MP585

2025

RURAL PROFILE OF ARKANSAS

UofA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Arkansas has one of the largest rural population shares in the country: almost 45% of the state's population resides in rural areas. In addition to being home to a large share of our population, our rural areas make a vital contribution to the state's economy as the locus for much of the state's agriculture, forestry, and tourism activity.

Despite playing a pivotal role in Arkansas' culture and economy, the state's rural areas have faced significant challenges in recent decades. Social, economic, and demographic trends have contributed to significant out-migration from rural areas. The decline in population and associated loss of businesses in many of the state's rural counties have made it more and more difficult for rural communities to provide the amenities and even the basic services that are necessary if they are to continue to thrive. Developing effective strategies to address this ongoing challenge requires information: information that helps make sense of the underlying trends driving population change. The Rural Profile of Arkansas – 2025 is the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's latest offering in our ongoing effort to provide community leaders with precisely that kind of information.

While the major focus of the profile remains on understanding the differences between rural and urban areas of the state, conditions also vary within the rural areas. To provide insight into how circumstances differ in rural areas, three distinct regions – the Delta, the Coastal Plains and the Highlands – were studied.

For 30 years, the Rural Profile has served as a trusted source of data and information for state and local elected officials, policy makers, business leaders, and other local government stakeholders. The Profile is intended to be a resource for state and community leaders in planning, implementing, and refining the policies and programs that impact not only rural Arkansas but the entire state. Rural and urban Arkansas are complementary pieces of a unified whole, and the state won't thrive unless both rural and urban sectors are working together in ways that are collaborative and mutually supportive.

If you have any questions on how to interpret and use the information in this profile, please contact your local Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service agent. They are a valuable resource to you and your community.

We look forward to continuing our service to the State of Arkansas by providing rigorous, objective analysis of the important issues facing Arkansans living in every corner of this amazing place that we are proud to call home.

John D. Anderson
Senior Associate Vice President for Agriculture – Extension
Director Cooperative Extension Service
University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Community & Economic Development
Strengthening Arkansas Communities

2025

RURAL PROFILE OF ARKANSAS

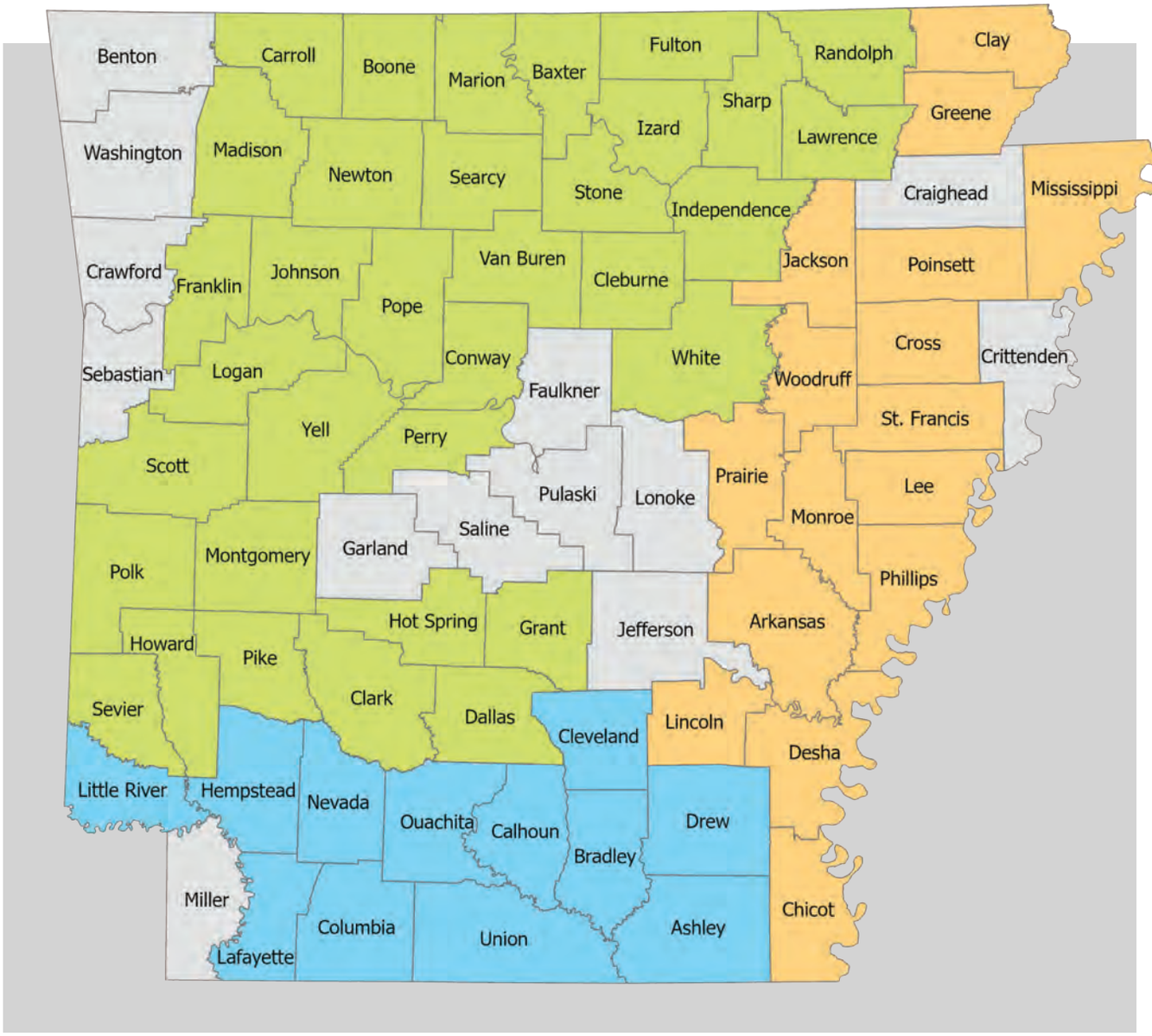
Social & Economic Trends Affecting Rural Arkansas

Authors:

Dr. Frank Seo, Assistant Professor – Rural Development
University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service

Mark S. Goodman, CEcD, President
Regional Development Partners, LLC

ARKANSAS REGIONS AND COUNTIES



Coastal Plains **Delta**

Highlands **Urban**

Visit our website for more information:
www.uaex.uada.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RURAL AND URBAN DEFINED 6

POPULATION 7

ECONOMY 14

INFRASTRUCTURE 23

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRESS 28

HEALTH 34

EDUCATION 39

LOCAL GOVERNMENT 45

APPENDICES 50

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 66

NOTE: All dollar values reported in this publication are constant dollars using the South Urban Consumer Price Index to adjust for inflation. The most current year for which data are available for each indicator is used as the base in calculating the constant, or inflation adjusted, dollar values. The term "nominal" is used in this publication to reflect values that have not been adjusted for inflation.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

POPULATION

- The population of Arkansas grew by nearly 85,200 people from 2013 to 2022, slightly more than half the 5.47 percent rate of growth nationally.
- The population in the Rural region decreased by 4.4 percent between 2013 and 2022, ranging from -0.8 percent in the Highlands to -10.1 percent in the Coastal Plains and -9.4 percent in the Delta.
- The decline of Arkansas' rural population between 2013 and 2022 was a result of both natural population loss and out-migration. During the last two years, however, a larger natural population loss in rural areas has been attenuated by a net in-migration. In the Urban region during the same period, natural increase and in-migration both played a significant role in population growth.
- Rural Arkansas counties tend to have an older population than urban counties. In 2022, the median age in the Rural counties was 42.7 years compared to only 37.8 years in urban counties.

ECONOMY

- While Arkansas' economy, as measured by total employment, grew steadily since the end of the Great Recession, employment in Arkansas grew at two-thirds the rate of the national economy from 2010 to 2022 (14 percent versus 21 percent, respectively).
- COVID-19 impacted rural economies across Arkansas that were still struggling to recover from the Great Recession. However, the past two years have seen a rural employment increase of 4 percent, placing total employment less than 2 percent below their pre-recession levels in 2007.
- The Urban region saw employment increase by 9.5 percent from 2013 to 2022, while employment in the Rural region decreased by 0.1 percent. The Delta and Highlands regions witnessed a slight increase in employment (0.2 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively). The Coastal Plains region saw a decrease in employment during this period of 2.5 percent.
- From 2012 to 2021, Arkansas witnessed employment growth in all sectors, less government and mining. During this period, government employment declined by nearly 15,000 employees, dropping from 15.1 percent of total employment in 2012 to 13.2 percent of total employment in 2021. As a share of total employment, the sectors of finance, information, and real estate (0.8 percent), as well as professional services (0.9 percent) experienced the greatest increases during this period, followed by construction (0.7 percent), transportation and utilities (0.5 percent) and other services (0.3 percent). Though the remaining sectors (manufacturing, farming & forestry and trade) grew, their share of statewide employment remained the same or dropped. Overall, statewide employment grew by 110,489. However, there was considerable variation between Urban and Rural areas. All statewide total employment gains were realized in Arkansas' urban counties and highland counties. In the Rural areas, the decline of government employment had an oversized impact on overall employment change.
- In 2022, average earnings per job varied by region, with earnings in Rural counties trailing Urban counties by 12 percent. However, Coastal Plains earnings exceed Urban earnings by 3 percent. Arkansas Delta and Arkansas highlands average earnings per job lagged behind the Urban equivalent by 7 percent and 18 percent, respectively.
- In 2022, rural counties had an average median household income that was 20 percent lower than urban counties. In 2022, the average median household income of counties in the rural areas was approximately $47,000 compared to $60,000 in urban areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) uses a benchmark of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps (100/20 Mbps) to measure the availability of adequate broadband internet. As of January 2024, 100 percent of the Arkansas population lived in areas with 100/20 Mbps internet availability.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

- The majority of Arkansas' 12,962 state, county, and city bridges are in fair or good condition. 48 percent were rated as fair, 46.6 percent as good, and 5.4 percent as poor (structurally deficient) by the Federal Highway Administration in 2023.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains regulations for public drinking water and records violations of those standards for communities across the nation. As reported in February 2024, all 75 counties in Arkansas had some form of drinking water violation.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRESS

- Arkansas is a high poverty state. Total poverty rates in Arkansas were approximately 4 percentage points higher than the national average of 12.5 percent in 2022.
- Rural counties had higher poverty rates (19 percent) than urban counties (16 percent). Within the Rural regions, the Delta had the highest rate of total poverty (22 percent).
- Like total poverty rates, rates of child poverty were higher in Rural areas (26 percent) than Urban areas (22 percent) in 2022.
- While 11.2 percent of the U.S. population was food insecure in 2022, across Arkansas, 505,000, or 16.6 percent, were experiencing the same. Within Arkansas, rural areas experienced slightly more food insecurity compared to urban areas of the state, 16.5 percent, and 13.3 percent, respectively. The Delta had the highest regional rate at 17.6 percent.
- In 2022, Arkansans living in the state's Rural areas were more likely to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits than those living in Urban areas. Nearly one in five rural residents (18 percent) received SNAP, compared to 13 percent of urban residents.
- The Zillow Home Value Index (or ZHVI) is a seasonally adjusted measure of the typical home value and market changes across a given region and housing type. It reflects the typical value for homes in the 35th to 65th percentile range. Between January 2020 and January 2024 across Arkansas, the ZHVI increased by 35 percent, from $144,284 to $195,502.

HEALTH

- Health Factor scores (representing health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment) and Health Outcome scores (representing length and quality of life) can be used to assess health-related factors. In general, urban counties had better health factor scores than those in rural counties in Arkansas.
- Arkansas' infant mortality rate for 2021 increased by 15 percent since 2018 to 8.59 deaths per 1,000 live births. The national average is 5.4. This placed Arkansas second in the nation for infant mortality that year, behind Mississippi.
- In 2022, 71 percent of Arkansas' adult population was categorized as overweight or obese.
- 28 percent of children in Arkansas were considered obese, and 46 percent were considered either overweight or obese in 2021. Children living in rural counties in Arkansas were more likely to experience obesity (29 percent) compared to urban counties (26 percent).

EDUCATION

- In 2022, U.S. pre-k enrollment was 45.6 percent. Arkansas pre-k enrollment rates in Rural areas of the state were slightly higher (42.2 percent) than rates in Urban areas (41.9 percent).
- More than 475,000 children were enrolled in Arkansas public schools in the 2023-2024 school year, a level that has fluctuated little over the past 10 years. However, in Rural areas, public school enrollment has declined nearly 8 percent since the 2014-2015 school year.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

- Homeschooling in Arkansas saw a significant rise during the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend continued into the 2023–2024 academic year, particularly in urban areas with better access to resources. With the Arkansas LEARNS Act and homeschooling-friendly regulations, the number of homeschooled students is expected to increase in the future.
- Enrollment in private schools has also increased, driven by expanded educational options and the Arkansas LEARNS Act. Enrollment in private schools resembles the trend in homeschooling, with urban areas, which tend to have more financial resources and greater access to educational opportunities, leading the way.
- Educational attainment levels in Arkansas are consistently below the national average and remained so in 2022 despite gradual improvement. Nearly 33 percent of Arkansans age 25 and older had an associate, undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree, compared to 43 percent nationally.
- 26 percent of adults in rural counties had an associate degree or higher, considerably less than the 39 percent in urban counties. Among the Rural regions, the Delta had the lowest rates of educational attainment for associate, bachelor's, and graduate or professional degrees (21 percent).
- The ratio of people with associate or bachelor's degrees in science and engineering increased in Arkansas between 2006 and 2021. In 2006, less than 10 people per 1,000 in the 18-24 age group had a bachelor's degree in science and engineering. By 2018, that number had grown to 16 per 1,000 people. In 2021, it was up to 21 per 1,000 people.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- County government revenue increased, on average, for Arkansas counties from 2012 to 2021. Much of that growth was from local sources: Property and sales tax revenue, which increased 17 percent and 51 percent, respectively.
- Total nominal property tax assessments increased across Arkansas by 33 percent between 2015 and 2022.
- Across Arkansas, county government property tax collections increased by 17 percent between 2012 and 2021. Urban counties experienced an increase of 19 percent, with slightly higher rates of change noted in Coastal Plains and Delta counties. Highlands counties realized a growth rate of only 6 percent.
- Between 2017 and 2021, property tax revenues increased in 52 of Arkansas' 75 counties.
- Nominal retail sales, which we use as a proxy for the sales tax base, grew by 40 percent statewide from 2018 to 2022. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (January 2020), sales have increased by 27 percent. Adjusted sales grew by 20 percent since 2018 and 11 percent since January 2020.
- Between 2018 and 2022, adjusted retail sales increased across Arkansas by 20 percent. Increases were greater in urban areas (21 percent) than across Rural areas (18 percent).
- The average millage of Arkansas counties was 7.8 mills. The average millage in rural counties was 7.9 compared to 7.4 mills in urban areas.
- In 2024 the average sales tax rate of rural counties was approximately 1.8 percent compared to 1.1 percent in urban counties.

RURAL AND URBAN DEFINED

The Rural Profile of Arkansas presents a data-driven depiction of social, economic, and demographic characteristics of rural and urban regions of the state. The goal is to provide information and data that allow insight into the critical issues facing different areas of the state, which may require diverse policies and programs to address regional concerns. To accomplish this, we use a classification scheme to delineate rural versus urban areas of the state.

Like much of rural America, rural areas of Arkansas have been greatly affected by the changing structure of the global economy. This, in turn, affects the well-being of people living in these areas, population composition, migration and access to resources required to maintain viable communities. In this publication, we provide information on demographic, economic, social and fiscal conditions affecting the well-being of Arkansas citizens to inform local and state leaders as they develop policies and programs that will help people in all areas of the state live healthy and productive lives.

The Urban and Rural Classifications

In the current Profile, we continue to use long-established categorization of counties as metropolitan and nonmetropolitan. However, we use the word "rural" in place of "nonmetropolitan" and the word "urban" in place of "metropolitan." Populations residing in counties with large cities are classified as metropolitan, and those counties are grouped into a category termed "urban region."

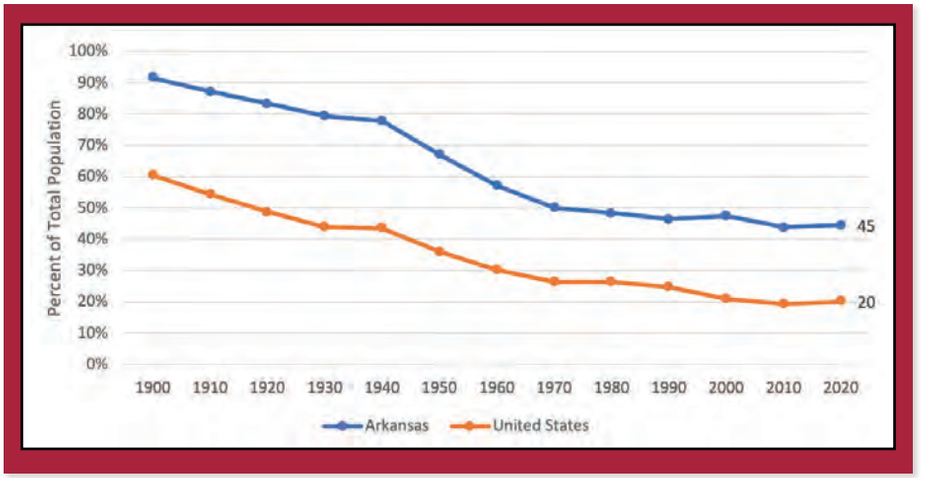
In addition to the rural and urban regions described above, we divide the rural areas into three regions composed of counties with similar economic activity, history, physical setting, settlement patterns and culture. The three rural regions of Arkansas are the Coastal Plains, Delta and Highlands. This approach combines nonmetropolitan counties in similar regions and facilitates comparison with the metropolitan counties. A map showing each county and region is on page 2 of this publication.

Arkansas – A Rural State

No matter how you measure it, Arkansas is a very rural state. When using the county-based metropolitan/nonmetropolitan definitions, 45 percent of Arkansans live in rural counties, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. In contrast, only 20 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural counties.

As seen in Figure R1, Arkansas' percentage of people living in rural areas has been higher than that of the nation since 1900. Here, the rural population is defined as people living in nonurbanized areas, irrespective of county boundaries. In 1900, 92 percent of Arkansans lived in rural areas compared to only 60 percent of Americans. Both nationally and in Arkansas, the percentage of people living in rural areas decreased dramatically between 1900

FIGURE R1. RURAL POPULATION, 1900 TO 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

and 2010. However, there was slight increase in rural population between 2010 and 2020 in both Arkansas and the nation.

Arkansas' Rural Population Continues Decline

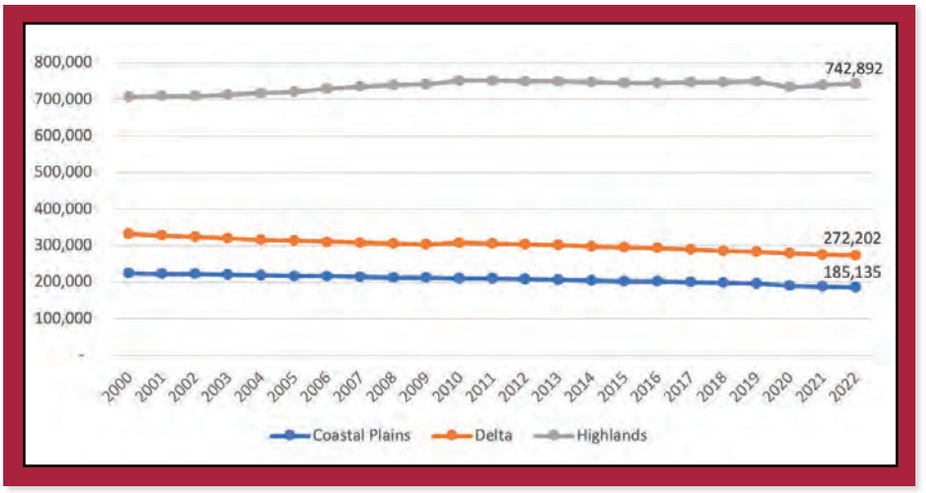
The population of Arkansas grew by 123,639 people from 2010 to 2022, but the growth rate was slower than the national average. Arkansas' population increased by 4.2 percent compared to 7.5 percent nationally during that time. Despite the moderate population growth statewide, growth patterns within the state continue to show population movement from the rural region to the urban region. In 2000, the rural region contained about 47 percent of Arkansas' population; by 2010, that ratio declined to 43 percent, and in 2022, it was 39 percent.

The population in the rural region decreased by 5.4 percent between 2010 and 2022. During this time, the urban counties continued to gain population, increasing 11.6 percent. Across Arkansas, 50 out of 75 counties lost population during this period, with four counties experiencing a decline of greater than 20 percent. There were two rural counties with double-digit growth (Greene: 10.1 percent; Madison: 11.5 percent). Five of the 13 urban counties realized double-digit growth (Benton: 36.1 percent; Craighead: 16.8 percent; Faulkner: 12 percent; Saline: 18.3 percent; and Washington: 25.5 percent), while one (Jefferson: -16.9 percent) experienced a double-digit decline.

The population in the Coastal Plains decreased the most among the rural regions, dropping 12.1 percent from 2010 to 2022. The Delta also saw considerable population losses during that time (-11.4 percent), while the Highlands remained relatively flat (-1.1 percent).

Longer-term trends are evident when analysis is extended to the year 2000. Arkansas' population grew 13.7 percent during that time, with a 5 percent decline in the rural region and a 30 percent increase in the urban region. Of the rural regions, only the Highlands had a net gain in population (5 percent) from 2000 to 2022 (Figure P1). This rural region exhibited population growth between 2003 and 2010, followed by a period of decline from 2010 to 2020 before recovering slightly through 2022. The population in the Coastal Plains and Delta has declined steadily since 2000 without any major change in course.

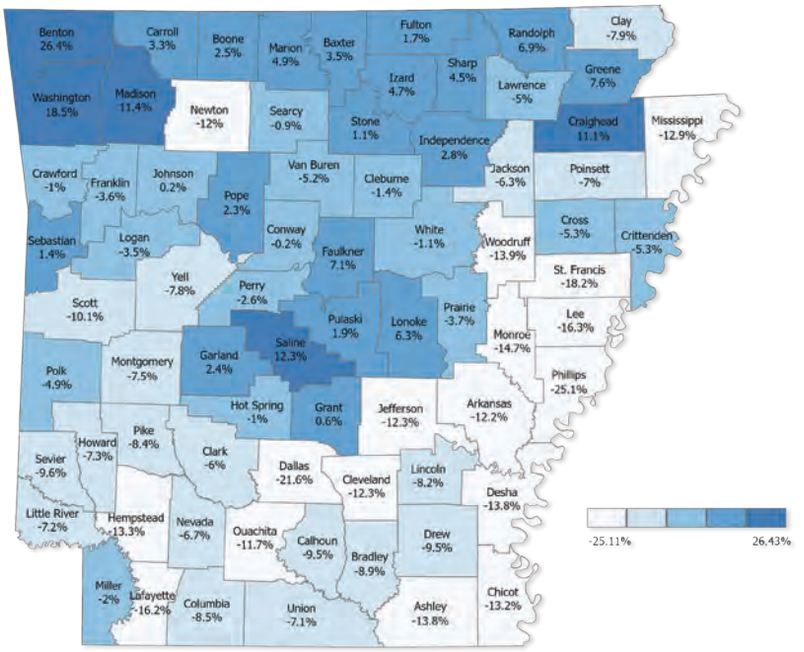
FIGURE P1. POPULATION IN RURAL REGIONS OF ARKANSAS, 2000 TO 2022



Source: Annual Estimates of Resident Population, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

The regional trends in population mask the large differences in population change among counties. Figure P2 shows county-level population change between 2013 and 2022. The population declined in 51 of Arkansas' 75 counties—including 47 rural counties and 4 urban counties (Crawford, Crittenden,

FIGURE P2. PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION BETWEEN 2013 AND 2022



Source: Annual Estimates of Resident Population, April 1, 2013 and July 1, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

Jefferson, and Miller). The largest growth rate in population, 26 percent, was in Benton County.

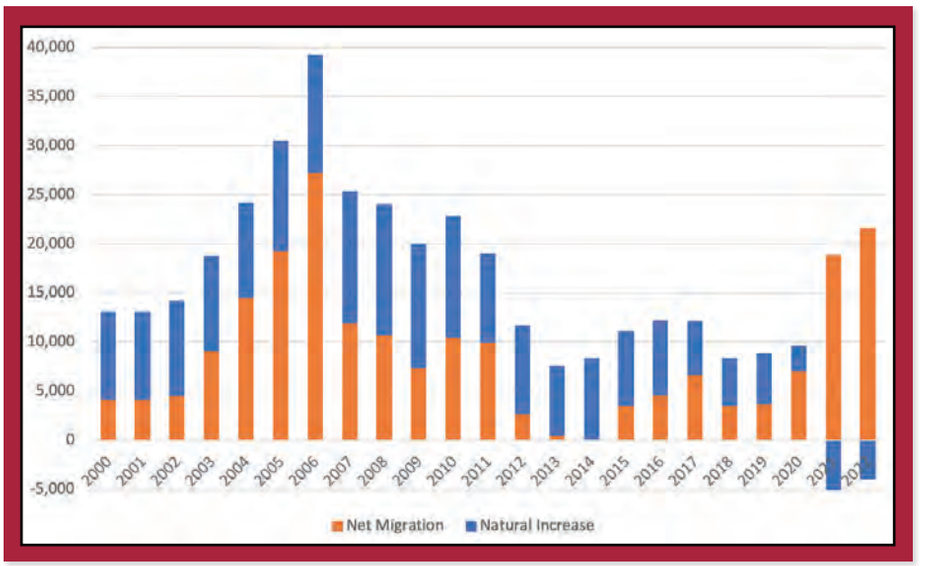
The rate of decline was highest in Phillips County at -25 percent. Notably, the 24 counties with population growth from 2013-2022 were disproportionately urban (nine) or located in the Highlands (14). However, population growth in the Highlands counties was substantially less than growth in the urban counties. In comparison, of the 18 counties with population declining 10 percent or more, only four were outside of the Delta and Coastal Plains. Population decline in the Delta and Coastal Plains continues to be so widespread that only one county's population (Greene County) grew from 2013 to 2022.

Out-migration from Rural to Urban Regions Continues

Populations grow and decline in two ways: From natural increase or decrease (births and deaths) and from migration. A natural increase indicates more births than deaths (positive value), while a natural decrease denotes more deaths than births (negative value). Net in-migration indicates more in-migration than out-migration (positive value), and a net out-migration indicates more out-migration than in-migration (negative value).

