



USDA's Rural Health Resources and Mental Health

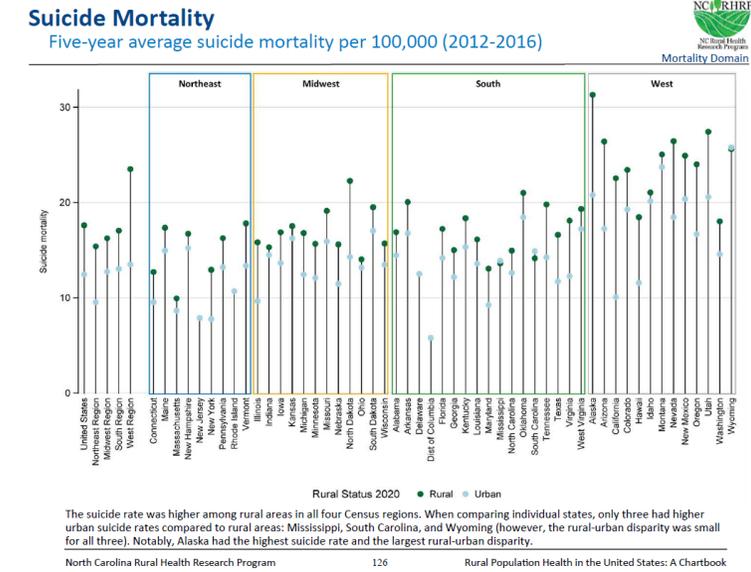
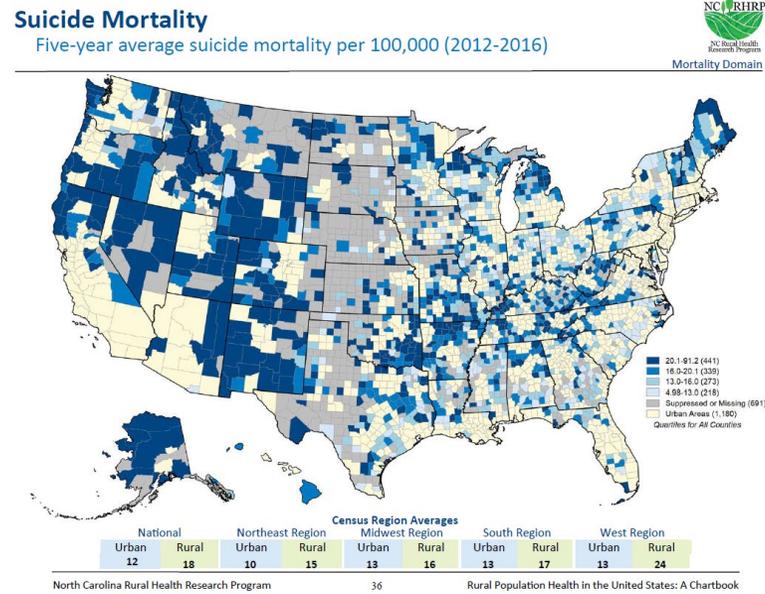
Kellie Kubena, USDA Rural Health Liaison

February 8, 2024

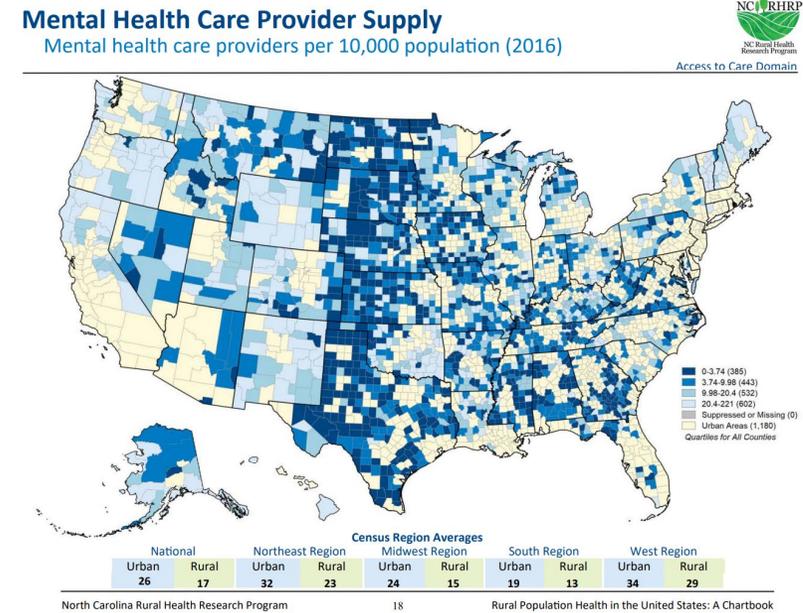
Rural Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention

