



HOUSING ASSISTANCE COUNCIL

# Rural Research Note



## Population Change in Rural America

The 2010 Census revealed a population of 308 million people in the United States. This figure represents a population increase of roughly 27 million, or a 9.7 percent from the year 2000. The nation's population growth over the past decade was lower than in the 1990-2000 period, when the national population grew by 13 percent. A variety of factors, including the recent economic downturn, reduced immigration, as well as other demographic factors, are largely responsible for this moderated population growth.

Population growth was particularly low in rural and small town communities. The population in rural and small town communities grew by 3.5 million (5.6 percent) between 2000 and 2010. Many urban areas in the United States lost population, and as a whole the nation's

urban population grew by just one percent.

Population growth was most pronounced in suburban and exurban communities where the population grew by approximately 18 percent over the past decade. These population growth patterns reflect a trend towards suburbanization that has emerged over the past several decades.

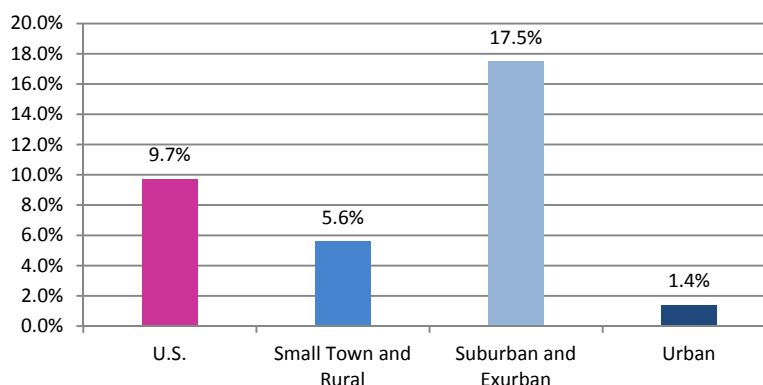
### ABOUT THIS SERIES

*Population Change in Rural America* is the second in a series of *Rural Research Notes* presenting data and findings from the recently released 2010 Census and American Community Survey (ACS).

In the coming months, the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) will publish *Rural Research Notes* highlighting various social, economic, and housing characteristics of rural Americans.

The *Rural Research Notes* series will preview HAC's decennial *Taking Stock* report - a comprehensive assessment of rural America and its housing. Since the 1980s, HAC has presented *Taking Stock* every ten years following the release of Census data. The newest *Taking Stock* report will be published in 2012.

### Population Change by Residence 2000-2010



## Population Gain and Loss in Rural & Small Town Areas

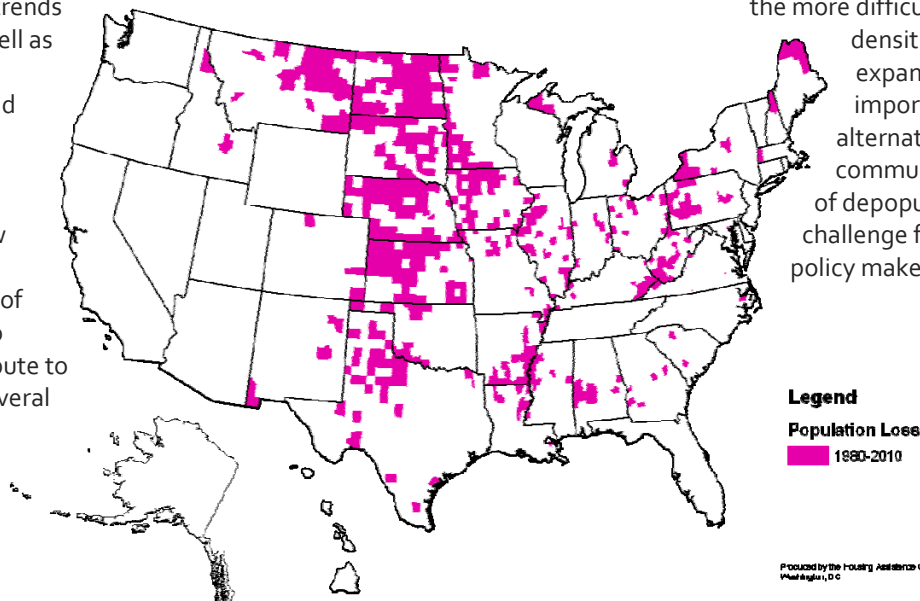
Rural and small town population growth between 2000 and 2010 was greatest in the western and southern United States, where economies, resources, and amenities are more robust. States such as Arizona, Utah, Delaware, Hawaii, and Florida all experienced rural and small town population growth at 20 percent or more. In contrast, Midwestern states including North Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, and Kansas