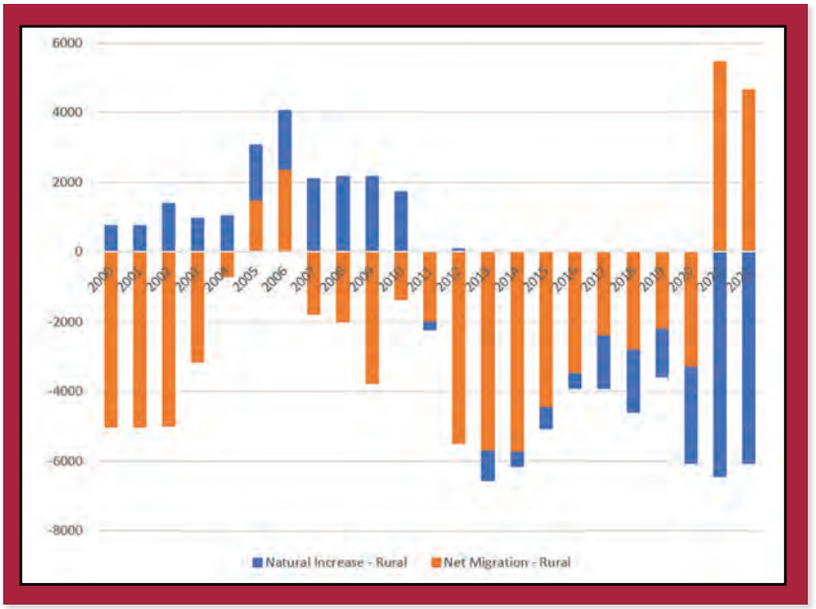
Figure P3 shows a peak of net migration and natural increase in Arkansas in 2006. Statewide population growth slowed considerably from 2006 to 2014, the result of declining net in-migration and natural increase. Net in-migration declined from a high of 27,288 in 2006 to a slight net in-migration in 2014 (23) and trending back to a 2022 in-migration of 21,523. The natural increase of the population grew from 2000 to 2007 (8,879 to 13,310), followed by steadily declining figures annually to 2,500 in 2020, before dropping considerably in 2021 (-3,236) and 2022 (-3,936).

FIGURE P3. STATE POPULATION COMPONENTS OF CHANGE, 2000 TO 2022



Source: Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

FIGURE P4. RURAL POPULATION COMPONENTS OF CHANGE, 2000 TO 2022



Source: Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

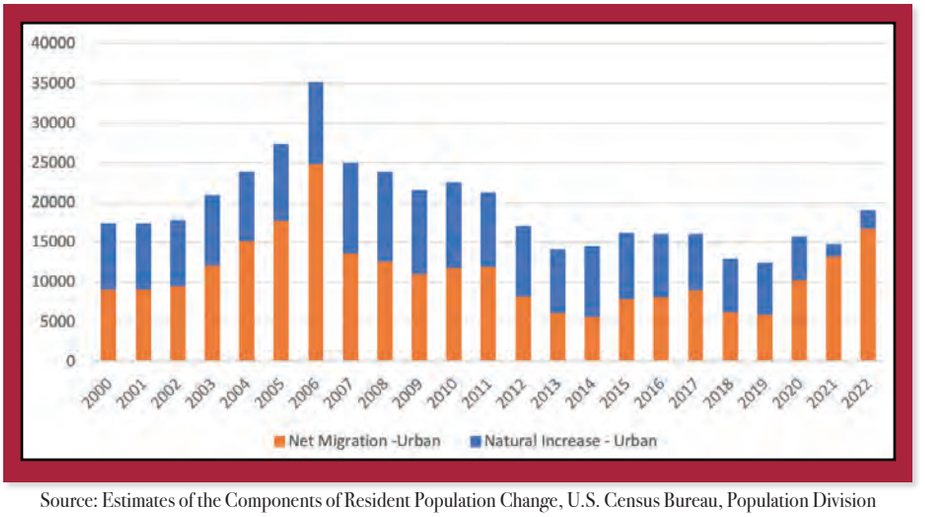
Figures P4 and P5 show that the migration patterns and rates of natural increase differ greatly between urban and rural regions of the state and have changed since the first half of the 2000s. The population decline in the rural region of the state has primarily been due to out-migration of people, though in recent years loss has accelerated due to natural decreases with some in-migration. Both in-migration and natural increase resulted in population growth in the urban region.

Nearly every year from 2000 to 2020 (except for 2005 and 2006), there was a net out-migration of people from the rural region of the state. In 2021, this trend reversed and saw an in-migration in 2021 and 2022. Generally, this has been in contrast to the urban region, where there was a net in-migration of people every year during this period. Net in-migration in urban areas increased in the early 2000s to a high of 24,915 in 2006.

Though the rural region has had few instances of net in-migration in the past two decades, the trends vary greatly between the Coastal Plains/Delta regions and the Highlands region. The Highlands region was the only one of the three Rural regions to have many years of net in-migration from 2000 to 2022. The Highlands experienced a span of in-migration that lasted 11 years (2000 to 2011), and again for seven consecutive years (2016 to 2022). For four of those years (2004, 2005, 2021, and 2022), in-migration in the Highlands was large enough to eclipse the out-migration in the other two rural regions.

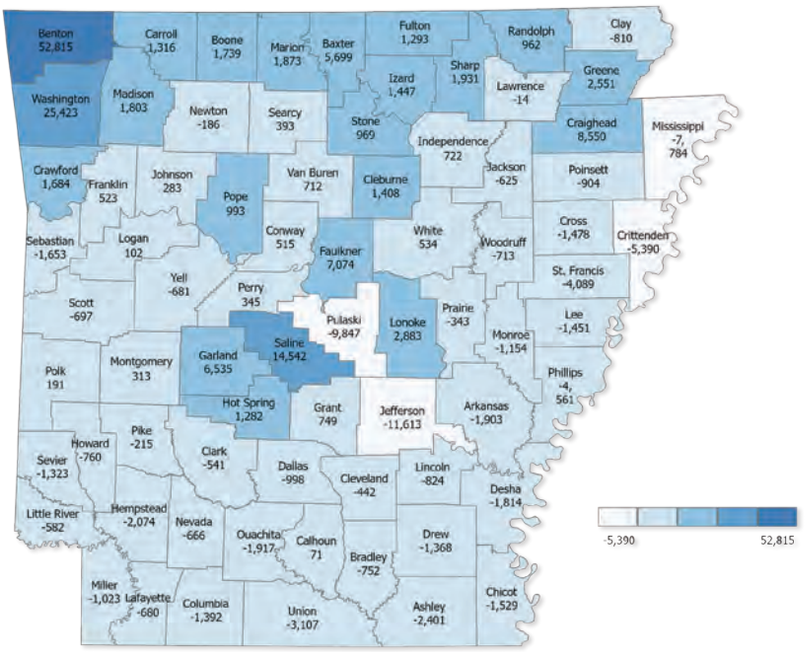
Recent migration trends indicate that most counties in the Delta and Coastal Plains regions continue to lose population due to out-migration (Figure P6). In 2022, only six counties in the Delta and Coastal Plains regions (Clay, Cleveland, Greene, Lafayette, Nevada and Prairie) had net in-migration of residents. From 2013 to 2022, only Calhoun and Greene Counties had a positive overall net migration in these regions. Eight of the 13 urban counties had a net in-migration of residents during that time.

FIGURE P5. URBAN POPULATION COMPONENTS OF CHANGE, 2000 TO 2022



Source: Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

FIGURE P6. NET MIGRATION OF POPULATION BETWEEN 2013 AND 2022

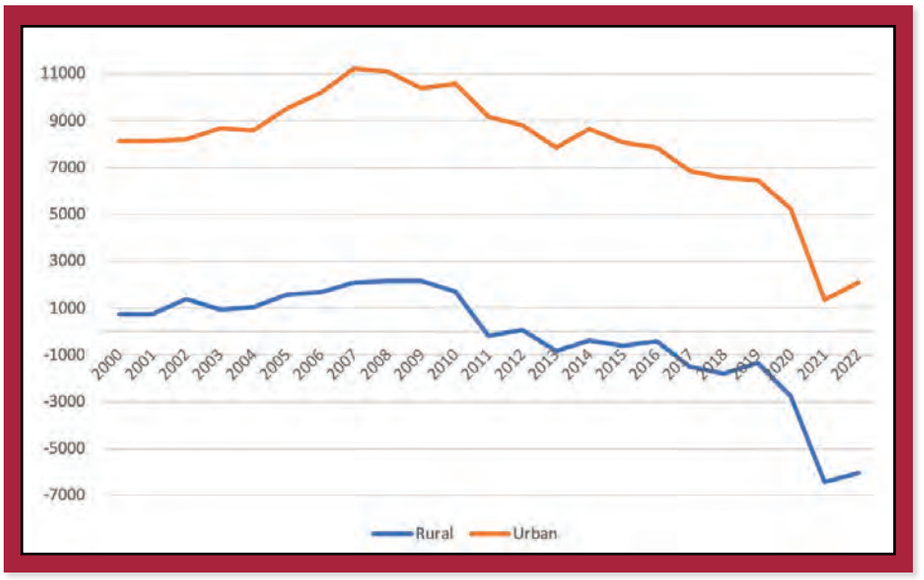


Source: Annual Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change, April 1, 2013 to July 1, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

Natural Increase in Population Declined

There was a growing natural population increase throughout the state in the early 2000s, peaking in 2007 and 2008. Though not at peak levels, combined natural increases in population continued until an abrupt reversal in 2021 (-5,059), which continued through 2022 (-3,936). Arkansas' urban region experienced a positive natural increase in its population from 2000 to 2022, while the rural counties consistently have experienced a natural decline in population since 2013. Rural counties experienced increasingly significant losses in 2021 and 2022, pulling statewide totals into negative space as well (Figure P7). Despite a smaller loss in 2022, the natural decrease of population in Arkansas's rural region

FIGURE P7. NATURAL INCREASE TREND IN RURAL AND URBAN REGIONS, 2000 TO 2022

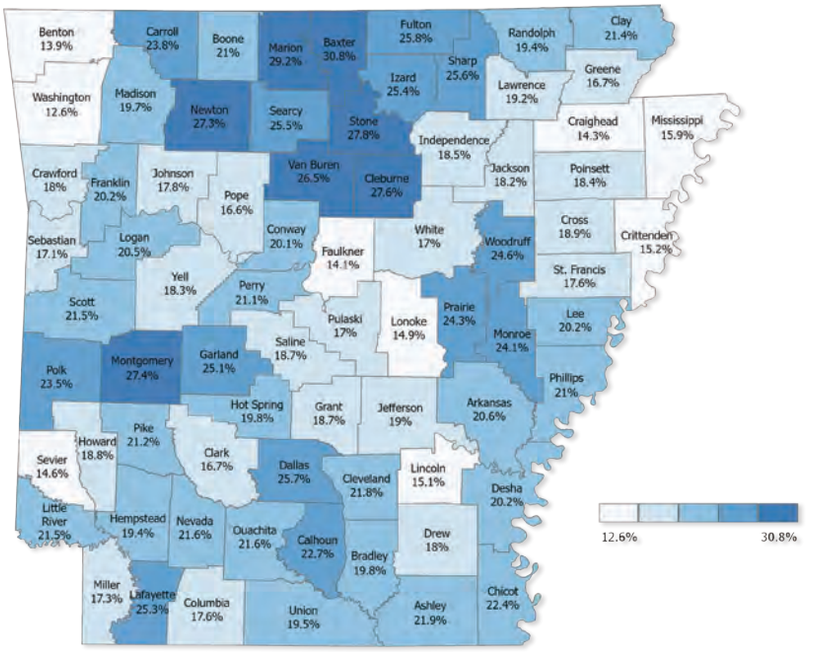


Source: Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

continues to be substantially greater than losses predating the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure P7).

Like the rural region, the natural increase of the population in the urban region grew to a high in 2007 (11,216) and has steadily declined through 2022 (2,108), though it did not dropped into negative territory during that period. Twenty-two Arkansas counties (29 percent) had an overall natural increase in their population, denoting more births than deaths from 2013-2022 (Figure P8).

FIGURE P8. NATURAL INCREASE/DECREASE OF POPULATION BETWEEN 2013 AND 2022

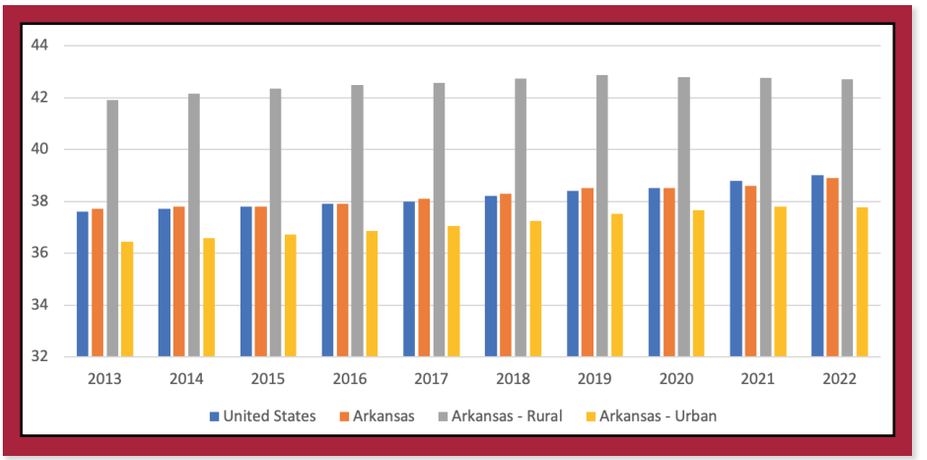


Source: Annual Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change, April 1, 2013 and July 1, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

Median Age Higher in Rural Regions

The median age of Arkansans (38.9) was similar to the national median age (39.0) in 2022 and both increased slightly from 2013 to 2022 (Figure P9). However, the statewide median age masks the difference in median age among regions and counties in the state (Figure P10). In 2022, the median age ranged from 32.1 in Clark County to 51.7 in Marion County, though generally, the median

FIGURE P9. MEDIAN AGE, 2013 TO 2022

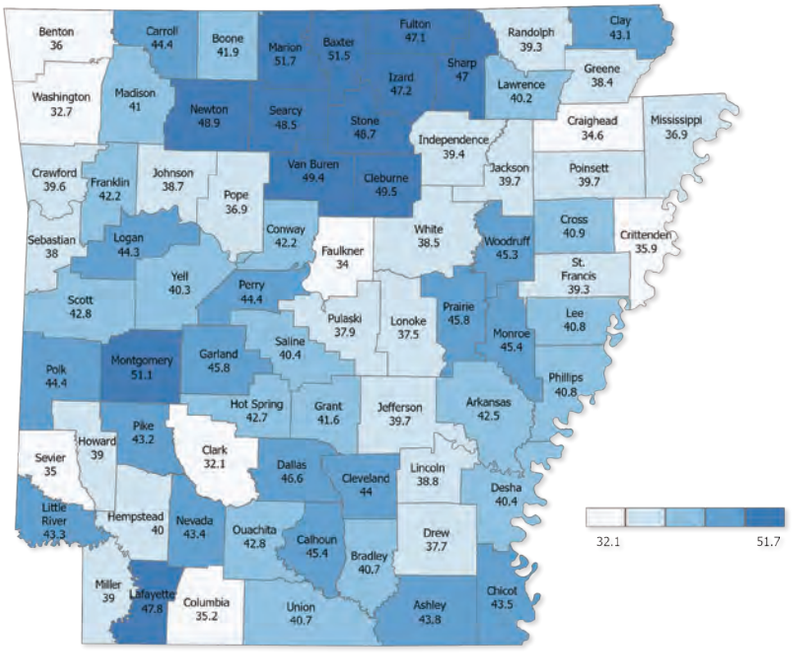


Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for the United States, States, Counties, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth and Municipios: April 1, 2013 to July 1, 2022

age in the urban region (37.8) was lower than in the rural region overall (42.7) and the state as a whole. The Highlands region had a higher median age than other rural regions in the state. The average median age of the Highlands region was 43.6 in 2022, compared to 42.1 in the Coastal Plains and 41.3 in the Delta.

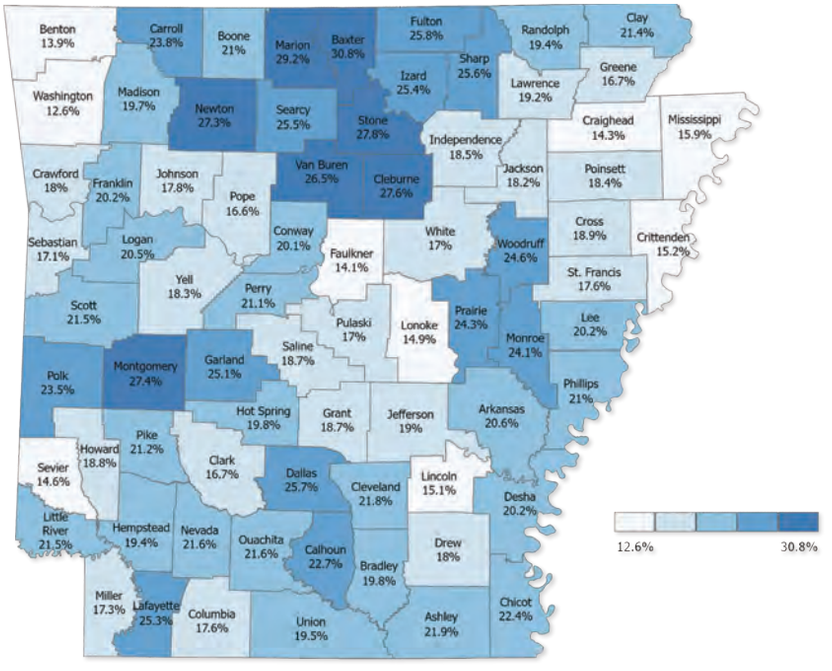
The proportion of the total population who are seniors (65 years of age and older) varies substantially by county (Figure P11). The share of county populations aged 65 and older ranges from a low of 13 percent in Washington County to a high of 31 percent in Baxter County. Likewise, there were large differences between rural and urban counties in the state.

FIGURE P10. MEDIAN AGE, 2022



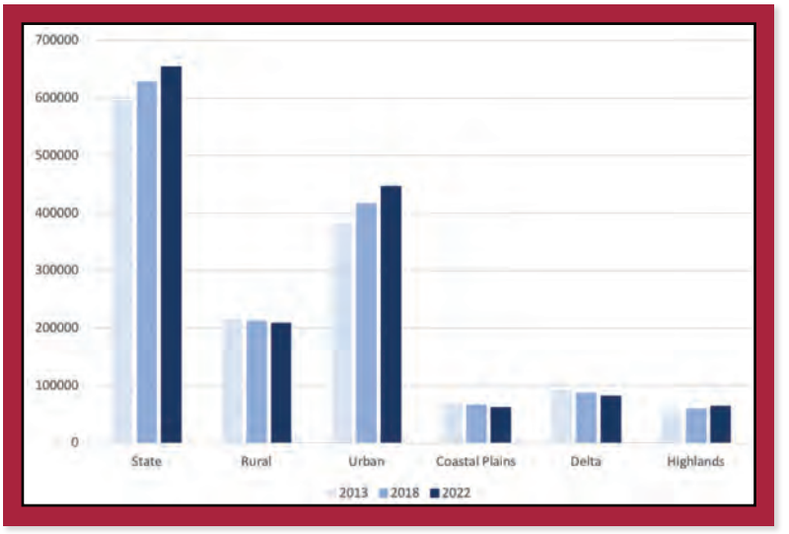
Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for the United States, States, Counties and Puerto Rico Commonwealth and Municipios: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022

FIGURE P11. POPULATION AGED 65 AND OLDER, 2022



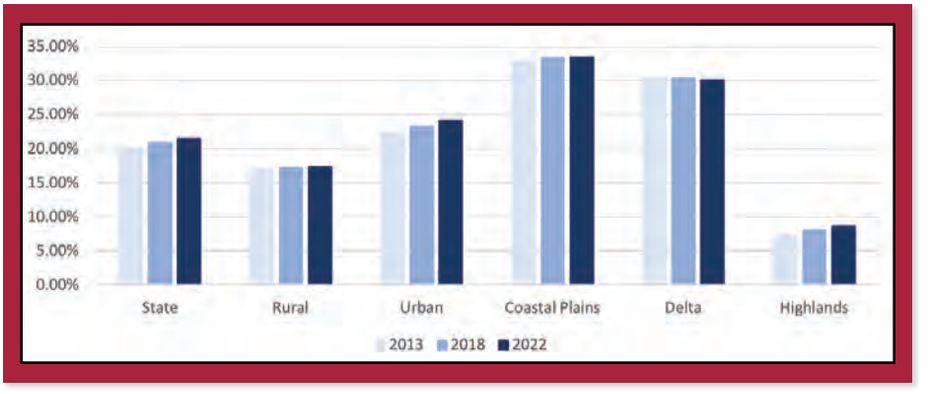
Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for the United States, States, Counties and Puerto Rico Commonwealth and Municipios: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022

FIGURE P12. NON-WHITE POPULATION OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS



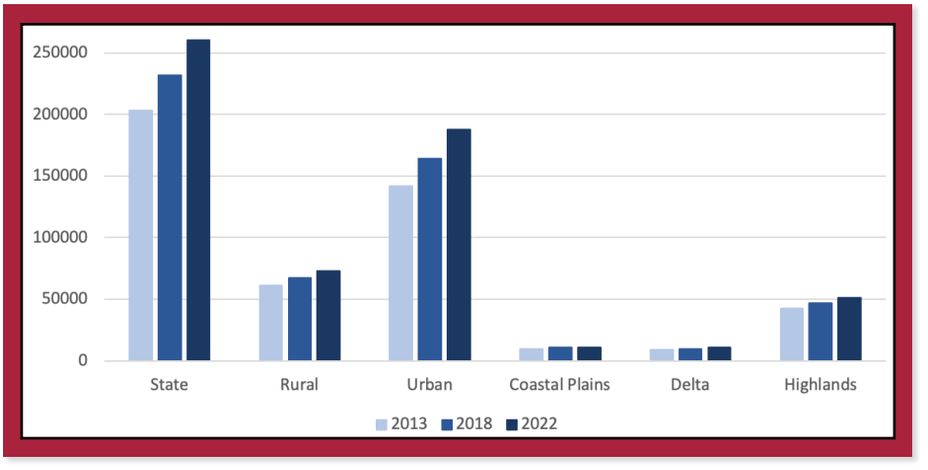
Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2013 to July 1, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE P13. NON-WHITE POPULATION AS A SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS



Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2013 and July 1, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE P14. HISPANIC POPULATION OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS

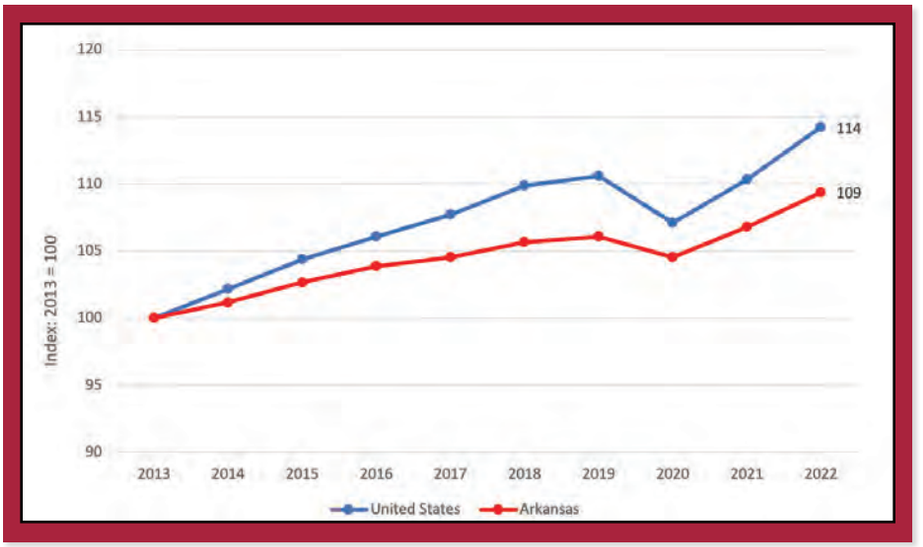


Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2013 and July 1, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

Statewide Employment Trending Up and Recovered from Covid-19 Pandemic

The Arkansas economy, as measured by total employment, declined significantly during the Great Recession, though it nominally recovered to pre-recession levels by 2014. In 2020, employment was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related shocks but recovered and surpassed pre-pandemic employment by 2021 (Figure E1).

FIGURE E1. ARKANSAS AND NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, 2013 TO 2022



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce (2013-2022)

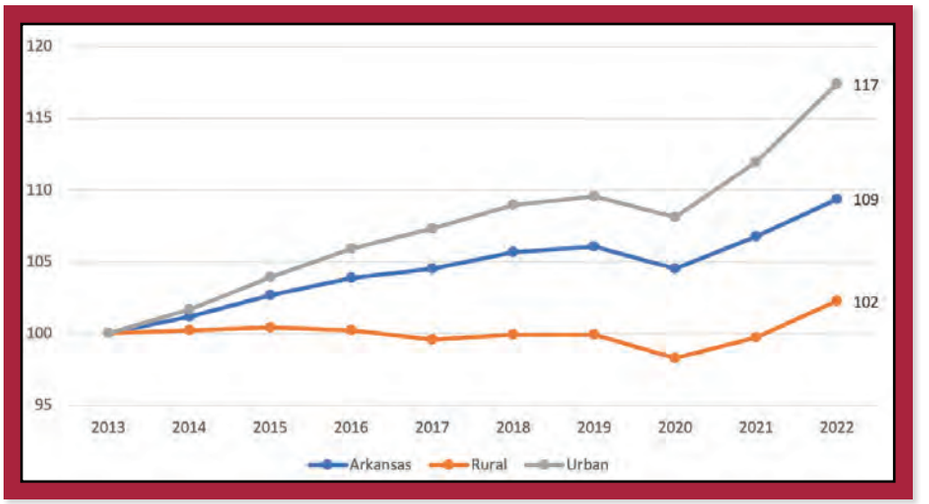
From 2013 to 2022, Arkansas employment grew at roughly two-thirds the rate of U.S. employment growth: 9 percent in Arkansas versus 14 percent nationally. Arkansas' employment growth since 2013 also varied greatly between the rural and urban regions of the state.

Uneven Growth in Rural and Urban Employment

With two years of data findings following the initial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can now identify trends from the past 10 years, aiding in understanding the structure and state of Arkansas' rural and urban economies. Between 2013 and the onset of COVID-19, the urban region increased employment by nearly 10 percent. Collectively, the rural regions' employment was stagnant during this same period.

The initial employment impacts of the pandemic were uniform across all regions. However, urban areas of the state experienced a quicker and more robust recovery while forming a new employment trend. Though employment growth in rural areas has been less by comparison, the recovery has eclipsed the stagnant employment levels since 2013 and pre-COVID, growing 2 percent between 2021 and 2022 (Figure E2).

FIGURE E2. ARKANSAS RURAL AND URBAN COUNTY EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, 2013 TO 2022



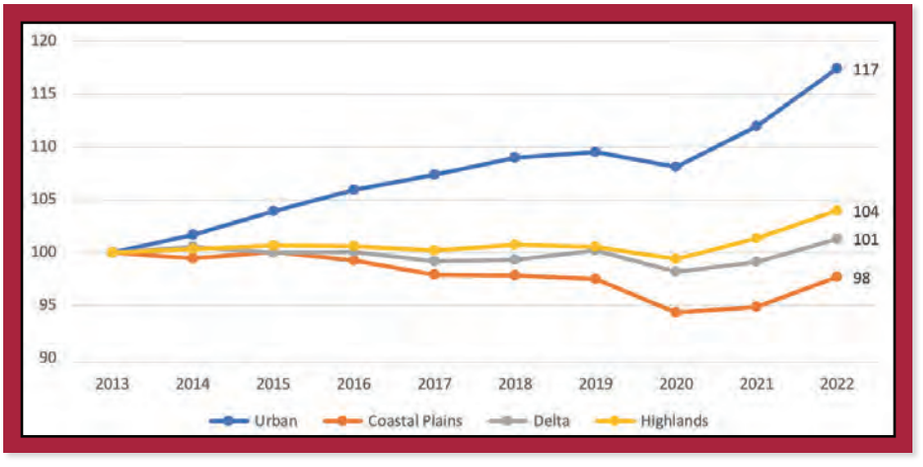
Source: Computed from Regional Economic Accounts, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce

In summary, the Arkansas economy grew by 9 percent from 2013 – 2022, with the urban region witnessing an employment increase of 17 percent while employment in the rural region ultimately gained 2 percent, a change realized post-pandemic.

