

Rental Assistance in Urban and Rural Areas



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The federal government's three largest rental assistance programs — Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Public Housing, and Multifamily¹ units — provide over 4.5 million units of assisted housing. Thirteen percent, or 611,484, of those units are located outside of metropolitan areas, including nearly 10 percent of voucher households (in 2014), and 18 percent of public housing units and 13 percent of multifamily units (in 2013). In addition to these programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Service provided rental assistance to an additional 268,020 households in 2014.² Programs authorized under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act also provide funds for rental assistance in rural areas.

According to HUD's report on "worst case" needs in 2013, 84 percent of renters with "worst case" housing needs live in central cities or suburbs, while 16 percent live in non-metropolitan areas.³ While the number of federally assisted affordable rental units is sufficient to serve only about one in four eligible families, their distribution across metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas is in close proportion to relative need.

The share of non-metropolitan households receiving HUD rental assistance varies considerably by state (see Table 1). In Montana, Vermont, and Wyoming, over half of these assisted households live in non-metro areas.

TABLE 1

Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan HUD-Assisted Households 2013-2014

State	Metro share	Non-metro share
U.S. Total	87%	13%
Alabama	74%	26%
Alaska	74%	26%
Arizona	98%	2%
Arkansas	55%	45%
California	98%	2%
Colorado	87%	13%
Connecticut	97%	3%
Delaware	100%	0%
District of Columbia	100%	0%
Florida	97%	3%
Georgia	82%	18%
Hawaii	78%	22%
Idaho	73%	27%
Illinois	91%	9%
Indiana	82%	18%
Iowa	57%	43%

TABLE 1

Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan HUD-Assisted Households 2013-2014

State	Metro share	Non-metro share
Kansas	65%	35%
Kentucky	61%	39%
Louisiana	86%	14%
Maine	70%	30%
Maryland	98%	2%
Massachusetts	99%	1%
Michigan	88%	12%
Minnesota	78%	22%
Mississippi	44%	56%
Missouri	79%	21%
Montana	48%	52%
Nebraska	65%	35%
Nevada	94%	6%
New Hampshire	63%	37%
New Jersey	100%	0%
New Mexico	63%	37%
New York	96%	4%
North Carolina	74%	26%
North Dakota	58%	42%
Ohio	85%	15%
Oklahoma	71%	29%
Oregon	84%	16%
Pennsylvania	89%	11%
Rhode Island	100%	0%
South Carolina	81%	19%
South Dakota	50%	50%
Tennessee	81%	19%
Texas	87%	13%
Utah	94%	6%
Vermont	45%	55%
Virginia	87%	13%
Washington	93%	7%
West Virginia	69%	31%
Wisconsin	79%	21%
Wyoming	49%	51%

Source: CBPP analysis of HUD administrative data. For more information, please see the sources and methodology.

The share of non-metro assisted households also varies among each of the three major HUD programs. Public housing tends to have the greatest proportion of non-metro units, but this is not the case in every state (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

Non-Metropolitan HUD-Assisted Households by Program 2013-2014

State	Vouchers	Public housing	Multifamily
U.S. Total	10%	18%	13%
Alabama	17%	33%	24%
Alaska	25%	44%	21%
Arizona	2%	4%	3%
Arkansas	43%	56%	38%
California	1%	1%	3%
Colorado	9%	19%	16%
Connecticut	2%	3%	4%
Delaware	0%	0%	0%
District of Columbia	0%	0%	0%
Florida	2%	6%	3%
Georgia	7%	36%	16%
Hawaii	27%	19%	14%
Idaho	21%	52%	32%
Illinois	4%	22%	7%
Indiana	16%	16%	20%
Iowa	41%	74%	38%
Kansas	23%	46%	38%
Kentucky	33%	50%	37%
Louisiana	8%	30%	13%
Maine	33%	20%	31%
Maryland	2%	2%	2%
Massachusetts	1%	0%	1%
Michigan	11%	23%	10%
Minnesota	16%	25%	24%
Mississippi	44%	78%	56%
Missouri	17%	44%	14%
Montana	48%	54%	54%
Nebraska	20%	48%	43%
Nevada	7%	0%	10%
New Hampshire	34%	17%	51%
New Jersey	0%	0%	0%
New Mexico	27%	57%	42%
New York	5%	2%	5%
North Carolina	25%	28%	25%
North Dakota	32%	43%	60%

TABLE 2

Non-Metropolitan HUD-Assisted Households by Program 2013-2014

State	Vouchers	Public housing	Multifamily
Ohio	16%	11%	16%
Oklahoma	16%	43%	36%
Oregon	15%	16%	20%
Pennsylvania	9%	12%	11%
Rhode Island	0%	0%	0%
South Carolina	12%	24%	23%
South Dakota	41%	59%	57%
Tennessee	9%	27%	23%
Texas	9%	25%	13%
Utah	5%	9%	8%
Vermont	48%	67%	60%
Virginia	14%	10%	15%
Washington	5%	8%	10%
West Virginia	30%	26%	34%
Wisconsin	14%	30%	24%
Wyoming	37%	42%	67%

Source: CBPP analysis of HUD administrative data. For more information, please see the sources and methodology

¹ The multifamily category includes properties with project-based rental assistance (through a component of the Sections 8, 202 or 811 programs, the Rental Assistance Program or the Rent Supplement program) and properties without rental assistance that rent units at below market rents 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. For more details, please see the sources and methodology.

² This is the number of units receiving assistance under the USDA Section 521 rental assistance program in fiscal year 2014. Data taken from the USDA's Multifamily Housing Annual Fair Housing Report, available at http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/rd_obligations/mfh-occupancy/usda-mfh-fy14-report.pdf.

³ "Worst Case Housing Needs: 2015 Report to Congress," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, May 2015, http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/affhsg/wc_HsgNeeds15.html. HUD defines households with "worst-case" needs as unassisted renters with incomes below 50 percent of the local area median income who paid more than one-half of their income for rent or lived in severely inadequate housing conditions.