

# 10 Year Trends in Rural Challenges

Agencies, organizations, media and policy makers can use these insights to improve how they serve rural people.



See the full report

## Primary Conclusion

**Although good ideas are stifled by conflict, negativity and old way thinking, communities that are open to new ideas can thrive.**

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### Persistent Challenges

- Youth out-migration
- Downtown decline
- Workforce shortages
- Small business marketing

### Fast Moving Concerns

- Crisis in housing
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of support for small businesses

### Slow Building Challenges

- Not enough volunteers
- Online competition
- Lack of usable buildings

### Appreciating Assets

- Natural resources
- Strong social bonds
- Dedicated workforce
- Broadband access

### Demographic Shifts

- Rural people take a broad view of differences
- More see communities as diverse than not

### The External View

- Crime, drug abuse, disaster not as common as seen in outside reports
- Rural people report taking action
- Little interest in business plans, jobs recruitment

The Survey of Rural Challenges asks rural people to share their insight into the challenges they face and the assets they can use. This report analyzes over 2200 responses from communities across the US and Canada from 2015 to 2024. The responses show what's changing and what isn't in small towns and rural places from the point of view of their own people.