Employment Challenges in all Three Rural Regions

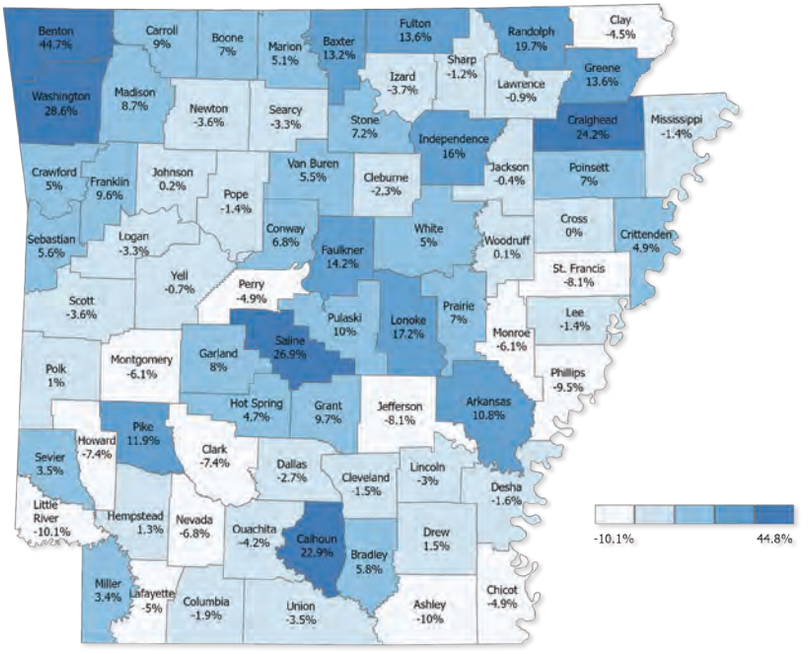
The Great Recession hit all three rural regions hard. Employment remained flat or declined from 2013-2020, then declined again during the pandemic. The urban region, on the other hand, experienced steady growth, COVID notwithstanding. The Coastal Plains Region saw particularly lasting negative employment effects over the past decade, with the largest percent decline in employment, currently still 2 percent below 2013 levels. The Highlands and Delta regions experienced stagnation leading up to the pandemic, but have since gained ground over 2013 employment levels by 4 percent and 1 percent, respectively (Figure E3).

FIGURE E3. ARKANSAS RURAL AND URBAN REGIONS EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, 2013 TO 2022



Source: Computed from Regional Economic Accounts, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce

FIGURE E4. PERCENT CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN 2013 AND 2022



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce

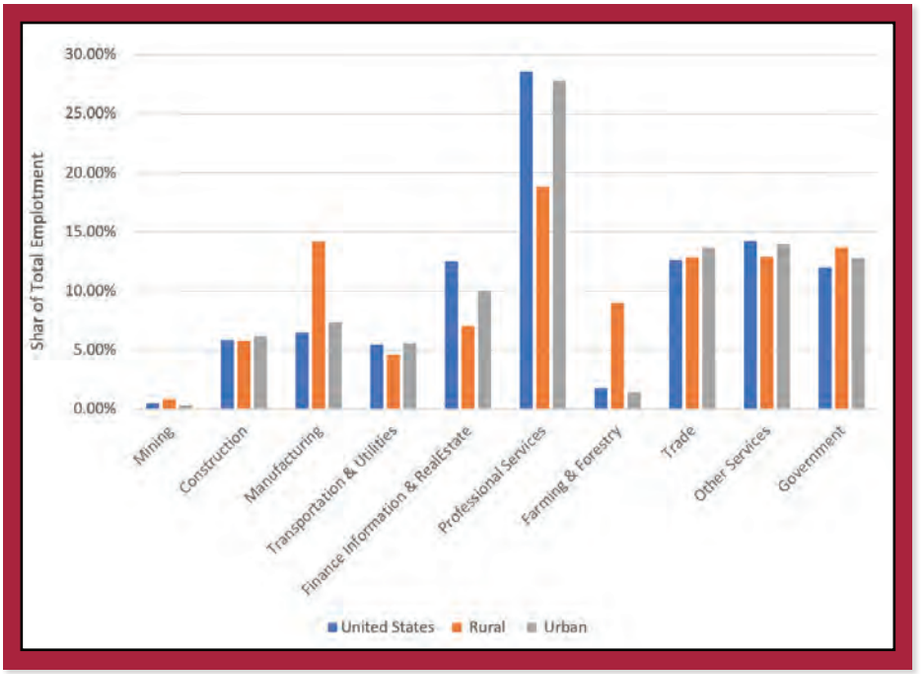
Employment Differences Within Regions

One of the 13 urban counties experienced a decline in the total number of jobs from 2013 to 2022 (Jefferson County). The remaining 12 urban counties had an increase in employment during this period, ranging from 3 percent in Miller County to 45 percent in Benton County.

In the Coastal Plains, eight of 12 counties had a net loss of jobs from 2013 to 2022. Many Delta region counties also struggled to realize employment growth during this period, as 10 of the 16 counties had a net loss of jobs. Across the Highlands region, 15 of the 34 counties had a net loss of jobs.

About 60 percent (38) of all rural counties lost jobs from 2013 to 2019 (pre-COVID). Extending findings past the pandemic through recovery to 2022, 53 percent (33) of all rural counties lost employment, suggesting a relative collective improvement across rural Arkansas since 2019.

FIGURE E5. EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN THE U.S. AND RURAL AND URBAN REGIONS OF ARKANSAS, 2021



Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce

In total, of the 41 Arkansas counties that had net employment gains from 2013 to 2022, the highest rate of job growth occurred in counties that were generally in or surrounding the urban areas of Northwest, Northeast, and Central Arkansas. Fifteen counties, seven urban and eight rural, had 10 percent or greater growth in employment during this period. Employment grew 45 percent in Benton County, 29 percent in Washington County, 27 percent in Saline County, and 24 percent in Craighead County.

Employment by Major Industry Sector

Diversity in the type of industry and sources of income is vital to the success of Arkansas' economy. While the natural resources (Farming & Forestry and Mining) and Manufacturing sectors are critical to the state's economy, the professional services sector provided the largest share of employment in both the urban and rural regions of Arkansas in 2021. However, compared to the U.S. economy, farming & forestry and manufacturing employment remained a much larger share of total employment across the rural Arkansas economy in 2021.

Industry Sector Share in Rural and Urban Counties

Service industry jobs continue to make up a large portion of jobs in both the rural and urban regions of the state. 28 percent of jobs in the urban region and 19 percent of jobs in the rural region are in the professional and other services sectors. The professional services sector employment share in urban Arkansas mirrors that of the greater United States, nearly doubling the second-highest employment sector for each (Figure E5).

Other industry sectors diverged in importance between the rural and urban regions. 24 percent of jobs in the rural region were in the combined sectors of farming & forestry, mining,and manufacturing, compared to 8 percent in the urban region.

Although farming & forestry provide 9 percent of the jobs in rural Arkansas, agriculture and forestry remain vital to the rural region of the state. Many jobs in manufacturing are complementary to the farming & forestry sector, such as processing agriculture and forestry products. Likewise, numerous professional and other services sector jobs are required to support the farming & forestry and Manufacturing industries.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture estimates that one of every seven jobs in Arkansas in 2022 was directly or indirectly tied to the agriculture and forestry sectors. This suggests that a strong agriculture and forestry industry remains vital to the rural region of the state.

While the type of agriculture, forestry, and manufacturing differs among the Rural regions of the state, Figure E6 depicts the importance of these industries to all three rural regions. Combined, the farming & forestry and manufacturing sectors contribute 22-26 percent of total employment in all three rural regions of the state.

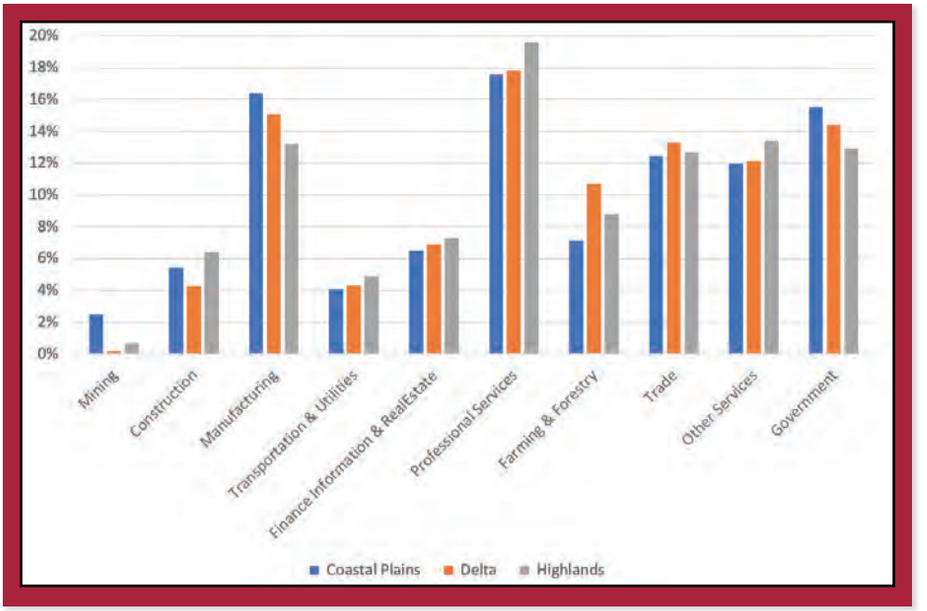
Industry Sector Employment Trends in Rural and Urban Areas

From 2012 to 2021, Arkansas saw a shift away from Government employment. The Urban region lost 6,200 jobs during this period (4 percent). However, rural regions were impacted to a greater degree, eliminating nearly 9,000 workers, or 10 percent. Additionally, the mining sector lost over 9,800 employees across the state, uniformly between urban and rural regions.

Collectively, the rural region experienced a slight loss in trade, transportation & utilities and professional services employment, but registered modest gains in finance, information & real estate, farming & forestry and other services, as well as slight gains in construction and manufacturing between 2012 and 2021.

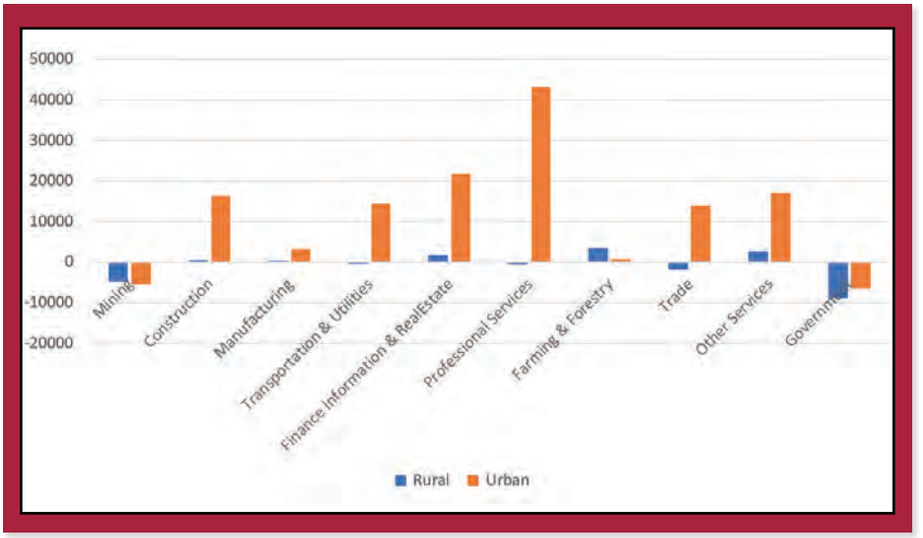
Urban areas of Arkansas gained in all sectors except government, mining, and trade. This includes an increase in manufacturing employment by 3,149. Significant employment gains across the urban region include those in professional services (42,900), finance, information & real estate (21,637), other services (16,926), transportation & utilities (14,189) and trade (13,817).

FIGURE E6. EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN RURAL REGIONS OF ARKANSAS, 2021



Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce

FIGURE E7. EMPLOYMENT CHANGE BY SECTOR IN RURAL AND URBAN REGIONS OF ARKANSAS BETWEEN 2012 AND 2021



Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce (2012-2021)

trade (-1,209) and finance & information (545). Farming & forestry experienced a significant increase (2,618), as did other services (766) during this period.

The most substantial employment loss among the three regions occurred in the Coastal Plains. While a few sectors gained (manufacturing: 494 and farming & forestry: 193), there were deep drops in government (-1,888), mining (-1,450), construction (-1,727), retail trade (-1,091) and professional services (-919). In total, this region lost nearly 7,000 jobs.

Industry Sector Employment Trends by Rural Region

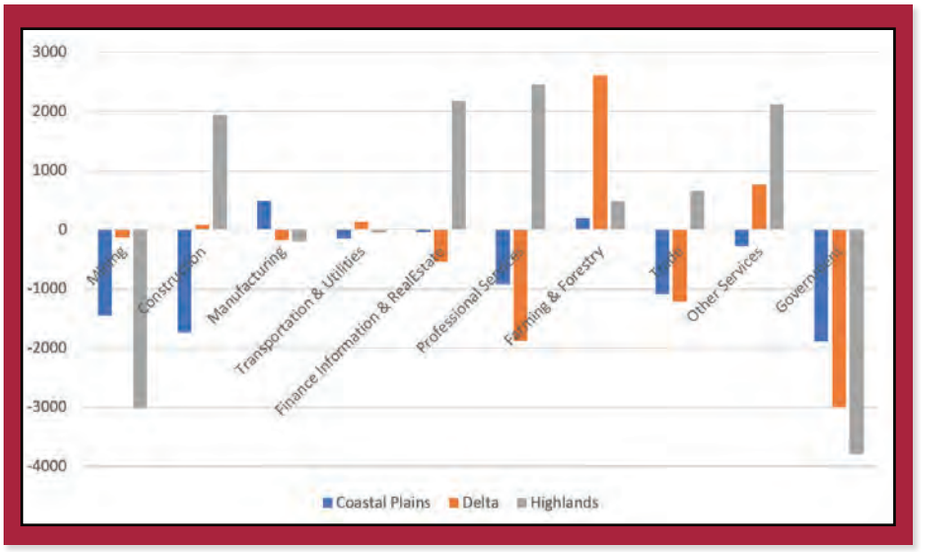
Across rural regions of Arkansas, in particular, there were notable shifts between 2012 and 2021, although there was considerable variation among those regions (Figure E8).

Despite steep losses in government (-3,794) and mining (-3,013) employment, the Highlands region gained 2,809 jobs in total during this period. Significant gains were realized in professional (2,452) and other services (2,121), finance & information (2,179) and construction (1,949). The region also gained in retail trade and farming & forestry. There was a slight decline in manufacturing and transportation employment.

Overall, the Delta region lost 3,325 jobs. Most substantial was the loss of 3,000 government jobs, though significant job loss was also found in professional services (-1,876), retail

The changing structure of the Arkansas economy, especially in the rural areas, suggests a need to diversify and invest in economic enterprises that use and add value to local resources. The increasing need for skilled technicians in many industries suggests that those regions with a skilled and dependable workforce will be in a better position to grow their regional economies.

FIGURE E8. EMPLOYMENT CHANGE BY SECTOR IN RURAL REGIONS OF ARKANSAS BETWEEN 2012 AND 2021

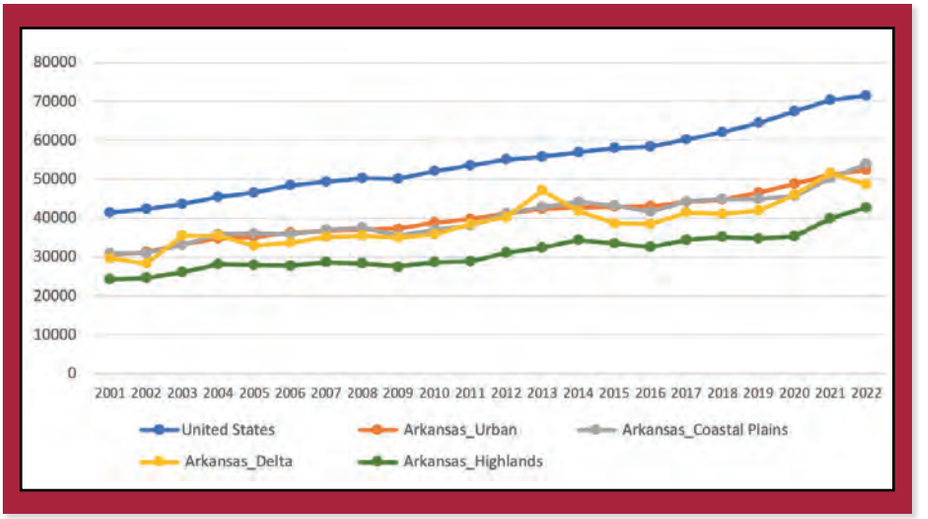


Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce (2012-2021)

Growth in Average Earnings Per Job Since 2010

On average, Arkansans earn about 78 percent of the average earnings nationally. In 2022, the average earnings per job in Arkansas were $55,552 compared to $71,586 nationally. Arkansas' average earnings per job increased by 4.3 percent from 2010 to 2022, outpacing the national growth of 2.2 percent.

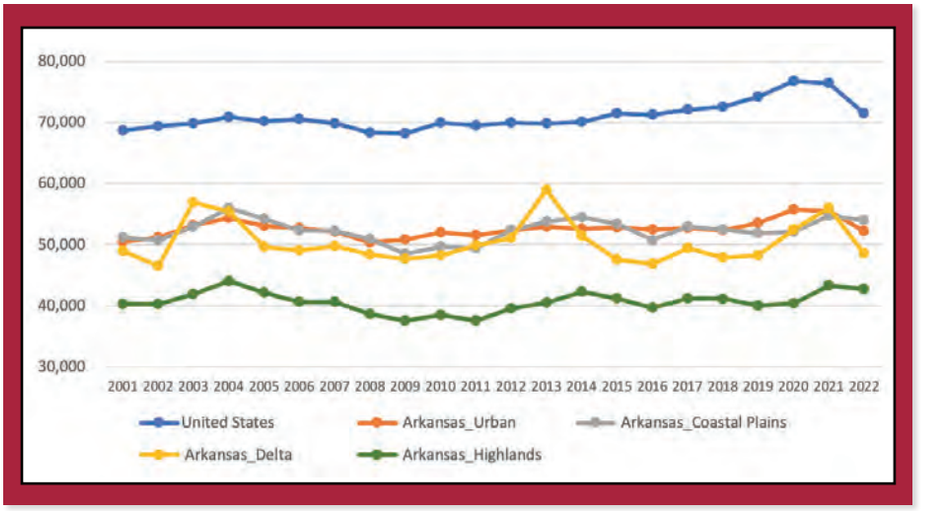
FIGURE E10. NOMINAL AVERAGE EARNINGS PER JOB IN THE U.S. AND ARKANSAS, 2001 TO 2022



Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis (2001-2022), U.S. Department of Commerce
Note: Nominal average compensation per job is the compensation of employees divided by total full-time and part-time wage and salary employment (not adjusted for inflation)

Earnings per job in the urban parts of Arkansas remain higher than in rural areas (Figure E9), though the gap appears to be diminishing to a degree. In 2022, average earnings per job in the rural region were 89 percent of those in the urban region. By comparison, in 2010, rural earnings were only 83 percent of those in urban Arkansas. Collective growth of earnings per job in the Rural region was 7.6 percent compared to the Urban region (0.4 percent), though this has not been high enough to close the persistent gap in earnings. Among the Rural regions, the Highlands consistently had the lowest average earnings per job during this time (Figure E10). Earnings per job ranged from a low of $23,625 in Newton County to a high of $74,317 in Calhoun County in 2022.

FIGURE E9. REAL AVERAGE EARNINGS PER JOB IN THE URBAN AND RURAL REGIONS OF ARKANSAS, 2001 TO 2022

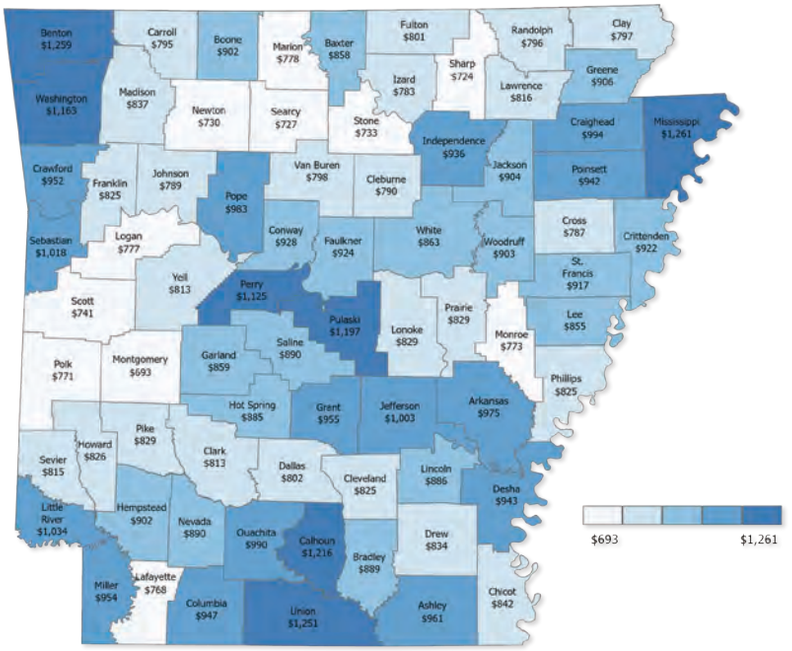


Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce (2001-2022); South Urban Consumer Price Index. (2001-2022), Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Note: Real average compensation per job shows the actual average compensation per job that is calculated by applying the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) on the nominal values

Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages during the 4th Quarter of 2022 in Arkansas were $1,065, 23 percent less than the national average weekly wages ($1,385). Urban counties in Arkansas had higher average weekly wages on average compared to rural counties. In 2022, rural counties averaged an average weekly wage 13 percent lower than urban counties and 37 percent lower than the

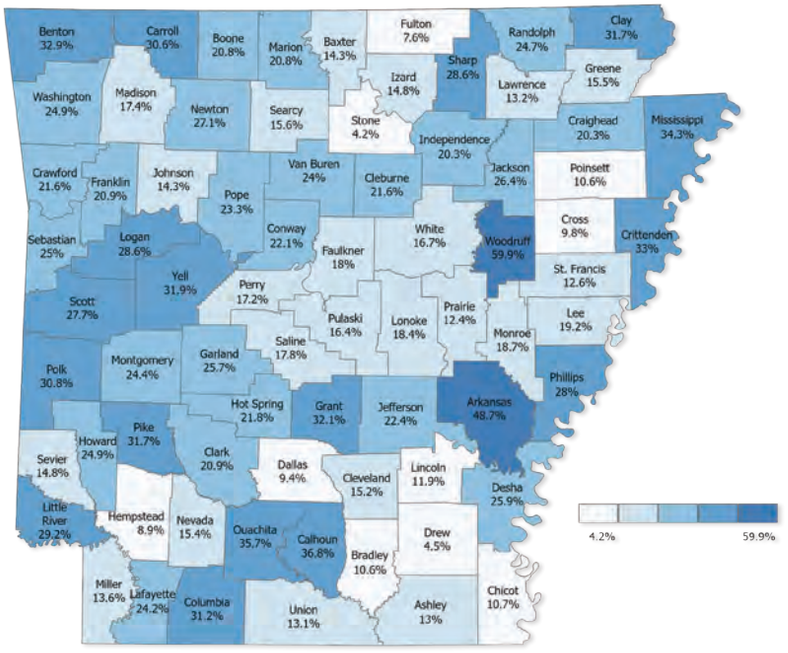
FIGURE E11. AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES BY COUNTY IN ARKANSAS, FOURTH QUARTER 2022 (U.S. AVERAGE = $1,385)



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

national average. In 2022, the average weekly wage of counties in the rural region was $869 compared to $997 in the urban region. Average weekly wages in 2022 varied greatly among counties, ranging from a low of $693 in Montgomery County to a high of $1,261 in Mississippi County (Figure E11).

FIGURE E12. 5-YEAR MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ESTIMATES PERCENTAGE CHANGES BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022



Sources: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018 to 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau, 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars

Median Household Income

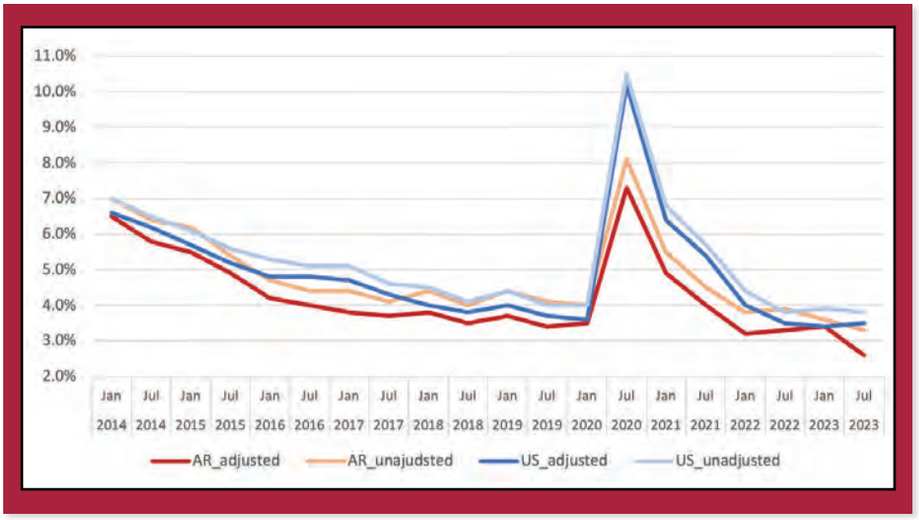
Median household income in Arkansas increased 23 percent from 2018 to 2022, a quicker rate than the 18 percent growth rate of nominal average earnings per job for the same period.

The median household income in Arkansas was $56,335 in 2022. Urban counties in Arkansas had higher median household incomes ($59,588) on average compared to Arkansas' rural counties ($47,436). Median household income varied greatly among counties, ranging from a low of $33,801 in Lee County to a high of $85,269 in Benton County. The change in median household income from 2018 - 2022 also varied by county (Figure E12). Median household income grew from a high of 60 percent in Woodruff County to a low of 4 percent in Stone County from 2018 to 2022.

Covid-19, Fluctuating Labor Force Levels and Unemployment

Returning to a normalized pattern following the COVID-19 pandemic allows us to assess the greater impact the pandemic had on the labor market and unemployment during the years 2020 through 2022. The U.S. adjusted unemployment rate increased from 3.6 percent to 10.2 percent between January 2020 and July 2020, whereas the Arkansas unemployment rate increased from 3.5 percent to 7.3 percent during this same period. By January 2021, Arkansas' adjusted unemployment rate had dropped below

FIGURE E13. ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN THE U.S. AND ARKANSAS OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS (2023 DATA IS PRELIMINARY)



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2014-2023)

5 percent and subsequently settled at 3.2 percent in January 2022. Nationally, unemployment rates returned to pre-COVID-19 levels by July 2022. (Figure E13).

