Demographic and Economic Profile

Nonmetropolitan America

Prepared for the
Agriculture Chairs Summit
San Diego, CA
January 23-25, 2009

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Demographic and Economic Profile:
Nonmetropolitan America

Introduction

This report provides a demographic and economic profile for nonmetropolitan counties in the United States. Nonmetropolitan counties encompass both micropolitan counties and noncore counties. Micropolitan areas contain a county with an urban core of population 10,000 to 49,999 plus surrounding counties that are linked through commuting ties. Noncore counties are counties not classified as metropolitan or micropolitan. Based on the 2007 classifications from the Office of Management and Budget, there are 694 micropolitan and 1,355 noncore counties in the U.S. The remaining 1,092 counties are metropolitan counties. Of the U.S. total 2007 population of 301 million, 10.1 percent live in micropolitan areas, and 6.4 percent live in noncore areas.

Population Change

From 2000 to 2007, the population in the US increased by 7.2 percent. In nonmetropolitan areas, the increase was much slower – micropolitan areas grew by 3.6 percent and noncore areas by 0.2 percent. The fastest growth was in metropolitan areas, which grew by 8.2 percent.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micropolitan</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncore</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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</table>

source: U.S. Census Bureau
During this time period, over 1,300 counties lost population, and 85 percent of them were nonmetropolitan counties.

From 2006 to 2007, the population in the US increased by 1.0 percent. Again the fastest growth was in the metropolitan areas, increasing 1.1 percent. Micropolitan areas grew by 0.6 percent and noncore areas by 0.2 percent. During this time, nearly 1,200 counties lost population, and 82 percent of them were nonmetropolitan.
Race and Ethnicity of the Population

The racial composition of the US population is shown in the bar chart to the right. It is important to note that the population of any given race includes those of Hispanic ethnicity – each racial category presented in the chart includes both Hispanics and non-Hispanics of that race. The population in the U.S. is 80 percent white. Whites make up a larger percentage of the total population in micropolitan and noncore areas than in metropolitan areas.

While overall whites account for the largest racial category in nonmetropolitan areas, there are nonmetro areas in the US in which nonwhites account for a significant portion of total population. These areas are shown in the map below. In many parts of the southeast and Mississippi Delta, African Americans make up a large portion of total population, and Native Americans make up large portions of the population in parts of the upper Great Plains and Four Corners region.
Hispanics make up 15 percent of the total US population – 17 percent in metropolitan areas and 7 percent in nonmetropolitan areas. There are several nonmetropolitan areas in the US in which Hispanics make up a large portion of total population, shown in the map below.

Age

Nonmetropolitan residents are older on average than their metropolitan counterparts. The median age in metropolitan areas is 36.1 years, compared to 37.8 years in micropolitan areas and 40.1 years in noncore areas. Nonmetro areas have a larger portion of population age 65 and over, as shown in the chart to the right. The percent of the population age 65 and over is 11.9 in metropolitan areas, compared to 14.6 in micropolitan areas and 16.3 in noncore areas.
Educational Attainment

In general, residents of metropolitan areas have higher levels of educational attainment than their nonmetropolitan counterparts. The chart below shows the percent of the population attaining certain levels of education. In each category, the percent of the population attaining that level of education is highest in the metropolitan areas and lowest in the noncore areas.

Per Capita Income

Per capita income in nonmetropolitan areas has lagged behind metropolitan areas over the past 10 years. In 2006, the US per capita income was $36,714. The income in metropolitan areas was $38,564, compared to an income of $27,403 in nonmetropolitan areas. This represents a fairly significant income gap between metro and nonmetro areas in the US – nonmetro income was just 71 percent of metro income in 2006.
The per capita income in most nonmetro counties is less than the US income of $36,714, shown in the map below.

**Per Capita Income, 2006**

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis
Regional Economic Information System
Alaska & Hawaii are not to scale

**Estimated Percent of Population in Poverty, 2005**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates
Alaska & Hawaii are not to scale

**Poverty**

Several nonmetropolitan areas of the US have experienced high and persistent poverty. The estimated poverty rate for the US in 2005 was 13.3 percent. In metropolitan areas, the estimated poverty rate was 12.7. Micropolitan areas had a poverty rate of 15.6 and noncore areas a rate of 17.0.
Employment by Industry

The chart to the right shows the distribution of employment by industry for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan portions of the US. Nonmetropolitan areas employ larger percentages of workers in government, retail trade, manufacturing, and farming than do metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas employ larger percentages in professional and technical services, real estate, finance, insurance, and information service industries.

Unemployment

The US unemployment rate for 2007 was 4.6 percent. The rate in nonmetropolitan areas was higher, at 5.1 percent, compared to only 4.5 percent in metropolitan areas. As shown in the map, there are several nonmetro areas in the US with unemployment rates more than 1 ½ times the U.S. rate.
Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship plays a key role in the economic development of communities, but entrepreneurship is a difficult concept to measure. Two indicators of entrepreneurship are presented here: (1) nonfarm proprietors as a proportion of total nonfarm employment; and (2) income per nonfarm proprietor.

Nationally, nonfarm proprietor employment accounts for 18.8 percent of total nonfarm employment. This percentage is 18.2 in metropolitan areas, and 22.5 percent in nonmetropolitan areas of the US.

However, even though proprietors account for a larger share of employment in nonmetro areas, average income per proprietor is lower in nonmetro than in metro areas. Nationally, income per nonfarm proprietor is $29,950. In metro areas, income per proprietor is $32,721, compared to only $16,567 in nonmetro areas.
Health Professional Shortage Areas

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are designated for primary medical care, dentists, and mental health professionals. The designations are made by the Bureau of Health Professions within the Department of Health and Human Services. The maps below present the status of nonmetro counties as being whole or in part designated as part of an HPSA.

77.2 percent of nonmetropolitan counties are designated as being totally or partly in a primary care HPSA; 59.6 percent of nonmetro counties are totally or partly in a dental care HPSA; and 86.6 percent of nonmetro counties are totally or partly in a mental health care HPSA.
Infant Mortality

The infant mortality rates are a 5 year average of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate is 6.9 for the U.S. There were 1,041 nonmetro counties with an infant mortality rate greater than this US average, and 128 nonmetro counties with more than twice the national infant mortality rate.
Data Sources:

**Bureau of Economic Analysis**, Regional Economic Information System  

**Bureau of Labor Statistics**, Local Area Unemployment Statistics  
[http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm)

**Department of Health and Human Services**, Health Resources and Services Administration Area Resource File  

**U.S. Census Bureau**

- Population Estimates  

- Metropolitan and Micropolitan Area Classifications  

- Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates  

- American Community Survey  

For questions and comments, please contact:

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http://ims2.missouri.edu/step1.AOI/statelist.asp

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