

2015 Federal Rental Assistance in Urban and Rural Areas

Sources and Methodology

CBPP relied on administrative data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to identify the location of households that receive HUD rental assistance. We estimated the share of households in non-metropolitan areas using the location of households or properties in the three largest HUD programs, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Public Housing, and Multifamily housing in 2013 and 2014. CBPP relied on definitions of metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB publishes geographic boundaries for [metropolitan statistical areas](#), defined as a core urban area with a population of 50,000 or more. CBPP considered a household or unit to be non-metropolitan if it was located outside a metropolitan statistical area.

CBPP relied on two data sources to determine the location of HUD-assisted households. We used HUD's Picture of Subsidized Households 2013 to determine the location of public housing and multifamily assisted properties. This dataset contains information on each property's core-based statistical area (CBSA), a collective term for metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas. CBPP used a CBSA to CBSA type crosswalk from the Missouri Census Data Center's [MABLE/ Geocorr12 Geographic Correspondence Engine](#) version 1.1.2012 (the most current available) to identify which properties were located inside or outside a metropolitan statistical area.

The Picture of Subsidized Households' multifamily category includes properties with rental assistance under various programs and properties without rental assistance that rent units at below market rent due to a mortgage subsidy. HUD includes the following programs in its multifamily category: Section 8 New Construction and Substantial Rehabilitation, Section 8 Loan Management Set Aside, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Supportive Housing for Disabled Persons, Section 236 Preservation, Rental Assistance Program, Rent Supplement, Below Market Interest Rate, Property Disposition, and other multifamily preservation activities. We were unable to separate the units receiving rental assistance in some of these categories from those only receiving a mortgage subsidy, but we estimate that roughly 222,000 multifamily units fell into the latter category.

CBPP used a demographic dataset from HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research to determine the location of households using vouchers in 2014. For the vast majority of voucher households, we used latitude and longitude coordinates in the dataset to geocode each household using ArcGIS mapping software. These households were then joined to a [shapefile of metropolitan statistical areas](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau in order to identify the share of households in metro and non-metro areas. Latitude and longitude data was not available for households using vouchers administered by the 39 agencies participating in the [Moving to Work demonstration](#). For these households, CBPP relied on a City Name to CBSA crosswalk from the Missouri Census Data Center's [MABLE/ Geocorr12 Geographic Correspondence Engine](#) version 1.1.2012 to identify which properties were located inside or outside a metropolitan statistical area. Voucher households that ended their participation in the program in 2014 were removed from the analysis.

Data Limitations

The Picture of Subsidized Households 2013 is missing data on the number of units for certain multifamily properties. Unit data was missing for 457 of 31,918 properties, representing 1.4 percent of the dataset. Additionally, location data was missing for 15,402 of 2.2 million voucher households, representing 0.7 percent of the dataset.

Voucher data represent vouchers in use, while the public housing and multifamily unit counts represent all units in each property regardless of occupancy status. Some units in the public housing and multifamily properties may not have been occupied.

Households assisted by USDA Rural Rental Assistance or by programs authorized under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act were excluded from the analysis because there is currently no detailed location data available for households in these programs. While the majority of USDA-assisted households are located in non-metropolitan areas, some are in areas that have undergone significant population growth in recent years and now qualify as metropolitan.