Rural Versus Urban Unemployment

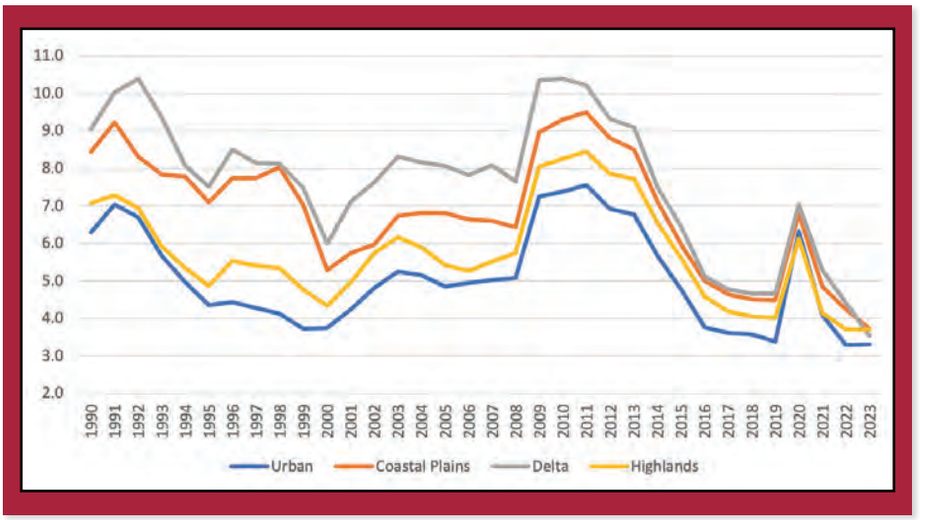
Typically, the official unemployment rate has been higher in rural areas of Arkansas. This is the case dating back to at least 1990. During a brief period in 2020, however, the official unemployment rate in the urban region was near or above that of the rural region, though final annual unemployment findings for 2020 presented an urban rate of 6.3 percent and a rural rate of 6.5 percent.

Recent years have seen a tightening of unemployment rates between rural and urban regions of Arkansas. During the late 1990s, unemployment rates in rural Arkansas generally were more than 50 percent higher than in urban Arkansas. Between the early 2000s and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, rural unemployment typically ran 20 to 30 percent higher than in urban areas. Though rural unemployment rates once again exceeded urban unemployment rates following the pandemic, the rural unemployment rate in 2023 was 3.7 percent as compared to 3.3 percent across urban counties of Arkansas. The adjusted unemployment rates were 10.4 percent and 9.4 percent in the rural and urban regions, respectively, in September 2020 (Figure E14).

Entrepreneurial Spirit and Patent Origination in Arkansas

Counting patents registered across Arkansas, total patents are the sum of design patents, plant patents, reissue patents, and utility patents. Arkansas has lagged the nation in patent registration over the past 30 years, though to a lesser degree over recent years. In 2019, Arkansas ranked 39th in patent registration among U.S. states and the District of Columbia, with 2.0 patents originating per 10,000 people. By comparison, leading the nation

FIGURE E14. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY REGIONS IN ARKANSAS, 1990-2023 (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED; 2023 DATA IS PRELIMINARY)

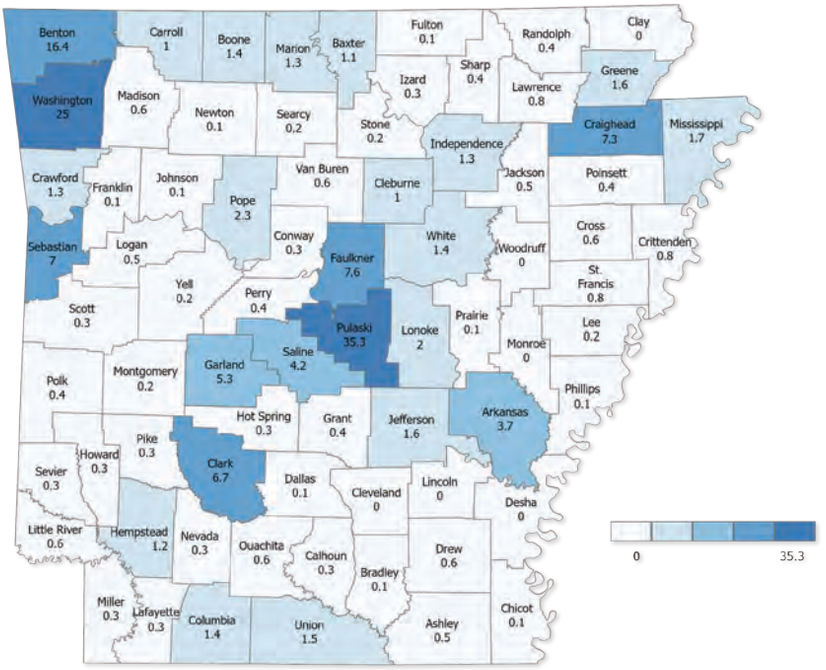


Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

were Massachusetts and California, with nearly 13 patents originating per 10,000 people. Mississippi and Alaska ranked lowest, with patents registered of less than 1.0 per 10,000. The total number of new patents for the entire country in 2019 was 186,022.

Arkansas originated 1.0 patents per 10,000 people in 2015 (Figure E15). In 2019 and 2020, Arkansas originated 2.0 patents per 10,000 people and 1.8 patents per 10,000 people, respectively. The annual rate of change in patent origination in Arkansas between 2015 and 2020 was 11.8 percent. Across the United States, patent origination per 10,000 people in 2015 and 2020 was 4.8 and 5.5, respectively, which represents an annual rate of change of 2.72 percent.

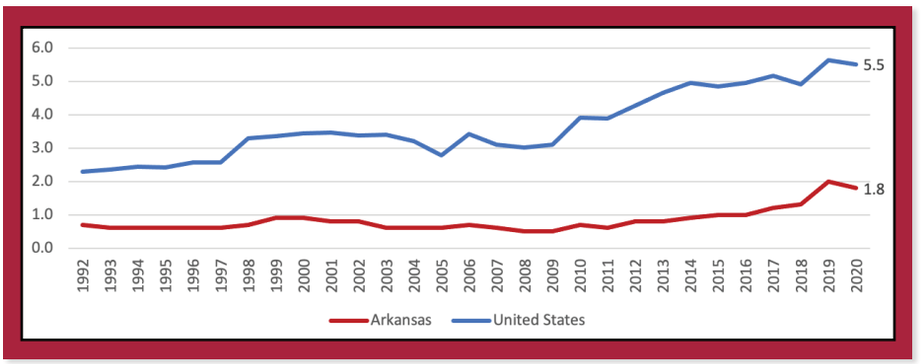
FIGURE E16. AVERAGE UTILITY PATENT GRANTS IN ARKANSAS, 2000-2015



Sources: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Measuring the distribution of patents awarded across the state between 2000 and 2015 (Figure E16), the urban region and areas represented by institutions of higher learning experienced higher rates of patent awards per 10,000 population, with Pulaski County (35.3), Washington County (25) and Benton County (16.4) far exceeding other counties. In addition to the above-mentioned counties, the following represent the top 10 counties where utility patents were secured: Faulkner (7.6), Craighead (7.3), Sebastian (7.0), Clark (6.7), Garland (5.3), Saline (4.2) and Arkansas County (3.7).

FIGURE E15. TOTAL PATENTS ORIGINATING PER 10K PERSONS IN ARKANSAS AND THE U.S., 1992-2020



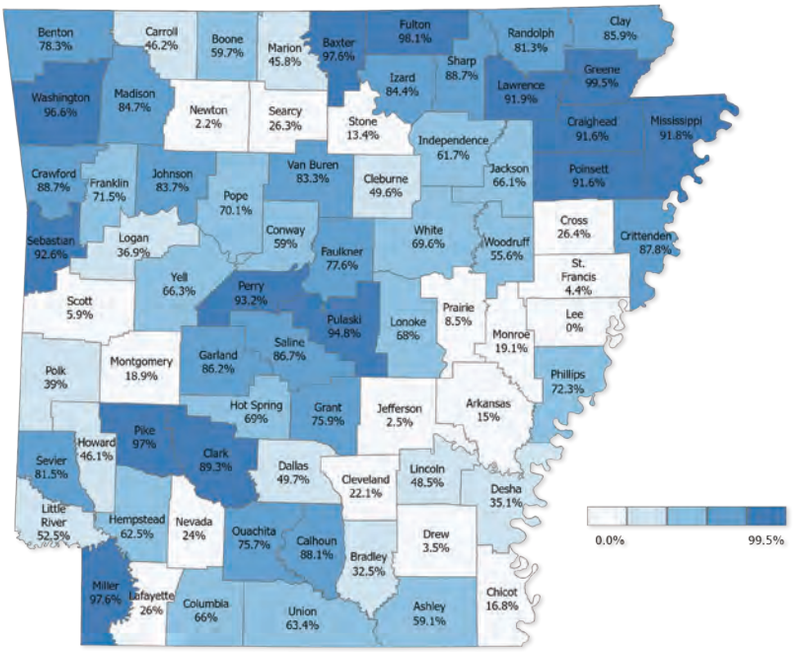
Sources: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
(the U.S. number was calculated from the total U.S. population divided by the total number of patent grants in the U.S.)

Modern infrastructure is essential for a growing, healthy economy and allows for an improved overall quality of life. Good infrastructure connects people and businesses to the global economy, provides enhanced opportunities for education and employment and is necessary for the health of residents. Providing this critical infrastructure is more difficult for rural counties that have less ability to generate local tax revenue. If unable to maintain basic infrastructure, these counties will likely experience a continuing cycle of decline in revenue, infrastructure and economic power.

Broadband

High-speed internet access is a quintessential component of modern infrastructure, which the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted. Governmental agencies, workers, students, schools and businesses rely on internet access to connect them to markets and information. Though improvements have been made in high-speed broadband across Arkansas, rural Arkansans' access to it remains low.

FIGURE I1. PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO 250/25 MBPS FIXED BROAD-BAND, JUNE 30, 2023



Sources: FCC National Broadband Map, Federal Communications Commission (accessed January 23, 2024)

On March 14, 2024, the Federal Communications Commission announced a new speed benchmark of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload (100/20 Mbps) to define high-quality broadband internet. The previous benchmark set by the FCC in 2015 was 25/3 Mbps. Noting improvement in Arkansas, 100 percent of the population lived in areas with 100/20 Mbps fixed broadband internet access, 60 percent of Arkansans have access to 250/25 Mbps and 40 percent have access to 1000/100 speeds, and 40 percent have access to 1000/100 Mbps speeds.

To provide a general comparison of internet speeds and user capabilities, consider the following:

- An internet speed of 100/20 Mbps allows users to perform most common online activities like browsing the web, streaming HD videos on multiple devices, playing online games, downloading large files, participating in video conferences and working remotely without significant lag. The FCC considers a speed of 100/20 to be the current standard for broadband internet.
- An internet speed of 250/25 Mbps allows users to stream high-definition videos on multiple devices simultaneously, play online games with minimal lag, host video conferences, download large files quickly and generally handle heavy internet usage without interruption.
- An internet speed of 1000/100 Mbps allows users to perform high-bandwidth activities like streaming multiple 4K videos simultaneously, play online games with minimal lag, download large files very quickly, support multiple users engaged in demanding internet activities and efficiently manage a large network of smart home devices without experiencing slowdowns.

Source: https://www.allconnect.com/blog/internet-speed-classifications-what-is-fast-internet

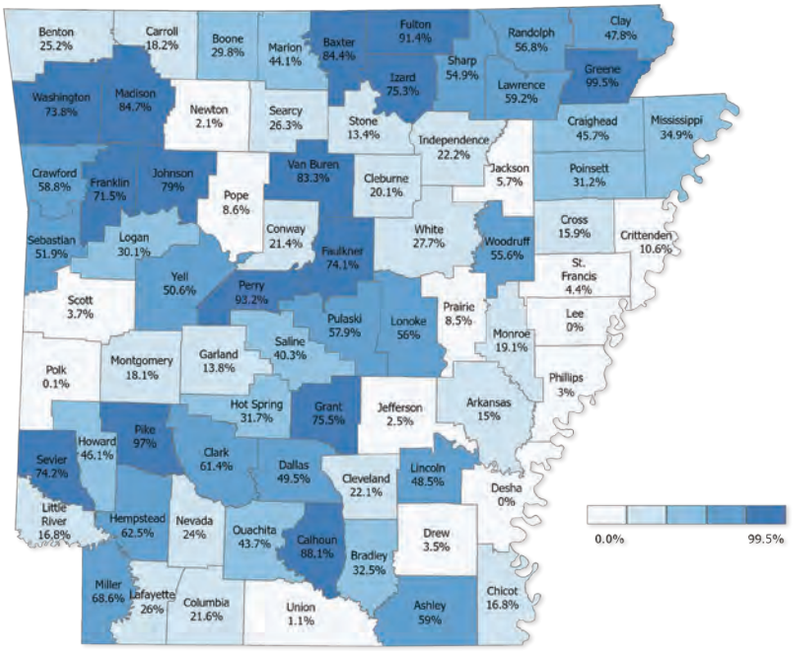
While 100/20 Mbps coverage is now universal across Arkansas, there is a wide gap between urban and rural regions of the state with respect to 250/25 Mbps download/upload speed (Figure I1), with 81 percent of urban areas having access while only 56 percent of rural areas experiencing the same. Supporting covered speeds of 250/25, five counties provide coverage of less than 5 percent (St. Francis: 4.4 percent; Drew: 3.45 percent; Jefferson: 2.55 percent; Newton: 2.21 percent; and Lee: 0 percent).

Regarding 1000/100 Mbps internet coverage, there is only a slight separation between urban (45 percent) and rural (39 percent) coverage. There is a greater gap between the various rural regions, with the Highlands region exceeding the urban region, supporting a coverage of 47 percent, while the Coastal Plains' coverage is 33 percent, and that of the Delta region is 25 percent. (Figure I2).

Many people rely on wireless networks for internet access. Fourth generation mobile broadband internet access, or 4G, began to come online in 2011 followed by more advanced 5G networks in 2019. Across Arkansas, the population is served to a varying degree by 4G (5/1 Mbps) and 5G (7/1 Mbps and 35/3 Mbps) service. Statewide, there is an 88 percent coverage with 4G, while 62 percent of the State has access to 5G 7/1 Mbps speed, and 30 percent has access to 5G 35/3 Mbps speed.

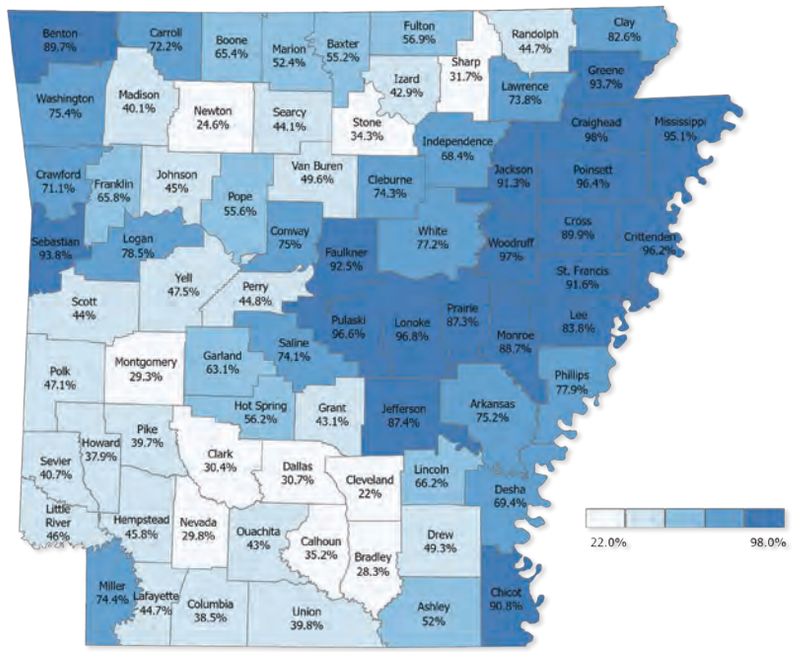
Although 96 percent of the population in the urban region has 4G coverage, rural access varies. Coverage in the Delta region is 97 percent, Coastal Plains coverage is 88 percent, and the Highlands region has 80 percent coverage. Counties with the highest level of 4G coverage include Craighead (99.99 percent); Greene

FIGURE I2. PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO 1000/100 MBPS FIXED BROADBAND, JUNE 30, 2023



Sources: FCC National Broadband Map, Federal Communications Commission (accessed January 23, 2024)

FIGURE I3. PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO 7/1 MBPS 5G MOBILE BROAD-BAND, JUNE 30, 2023



Sources: FCC National Broadband Map, Federal Communications Commission (accessed January 23, 2024)

(99.88); Pulaski (99.67); Lonoke (99.57); and Woodruff and Jefferson Counties (each at 99.49). Counties supporting the lowest service area coverage include Madison (63.82 percent); Stone (63.71); Johnson (63.06); Searcy (63.02); and Newton (39.94).

The differences in 5G coverage across urban and Rural regions vary greatly. Overall, 85 percent of the urban region had speeds of 7/1 Mbps compared to 58 percent across rural regions. As with 4G coverage, Delta access is much higher (86 percent) compared to Highlands (51 percent) and Coastal Plains (40 percent). Detailed county level coverage is presented in Figure I3.

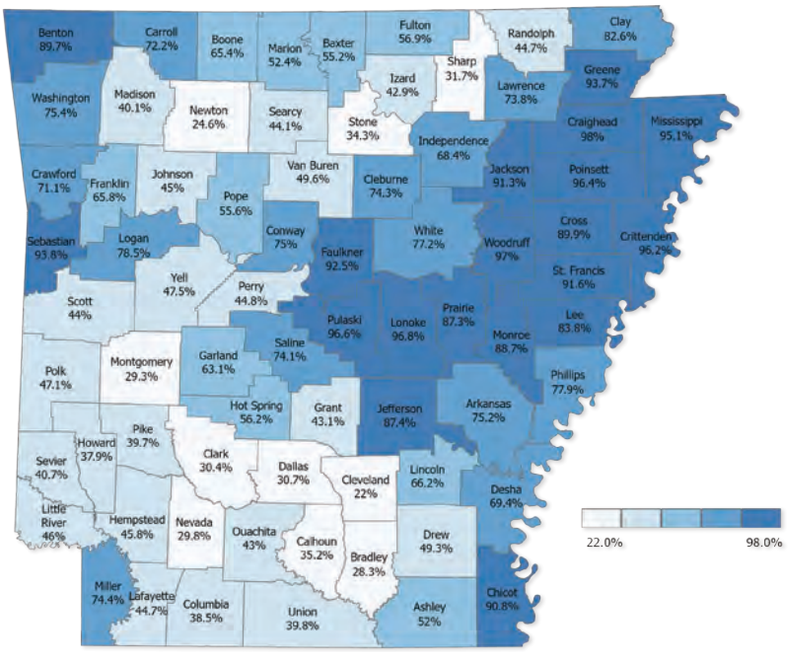
The percentage of population with 5G 35/3 Mbps service also varies greatly across regions. At 59 percent, access in the urban region more than doubles that of rural regions (24 percent). Delta coverage is highest (31 percent) followed by Highlands (24 percent) and Coastal Plains (15 percent). County level percentages are presented in Figure I4. The four counties with the highest level of 5G 35/3 speed coverage are located in central Arkansas (Benton - 69.93 percent; Faulkner – 70.86 percent; Lonoke – 75.24 percent; and Pulaski – 81.53 percent). Six counties support 5G 35/3 coverage at a level less than 12 percent (Montgomery – 11.9 percent; Nevada – 11.44 percent; Sharp – 11.13 percent; Dallas – 10.46 percent; Bradley – 9.03 percent; and Cleveland – 7.81 percent).

High-speed broadband availability, especially in rural counties of the state, remains a critical problem for state and local governments to address. Factors such as topography, population density and consumer demand contribute to this. However, providing the availability of high-speed broadband does not always provide access. Many individuals, households and businesses cannot afford to purchase computers and connect to the internet or lack the knowledge and technical skills to access and use digital tools to their advantage. The Arkansas State Broadband Office, through the Arkansas Digital Skills and Opportunity Plan, has set goals and identified strategies to help address these needs.

Bridge Condition

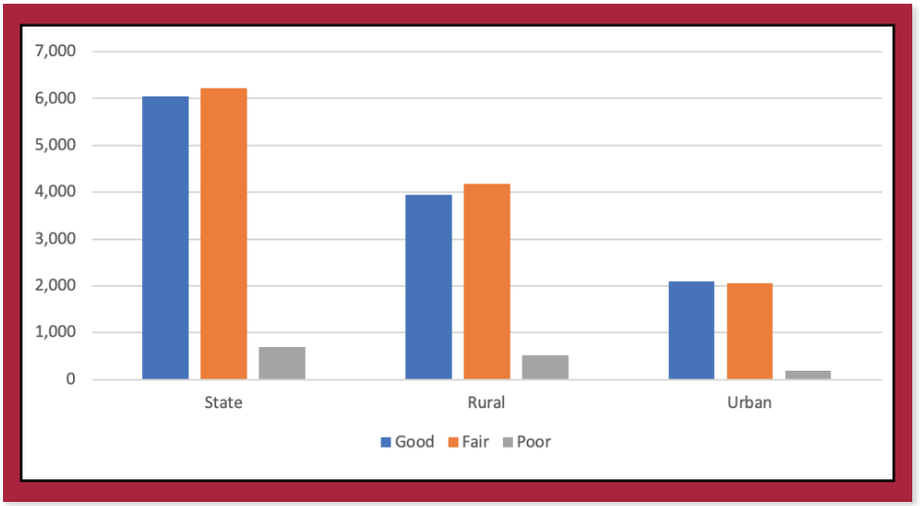
The majority of Arkansas' 12,962 state, county and city bridges are in good or fair condition. 47 percent were rated as good, 48 percent as fair and 5 percent as poor (structurally deficient) by the Federal Highway Administration in 2023 (Figure I5). There was no significant difference between rural and urban counties in the percentage of bridges rated as good, fair or poor in 2023. Of bridges rated as being in poor condition, 513 were in rural counties, and 184 were in urban counties.

FIGURE I4. PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO 35/3 MBPS 5G MOBILE BROAD-BAND, JUNE 30, 2023



Sources: FCC National Broadband Map, Federal Communications Commission (accessed January 23, 2024)

FIGURE I5. CONDITION OF ARKANSAS BRIDGES IN THE STATE AND RURAL AND URBAN COUNTIES, 2023



Source: Bridge Condition by County 2023, Federal Highway Administration

The Delta had the highest rate of structurally deficient bridges among the rural regions (9.2 percent). The Coastal Plains had the fewest number of structurally deficient bridges (38) and the lowest rate (2.4 percent).

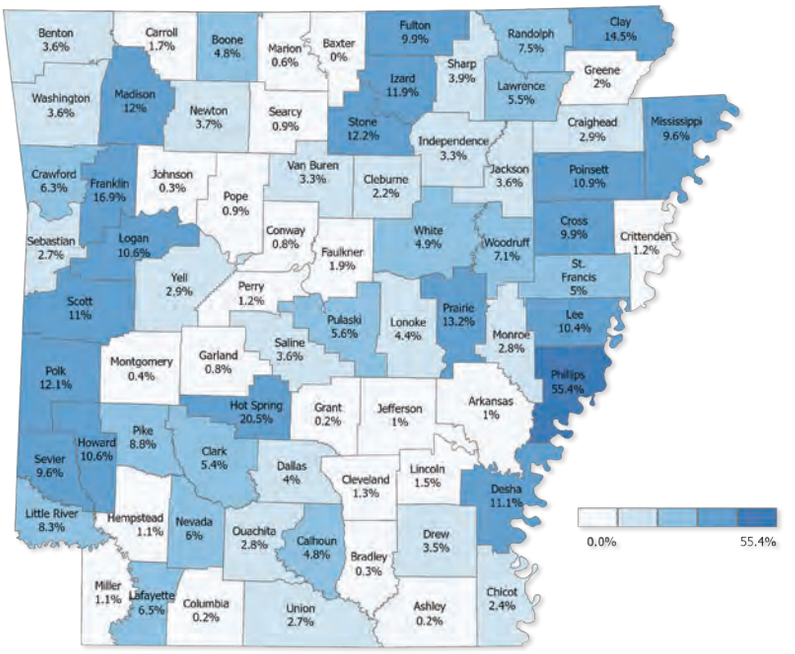
Many of the structurally deficient bridges were concentrated across fewer counties, while one county (Baxter) had no bridges classified as structurally deficient. Thirteen Arkansas counties maintained at least 10 percent of their bridge stock as structurally deficient. Three counties had bridges with a structural deficiency greater than 15 percent, including Madison County at 15.6 percent, Poinsett County at 15.9 percent and Phillips County with the highest rate of structurally deficient bridges at 25 percent (Figure I6).

Bridges vary considerably in size and, therefore, in maintainance costs. Although the Urban region represents nearly a third of the bridges in the state, those bridges make up 46 percent of the total surface area of all bridges in the state. Bridge conditions in Arkansas, as measured by square meters, suggest that 46 percent were good, 49 percent fair, and 5 percent poor. These ratios vary slightly between rural and urban counties, with poor-rated bridges making up 6.1 percent of all rural bridges and only 3.6 percent of urban bridges.

Drinking Water

The Environmental Protection Agency maintains regulations for public drinking water and records violations of those standards for communities across the nation. Drinking water regulations protect public health by identifying potentially dangerous drinking

FIGURE I6. PERCENT OF POOR BRIDGE CONDITION AREAS, 2023

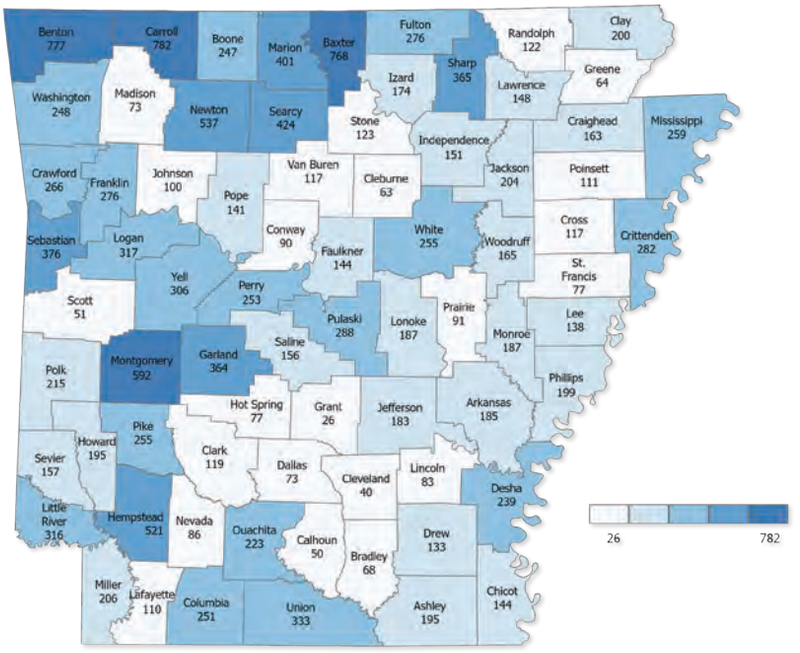


Source: Bridge Condition by County 2023, Federal Highway Administration

water conditions. Contaminants evaluated by the EPA include metals such as lead and copper, and various chemicals and carcinogens. These contaminants are evaluated based on the impacts of short-term and long-term exposure, which may lead to adverse health effects, including lead poisoning or cancer.

According to the analysis of the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Information System, all of Arkansas' 75 counties had some form of drinking water violation in 2023. Rural counties were cited for 78 percent of the State's violations. Counties of the Highlands were responsible for over 60 percent of all rural violations. More than a quarter of all violations occurred in the following seven counties: Baxter, Benton, Carroll, Hempstead, Montgomery, Newton and Searcy. (Figure I7).

