

# United States® Census 2020

## Census Data Matters: Rural America

### Arkansas

Federal spending through the 55 census-guided federal funding programs that serve rural communities totaled \$30.7 billion dollars for Fiscal Year 2016.

Arkansas, with 43.8% of its population living in rural areas, is the sixth most rural state in the U.S. For Fiscal Year 2016 (FY2016), the state received a total of \$478,556,730 from the six largest rural assistance programs.

LARGEST RURAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	EXPENDITURE
Very Low to Moderate Housing Loans	\$384,157,930
Rural Electrification Loans & Loan Guarantees	\$21,692,000
Water & Waste Disposal Systems for Rural Communities	\$31,542,488
Rural Rental Assistance Payments	\$26,379,177
Business and Industry Loans	\$2,499,000
Cooperative Extension Service	\$12,286,135
<b>SIX-PROGRAM TOTAL</b>	<b>\$478,556,730</b>

### Census-guided Rural Assistance Programs

Federal rural assistance programs use census-derived data to distribute funds through grants, loans, loan guarantees, insurance programs and direct payments to households. Census data is essential to determining program eligibility, fund allocation, selection preferences and interest rates on federally subsidized loans.

Eligibility for a rural assistance program usually requires location in an area classified as rural or possessing particular characteristics of rural communities or rurality. Certain USDA assistance programs, for example, define rural as *“any area other than a city, town, or unincorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants.”*

The allocation of benefits under the country largest rural assistance program, the USDA Low to Moderate Income Housing Loan Program, is another instance of the critical importance of census data to the county’s rural areas. Using data from Urban-Rural Classification and Population estimates and the American Community Survey (ACS), subsidized rural housing loans are allocated based on a number of criteria including a state’s share of the nation’s rural population, percent of rural substandard housing units, and Area Mean Income.

The machinery for the distribution of rural assistance from the Federal government to America’s rural communities relies entirely on a comprehensive and accurate census.

**For further information**

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**APRIL 1, 2020 IS CENSUS DAY!**

Source: Andrew Reamer. December 2018. *Federal Funding for Rural America: The Role of the Decennial Census. Counting for Dollars 2020: Report #3.* (<https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/Counting%20for%20Dollars%233%20Federal%20Funds%20for%20Rural%20America%2012-18.pdf>)