

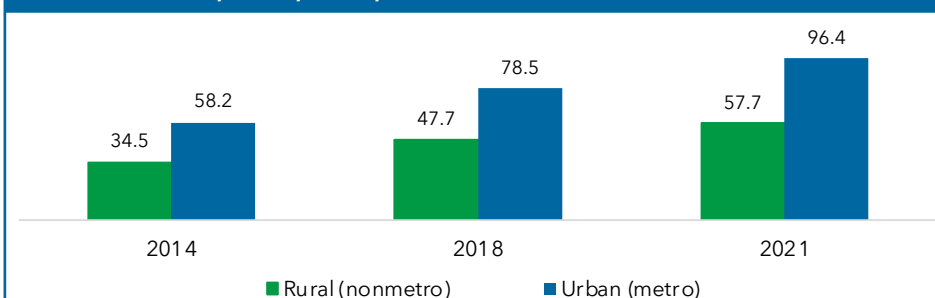
Changes in the Supply and Rural-Urban Distribution of Social Workers in the U.S., 2014-2021

KEY FINDINGS

- The number of social workers per 100,000 population in rural U.S. counties (57.7) was about 60% that of urban counties (96.4).
- The ratio of social workers to population increased by about two thirds in both rural (67.2%) and urban (65.6%) counties from 2014 to 2021.
- The 2021 supply of social workers per 100,000 population varied substantially across different types of rural places. Rural counties adjacent to metro counties had a ratio of 53.0, and small and remote counties adjacent to micro counties had a ratio of 36.1. These ratios were lower than those of nonadjacent micropolitan (80.2) and nonadjacent small and remote (68.3) counties.
- About one fifth (21.8%) of rural counties did not have a social worker in 2021 compared to 5.4% of urban counties.

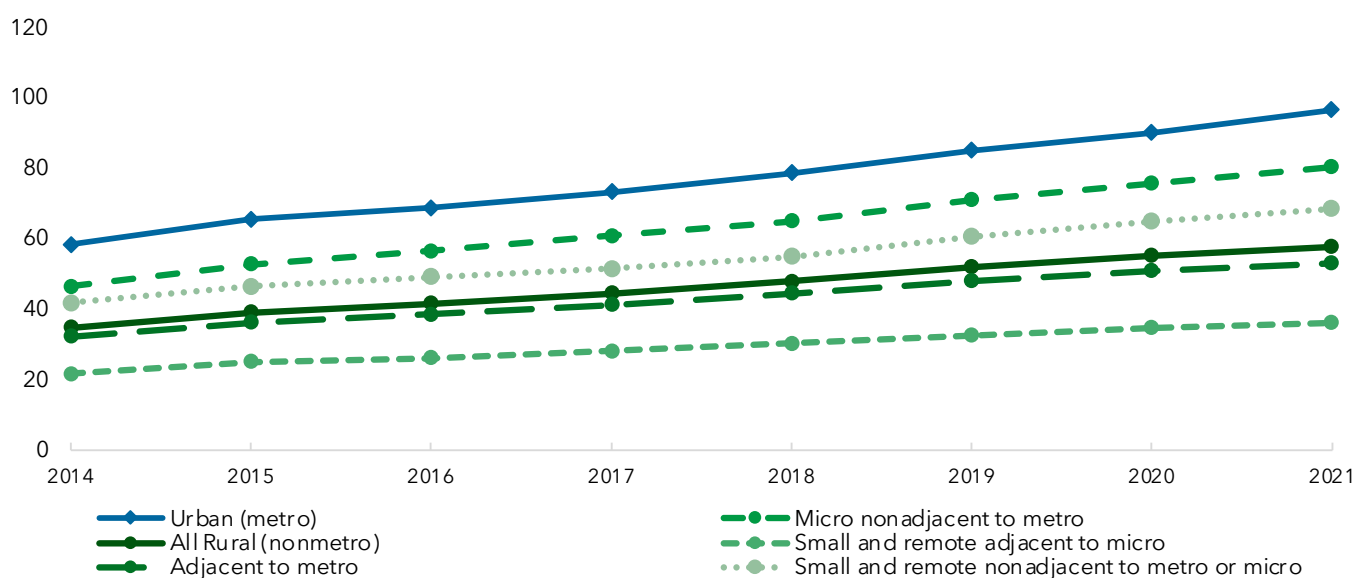
This report describes the rural-urban distribution of social workers in U.S. counties from 2014 to 2021. The following behavioral health and social service providers were included: social workers, clinical social workers, and school social workers. Counties were categorized using the U.S. Department of Agriculture Urban Influence Codes (UIC). For detailed county designations, see page 4.