FIGURE I7. NUMBER OF DRINKING WATER VIOLATIONS, 2023



Source: SDWIS Fed Reporting Services System, EPA

* The number of violations was duplicated and equally counted in their service area if the water providers covered multiple counties.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRESS

Arkansas is frequently among the states with the highest levels of social and economic stress indicators, and rural regions of the state have higher levels of economic stress than the urban region. Markers of economic stress are part of a complex and interrelated web of community well-being characteristics. Poverty and food insecurity, for instance, are both products and drivers of other indicators like education and health. People living in rural areas of Arkansas are especially likely to face social and economic stresses compared to those living in urban areas. We use several indicators to provide a snapshot of the social and economic stress experienced by Arkansans, including:

- Adults and children living in poverty
- People experiencing food insecurity
- People participating in food assistance programs like SNAP
- Households with high housing cost burdens

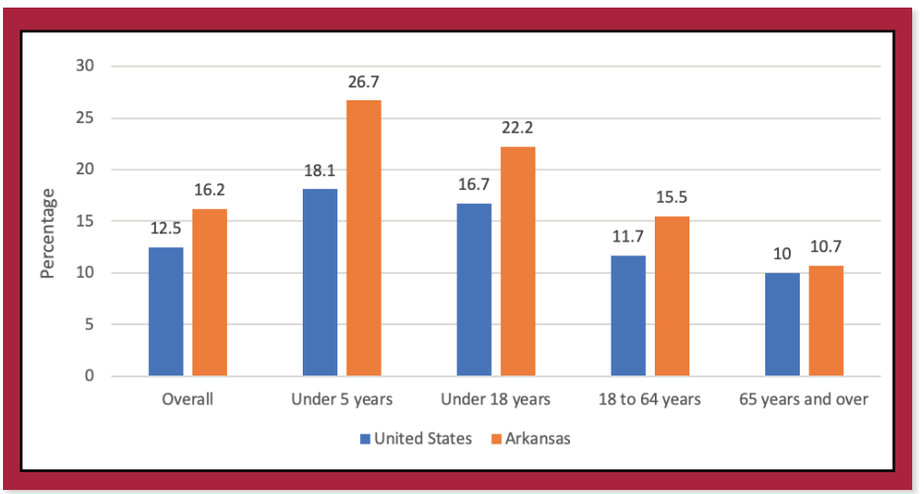
Poverty Remains High with Some Improvements

With nearly 475,000 Arkansans at or below the federal poverty level in 2022 (Figure SES1), Arkansas has a poverty rate (16.2 percent), which is 30 percent higher than the U.S. average (12.5 percent). This marks a slight improvement in the overall poverty rate from 2018, when 17.6 percent of all residents lived below the federal poverty line. Similarly, the poverty rate of children under 18 years dropped slightly from 25 percent to 22 percent during the same period.

Poverty rates varied among the different population cohorts, though have remained consistently higher than the national average. In 2022, the child poverty rate for children under 18 years was 22 percent, which was 33 percent higher than the national average of 17 percent for the same age group. Child poverty for children under 5 years was 27 percent, which was nearly 50 percent higher than the national rate of 18 percent. For adults aged 18 to 64 years, the 2022 poverty rate was 15.5 percent. Nationally, the poverty rate for the same population range was 11.7 percent. The poverty rate for adults 65 years and older was 10.7 percent, a level marginally greater than the 10 percent national rate for the same.

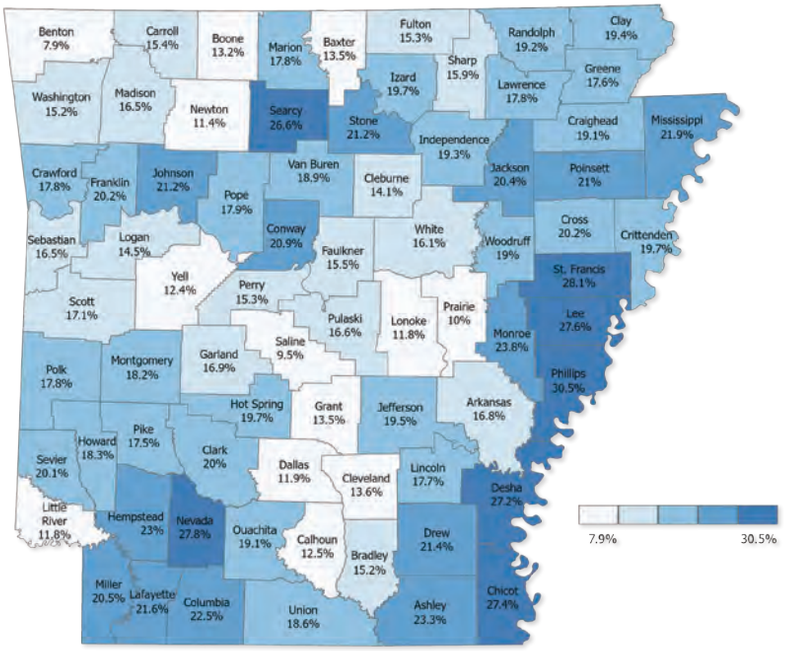
There were substantial differences in the percentage of people in poverty across regions of the state and among counties in 2022 (Figure SES2). The poverty rate in Arkansas' urban counties was 15.9 percent, while rural Arkansas' poverty rate was 18.8 percent. As a region, the Delta region possessed the highest poverty rate of 21.8 percent. Total poverty rates across Arkansas ranged from a high of 30.5 percent in Phillips County to a low of 7.9 percent in Benton County.

FIGURE SES1. POVERTY STATUS BY AGE, 2022



Sources: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months (5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022), U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE SES2. POVERTY RATE BY COUNTY, 2022



Sources: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months (5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022), U.S. Census Bureau

Among adults aged 65 and older, poverty rates increased statewide from 10 percent in 2018 to 10.7 percent in 2022. The rural region saw senior poverty rates increase from 11 percent to 12.7 percent during that period, while the urban region increased from 9 percent in 2018 to 10.7 percent in 2022.

Child Poverty Rates High but Declining in Rural Areas

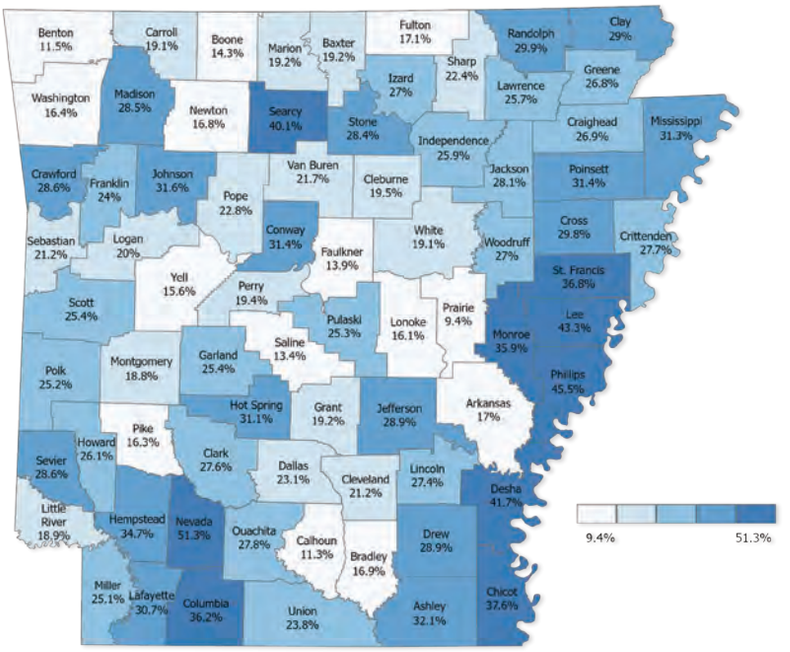
Like total poverty rates, rates of child poverty were higher in the rural region compared to the urban region in 2022. However, child poverty rates in rural counties have decreased from 29 percent to 26 percent between 2018 and 2022. Across urban counties, child poverty rates have decreased very slightly from 22 percent in 2018 to just below 22 percent in 2022.

In 2018, the highest county level of child poverty was recorded at 53 percent in Phillips County. In 2022, the highest level of child poverty was 51 percent, in Nevada County. Prairie County registered the lowest level of child poverty in 2022 (9.4 percent). Ten counties in 2022 registered more than one-third of children living in poverty. This marks a notable improvement from 2018 when 21 counties had more than a third of children living in poverty. Of the 10 counties mentioned, all are rural counties (Figure SES3).

Food Insecurity Remains a Concern in Arkansas

Another measure of household vulnerability is food insecurity. According to the USDA, food-insecure households do not have constant access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all people in the household. A household would be considered food insecure even if they only have trouble accessing enough quality

FIGURE SES3. CHILD (PEOPLE UNDER AGE 18) POVERTY RATE, 2022

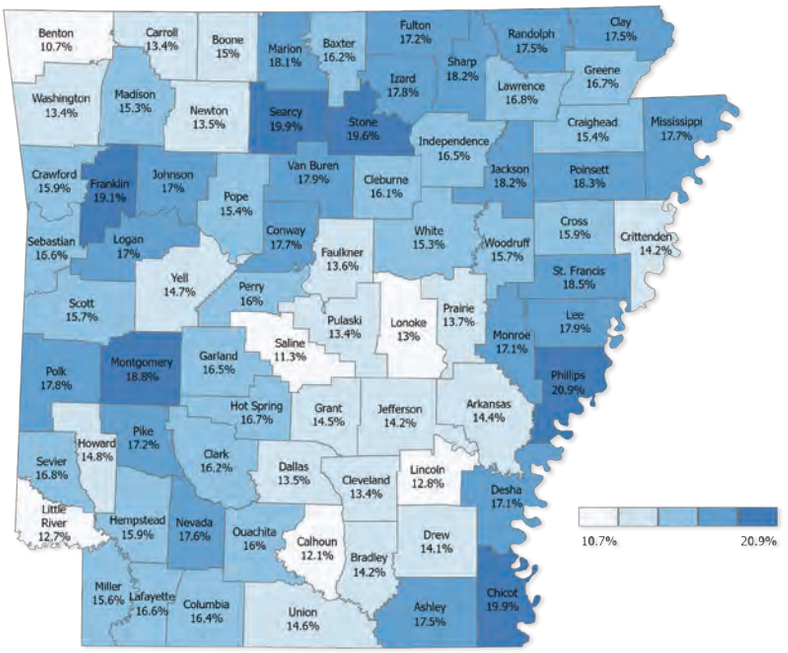


Sources: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months (5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022), U.S. Census Bureau

meals for part of the year. Food-insecure households may experience concern over where their next meal is coming from, lower quality diets, and family members who skip meals for all or part of the year. Food insecurity may lead to hunger, but it is not a measure of hunger. Food insecurity indicates that a household is struggling and may at times have to make choices between adequate food and other basic needs, such as housing or medicines.

Nationally, approximately 11 percent of the population was food insecure in 2022. Statewide, the figure was near 17 percent (Figure SES4).

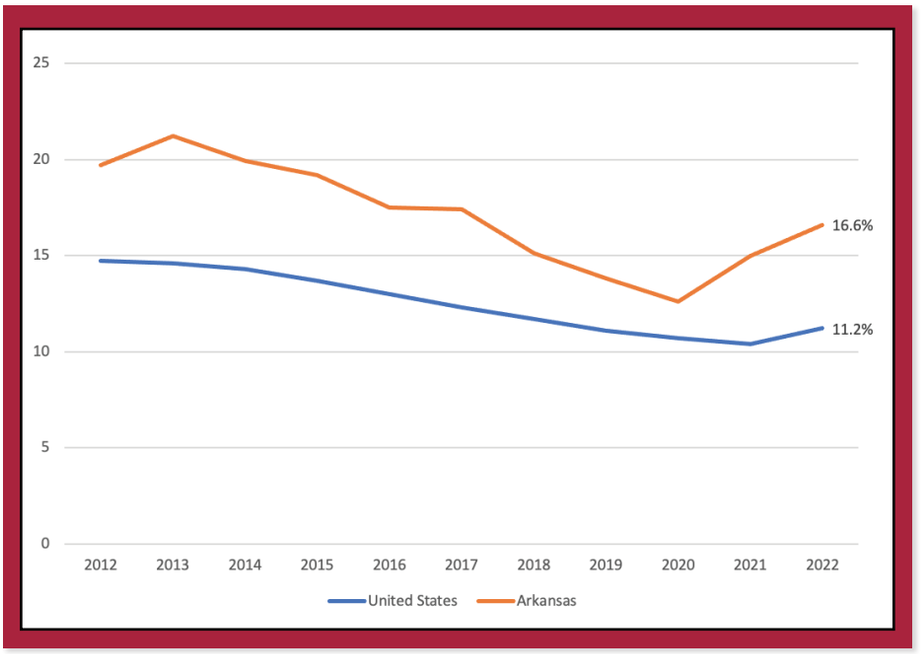
FIGURE SES5. FOOD INSECURITY RATE BY COUNTY, 2021



Sources: Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap 2023

Across Arkansas in 2021, approximately 441,000 people, or just under 15 percent of the population, faced food insecurity. Within Arkansas, rural areas experienced slightly more food insecurity compared to urban areas of the state, 16.5 percent and 13 percent, respectively. The Delta had the highest regional rate at 18 percent overall. Factors like access to grocery stores, income levels, and job availability may contribute to increased rates of food insecurity in rural areas of Arkansas.

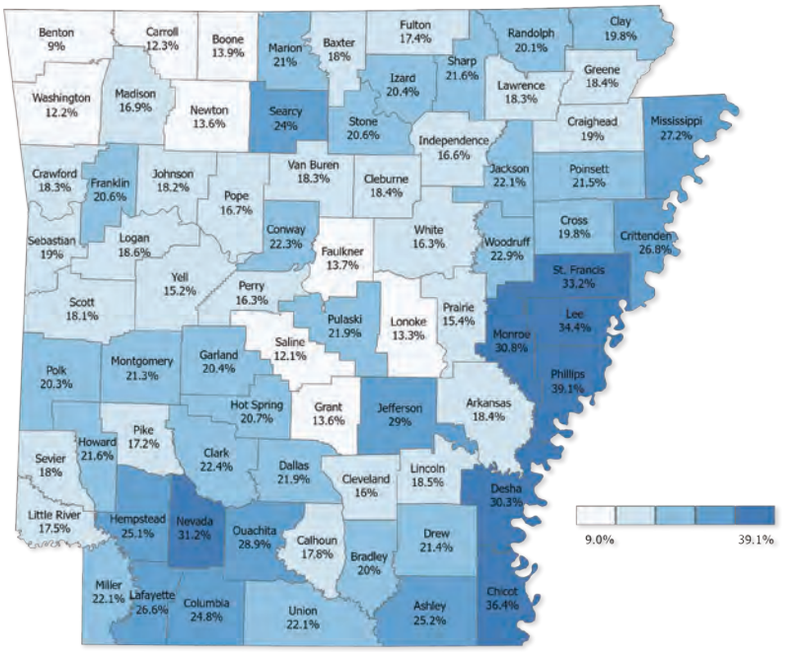
FIGURE SES4. HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY RATE, 2022



Sources: Household Food Security in the United States (3 year moving average, 2012-2022), Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture)

Generally, rates of food insecurity are higher for children than for adults. This was true nationally and across all regions of Arkansas. The rural region had a rate of child food insecurity at 21 percent, while urban region had a rate of 17 percent. Within the rural regions, the Delta had the highest rate of child food insecurity at 26 percent. Seven counties experienced a child food insecurity rate greater than 30 percent in 2021 (Desha: 30.3

FIGURE SES6. CHILD (PEOPLE UNDER AGE 18) FOOD INSECURITY RATE BY COUNTY, 2021



Sources: Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap 2023

percent; Monroe: 30.8 percent; Nevada: 31.2 percent; St. Francis: 33.2 percent; Lee: 34.4 percent; Chicot: 36.4 percent; and Phillips: 39.1 percent). Figure SES6 shows the geographic distribution of food insecurity rates for children.

Food Assistance

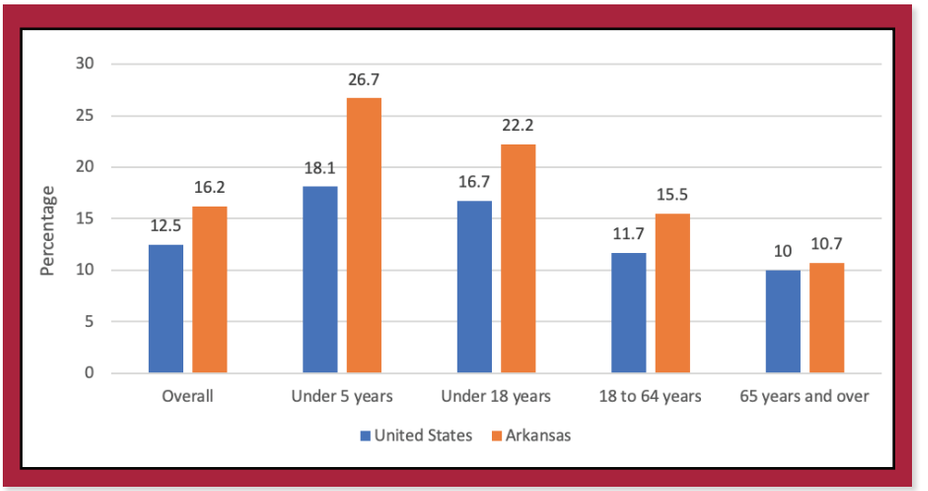
Statewide, more than 462,000 Arkansans (15 percent) received food assistance through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2022, formerly known as food stamps. Although many Arkansans receive SNAP assistance, the number has been declining since the peak in 2013 (Figure SES7). Free and reduced-price school lunch is another important part of food assistance in Arkansas and across the nation. According to the Arkansas Department of Education, approximately 274,000 students in Arkansas received free lunches, and around 35,000 received reduced-price lunches, accounting for about 66 percent of total enrollments during the 2020-2021 school year.

Snap Rates Higher in Rural Arkansas

People in rural counties were more likely to receive SNAP benefits than in urban counties in 2022. About one in six residents in rural counties (18 percent, compared to 13 percent of residents in urban counties, received SNAP benefits in 2022. Of the rural regions, the Delta had the highest rate of SNAP recipients at 24 percent, followed by the Coastal Plains with 20 percent.

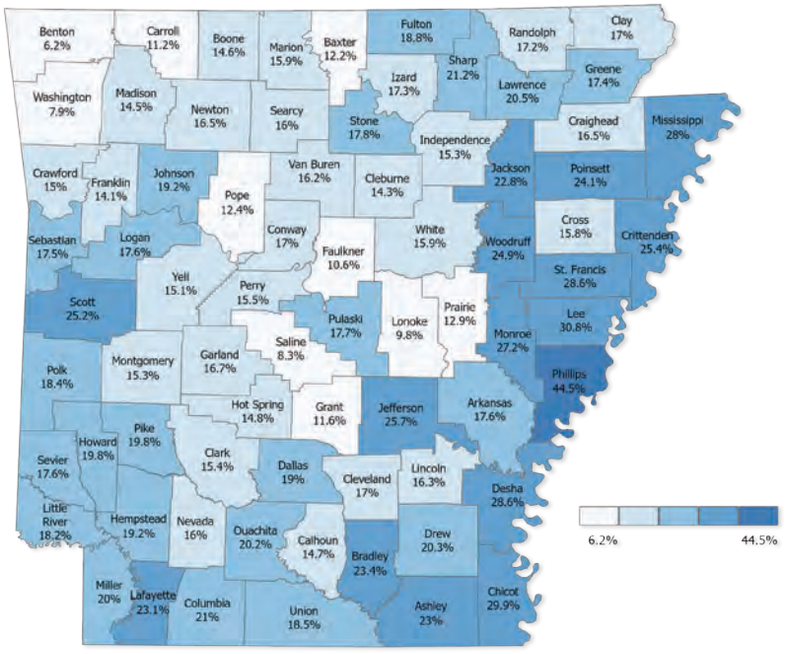
Twenty-one counties in the state had more than 20 percent of their residents receiving SNAP in 2022. This figure is down from 2019, when 26 counties had

FIGURE SES7. NUMBER OF SNAP RECIPIENTS AND FOOD INSECURITY RATE IN ARKANSAS



Sources: 2022 Statistical Report, Arkansas Department of Human Services & Household Food Security in the United States (3 year moving average, 2012-2022), Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture)

FIGURE SES8. PERCENT OF SNAP RECIPIENTS IN ARKANSAS BY COUNTY



Sources: 2022 Statistical Report, Arkansas Department of Human Services & Household Food Security in the United States (3 year moving average, 2012-2022), Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture)

more than 20 percent receiving SNAP (Figure SES8). Nearly 25 percent of the population receiving supplemental nutrition assistance reside within three counties (Pulaski: 15.2 percent; Sebastian: 4.9 percent; and Washington: 4.3 percent). Overall, 53 percent of all recipients reside in urban counties. Of rural recipients, 54 percent reside in the Highlands region.

SNAP and COVID-19

SNAP is a policy tool that acts as a counterbalance to economic downturns. As more families face financial hardship, more qualify for food assistance. An increase in government spending on benefits like SNAP provides more purchasing power to low-income households, which puts more money into the economy.

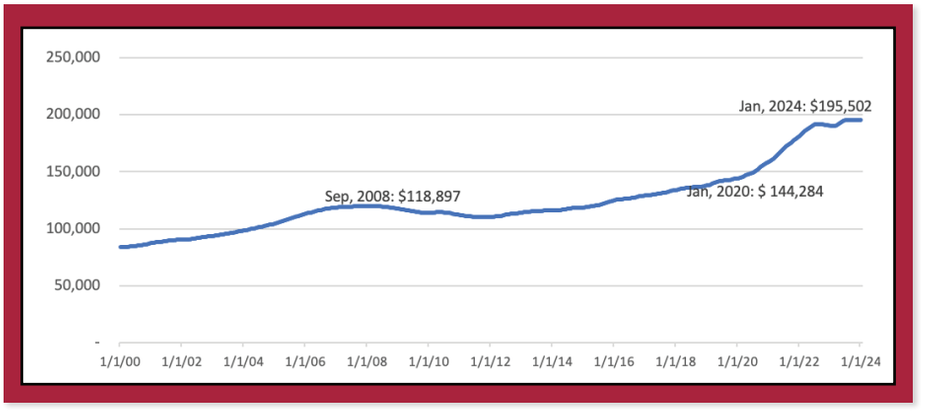
This additional purchasing power had been critical for families who struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic and helped the local economies in which they lived. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimated that SNAP participation increased 17 percent nationally and 24 percent in Arkansas from February to May 2020[1].

Home Value

Following the pandemic, home prices increased at an accelerated rate. The rapid rise in inflation has contributed to escalating housing costs, making it increasingly difficult for lower-income households to enter the housing market. Many families find themselves spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, which places a significant strain on their finances[2]. Low-income Arkansans face particularly high rates of housing cost burdens, highlighting the challenges they encounter in securing affordable housing.

Dating back to 2000, home values have increased year over year at a modest rate, with the exception of the Great Recession and housing crisis of 2008 through its recovery. However, from the onset of

FIGURE SES9. ZILLOW HOME VALUE INDEX (ZHVI) FOR ALL HOMES, INCLUDING SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCES, CONDOS, AND CO-OPS IN ARKANSAS, 2000 TO 2024



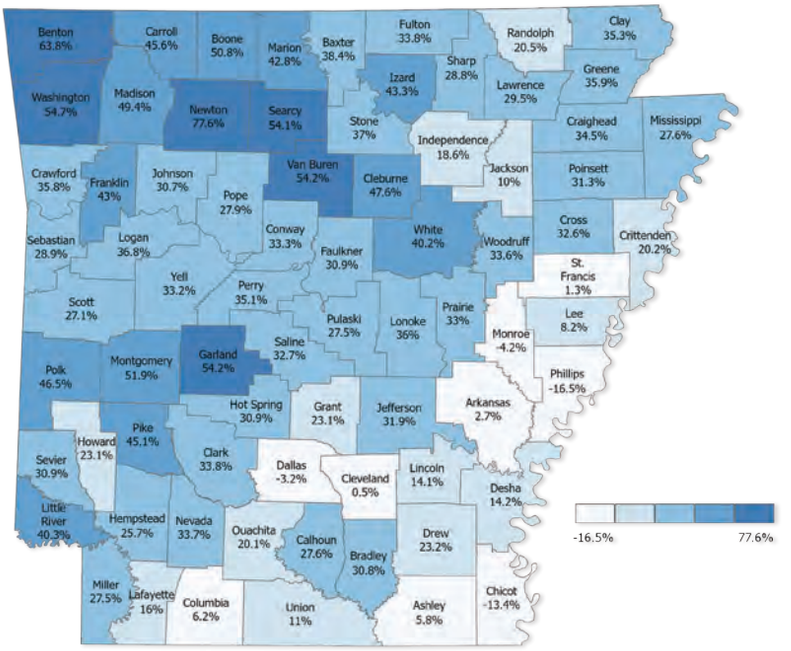
Sources: Zillow Housing Data (Nominal Dollars, Smoothed Seasonally Adjusted)

[1] The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
[2] American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Income Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

COVID-19 in March 2020 to March 2024, Arkansas saw a collective increase in nominal home values of 32 percent. The rural region of Arkansas realized an increase of 30 percent while the urban region experienced an increase of 39 percent (Figure SES9).

While statewide home values increased by 35 percent between January 2020 and January 2024, individual county rates of change varied widely. Eight counties' rate of change exceeded 50 percent over four years (Boone: 51 percent; Montgomery: 52 percent; Searcy: 54 percent; Van Buren: 54 percent; Garland: 54 percent; Washington: 55 percent; Benton: 64 percent; and Newton: 78 percent). During the same period, four counties absorbed losses in home values (Dallas County: -3 percent; Monroe: -4 percent; Chicot: -13 percent; and Phillips County: -16 percent). Figure SES10 presents the change in the Zillow Home Value Index.

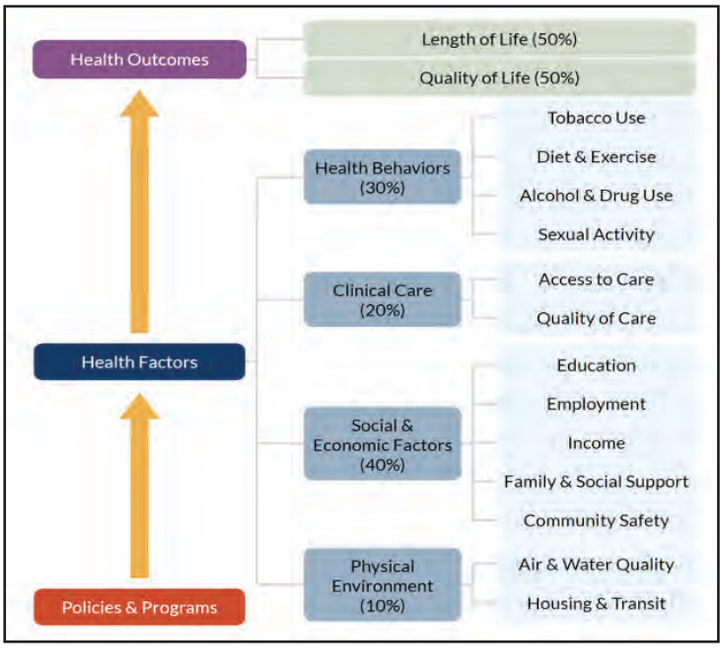
FIGURE SES10. PERCENT CHANGE IN ZILLOW HOME VALUE INDEX BY COUNTY BETWEEN MARCH 2020 AND MARCH 2024



Sources: Zillow Housing Data (Dollars, Smoothed Seasonally Adjusted)
Note: The Zillow Home Value Index reflects all homes, including single-family residences, condos, and co-ops

Community health is influenced by social, economic, behavioral, clinical and environmental factors, all of which determine health outcomes in complex and interconnected ways. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, clinical care is responsible for 20 percent of health outcomes, while the remaining 80 percent of health outcomes are determined by non-clinical factors, including behavioral and environmental conditions (Figure H1). Public Health experts often use indices to track how a variety of health factors and outcomes vary across different communities. In this section, we provide County Health Rankings that summarize a number of health outcomes and health risk factors for different areas of Arkansas.