### Population Loss 1980-2010

all lost population in rural and small town areas. These population trends in the rural Midwest, as well as in portions of Central Appalachia, the South, and Northeast “rust belt” communities, continue a pattern that has been evolving over the past few decades. The decline in small family farms, a lack of amenities, and inability to attract industry all contribute to rural population loss in several distinct areas of rural America.

In the Midwest, where population loss is most profound, many rural communities face a variety of challenges stemming primarily from the region's dependence on farming as the main source of employment and the absence of other industries. Productivity increases in the farm economy, as well as structural changes in agriculture, have decreased the need for agricultural labor.

Population loss has a complex and significant impact on area housing stock. As populations decline, homes become vacant and can easily fall into disrepair. Absentee homeownership is often commonplace in these communities, and older residents who are left behind may be unable to maintain their residences. These conditions contribute to a decline in housing values, making mortgages and home rehabilitation loans more difficult to obtain. Meeting housing needs in this context is made all the more difficult by low population densities spread out over large expanses of territory. The importance of finding alternative ways to serve the community development needs of depopulated areas is a challenge for communities and policy makers alike.



*The decline in small family farms, a lack of amenities, and inability to attract industry all contribute to rural population loss in several distinct areas of rural America.*





## FAST FACTS

3.5 Million

Population increase between 2000 and 2010 in Rural and Small Town areas of the United States

