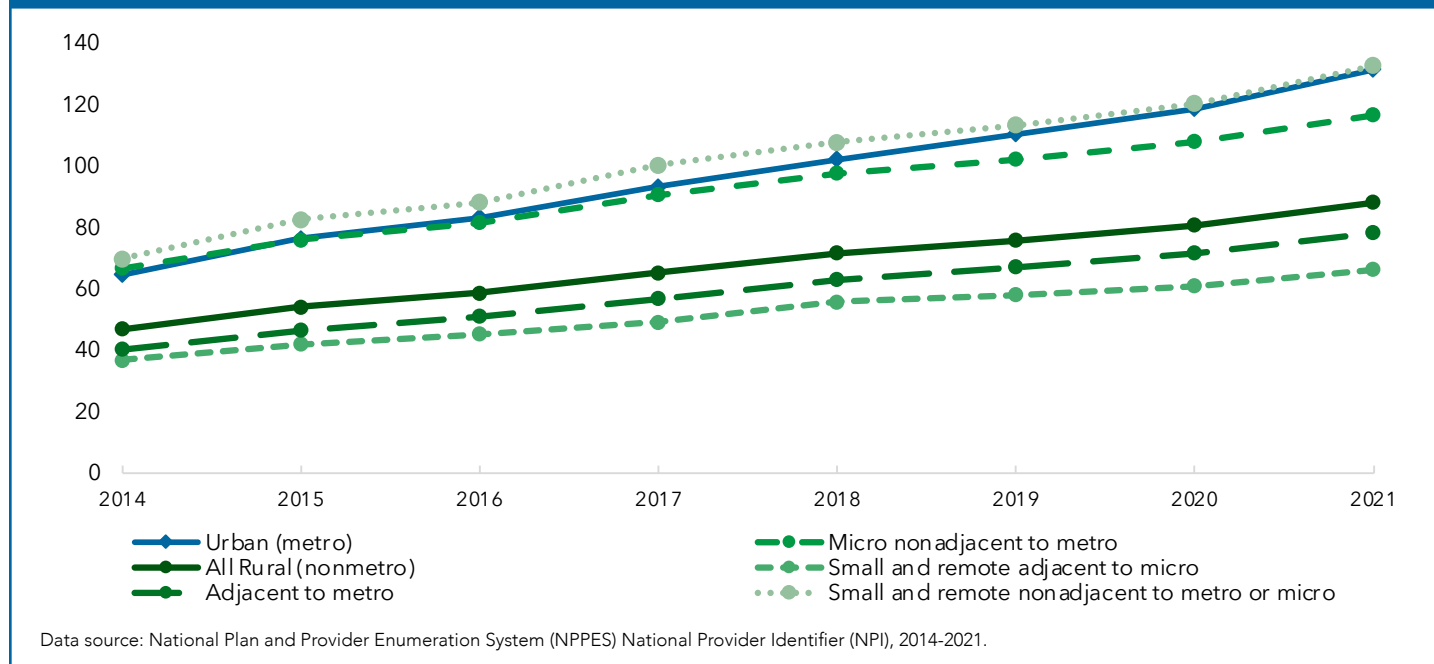
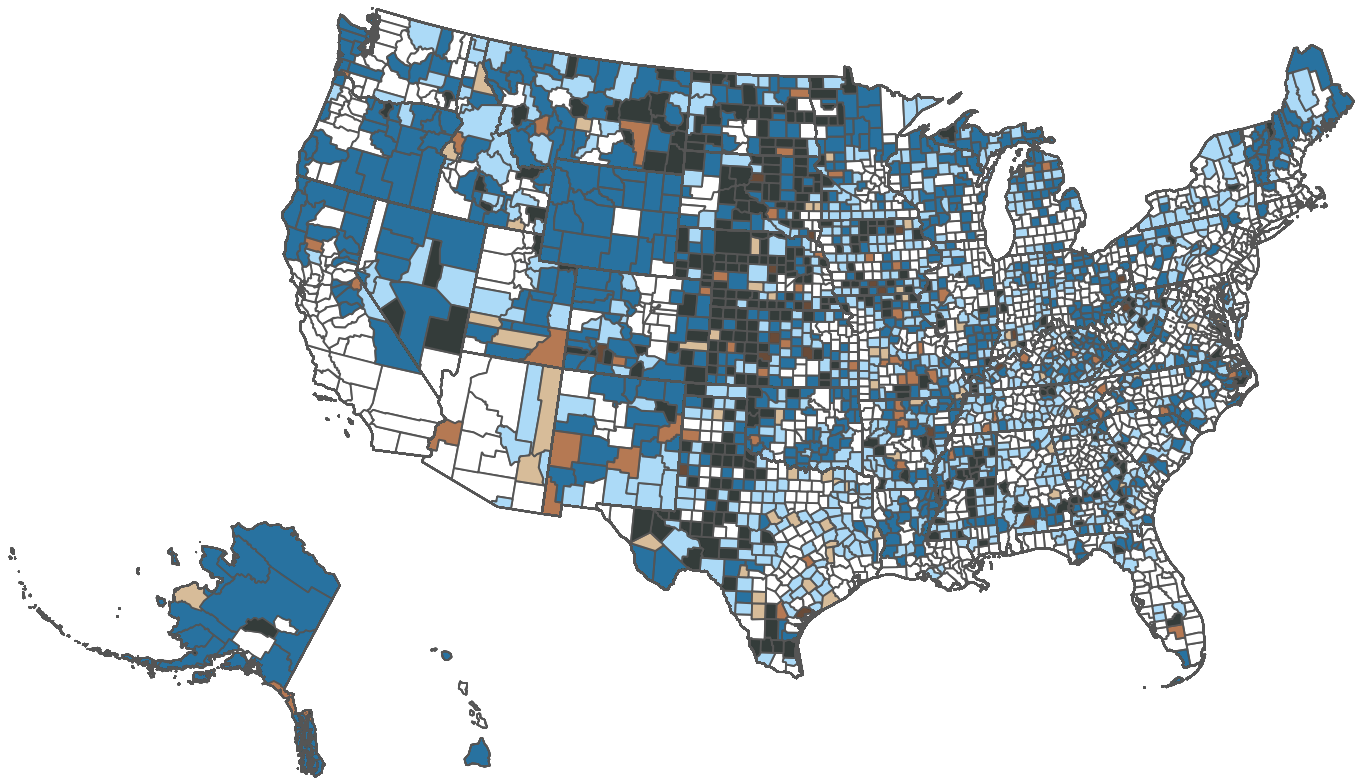