- Two out of five adults report symptoms of anxiety or depression. With one fifth of the US population residing in rural areas, that translates into millions of rural residents
- Rural areas on average had higher suicide rates and lower supplies of mental health care providers when compared to urban areas.
- Evidence shows that farmers and ranchers may face some unique behavioral health and suicide risks
- USDA supports farmers, ranchers, and rural communities with grants and loans for operations, education, healthcare facilities, and workforce and economic development.

Figures from Rural Health Research Gateway [Rural Population Health Chartbook](#)



The suicide rate was higher among rural areas in all four Census regions. When comparing individual states, only three had higher urban suicide rates compared to rural areas: Mississippi, South Carolina, and Wyoming (however, the rural-urban disparity was small for all three). Notably, Alaska had the highest suicide rate and the largest rural-urban disparity.





U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Farm
Production
and
Conservation
(FPAC)

Food,
Nutrition, and
Consumer
Services (FNS)

Food Safety
(FSIS)

Marketing
and
Regulatory
Programs
(MRP)

Natural
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and
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(NRE)

Research,
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and
Economics

Trade and
Foreign
Agricultural
Affairs (TFAA)

Rural
Development
(RD)

USDA Rural Development

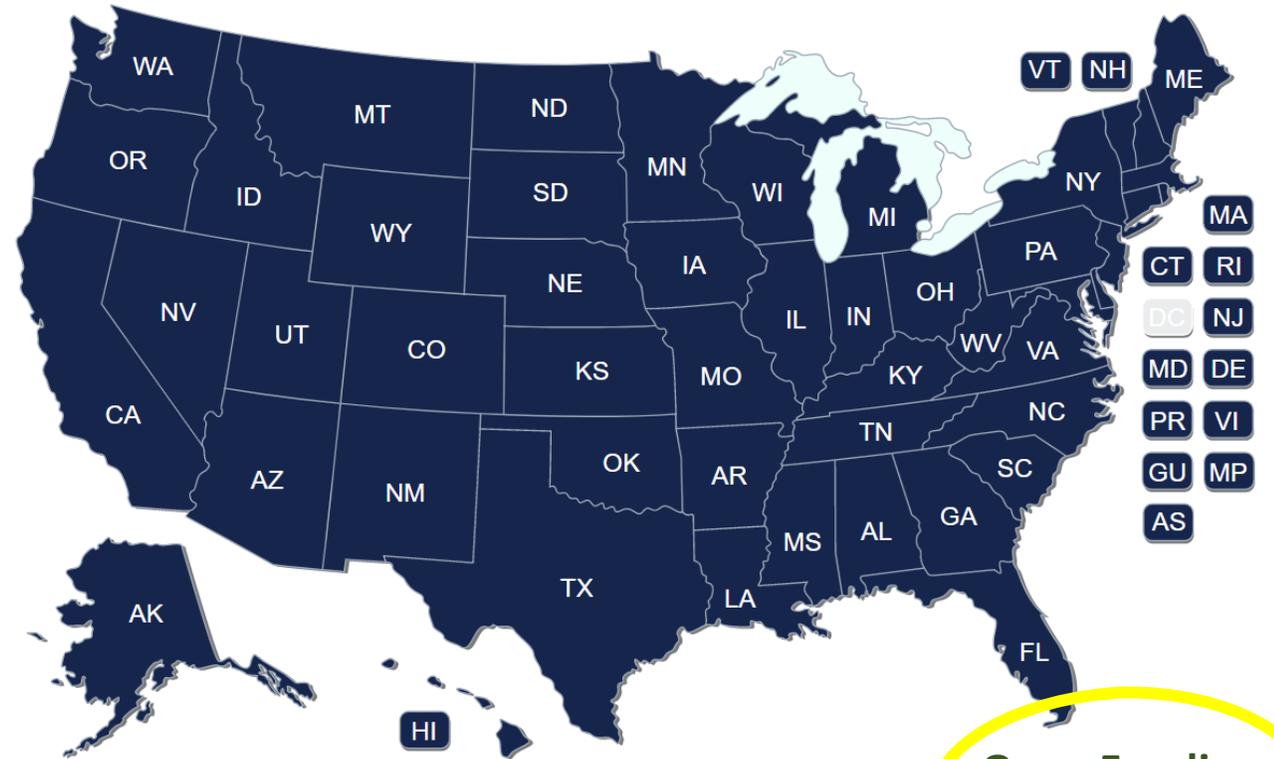