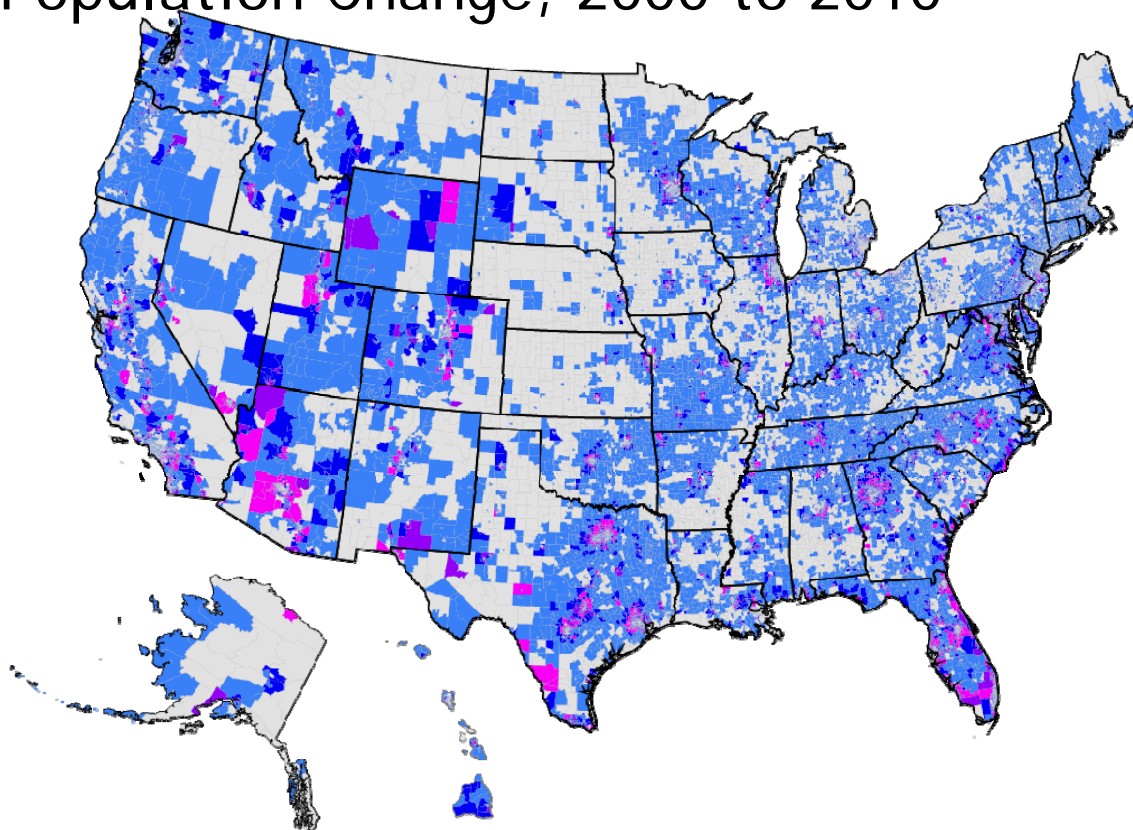
5.6%

Population growth rate of Rural and Small Town areas between 2000 and 2010

9.7%

Population growth rate of the United States between 2000 and 2010

## Population Change, 2000 to 2010



## Legend

## Census Tract Boundaries

## Population Change 2000-2010

- Population decline
- 0.1% - 24.9%
- 25.0% - 50.0%
- 50.1% - 74.9%
- 75.0% - or Higher

### Rural Population Gain – 10 States with the largest Rural & Small Town Population Gain, 2000-2010

- Arizona—29.8% 285,427
- Delaware—26.0% 41,502
- Utah—25.7% 99,373
- Florida—21.3% 285,367
- Hawaii—21.2% 73,719
- Nevada—17.5% 43,243
- Wyoming—16.0% 55,188
- Colorado—13.5% 106,999
- Alaska—13.2% 41,967
- Washington—11.8% 119,168

### Rural Population Decline and Stagnation – 10 States with Negative or Minimal Population Gain in Rural & Small Town Areas. 2000-2010

- North Dakota — -3.1% -12,442
- Iowa— -2.0% -31,535
- Illinois— -1.4% -28,332
- Nebraska— -1.2% -9,962
- Rhode Island— -0.6% -145
- Kansas— -0.5% -6,575
- Michigan— 0.0% 150
- Mississippi— 0.2% 3,886
- New York— 0.3% 6,809
- West Virginia— 0.4% 3,985