FIGURE H1. COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS MODEL



Sources: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

This section also provides data on infant mortality and obesity. Although neither is a perfect or comprehensive representation of population health, measures like infant mortality and obesity each offer a way to broadly view the health of Arkansans. Infant mortality is often used as a public health indicator because structural factors affecting the health of entire populations also influence infant health[3]. Obesity is another common metric used to assess population health because it is associated with a higher risk for many other serious diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer[4]. A growing economy depends on a skilled and healthy workforce. Programs to improve health factors contribute to the physical and economic well-being of Arkansas citizens.

Health Rankings

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings combine many indicators into a single index for easy comparison. The indicators are grouped into two scores. The Health Factors score measures several underlying contributors to public health. This index includes data on:

- **Health behaviors** such as smoking, diet and physical activity.
- **Clinical care** factors, which include access to and quality of health care services and providers.
- **Social and economic** factors such as educational attainment, unemployment, poverty and crime.
- **Physical environment** factors such as air and water quality, housing and transit systems.

The Health Outcomes score measures the major health results that communities experience. This index includes data on:

- **Length of life**, measuring premature death and life expectancy.
- **Quality of life**, which includes indicators of poor physical or mental health and low birth weight of babies.

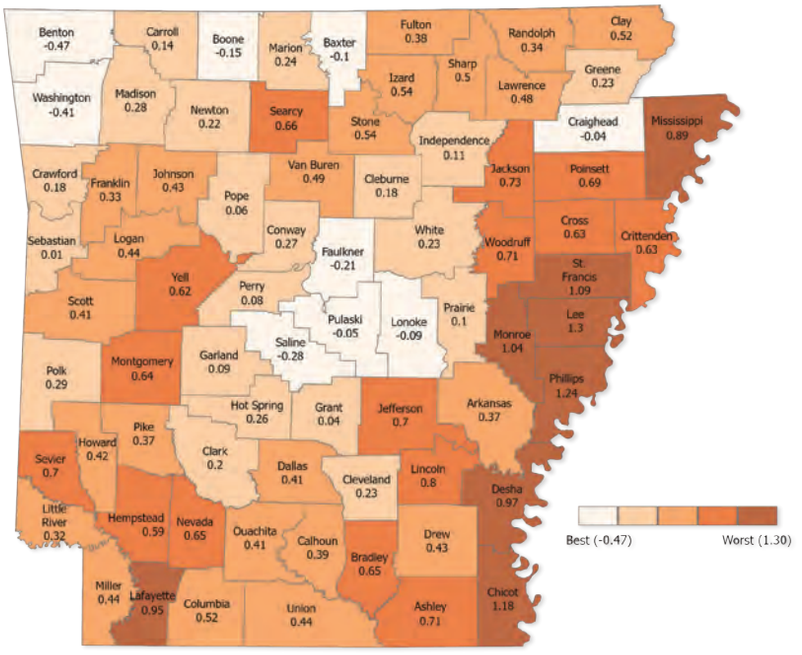
Rural Areas Rank Low in Health Factors and Outcomes

Health Factor scores vary across Arkansas counties (Figure H2). This score is designed to help us understand the

[3] Reidpath, D. D., & Allotey, P. (2003). Infant mortality rate as an indicator of population health. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 57(5), 344–346. https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.57.5.344

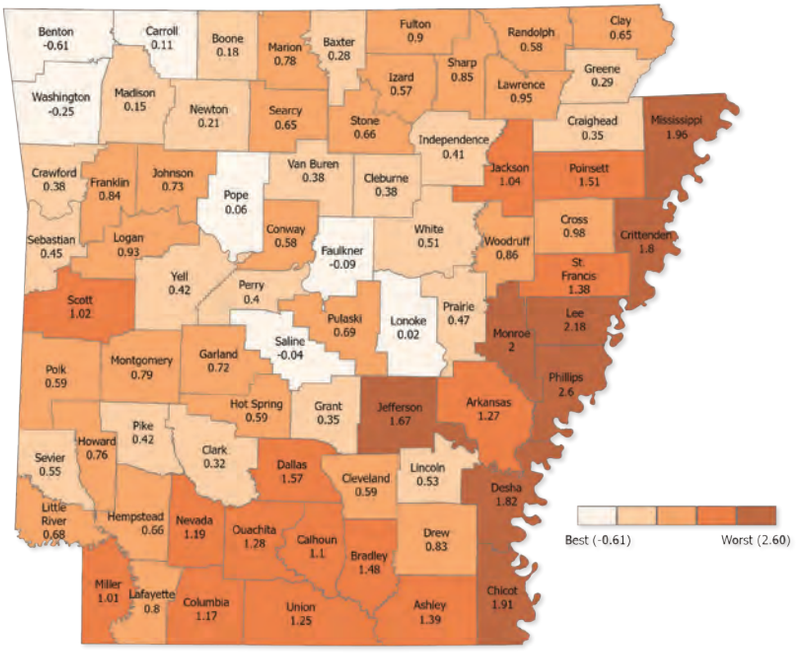
[4] Obesity, Healthline, July 16, 2018

FIGURE H2. HEALTH FACTOR SCORES, 2024



Sources: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

FIGURE H3. HEALTH OUTCOME SCORES, 2024



Sources: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

conditions that determine how long and well people live. A lower score indicates more favorable conditions for positive health outcomes. In general, counties in the urban region of the state had better health factor scores than those in the rural region. Eight of the top 10 counties with the best health factor scores were urban. All of the 10 counties with the worst health factor scores were rural.

Similarly, Figure H3 shows that counties in the urban region generally have better health outcome scores than the rural region. However, of the top 10 counties with the best health outcomes, five were rural and seven were from northwest Arkansas. Counties in the Delta and Coastal Plains had the worst health outcomes. Eight of the 10 counties with the worst health outcomes were in the rural Delta region.

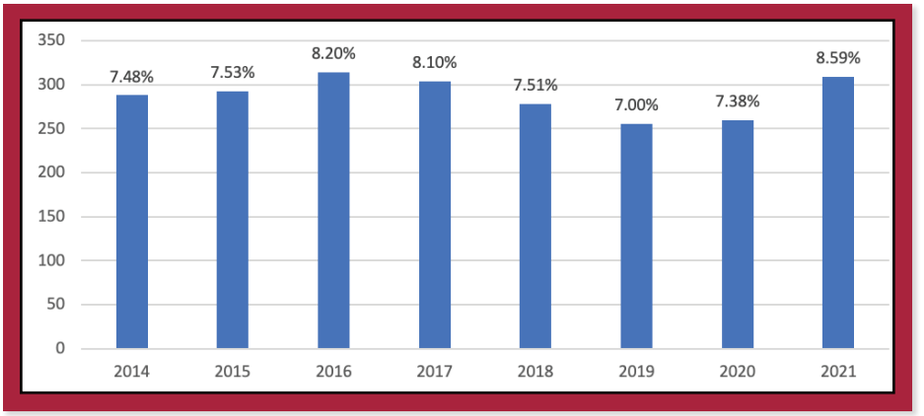
Infant Mortality

Arkansas' infant mortality rate (IMR) in 2018 was 7.5 deaths per 1,000 live births, well above the national average (5.7)[7]. This placed Arkansas third highest in the nation for infant mortality that year, behind Louisiana and Mississippi.

Nationally, infant mortality has been trending down, falling from 6.1 per 1,000 births in 2010 to 5.7 in 2018. Arkansas' infant mortality rate in 2021 was 8.59 deaths per 1,000 live births, well above the national average (5.4) . This placed Arkansas second-highest in the nation for infant mortality, behind Mississippi (9.39).

Arkansas' infant mortality rate had generally trended down in recent years through 2020 (7.38), though it increased to 8.59 per 1,000 in 2021 (Figure H4). During this time, Arkansas' infant mortality rate has remained high compared to the United States. Because infant mortality is relatively rare,

FIGURE H4. THE NUMBER OF INFANT DEATHS AND INFANT MORTALITY RATE IN ARKANSAS, 2014 TO 2021



Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

multiple years of data must be combined for meaningful data in counties with low populations. We combine data for the years 2014 to 2021 to enable us to examine county level data.

By race, Arkansas infant mortality rates vary substantially. Infant mortality rates among the Black population (12.3) are nearly double those of the White (6.7) or the API (6.5) populations. Infant mortality rates in the Hispanic population are the lowest across Arkansas at 5.0.

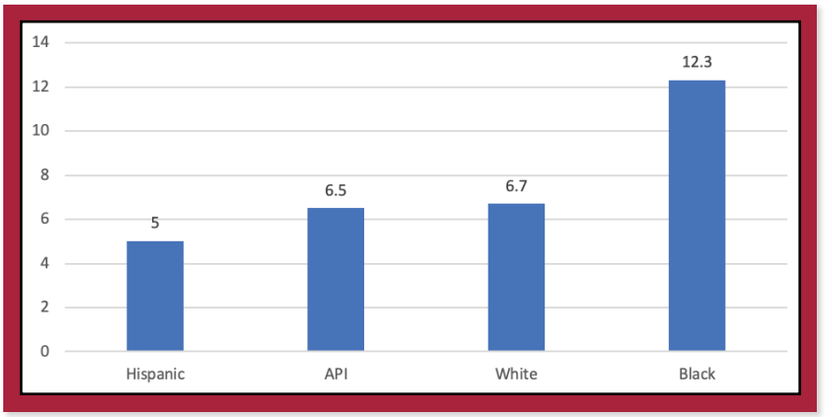
With infant death and mortality rates presented above, leading causes of infant deaths across Arkansas during this time period included: Birth defects (23.7 infant death rate per 1,000 live births); sudden unexpected infant death (17.7); pre-term birth and low birth rate death (17.6); and maternal pregnancy complications (3.9 death rate per 1,000 live births). (Figure H6).

Maternal Vulnerability Index

The U.S. Maternal Vulnerability Index is the first county-level, national-scale tool to rank vulnerability to poor maternal health outcomes and identify the regions and factors impacting susceptibility to these outcomes for U.S. mothers. The index ranks counties and states on overall vulnerability to poor pregnancy outcomes and vulnerability across six themes: Reproductive health, physical health, mental health and substance abuse, general healthcare, socioeconomic determinants and physical environment. Of the top 10 best-ranked counties in Arkansas, six are rural. However, the 10 worst-performing counties are rural as well (Figure H7).

Statewide, the Maternal Vulnerability Index is broken into six separate categories, each scored based on the level of vulnerability (0 = least vulnerable; 100 = most vulnerable). Figure H8 presents index findings for Arkansas. *General Healthcare and Mental Health & Substance Abuse* factor scores suggest a moderate level of vulnerability, while *Physical Environment, Socioeconomic Determinants, Physical Health, and Reproductive Health* factor scores suggest a very high level of vulnerability.

FIGURE H5. INFANT MORTALITY RATE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS FROM 2019 TO 2021



Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, Period Linked Birth/Infant Death data, 2019-2021
* API: Asian/Pacific Islander

Adult Obesity

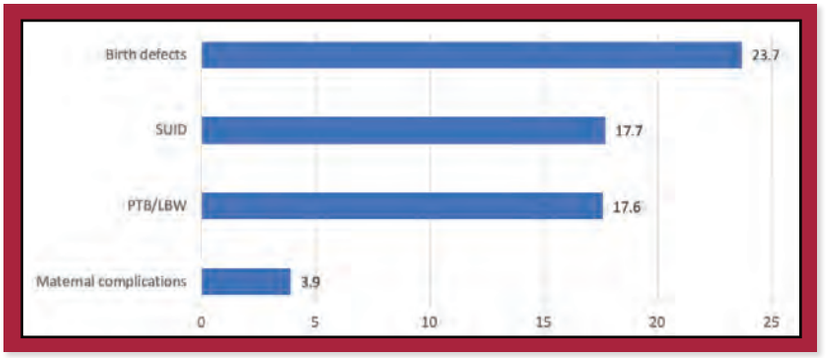
Obesity continues to be an epidemic in the United States and across Arkansas. An individual is considered overweight with a body mass index (BMI) of 25 to 30. Obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 or more. In 2022, 71 percent of adults in Arkansas were considered either overweight or obese, higher than the national average of 68 percent, according to the CDC (Figure H9). Nationally, Arkansas ranked 40th out of 51 in 2022. The high rate of obesity in Arkansans puts residents at increased risk for other severe health conditions, including diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Arkansas counties had high rates of adults who are considered obese, ranging from a high of 48 percent in St. Francis County to a low of 33 percent in Washington County. Adults in rural counties were more likely to be obese than those living in urban counties, though there were exceptions. Of the 10 Arkansas counties with the highest level of obesity, all but one (Jefferson County) are rural (Figure H10).

Child Obesity

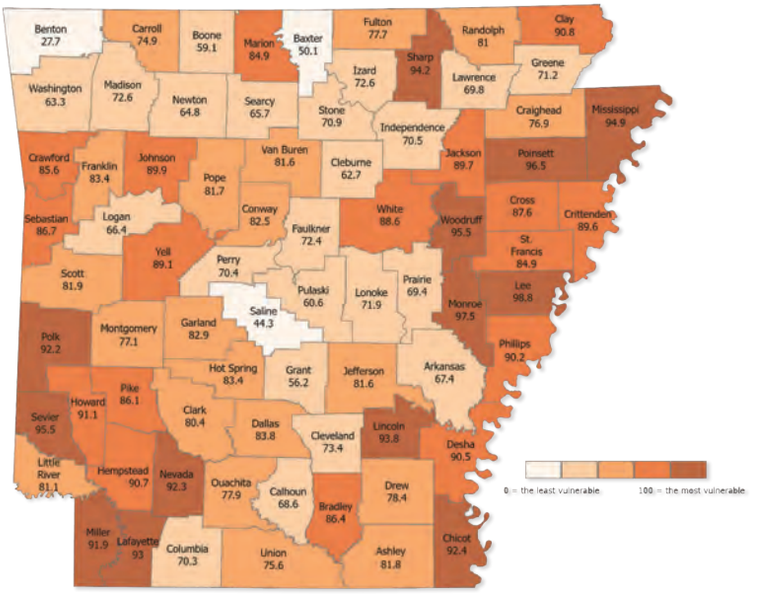
Children who are classified as obese face both increased health risks as children and later as adults. Childhood obesity ranged from a low of 16 percent in Newton County to a high of 48 percent in Calhoun County (Figure H11). The map highlights the distribution of childhood obesity across Arkansas during the 2020-2021 school year, showing significant regional differences. Notably, the Delta area in the eastern part of the state exhibits higher rates of childhood obesity, with counties such as St. Francis (31.4 percent), Crittenden (32.1 percent)

FIGURE H6. LEADING CAUSES OF INFANT DEATH RATE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS FROM 2019 TO 2021



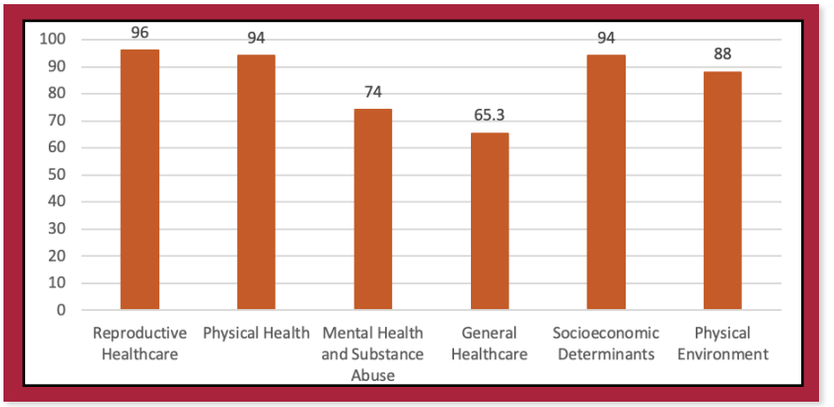
Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, Period Linked Birth/Infant Death data, 2019-2021
* SUID: sudden unexpected infant death; * * PTB/LBW = preterm birth and low birth weight

FIGURE H7. MATERNAL VULNERABILITY INDEX (MVI) BY COUNTY



Sources: Surgo Health, Maternal Vulnerability Index, (https://mvi.surgoventures.org/), last accessed May 2nd, 2024.Note: 0 = the least vulnerable and 100 = the most vulnerable

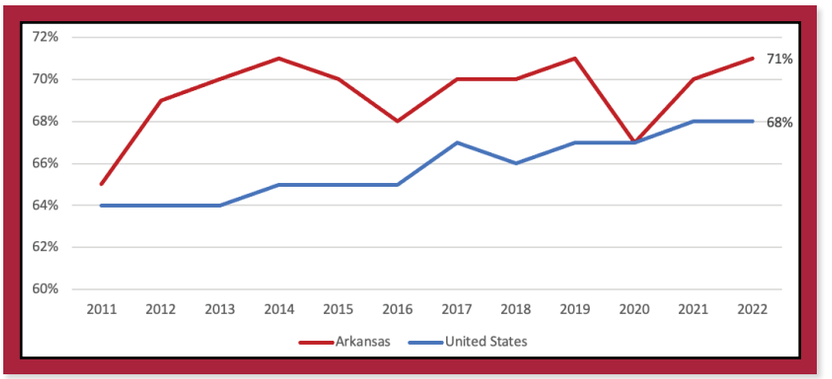
FIGURE H8. MVI SCORES FOR ARKANSAS



Sources: Surgo Health, Maternal Vulnerability Index (https://mvi.surgoventures.org/), last accessed May 2nd, 2024. Note: 0 = the least vulnerable and 100 = the most vulnerable

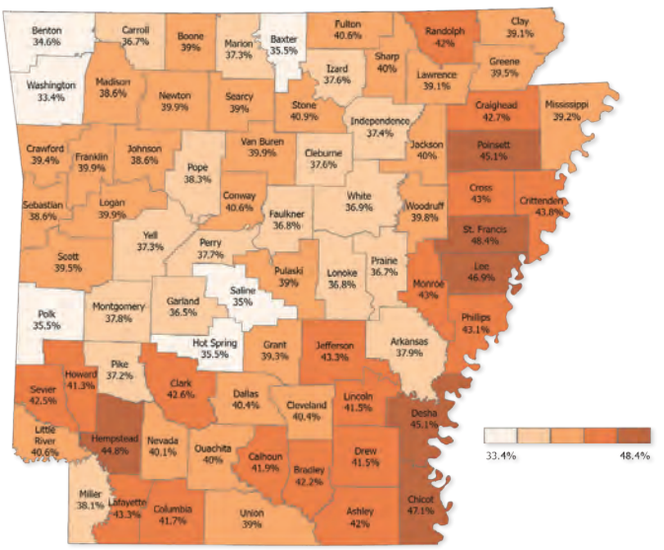
and Lee (43.6 percent) reporting elevated levels. This trend aligns closely with the patterns observed in adult obesity rates, suggesting that the challenges of obesity affect both age groups in this region. In contrast, counties like Newton (16.1 percent) and Cleburne (23.2 percent) in the northwest show much lower rates, indicating that targeted interventions may be more effective where the issue is most pronounced. Overall, this figure emphasizes the need for focused efforts to address childhood obesity, particularly in the Delta area of Arkansas.

FIGURE H9. PERCENT OF OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE ADULTS, 2022



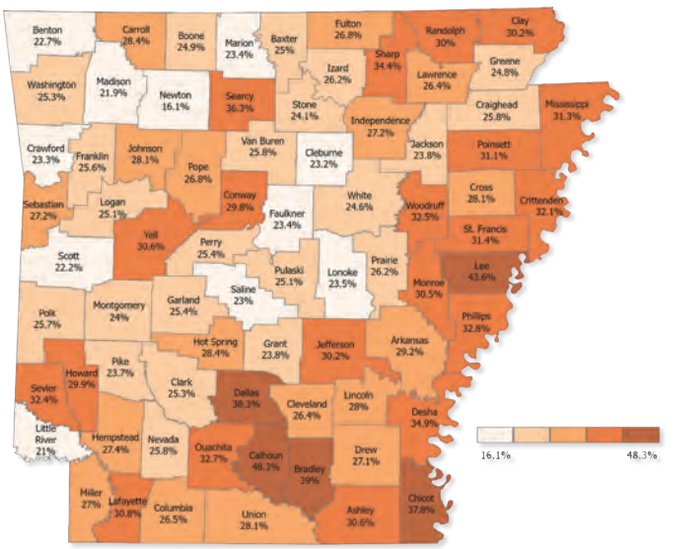
Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

FIGURE H10. PERCENT OF ADULT OBESITY IN ARKANSAS, 2024



Sources: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

FIGURE H11. PERCENT OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN ARKANSAS, 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR



Source: ACHI Assessment of Childhood and Adolescent Obesity in Fall 2020–Spring 2021

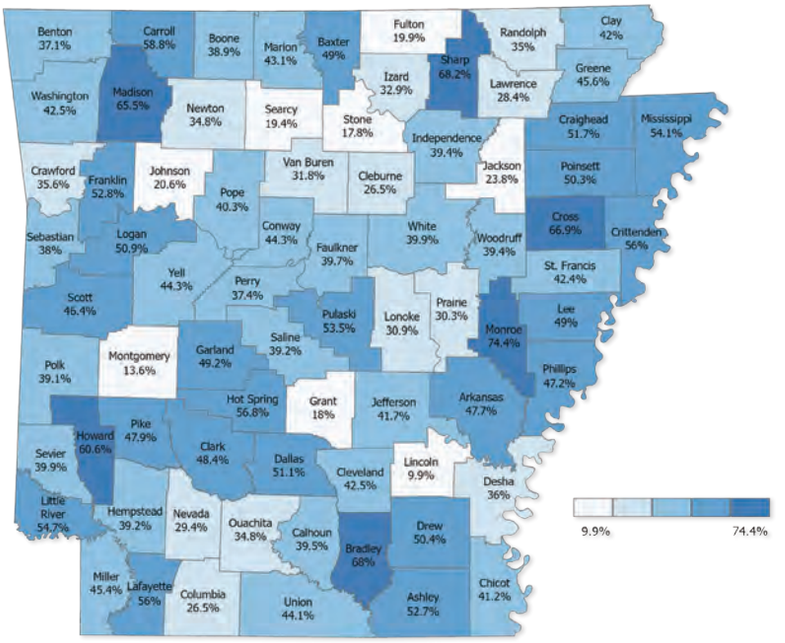
People are Arkansas' greatest resource, and the social and economic value of a well-educated population cannot be overstated. Investing in education provides a more skilled workforce and lowers poverty rates, which benefits the individual, communities and the state. To maintain and improve the state's human capital, access to high-quality education from pre-kindergarten to community college and beyond is critical.

Pre-K Enrollment Rates Impacted by Covid-19

Pre-K education is vital to the cognitive development of children and is a critical component for ensuring child preparedness for kindergarten and elementary education. Providing good pre-K opportunities also creates long-term benefits to the individual and society, including higher lifetime earnings and financial security, improved health outcomes, and civic contributions.

Leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, Arkansas had exceeded the national average in enrollment percentage of 3- and 5-year-olds enrolled in Pre-K. In 2019, the percentage of Arkansas 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in nursery or preschool was 49.7 percent, while nationally, enrollment was 48.3 percent. However, since COVID, enrollment in this cohort across Arkansas has fallen below national figures and is 43.5 percent vs. 45.6 percent nationally as of 2022. This decline in Arkansas amounts to a 12 percent drop in enrollment percentage since 2019. Within Arkansas, the 2022 enrollment percentage is slightly higher in the rural region (42.2 percent) than the urban region (41.9 percent), though it has declined since 2019. Across the State, the percentage of Pre-K enrollment coverage varied significantly, with Lincoln County at 10 percent and Monroe County at 74 percent (Figure ED1).

FIGURE ED1. PERCENT OF CHILDREN 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD ENROLLED IN NURSERY OR PRE-SCHOOL, 2022

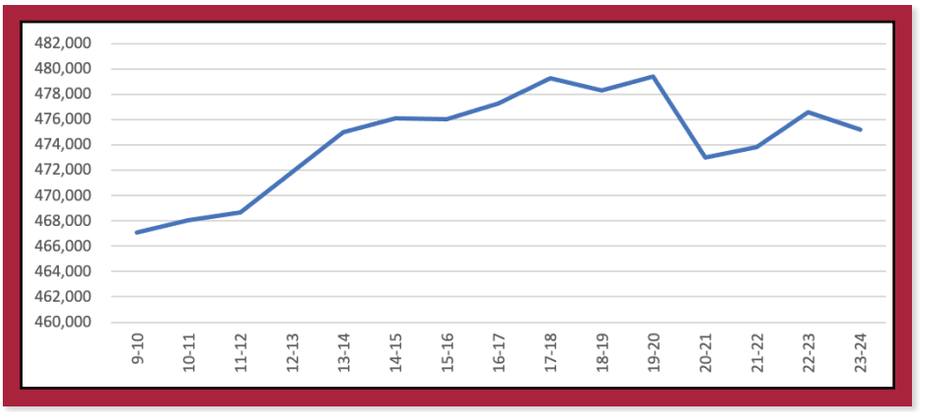


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates

Public School Enrollment Numbers

Over 475,000 children were enrolled in Arkansas public schools in the 2023-2024 school year, down 1 percent since the enrollment peak in the 2019-

FIGURE ED2. K-12 TOTAL ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN ARKANSAS, 2009-10 TO 2023-24

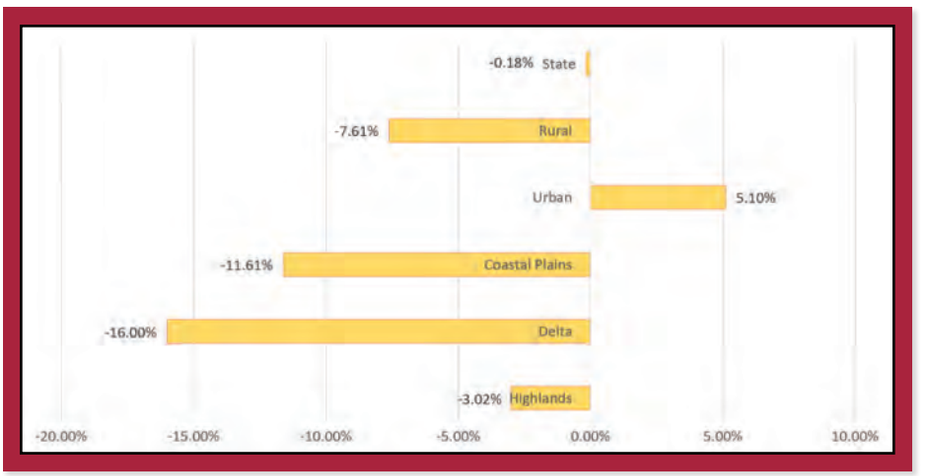


Sources: ADE Data Center, the Arkansas Department of Education

2020 school year, though still down 0.18 percent since the 2014-2015 school year (Figure ED2). The decline in enrollment has generally been realized in the rural region, where enrollment is down 8 percent since the 2014-2015 school year. Enrollment in the urban region grew 5 percent during the same period. All three rural regions experienced enrollment declines since the 2014-2015 school year. The Delta region experienced the largest decline in public school enrollment (-16 percent) during that time (Figure ED3).