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



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

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



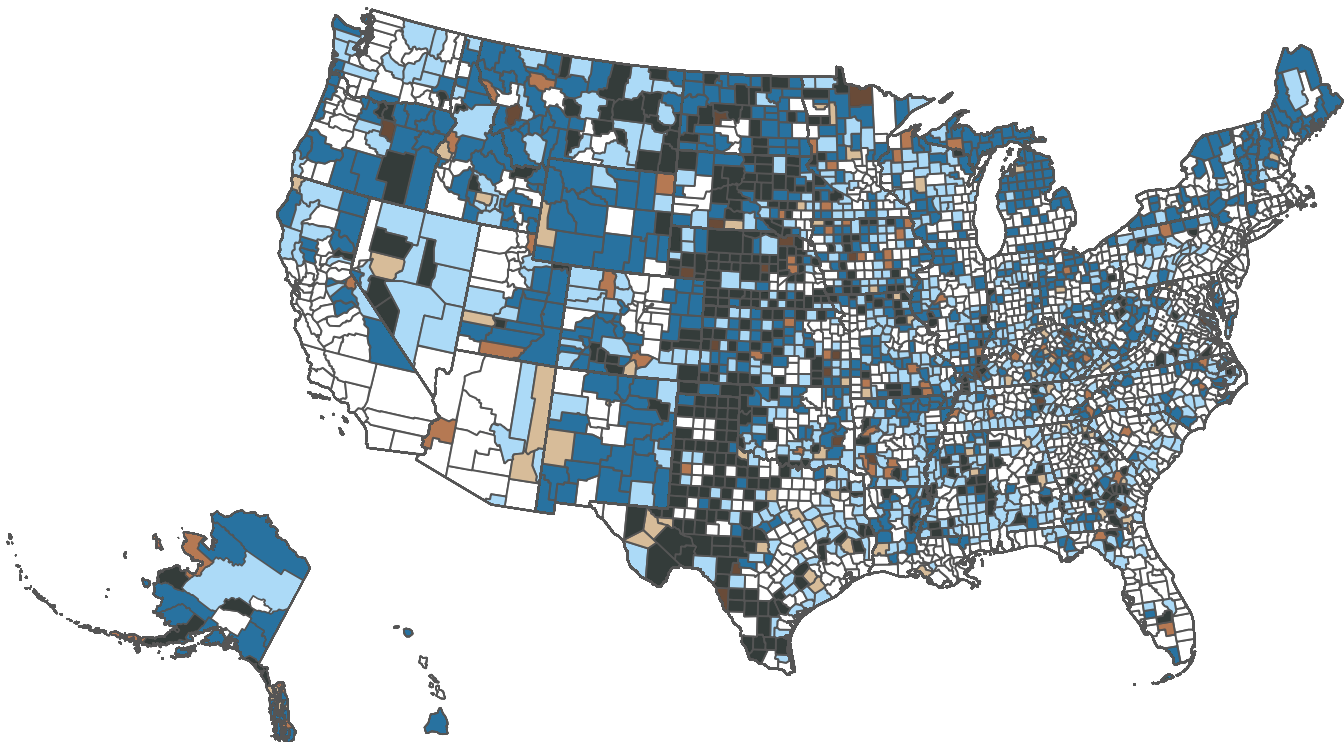
Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021.

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Urban (metro)	58.2	65.3	68.6	73.0	78.5	84.8	90.0	96.4
All Rural (nonmetro)	34.5	38.9	41.4	44.3	47.7	51.7	55.0	57.7
Adjacent to metro	32.2	36.2	38.4	41.0	44.4	47.9	50.9	53.0
Micro nonadjacent to metro	46.3	52.5	56.3	60.6	64.8	71.0	75.7	80.2
Small and remote adjacent to micro	21.6	24.8	26.1	28.0	30.1	32.3	34.4	36.1
Small and remote nonadjacent to metro or micro	41.7	46.4	49.1	51.3	54.7	60.3	64.7	68.3