#### ABOUT THE DATA

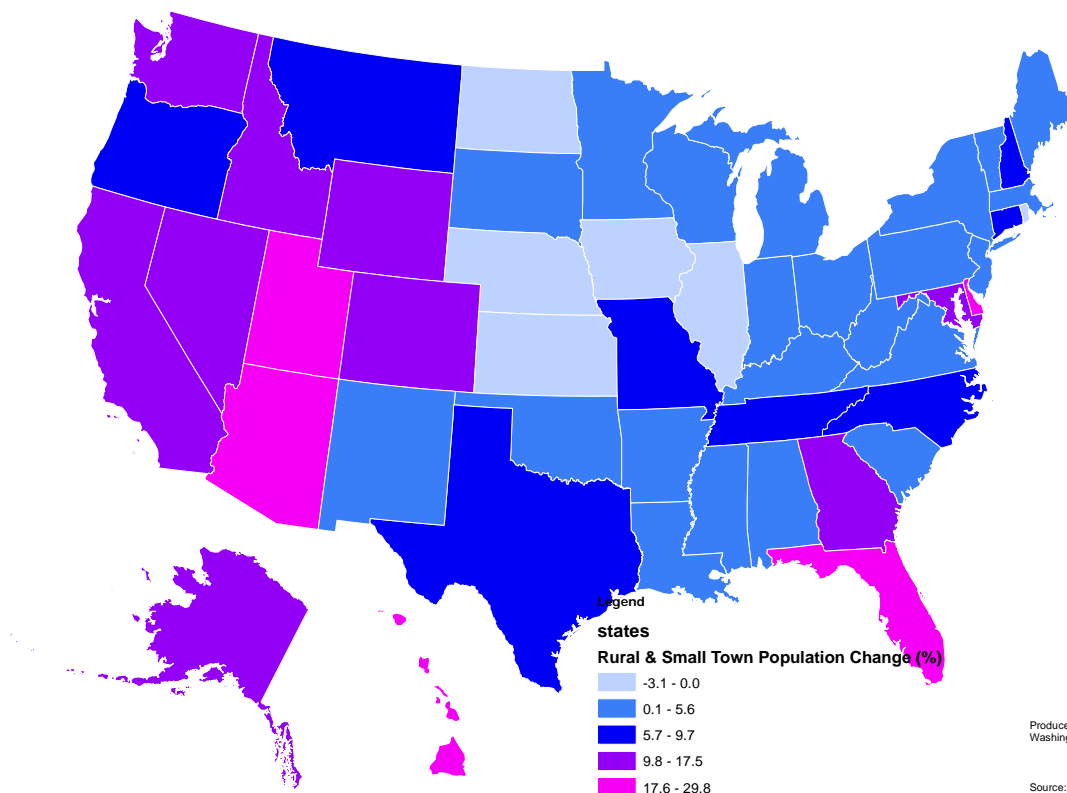
Unless otherwise noted, all data presented in this Research Note are based on HAC tabulations of the 2010 Census, Summary File -1.

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## Rural and Small Town Population Growth 2000-2010