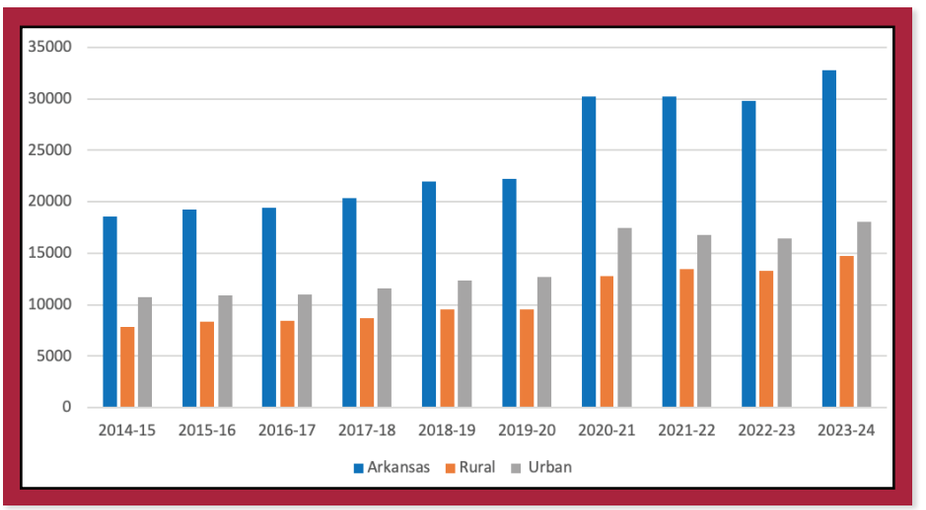
Sixty of Arkansas' 75 counties saw enrollment declines from 2014-15 to 2023-24. While urban counties collectively increased in enrollment, seven of Arkansas' 13 urban counties experienced declines. Nine of Arkansas' 62 Rural counties witnessed enrollment decreases. Four counties, all rural, lost over a quarter of their student enrollment during that time (Lafayette, Monroe, Phillips and St. Francis). Three counties saw their enrollment increase by 10 percent or more (Benton, Craighead and Marion).

FIGURE ED3. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS BETWEEN 2014-15 AND 2023-24



Sources: Enrollment Count by County, Arkansas Department of Education

FIGURE ED4. NUMBER OF HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS



Sources: Home School Reports from 2014-2015 to 2023-2024, Division of Elementary & Secondary Education

Declining enrollment numbers can pose difficult funding challenges for local communities. Lower student enrollment decreases some forms of school funding, but many costs for public education are fixed, like school facility maintenance and teacher and staff salaries. To overcome shrinking population, decreased funding and rising costs, public school districts are often forced to consolidate into larger school districts.

While there may be efficiency gains and more educational opportunities for students, there are also costs in school consolidation. Such decisions often burden students who must be bused longer distances to attend school and strain rural communities due to job loss. School consolidation may also result in the loss of identity for small communities, as historically, the local school often serves as a gathering place and site of social interactions for the entire community.

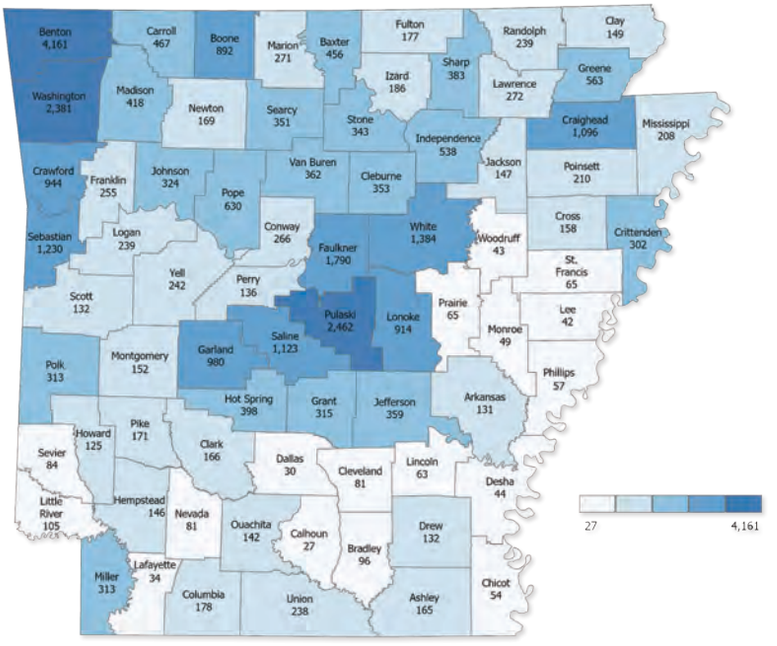
Accelerating Growth in Homeschooling Since the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic drove a significant rise in homeschooling as parents prioritized their children's safety and sought alternatives to traditional school environments. Many families, faced with uncertainties in public health protocols and disruptions in schooling, turned to homeschooling for greater control and flexibility. This trend has remained strong, with the number of homeschooled students continuing to grow in the 2023–2024 academic year (Figure ED4).

Furthermore, the Education Freedom Account, introduced as part of the Arkansas LEARNS Act in 2023, aims to support and potentially increase this growth by offering additional resources, expanding educational options and allowing parents to customize their children's education. Moreover, Arkansas homeschool law requires little beyond filing an annual Notice of Intent to homeschool. Therefore, decisions regarding how to homeschool, what curriculum to use and what records to maintain are left entirely to each family's discretion, making Arkansas a notably homeschooling-friendly state. With these policy supports in place, homeschooling is poised for further growth in popularity in the years ahead.

Urban areas have been at the forefront of the homeschooling movement in Arkansas. Data from the 2023–2024 academic year shows that urban counties with relatively better resource availability have more homeschooled students. These regions benefit from greater access to both tangible and intangible resources, such as homeschooling communities and easier access to educational tools, which make transitioning to homeschooling more feasible for families. Homeschooling in suburban areas also showed steady growth, suggesting that proximity to urban centers plays a key role in homeschooling participation (Figure ED5). These findings highlight how local infrastructure and access to resources influence the adoption of homeschooling, particularly in Arkansas's more densely populated regions.

FIGURE ED5. NUMBER OF HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS, 2023–2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

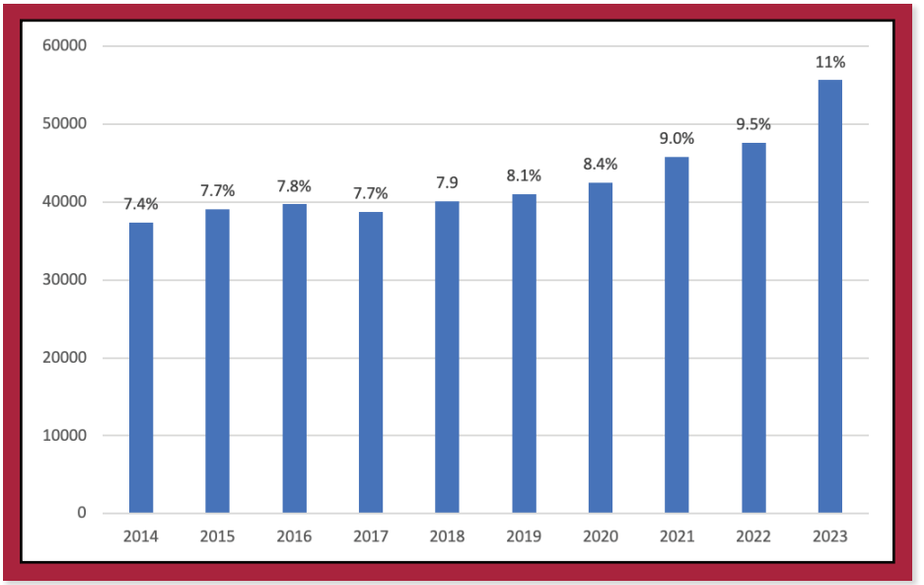


Sources: Home School Reports 2023-2024, Division of Elementary & Secondary Education

Urban Areas Driving Growth in Private School Enrollment

The Arkansas LEARNS Act has also profoundly impacted private school enrollment, particularly by emphasizing school choice and reducing financial barriers. Scholarship programs and expanded funding opportunities introduced by the Act have made private education more accessible to middle- and lower-income families. This has allowed a broader spectrum of families to pursue personalized education for their children, contributing to a steady increase in private school enrollment statewide. The Act reflects a strong legislative commitment to providing families with diverse educational options and addressing disparities in access to private schooling.

FIGURE ED6. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS ENROLLED FROM KINDERGARTEN TO 12TH GRADE OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau,
*The 2023 data represents a 1-year estimate

Enrollment patterns in private schools mirror homeschooling trends, with urban areas leading the way (Figure ED7). Families in these regions typically have greater access to private institutions and the financial means to support such choices. These trends are likely to continue, as the 97 schools participating in the Education Freedom Account program are primarily located in urban centers (Figure ED8). This urban concentration underscores the critical role of financial resources and location in shaping Arkansas's educational landscape, leaving other areas underserved.

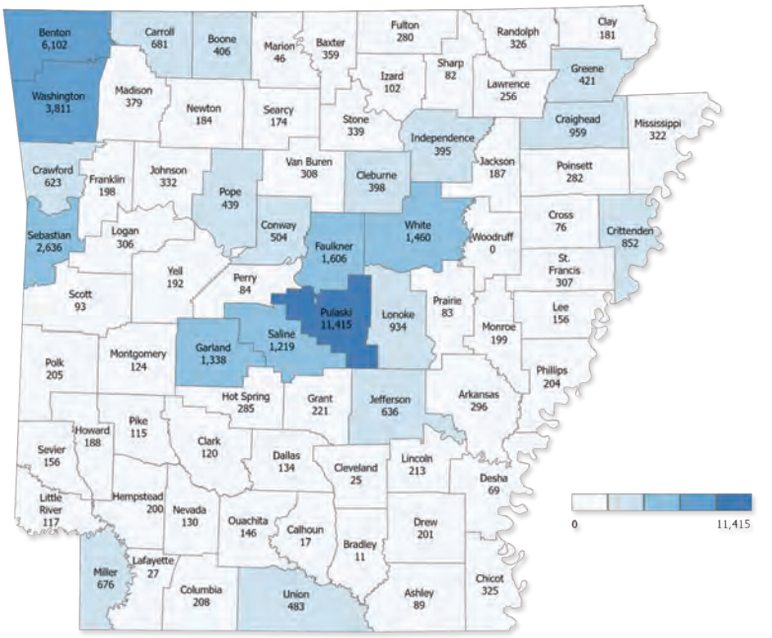
Educational Attainment Below National Averages

Educational attainment levels in Arkansas, though improving, have persistently remained below the national average and continued to do so in 2022. Arkansas remains behind the U.S. average across the board in terms of completion of higher education, including attainment of associate, bachelor's and graduate degrees in 2022 (Figure ED9) .

In 2022, 32.6 percent of Arkansans aged 25 and older had an associate, bachelor's, graduate or professional degree as their highest level of education completed, compared to 43 percent nationally. Arkansas was also behind the nation in the percentage of adults 25 and older with a graduate degree (9 percent, compared to 13 percent nationally).

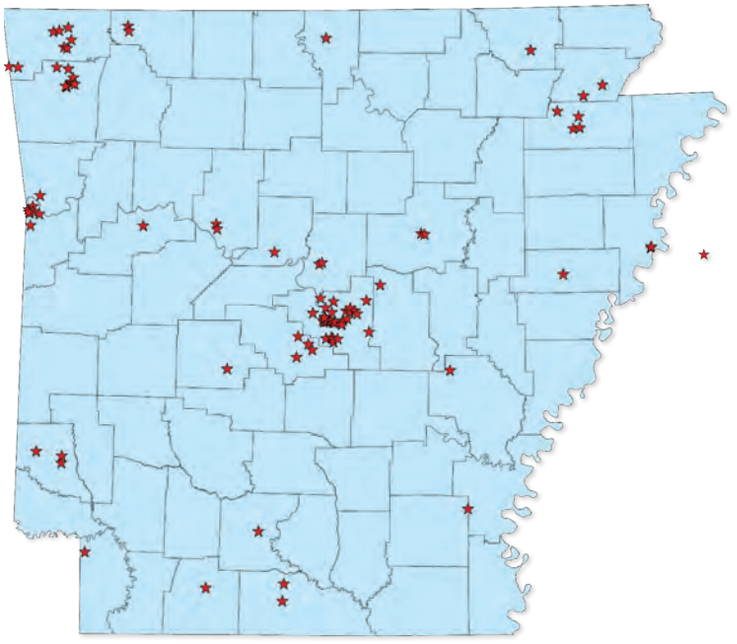
Within Arkansas, there remains a considerable divide in educational attainment between the rural and urban areas of the state. Twenty-six percent of adults in rural counties have at least an associate degree, considerably less

FIGURE ED7. NUMBER OF PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS, 2022



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE ED8. 97 PARTICIPATING PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNTS (EFA), 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR



Source: Education Freedom Account Annual Report 2023-2024, Arkansas Department of Education
Note 1: One out-of-state school in Germantown, Tennessee, is permitted to participate in the Education Freedom Account (EFA) program, as the LEARNS Act allows schools outside of Arkansas that previously served Succeed Scholarship students to participate. Note 2: 93 renewing schools and 28 new applicants have been approved for the 2024-2025 school year

than the 39 percent in urban counties. Among the rural regions, the Delta had the lowest rates of educational attainment for associate, bachelor's, graduate or professional degrees.

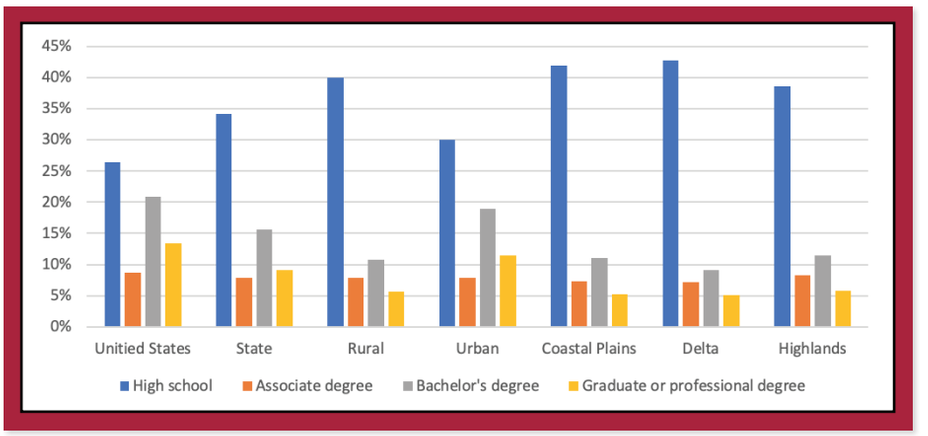
STEM Graduates Growing

While most agree that high quality education is critical for individual well-being and for the state to remain competitive in a global economy, rural communities struggle to graduate students with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) degrees at their two-year colleges for local residents.

The ratio of people with associate or bachelor's degrees in science and engineering has been increasing in Arkansas. In 2006, less than 10 people per 1,000 in the 18-24 age group had a bachelor's degree in science and engineering. By 2018, that number grew to 16 per 1,000 people, and in 2021, it had increased further to 18.3 (Figure ED10). The number of people with associate degrees in technology as well as science and engineering also grew during that time, but remained below two per 1,000 residents in the 18-24 age group.

Arkansas ranks 38th compared to other states in the percent of all degrees conferred that are in the science and technology field. This marks a significant improvement from 2018, when Arkansas was ranked 46th. The percent of degrees conferred to science and technology graduates increased from 23 percent in 2010 to 27 percent in 2016, since which time levels have maintained at or near 27 percent (Figure ED11). Nationally, however, the percent-

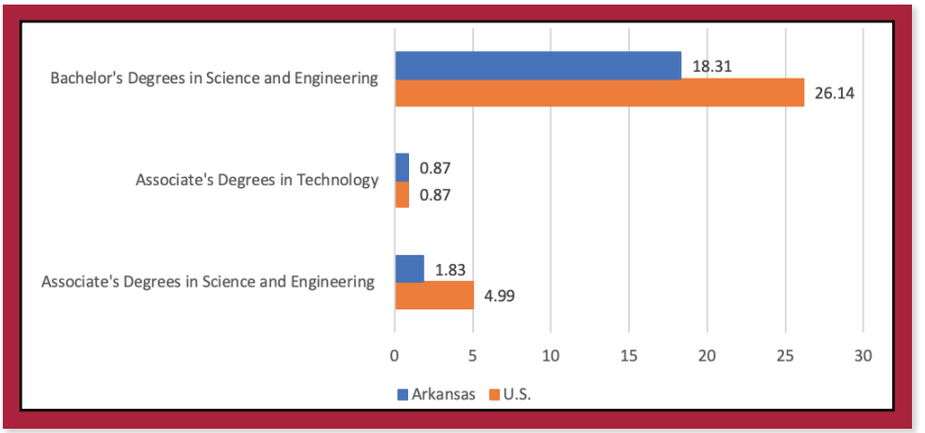
FIGURE ED9. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY PERCENT OF POPULATION 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER, 2022



Source: Educational Attainment, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

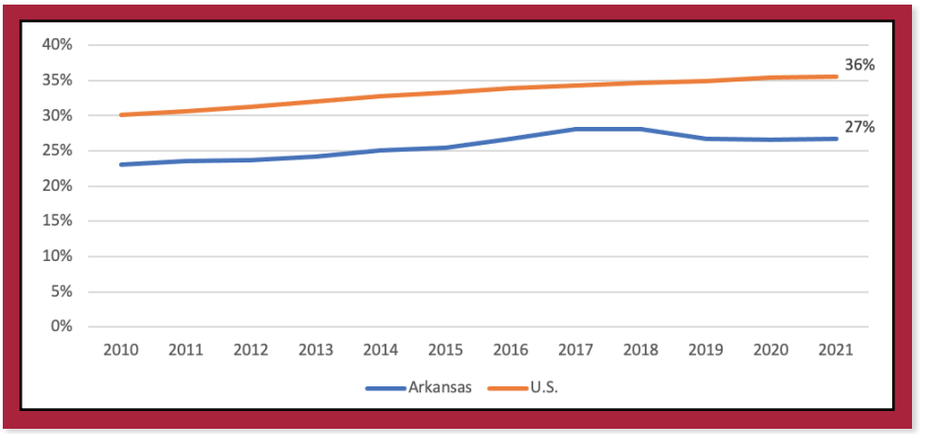
age of degrees conferred that are in the science and technology field has continued to rise since 2016, from 34 percent to the most recent figure of 36 percent in 2021, emphasizing the increasing gap between Arkansas and the United States in this category. State and local leaders' ability to improve educational services in rural communities will be critical for Arkansas' continued economic growth.

FIGURE ED10. DEGREES CONFERRED PER 1,000 INDIVIDUALS BY TYPE, 2021



Source: Science & Engineering Indicators, National Science Board, National Science Foundation

FIGURE ED11. SCIENCE & ENGINEERING DEGREES AS A PERCENT OF ALL DEGREES CONFERRED, 2010-2021

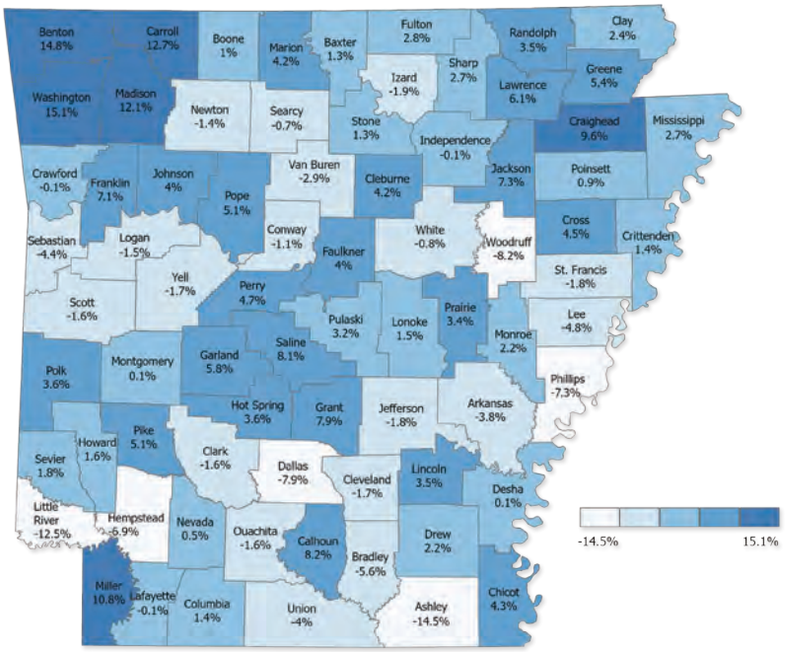


Source: Science & Engineering Indicators, National Science Board, National Science Foundation

Many local governments in rural Arkansas have been affected by structural changes in their economies that affect their tax base and ability to generate revenue from local sources. Because taxes represent a large share of local government revenue, the amount of revenue generated locally depends on the tax base and tax rate.

Structural changes in rural economies, whether created by the Great Recession, COVID-19 or longer-term population decline, have impacted business in rural areas of the state. Lost businesses and population have resulted in a declining local tax base and local tax revenue for some of our rural counties. Though stimulus monies such as the CARES Act funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic helped mitigate some of these declines, those efforts have expired. Local governments must also adapt to shifting state and federal priorities and the impact these may have on intergovernmental revenues.

FIGURE LG1. PERCENT CHANGE IN PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022



Source: Assessed Values, Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department; South Urban Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics

County Government Local Tax Base

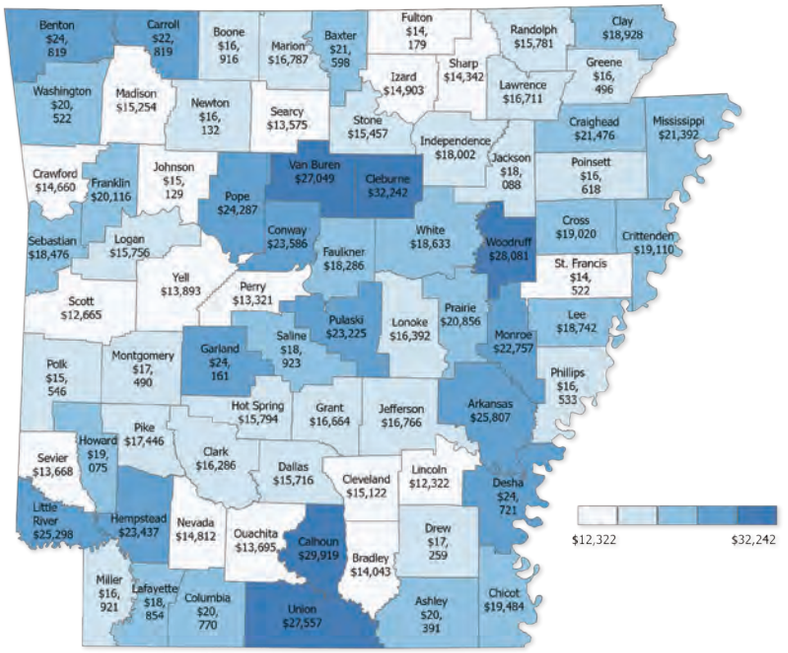
County governments generate a large share of their revenue from local sources. The largest local sources of county government revenue come from property and sales taxes. Changes in property and sales tax bases can greatly impact a county government's ability to generate revenue from local sources. While both the property and sales tax bases continue to grow statewide, many rural counties have seen declines in one or both in recent years.

To help maintain their revenue and ability to provide the infrastructure and services needed to support economic development and good quality of life for residents, some counties have increased their property tax millage and/or the county sales tax rate. Since many Arkansans still reside in unincorporated areas or towns of fewer than 2,500 people, the decline of the local tax base places an unusually heavy burden on rural county and town governments to provide the infrastructure and services demanded by local residents and businesses.

Property Assessments Growing Slowly Statewide, but Declining in Some Rural Counties

Statewide, inflation-adjusted property assessments grew 7.8 percent between 2018 and 2022. Across Arkansas, 10 of the 13 urban counties gained in property assessments over this period, with 37 of Arkansas' 62 rural counties also gaining. By comparison, a far greater percentage of urban counties' assessments grew (77 percent) than rural counties' assessments (60 percent). Of the 28 counties experiencing a loss in inflation-adjusted assessment values, Little River (-12 percent) and Ashley (-14 percent) declined by more than 10 percent. Five counties grew assessments by more than 10 percent (Benton: 15 percent; Carroll: 13 percent; Madison: 12 percent; Miller: 11 percent; and Washington: 15 percent), as shown in Figure LG1.

FIGURE LG2. PER CAPITA PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS, 2022

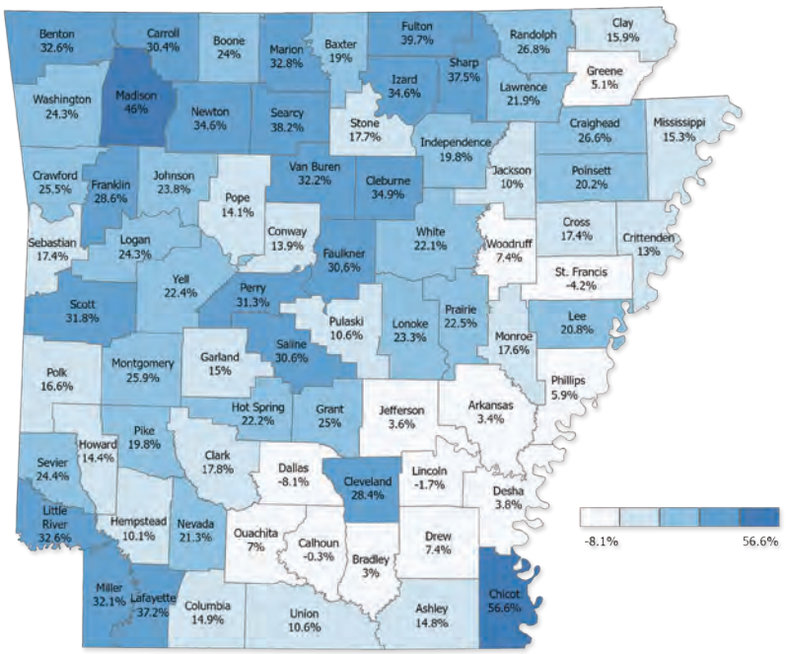


Source: Assessed Values, Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department; South Urban Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Statewide, real estate accounts for 68 percent of assessed property, while personal property totals 23 percent and utility property amounts to 9 percent. Mineral property assessments total less than half of 1 percent.

The variation in per capita property assessments in 2022 ranged from a low of $12,322 in Lincoln County to a high of $32,242 in Cleburne County. Calhoun, Woodruff, Union, and Van Buren counties join Cleburne County as the top five in per capita property assessments, largely due to utility and mineral assessments along with small populations (Figure LG2).