Table 1. Counselors per 100,000 Population in U.S. Rural and Urban Counties, 2014-2021

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Urban (metro)	64.5	76.2	83.1	93.3	102.1	110.1	118.6	131.2
All Rural (nonmetro)	46.7	53.9	58.5	65.2	71.6	75.6	80.3	87.7
Adjacent to metro	40.1	46.4	50.8	56.7	62.9	66.8	71.3	78.2
Micro nonadjacent to metro	66.7	75.9	81.4	90.6	97.5	101.9	107.6	116.4
Small and remote adjacent to micro	36.7	41.9	45.0	49.0	55.7	57.8	60.7	65.9
Small and remote nonadjacent to metro or micro	69.8	82.5	88.1	100.2	107.6	113.2	120.3	132.4

Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021.

Figure 3. Change in Counselors per 100,000 Population in U.S. Rural Counties, 2014-2021



- Rural county without any counselors in both 2014 and 2021
- Rural county with one or more counselors in 2014 but none in 2021
- Rural county with a **decrease** in counselors per capita from 2014 to 2021; decrease is **less** than the median county per capita decrease
- Rural county with a **decrease** in counselors per capita from 2014 to 2021; decrease is **more** than the median county per capita decrease
- Rural county with an **increase** in counselors per capita from 2014 to 2021; increase is **less** than the median county per capita increase
- Rural county with an **increase** in counselors per capita from 2014 to 2021; increase is **more** than the median county per capita increase
- Urban county