Rural Development

Innovation Center

Rural Housing Service

Rural Business and Cooperative Service

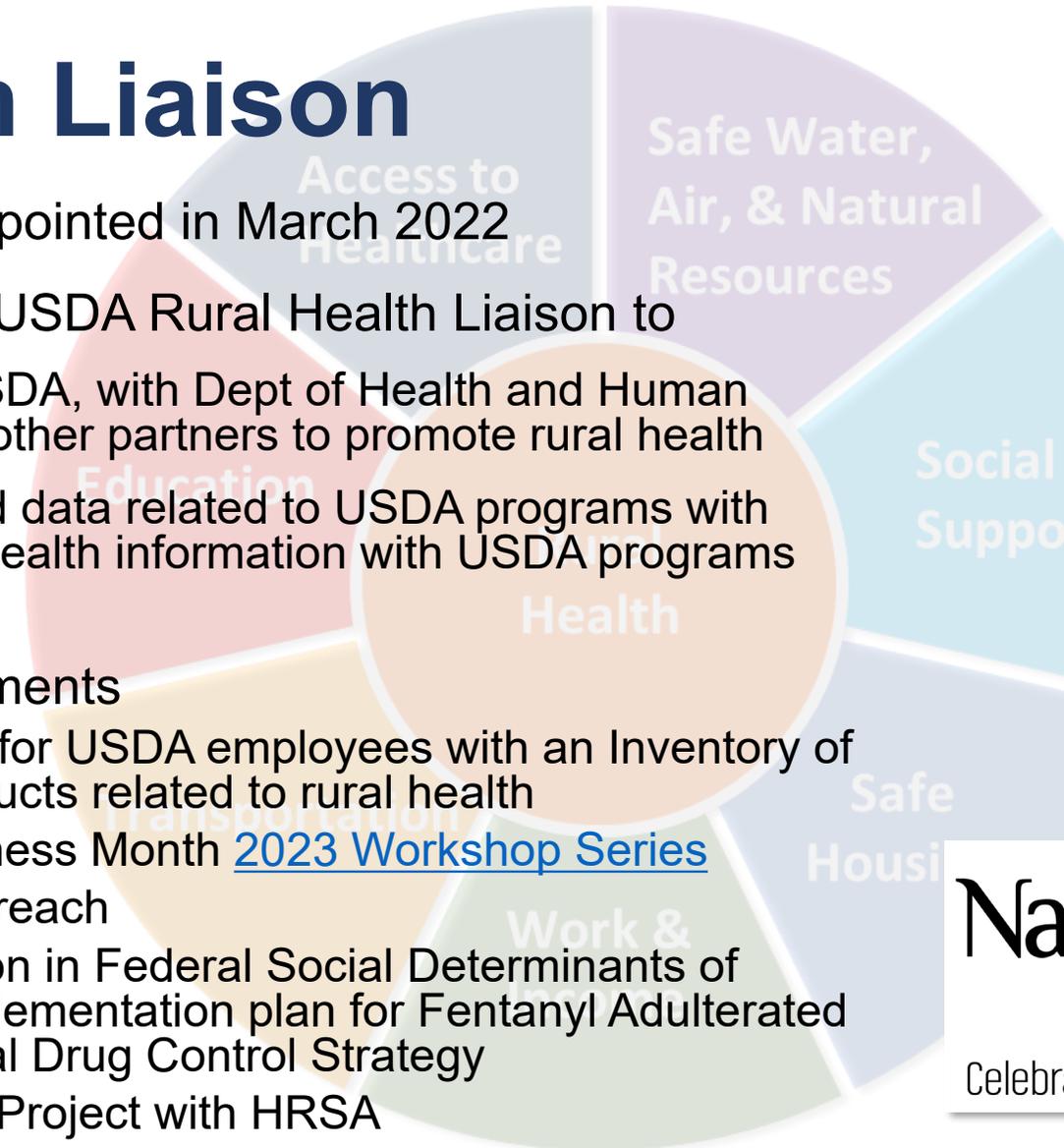
Rural Utilities Service



Open Funding Announcements

Rural Health Liaison

- Rural Health Liaison appointed in March 2022
- 2018 Farm Bill created USDA Rural Health Liaison to
 - Coordinate across USDA, with Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other partners to promote rural health
 - Share information and data related to USDA programs with customers and rural health information with USDA programs and partners
- 2022-2023 Accomplishments
 - Rural Health InfoHub for USDA employees with an Inventory of USDA programs/products related to rural health
 - Mental Health Awareness Month [2023 Workshop Series](#)
 - Rural Health Day Outreach
 - Led USDA participation in Federal Social Determinants of Health Playbook, Implementation plan for Fentanyl Adulterated with Xylazine, National Drug Control Strategy
 - Maternal Health Pilot Project with HRSA



Rural Development Programs and Rural Health

USDA Rural Development
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

-  Single & Multi-Family Housing Programs
-  Water & Environmental Programs
-  Community Facility Programs
-  Business & Cooperative Programs
-  Electric Programs
-  Telecommunications Programs

How can USDA Rural Development programs contribute to creating better conditions?



How RD supports rural health and health care

USDA Rural Development operates **over 70 financial assistance programs, such as loans and grants, for a variety of rural applications that impact a community's health.**

For example:

- **Communities**
- **Health Care**
- **Broadband**
- **Business**
- **Rural Emergency Health Care Grants**



Essential Community Facilities

- [Community Facilities Programs](#) offer fixed rate, low-cost **direct loans, loan guarantees** and **grants** to develop or improve essential public services and facilities in communities across rural America.
- These amenities help **increase the competitiveness of rural communities** in attracting and retaining businesses that provide employment and services for their residents.
- These facilities **improve the basic quality of life** and assist in the development and sustainability of rural America.

Eligible Applicants

- Public Bodies, Non-Profits or Native American Tribes



Expanding Broadband with Telecoms Programs

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants

[Telecom Programs](#) available to expand broadband through grants, loans

[Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant](#) funds can be used to purchase or support:

- Audio, video, and interactive video equipment, wiring, software, and other necessary items
- Support instructional programming
- Offset costs associated with providing technical assistance



Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Highlights Commitment to Rural Health Care

During his visit, Secretary Vilsack highlighted a recent Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant to the University of New Hampshire