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

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



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

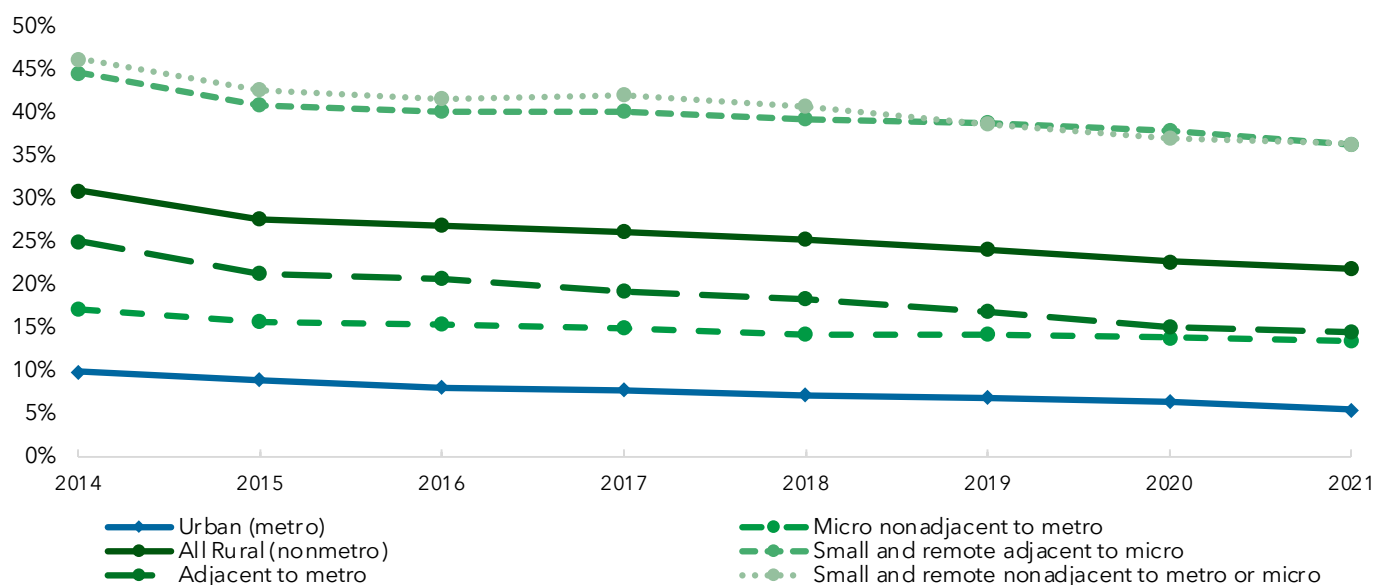
Data source: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI), 2014-2021.

Table 2. Social Workers 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.	58.2	96.4	34.5	57.7	32.2	53.0	46.3	80.2	21.6	36.1	41.7	68.3
New England	147.6	231.9	104.9	154.4	106.5	150.5	68.2	147.5	136.6	185.4	136.4	179.0
Middle Atlantic	88.4	145.1	50.4	74.6	51.4	75.1	56.3	88.8	22.2	39.0	**	**
East North Central	65.4	125.8	41.4	76.2	36.2	66.9	74.7	134.1	36.7	60.0	43.2	93.3
West North Central	61.4	96.9	34.8	53.6	30.7	48.3	54.3	82.0	13.9	23.2	38.9	55.7
South Atlantic	46.2	77.8	22.9	38.6	22.8	37.9	30.7	56.2	15.4	27.4	23.2	35.6
East South Central	38.7	62.5	16.8	32.8	16.1	29.5	19.8	42.1	10.2	20.5	25.3	58.7
West South Central	29.5	46.2	17.2	29.9	15.0	26.4	25.9	45.1	16.6	26.9	10.6	19.1
Mountain	50.5	87.4	47.6	80.6	45.6	75.1	56.2	96.6	39.2	67.2	33.6	58.8
Pacific	45.0	70.7	43.2	67.2	35.2	53.9	50.3	82.5	20.5	36.0	64.7	92.7

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 Social Worker, 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 Social Worker, 2014-2021

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Urban (metro)	9.8%	8.8%	7.9%	7.6%	7.0%	6.8%	6.4%	5.4%
All Rural (nonmetro)	30.8%	27.4%	26.7%	26.0%	25.1%	23.9%	22.6%	21.8%
Adjacent to metro	24.9%	21.2%	20.5%	19.2%	18.2%	16.7%	15.1%	14.5%
Micro nonadjacent to metro	17.1%	15.6%	15.2%	14.9%	14.1%	14.1%	13.8%	13.4%
Small and remote adjacent to micro	44.5%	40.8%	39.9%	39.9%	39.1%	38.6%	37.8%	36.2%
Small and remote nonadjacent to metro or micro	46.1%	42.5%	41.5%	41.8%	40.5%	38.6%	36.9%	36.3%

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 Social Worker by Census Division[†], 2014-2021

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total U.S.	30.8%	27.4%	26.7%	26.0%	25.1%	23.9%	22.6%	21.8%
New England	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Middle Atlantic	7.4%	7.4%	5.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
East North Central	10.3%	8.0%	7.6%	6.5%	5.7%	5.7%	4.9%	4.6%
West North Central	44.9%	40.4%	39.8%	40.2%	39.0%	37.8%	36.7%	35.7%
South Atlantic	25.6%	22.6%	22.2%	20.7%	20.0%	17.0%	15.9%	14.8%
East South Central	32.0%	24.1%	23.2%	22.0%	20.7%	19.1%	16.6%	15.8%
West South Central	45.2%	43.0%	42.0%	41.4%	40.4%	39.2%	38.2%	37.3%
Mountain	23.6%	22.2%	21.3%	20.4%	19.4%	18.1%	16.2%	16.2%
Pacific	20.0%	17.8%	16.7%	15.6%	14.4%	16.7%	13.3%	12.2%

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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