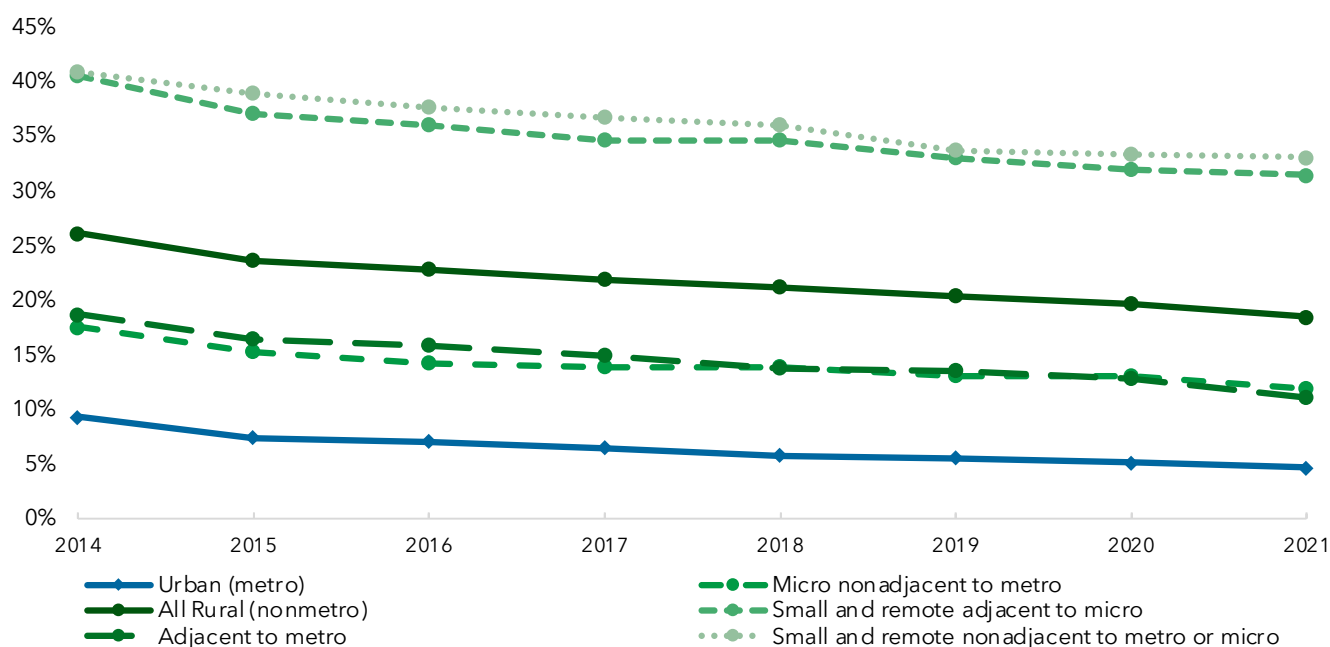
Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021.

Table 2. Counselors per 100,000 Population in U.S. Counties by Rural-Urban Location and Census Division[†], 2014 and 2021

	Urban		All Rural		Rural							
	Metro		Nonmetro		Adjacent to metro		Micropolitan nonadjacent to metro		Small and remote adjacent to micro		Small and remote nonadjacent to metro or micro	
	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021
Total U.S.	64.5	131.2	46.7	87.7	40.1	78.2	66.7	116.4	36.7	65.9	69.8	132.4
New England	90.1	187.1	73.3	135.3	74.3	124.7	49.9	116.3	99.1	185.4	92.2	217.0
Middle Atlantic	40.1	87.5	29.1	57.5	29.4	58.7	33.2	59.8	15.7	32.2	**	**
East North Central	49.7	117.1	32.6	88.7	30.4	85.7	43.6	96.3	29.3	107.1	44.8	93.9
West North Central	54.6	107.1	36.0	63.9	32.2	57.9	56.3	104.0	18.7	29.7	31.0	45.9
South Atlantic	43.0	89.4	34.4	59.2	33.7	58.8	51.6	81.2	33.4	50.8	13.1	34.0
East South Central	42.4	78.9	26.3	52.1	23.6	43.6	32.3	70.9	15.9	37.0	51.5	101.5
West South Central	58.3	103.2	56.5	82.9	44.1	69.4	89.8	124.0	62.1	85.0	70.9	90.7
Mountain	86.0	157.6	93.1	133.6	83.3	121.8	94.7	137.0	91.8	128.4	123.6	170.4
Pacific	116.7	238.3	109.3	236.1	99.2	214.7	111.7	220.0	59.1	165.7	159.1	405.9

Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021. **There are no small and remote nonadjacent to metro or micro counties in the Middle Atlantic Census Division. [†]Census Divisions: New England—CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Middle Atlantic—NJ, NY, PA; East North Central—IL, IN, MI, OH, WI; West North Central—IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD; South Atlantic—DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV; East South Central—AL, KY, MS, TN; West South Central—AR, LA, OK, TX; Mountain—AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY; Pacific—AK, CA, HI, OR, WA.

Figure 4. Percentage of U.S. Rural and Urban Counties Without a Counselor, 2014-2021



Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021.

Table 3. Percentage of U.S. Rural and Urban Counties Without a Counselor, 2014-2021

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Urban (metro)	9.3%	7.3%	7.0%	6.4%	5.7%	5.5%	5.1%	4.6%
All Rural (nonmetro)	26.1%	23.6%	22.7%	21.8%	21.1%	20.2%	19.6%	18.4%
Adjacent to metro	18.7%	16.3%	15.7%	14.9%	13.7%	13.5%	12.8%	11.0%
Micro nonadjacent to metro	17.5%	15.2%	14.1%	13.8%	13.8%	13.0%	13.0%	11.9%
Small and remote adjacent to micro	40.5%	37.0%	35.9%	34.6%	34.6%	33.0%	31.9%	31.4%
Small and remote nonadjacent to metro or micro	40.8%	38.9%	37.6%	36.6%	35.9%	33.7%	33.3%	33.0%

Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021.

Table 4. Percentage of U.S. Rural Counties Without a Counselor by Census Division[†], 2014-2021

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total U.S.	26.1%	23.6%	22.7%	21.8%	21.1%	20.2%	19.6%	18.4%
New England	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Middle Atlantic	9.3%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
East North Central	11.0%	9.5%	8.7%	8.7%	7.2%	6.8%	6.5%	5.7%
West North Central	43.7%	42.0%	40.4%	39.0%	39.2%	38.0%	37.3%	36.3%
South Atlantic	22.6%	19.6%	20.0%	18.9%	17.4%	17.0%	15.2%	12.2%
East South Central	27.0%	23.2%	22.0%	20.7%	19.5%	17.0%	16.2%	14.5%
West South Central	26.1%	22.9%	21.7%	21.3%	20.4%	19.7%	19.7%	18.8%
Mountain	22.2%	19.4%	19.4%	17.6%	18.1%	17.6%	17.1%	16.2%
Pacific	10.0%	6.7%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%

Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021. [†]Census Divisions: New England—CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Middle Atlantic—NJ, NY, PA; East North Central—IL, IN, MI, OH, WI; West North Central—IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD; South Atlantic—DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV; East South Central—AL, KY, MS, TN; West South Central—AR, LA, OK, TX; Mountain—AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY; Pacific—AK, CA, HI, OR, WA.

County Category Designations

Urban: Metropolitan, i.e., counties with an urban core with a population of at least 50,000 residents (UIC 1-2).

All rural: Nonmetropolitan, i.e., counties without an urban core population of at least 50,000 residents (UIC 3-12).

Adjacent to metro: Counties next to a metropolitan county whose largest town has up to 49,999 residents (UIC 3-7).

Micro nonadjacent to metro: Micropolitan counties not next to a metropolitan county whose largest town has 10,000-49,999 residents (UIC 8).

Small and remote adjacent to micro: Counties next to a micropolitan county whose largest town has less than 10,000 residents (UIC 9-10).

Small and remote nonadjacent to metro or micro: Counties not next to a metropolitan or micropolitan county whose largest town has less than 10,000 residents (UIC 11-12).

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