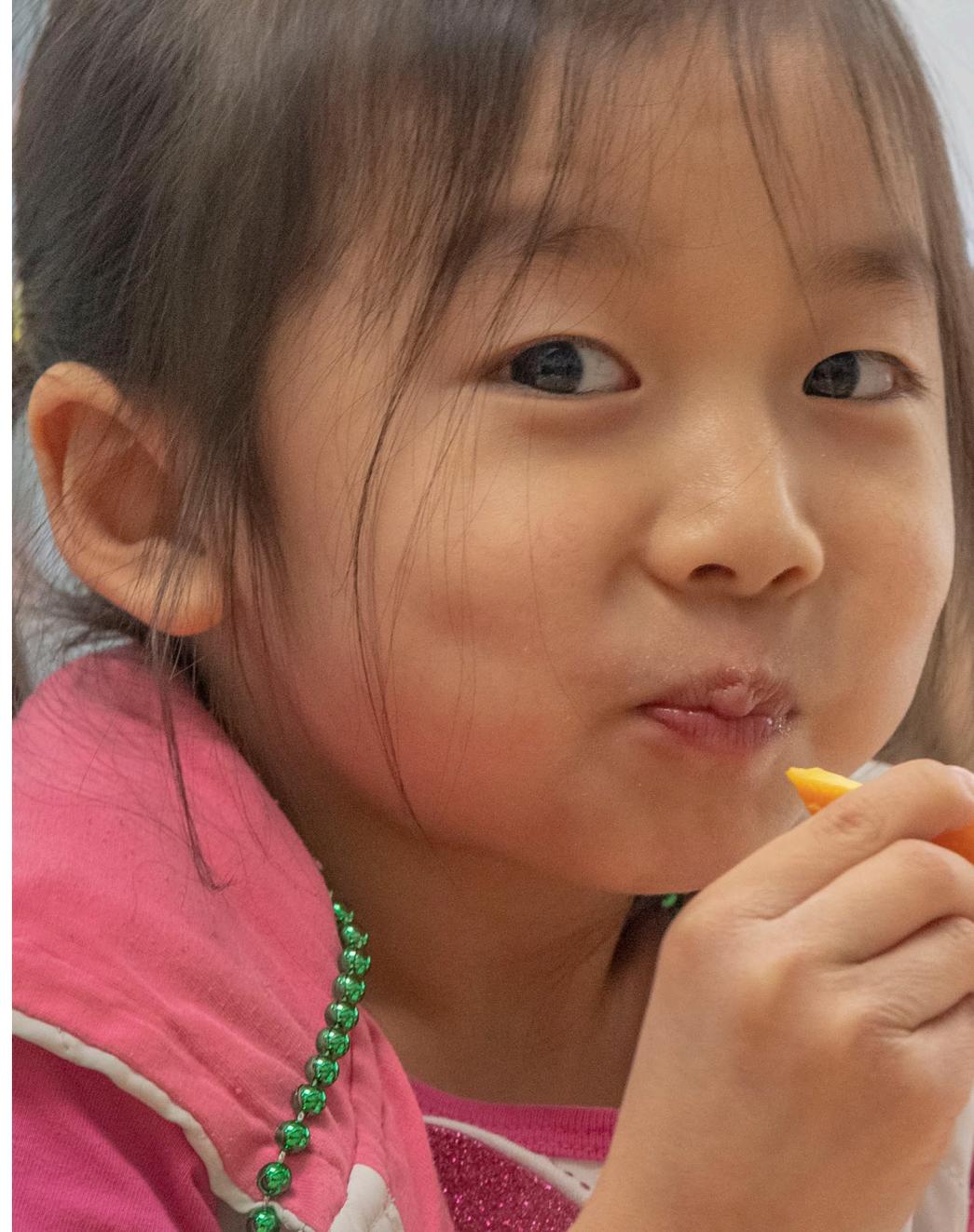
PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 8, 2024



"We know that rural Americans face unique challenges in accessing health care in their communities," said Secretary Vilsack. "USDA, with the support of the Biden-Harris Administration, has devoted significant resources to make it easier and more convenient for rural communities to receive health care services without having to make long drives or delay care. The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to the long-term prosperity and vitality of rural America, and to making sure younger generations know they don't have to leave home to create a good life in the communities they love." (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Public domain)

Community Development

- [Rural Placemaking Toolkit](#)
 - Offers education resources, activities and tools
 - Links to technical assistance providers and funders
- [Strategic Economic and Community Development](#)
 - Reserves funding from Rural Development Programs to support projects that promote and implement strategic community investment plans
 - Eligible projects must support multijurisdictional and multisectoral strategic community investment plans
- **Creating Opportunities through Rural Engagement**
 - Identify communities with great need that have not participated in RD programs recently
 - Connect to better understand barriers, support access to needed resources, listen and learn from communities
- [Rural Partners Network](#)
 - Staff located in communities, support navigation, application and capacity building
 - Rural Desk Officers identified





Beyond Rural Development: USDA Support for Rural Mental Health

- National Institute of Food and Agriculture
 - [Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network](#)
 - [Rural Health and Safety Education](#)
 - Support for [4-H](#) and [Cooperative Extension](#)
 - [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#)
- [Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#)
- Food and Nutrition Service
 - [WIC](#)
 - [SNAP-Ed](#)
- Farm Production and Conservation
 - [Office of Urban Agriculture](#)
- [National Agricultural Library Guide to Funding Resources](#)

Ideas for Moving Forward

- Exploration:
 - Better understand factors affecting farmers and interventions that are successful
 - Equip our USDA field staff with tools to best support our customers and each other
- Participation:
 - Update of National Suicide Prevention Strategy
 - Update of National Drug Control Strategy
 - USDA Observance of Mental Health Awareness Month



Let's Connect!

USDA Rural Development

- Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/>
- Subscribe for updates [here](#)
- Twitter: @usdaRD
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Rural Data Gateway](#)

USDA Rural Health

- Subscribe: [Rural Health](#)
- Contact: rural.health@usda.gov
or kellie.kubena@usda.gov
- Phone: 202-579-5715

Rural Partners Network:

- Website: Rural.gov
- Subscribe: [Rural Connections](#)
- Twitter: @ruralgov
- Contact: RuralPartnersNetwork@USDA.gov