Produced by the Housing Assistance Council  
Washington, DC

Source: HAC Tabulations of 2000 and 2010  
Census of Population and Housing SF-1



## POPULATION CHANGE BY RURAL, SUBURBAN, AND URBAN RESIDENCE, 2000-2010

State	Rural & Small Town		Suburban & Exurban		Urban		Total	
	Population Change	%	Population Change	%	Population Change	%	Population Change	%
Alabama	53,534	3.4%	291,315	11.1%	-10,840	-4.6%	334,009	7.5%
Alaska	41,967	13.2%	27,178	14.9%	14,154	11.1%	83,299	13.3%
Arizona	285,472	29.8%	985,124	57.4%	-9,546	-0.4%	1,261,050	24.6%
Arkansas	37,013	2.6%	206,760	17.8%	-2,415	-2.3%	241,358	8.9%
California	291,843	10.7%	2,352,951	22.4%	738,392	3.6%	3,383,186	10.0%
Colorado	106,999	13.5%	580,034	34.0%	40,289	2.2%	727,322	16.9%
Connecticut	17,774	9.4%	119,827	5.2%	31,263	3.4%	168,864	5.0%
Delaware	41,502	26.0%	74,043	16.5%	-760	-0.4%	114,785	14.6%
District of Columbia	0	0.0%	-919	-2.1%	30,583	5.8%	29,664	5.2%
Florida	285,376	21.3%	2,292,896	25.4%	240,660	4.3%	2,818,932	17.6%
Georgia	247,808	11.5%	1,228,733	23.2%	26,544	3.5%	1,503,085	18.3%
Hawaii	73,917	21.2%	52,389	12.6%	22,458	5.0%	148,764	12.3%
Idaho	66,267	11.1%	212,096	37.2%	-2,084	-1.5%	276,279	21.2%
Illinois	-28,332	-1.4%	628,587	12.5%	-188,916	-3.5%	411,339	3.3%
Indiana	13,744	0.8%	441,922	12.8%	-48,432	-5.5%	407,234	6.7%
Iowa	-31,535	-2.0%	153,294	15.6%	-1,977	-0.6%	119,782	4.1%
Kansas	-6,575	-0.5%	173,157	17.4%	-2,034	-0.5%	164,548	6.1%
Kentucky	81,688	3.9%	238,612	16.9%	-2,558	-0.4%	317,742	7.8%
Louisiana	9,151	0.6%	180,907	8.3%	-126,275	-15.0%	63,783	1.4%
Maine	10,949	1.6%	43,574	8.5%	-1,085	-1.3%	53,438	4.2%
Maryland	41,719	9.8%	388,789	13.7%	51,107	2.5%	481,615	9.1%
Massachusetts	2,456	1.1%	151,544	4.0%	44,777	1.9%	198,777	3.1%
Michigan	150	0.0%	249,322	4.8%	-304,276	-10.6%	-54,804	-0.6%
Minnesota	50,198	3.1%	333,899	14.4%	111	0.0%	384,208	7.8%
Mississippi	3,886	0.2%	131,903	13.7%	-12,180	-24.2%	123,609	4.4%
Missouri	120,664	6.3%	332,181	12.7%	-60,509	-5.7%	392,336	7.0%
Montana	63,136	9.6%	21,108	12.2%	2,976	4.0%	87,220	9.7%
Nebraska	-9,962	-1.2%	116,918	24.1%	8,548	2.2%	115,504	6.8%
Nevada	43,243	17.5%	456,546	92.0%	202,505	16.1%	702,294	35.1%
New Hampshire	31,912	6.8%	49,856	7.6%	-1,084	-1.0%	80,684	6.5%
New Jersey	4,969	3.9%	320,051	7.1%	52,073	1.4%	377,093	4.5%
New Mexico	34,766	4.2%	174,199	28.4%	31,414	8.1%	240,379	13.2%
New York	6,809	0.3%	225,326	3.9%	169,444	1.5%	401,579	2.1%
North Carolina	232,835	8.6%	1,232,233	25.2%	20,067	4.4%	1,485,135	18.4%
North Dakota	-12,442	-3.1%	39,192	30.7%	3,200	2.8%	29,950	4.6%
Ohio	44,769	1.7%	392,111	6.6%	-253,412	-8.9%	183,468	1.6%
Oklahoma	71,836	4.4%	219,443	17.3%	10,677	1.9%	301,956	8.7%
Oregon	88,328	8.2%	206,337	17.5%	114,504	10.0%	409,169	12.0%
Pennsylvania	70,365	3.0%	391,581	6.5%	-41,574	-1.0%	420,372	3.4%
Rhode Island	-145	-0.6%	8,235	1.5%	-4,419	-1.0%	3,671	0.4%
South Carolina	70,817	5.6%	545,211	20.9%	-3,249	-2.7%	612,779	15.3%
South Dakota	6,753	1.4%	53,497	25.6%	922	2.2%	61,172	8.2%
Tennessee	129,980	7.1%	510,315	15.7%	-9,344	-1.7%	630,951	11.2%
Texas	343,970	8.5%	3,700,938	35.7%	249,249	3.9%	4,294,157	20.6%
Utah	99,374	25.7%	414,581	36.5%	17,302	2.4%	531,257	23.7%
Vermont	5,468	1.3%	9,216	6.3%	2,296	9.1%	16,980	2.8%
Virginia	61,701	4.3%	755,882	19.3%	102,250	6.0%	919,833	13.0%
Washington	119,168	11.8%	582,459	18.0%	128,792	7.8%	830,419	14.1%
West Virginia	3,985	0.4%	40,128	5.4%	-241	-0.3%	43,872	2.5%
Wisconsin	68,090	3.8%	275,434	11.7%	-20,284	-1.7%	323,240	6.0%
Wyoming	55,188	16.0%	10,686	10.1%	420	1.7%	66,294	13.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,452,548</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>22,621,601</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>1,249,483</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>27,323,632</b>	<b>9.7%</b>

# The Housing Assistance Council

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) is a national nonprofit organization that supports affordable housing efforts in rural areas of the United States. HAC provides technical housing services, seed money loans from a revolving fund, housing program and policy assistance, and research and information services. HAC is an equal opportunity lender.

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