FIGURE LG3. PERCENT CHANGE IN RETAIL SALES BETWEEN MARCH 2018 AND MARCH 2022



Source: Arkansas Retail Sales - 2022: Q1, Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI), 2022; South Urban Con-sumer Price Index. Note: Gas sale is excluded

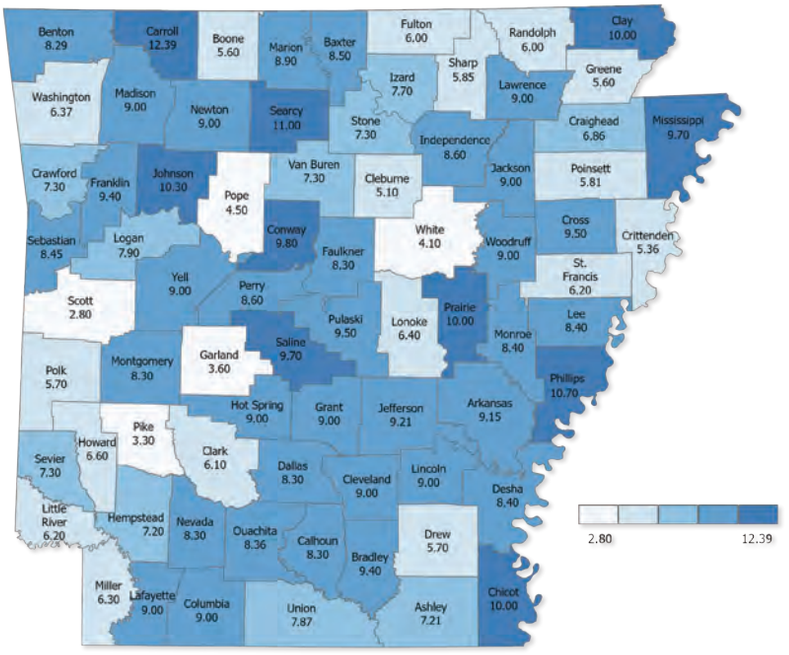
Navigating through the Covid-19 Pandemic and Recovery, Retail Sales Growing Statewide, but with Exceptions

Local government sales tax revenue is driven by the local sales tax base and sales tax rates. Retail sales, which we use as a proxy for the sales tax base, grew by a brisk 20 percent between March 2018 and March 2022. Sales increases across the rural region (18 percent) lagged slightly behind Arkansas' urban region (21 percent). However, the rural Highlands region sales increase eclipsed all other regions at nearly 23 percent (Figure LG3). Exceeding all other counties, Chicot County sales increased by 57 percent between these two dates. Four counties lost sales between these dates (Calhoun: -0.25 percent; Lincoln: -1.72 percent; St. Francis: -4.19 percent; and Dallas: -8.07 percent).

County Government Tax Rates Increasing

In 2023, the average millage (property tax rate) for Arkansas' 75 county governments, which does not include city, school district or special district millage, was approximately 7.8 mills, ranging from 2.8 in Scott County to 12.4 in Carroll County (Figure LG4). The average millage of

FIGURE LG4. COUNTY GOVERNMENT MILLAGE, 2023



Source: State of Arkansas 2022 Millage Report (2023 Collections), Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department

counties in the rural region was 7.9 compared to the urban region (7.4). Seven counties had a millage rate of 10.0 or greater (Prairie: 10.0; Clay: 10.0; Chicot: 10.0; Johnson: 10.3; Phillips: 10.7; Searcy: 11.0; and Carroll: 12.4).

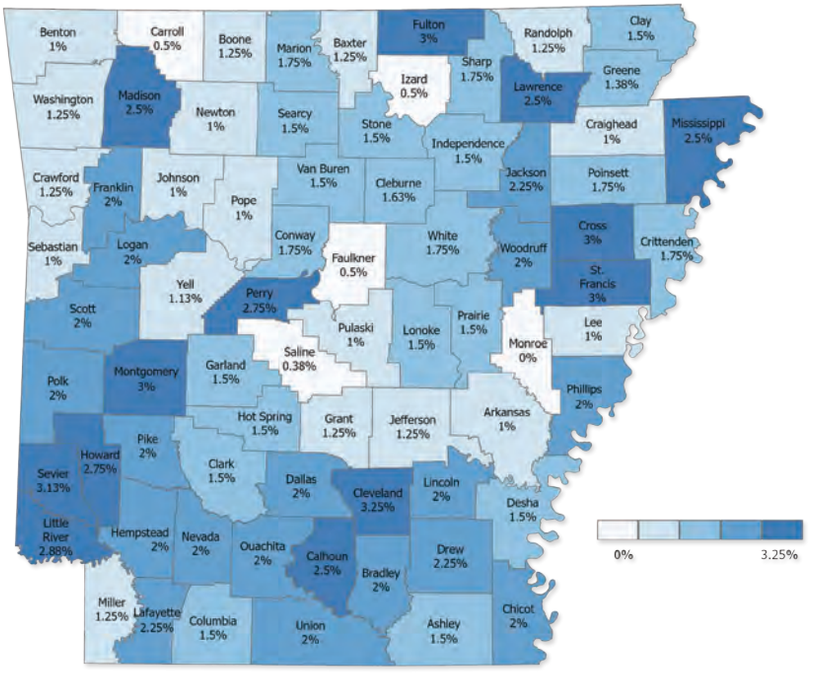
In Arkansas, rural counties, on average, have higher county sales tax rates than urban counties and have increased their rates more than urban counties over many of the past 20 years. In 2024, the average sales tax rate in rural counties was approximately 1.8 percent compared to 1.1 percent in urban counties (Figure LG5). Cleveland County presented the highest sales tax rate at 3.25 percent. Six counties have sales tax rates of 3 percent or greater (St. Francis: 3.0; Montgomery: 3.0; Fulton: 3.0; Cross: 3.0; Sevier: 3.125; and Cleveland: 3.25). Note that customers pay county sales taxes in addition to city and state sales taxes.

County Tax Revenue

Property and sales taxes make up the largest share of county government revenue. As both retail sales and property assessments have increased in recent years, so have revenues. During the 2012 to 2021 time period, county government property tax revenue increased by 17 percent after adjusting for inflation, while sales tax revenue adjusted for inflation increased by 51 percent. Of combined property tax and sales tax collections, property tax collections total 44 percent statewide. Across the urban region, property tax collections made up a larger share of combined collections (54 percent), while rural region property tax collections totaled 34 percent of the combined collections, demonstrating greater reliance by the rural region on sales tax collections.

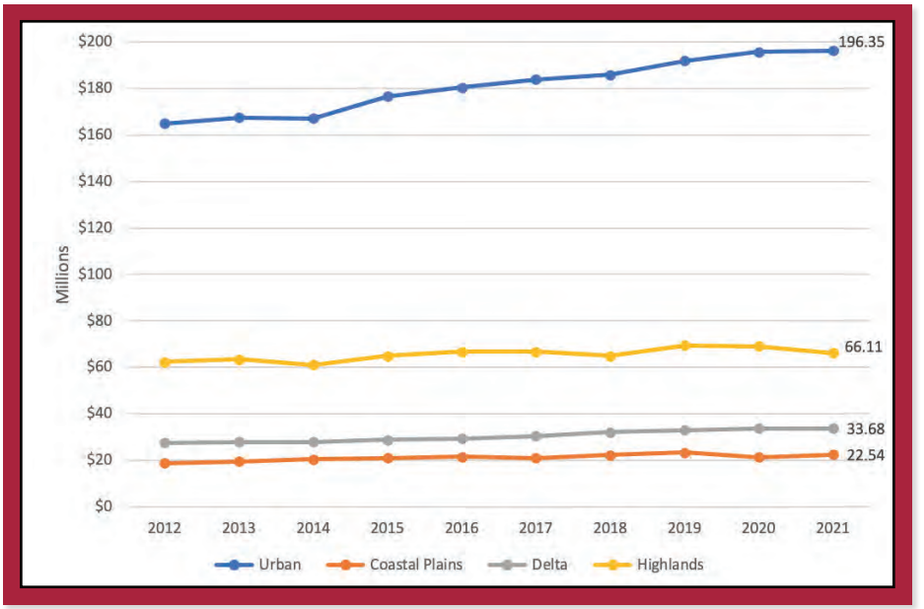
Urban counties experienced a larger increase in both property tax and sales tax revenue between 2012 and 2021 than the rural region. The urban region saw an increase in property tax (19 percent), which was greater than

FIGURE LG5. COUNTY SALES TAX RATES, 2024



Source: City County Sales Tax Table April - June 2024, Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration

FIGURE LG6. COUNTY GOVERNMENT PROPERTY TAX REVENUE, 2012-2021



Source: Legislative Audit Reports, Arkansas Legislative Audits; South Urban Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics

the overall rural region (13 percent). However, this difference is attributable to the Highlands region, which grew at only 6 percent, while Coastal Plains and Delta property tax collections increased 20 and 22 percent, respectively.

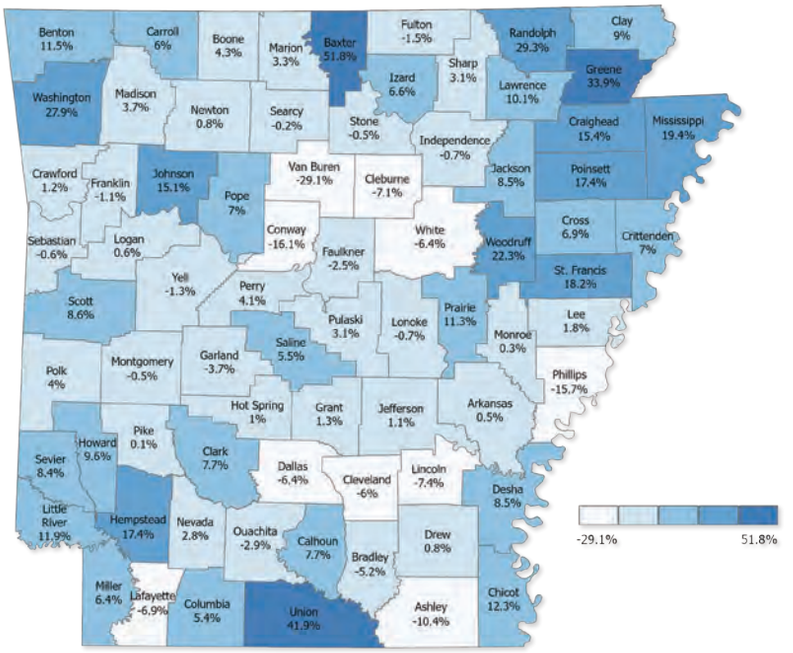
Property Tax Revenue 2017-2021

The period of 2017 – 2021 captures the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. During this period, 31 percent of Arkansas' counties lost property tax revenue (inflation adjusted values). Of the 23 counties experiencing lost revenue, Van Buren, Conway, and Phillips counties witnessed the largest declines (-29 percent, -16 percent, and -16 percent, respectively). Conversely, Washington (28 percent), Randolph (29 percent), Greene (34 percent), Union (42 percent) and Baxter (52 percent) counties saw increases in revenue greater than 25 percent (Figure LG7).

Sales Tax Revenue 2012-2021

Sales tax revenue is more volatile and prone to fluctuations along with the overall economy compared to the relatively stable property tax. Consumers may tighten their belts and reduce spending on goods and services subject to the sales tax during lean times. Or they may spend more because of stimulus program resources, as witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic, or higher wages. Because taxes are applied to the price of goods and services purchased, inflation can also impact sales tax revenue. Therefore, counties that depend largely on the sales tax for revenue may experience these fluctuations more directly.

FIGURE LG7. PERCENT CHANGE IN PROPERTY TAX REVENUE BETWEEN 2017 AND 2021

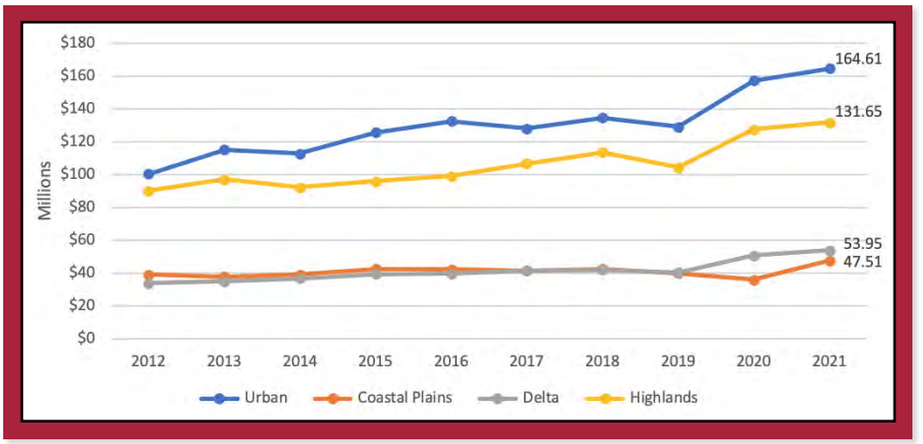


Source: Legislative Audit Reports, Arkansas Legislative Audits; South Urban Consumer Price Index
Note: The data of Madison, Nevada, and Scott County are from 2020

Appendix Table 1. Population

County Name	Population 2013	Population 2022	Percent Population Change, 2013-2022	Natural Increase/ Decrease Per 1,000 Population, 2022	Net Migration Per 1,000 Population, 2022	Median Age, 2022	Share of Population Aged 65 and Older, 2022	People of Color Share of Population, 2022	Percent Change in People of Color Population, 2013-2022
Arkansas	18,797	16,512	-12.2%	-7.9	-2.1	43	20.6%	28.5%	-7.8%
Ashley	21,289	18,354	-13.8%	-6.0	-9.8	44	21.9%	26.9%	-17.5%
Baxter	41,000	42,435	3.5%	-13.1	18.8	52	30.8%	3.9%	42.4%
Benton	239,559	302,863	26.4%	4.3	23.2	36	13.9%	12.7%	63.3%
Boone	37,353	38,284	2.5%	-4.8	15.1	42	21.0%	4.6%	37.3%
Bradley	11,120	10,135	-8.9%	-6.9	-12.5	41	19.8%	32.1%	-6.0%
Calhoun	5,190	4,695	-9.5%	-8.1	-0.4	45	22.7%	23.9%	-8.8%
Carroll	27,815	28,742	3.3%	-2.3	11.0	44	23.8%	9.4%	87.1%
Chicot	11,370	9,873	-13.2%	-7.3	-12.9	44	22.4%	56.3%	-13.7%
Clark	22,600	21,250	-6.0%	-3.2	5.3	32	16.7%	27.5%	-4.3%
Clay	15,482	14,265	-7.9%	-7.9	1.0	43	21.4%	3.6%	42.6%
Cleburne	25,645	25,284	-1.4%	-9.3	18.0	50	27.6%	4.0%	35.1%
Cleveland	8,517	7,467	-12.3%	-7.6	4.8	44	21.8%	13.7%	-9.4%
Columbia	24,282	22,216	-8.5%	-3.2	-9.9	35	17.6%	38.7%	-8.7%
Conway	21,091	21,046	-0.2%	-3.7	10.2	42	20.1%	15.6%	6.7%
Craighead	101,682	113,017	11.1%	3.1	8.0	35	14.3%	22.1%	42.2%
Crawford	61,708	61,075	-1.0%	-2.1	13.0	40	18.0%	9.9%	20.5%
Crittenden	49,677	47,061	-5.3%	0.2	-8.7	36	15.2%	58.3%	2.2%
Cross	17,521	16,601	-5.3%	-4.4	-0.7	41	18.9%	25.9%	-1.5%
Dallas	7,896	6,191	-21.6%	-10.5	-8.1	47	25.7%	44.5%	-20.4%
Desha	12,497	10,771	-13.8%	-6.9	-19.7	40	20.2%	51.2%	-11.8%
Drew	18,684	16,911	-9.5%	-3.1	-6.1	38	18.0%	30.7%	-7.2%
Faulkner	119,251	127,665	7.1%	2.5	13.4	34	14.1%	17.2%	23.3%
Franklin	17,917	17,271	-3.6%	-5.1	11.3	42	20.2%	6.4%	28.1%
Fulton	12,175	12,382	1.7%	-9.7	26.9	47	25.8%	5.0%	65.4%
Garland	97,734	100,089	2.4%	-7.2	4.6	46	25.1%	13.2%	11.4%
Grant	18,047	18,160	0.6%	-5.2	6.2	42	18.7%	6.3%	32.9%
Greene	43,176	46,448	7.6%	-1.4	3.9	38	16.7%	5.6%	115.7%
Hempstead	22,434	19,453	-13.3%	-0.5	-10.9	40	19.4%	34.7%	-9.0%
Hot Spring	33,534	33,203	-1.0%	-6.3	9.2	43	19.8%	14.6%	4.9%
Howard	13,541	12,557	-7.3%	-2.8	-6.7	39	18.8%	25.1%	-3.2%
Independence	36,899	37,945	2.8%	-1.9	7.6	39	18.5%	6.8%	33.7%
Izard	13,420	14,048	4.7%	-9.6	17.9	47	25.4%	5.4%	36.4%
Jackson	17,741	16,624	-6.3%	-7.8	-1.1	40	18.2%	21.6%	1.6%
Jefferson	73,233	64,246	-12.3%	-4.2	-18.2	40	19.0%	60.4%	-9.2%
Johnson	25,941	26,001	0.2%	-1.0	2.5	39	17.8%	10.2%	57.1%
Lafayette	7,279	6,101	-16.2%	-10.7	2.5	48	25.3%	38.0%	-18.6%
Lawrence	17,051	16,205	-5.0%	-5.2	-1.2	40	19.2%	4.1%	47.2%
Lee	9,996	8,364	-16.3%	-11.0	-12.9	41	20.2%	56.2%	-19.1%
Lincoln	14,070	12,916	-8.2%	-5.8	-12.9	39	15.1%	32.9%	-6.2%
Little River	12,743	11,821	-7.2%	-6.9	-3.8	43	21.5%	25.0%	-3.9%
Logan	22,034	21,253	-3.5%	-5.4	7.4	44	20.5%	6.6%	3.6%

FIGURE LG8. COUNTY GOVERNMENT SALES TAX REVENUE, 2012-2021

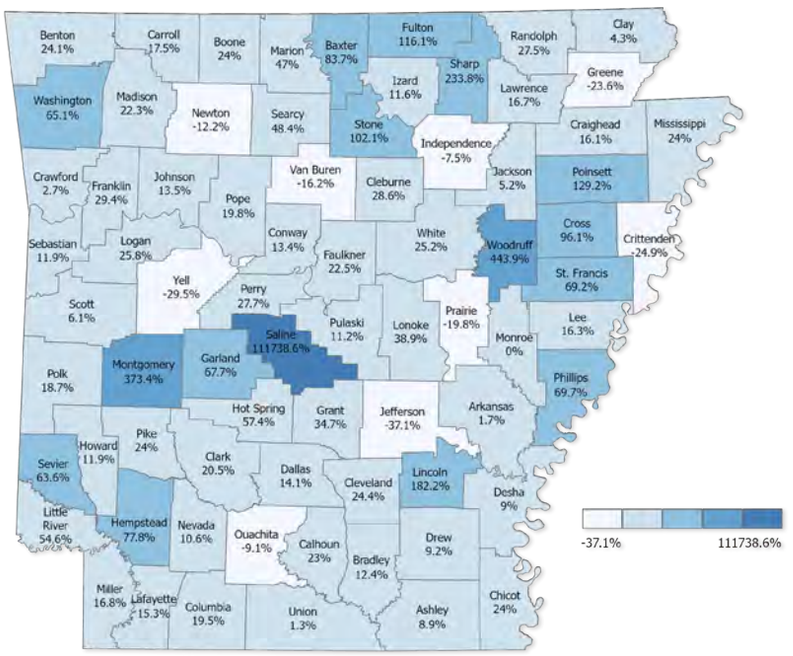


Source: Legislative Audit Reports, Arkansas Legislative Audits; South Urban Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics

The 2012 – 2021 period generally experienced two separate sales tax collection trends (Figure LG8). First, there was a moderate rate of growth pre-COVID-19 (2012-2019). Second, this pattern was followed by an accelerated growth in 2020 and 2021 for many counties. Between 2012 and 2019, Rural regions of Arkansas experienced an increase in real sales tax revenue of 13 percent. Over the next two years, rural regions grew by an additional 26 percent. Similarly, urban regions grew by 29 percent between 2012 and 2019, followed by a 27 percent increase over the next two years.

The overall growth in regions masks the major differences among counties. Figure LG9 compares real sales tax revenue change between 2017 and 2021, where nine counties saw a decline in revenue. Four of these counties (Greene: -24 percent; Crittenden: -25 percent; Yell: -30 percent; and Jefferson: -37 percent) experienced a decline of greater than 20 percent. During this same period, seven counties experienced an increase of more than 100 percent due to voter-approved increases in county sales tax rates, including Saline County, which enacted a new sales tax in 2019.

FIGURE LG9. PERCENT CHANGE IN SALES TAX REVENUE BETWEEN 2017 AND 2021



Source: Legislative Audit Reports, Arkansas Legislative Audits; South Urban Consumer Price Index
Note 1: The data of Madison, Nevada, and Scott County are from 2020
Note 2: Saline County enacted 0.375% of sales tax in 2019

Appendix Table 1. Population (continued)

County Name	Population 2013	Population 2022	Percent Population Change, 2013-2022	Natural Increase/ Decrease Per 1,000 Population, 2022	Net Migration Per 1,000 Population, 2022	Median Age, 2022	Share of Population Aged 65 and Older, 2022	People of Color Share of Population, 2022	Percent Change in People of Color Population, 2013-2022
Lonoke	70,775	75,225	6.3%	0.6	6.1	38	14.9%	11.0%	25.8%
Madison	15,690	17,486	11.4%	-0.3	30.9	41	19.7%	6.7%	72.5%
Marion	16,449	17,254	4.9%	-11.5	26.8	52	29.2%	4.9%	64.8%
Miller	43,439	42,552	-2.0%	-2.3	3.7	39	17.3%	29.6%	4.4%
Mississippi	44,642	38,896	-12.9%	-2.3	-15.5	37	15.9%	38.8%	-9.0%
Monroe	7,693	6,564	-14.7%	-9.9	-4.7	45	24.1%	44.5%	-12.8%
Montgomery	9,254	8,556	-7.5%	-10.1	0.8	51	27.4%	6.8%	30.8%
Nevada	8,767	8,181	-6.7%	-6.6	5.0	43	21.6%	32.8%	-7.1%
Newton	8,045	7,078	-12.0%	-12.0	0.0	49	27.3%	5.5%	23.3%
Ouachita	24,957	22,049	-11.7%	-6.1	-7.2	43	21.6%	43.3%	-9.8%
Perry	10,334	10,063	-2.6%	-5.8	12.9	44	21.1%	5.9%	15.8%
Phillips	20,435	15,304	-25.1%	-6.8	-27.7	41	21.0%	65.1%	-24.5%
Pike	11,117	10,179	-8.4%	-4.8	11.1	43	21.2%	8.4%	20.1%
Poinsett	24,184	22,495	-7.0%	-5.5	-5.0	40	18.4%	11.9%	14.2%
Polk	20,344	19,337	-4.9%	-7.6	7.9	44	23.5%	6.8%	21.6%
Pope	62,612	64,065	2.3%	-0.8	6.0	37	16.6%	8.3%	18.0%
Prairie	8,381	8,069	-3.7%	-9.9	7.2	46	24.3%	12.9%	-9.4%
Pulaski	391,745	399,145	1.9%	1.0	2.1	38	17.0%	43.9%	10.3%
Randolph	17,628	18,837	6.9%	-3.6	3.8	39	19.4%	8.0%	178.6%
St. Francis	27,442	22,451	-18.2%	-0.8	-10.2	39	17.6%	56.2%	-17.2%
Saline	113,380	127,357	12.3%	-1.0	16.9	40	18.7%	13.7%	71.0%
Scott	10,908	9,805	-10.1%	-5.7	7.0	43	21.5%	10.0%	4.3%
Searcy	7,992	7,918	-0.9%	-8.0	12.6	49	25.5%	5.1%	12.6%
Sebastian	127,266	129,059	1.4%	-0.6	5.7	38	17.1%	18.5%	10.9%
Sevier	17,358	15,686	-9.6%	-0.6	-0.4	35	14.6%	13.3%	12.5%
Sharp	17,041	17,810	4.5%	-8.4	16.2	47	25.6%	5.1%	31.0%
Stone	12,434	12,575	1.1%	-9.5	20.4	49	27.8%	4.0%	26.3%
Union	40,619	37,752	-7.1%	-4.7	-11.8	41	19.5%	36.0%	-5.3%
Van Buren	16,988	16,102	-5.2%	-9.6	30.4	49	26.5%	4.5%	12.2%
Washington	216,107	256,054	18.5%	4.4	12.5	33	12.6%	14.5%	42.7%
White	78,590	77,755	-1.1%	-2.5	10.4	39	17.0%	8.7%	14.2%
Woodruff	7,029	6,049	-13.9%	-8.6	-8.8	45	24.6%	28.9%	-16.2%
Yell	21,823	20,129	-7.8%	-2.1	1.5	40	18.3%	7.0%	16.8%
SUMMARY									
State	2,960,459	3,045,637	2.9%	-1.3	7.1	39	17.8%	21.5%	9.9%
Total Rural	1,254,903	1,200,229	-4.4%	-5.0	3.9	43	20.5%	17.3%	-2.8%
Total Urban	1,705,556	1,845,408	8.2%	1.1	9.1	38	16.1%	24.2%	17.1%
Coastal Plains	205,881	185,135	-10.1%	-5.0	-7.6	42	20.2%	33.5%	-8.8%
Delta	300,456	272,202	-9.4%	-5.0	-6.9	41	18.7%	30.1%	-10.6%
Highlands	748,566	742,892	-0.8%	-5.1	10.7	44	21.2%	8.6%	17.8%

Appendix Table 2. Total Employment and Employment Change

County Name	Total Employment			Employment Change %			Employment Change		
	2013	2018	2022	2008-2022	2013-2022	2018-2022	2008-2022	2013-2022	2018-2022
Arkansas	12,916	13,267	14,306	5.1%	10.8%	7.8%	694	1,390	1,039
Ashley	10,204	9,358	9,180	-14.3%	-10.0%	-1.9%	(1,538)	(1,024)	(178)
Baxter	20,608	21,796	23,324	6.8%	13.2%	7.0%	1,495	2,716	1,528
Benton	132,468	163,604	191,744	53.8%	44.7%	17.2%	67,112	59,276	28,140
Boone	20,231	20,654	21,652	4.5%	7.0%	4.8%	925	1,421	998
Bradley	4,757	5,148	5,032	-4.7%	5.8%	-2.3%	(250)	275	(116)
Calhoun	2,830	3,273	3,478	0.5%	22.9%	6.3%	18	648	205
Carroll	15,381	16,046	16,764	10.6%	9.0%	4.5%	1,608	1,383	718
Chicot	4,847	4,618	4,610	-10.2%	-4.9%	-0.2%	(522)	(237)	(8)
Clark	12,739	12,815	11,797	-12.2%	-7.4%	-7.9%	(1,640)	(942)	(1,018)
Clay	5,802	5,586	5,541	-13.4%	-4.5%	-0.8%	(857)	(261)	(45)
Cleburne	11,890	11,108	11,616	-4.3%	-2.3%	4.6%	(522)	(274)	508
Cleveland	1,977	1,952	1,947	1.8%	-1.5%	-0.3%	35	(30)	(5)
Columbia	11,793	11,328	11,566	-8.7%	-1.9%	2.1%	(1,102)	(227)	238
Conway	10,239	9,946	10,935	4.5%	6.8%	9.9%	472	696	989
Craighead	60,922	69,733	75,666	34.1%	24.2%	8.5%	19,256	14,744	5,933
Crawford	26,368	27,549	27,693	0.3%	5.0%	0.5%	94	1,325	144
Crittenden	23,161	23,549	24,297	5.8%	4.9%	3.2%	1,338	1,136	748
Cross	7,952	7,780	7,954	0.9%	0.0%	2.2%	70	2	174
Dallas	3,513	3,405	3,418	-17.0%	-2.7%	0.4%	(699)	(95)	13
Desha	6,545	6,521	6,438	-4.3%	-1.6%	-1.3%	(289)	(107)	(83)
Drew	9,162	9,288	9,300	-1.9%	1.5%	0.1%	(180)	138	12
Faulkner	57,632	60,149	65,806	19.0%	14.2%	9.4%	10,514	8,174	5,657
Franklin	6,915	7,234	7,577	5.3%	9.6%	4.7%	381	662	343
Fulton	3,791	3,998	4,307	9.4%	13.6%	7.7%	371	516	309
Garland	51,634	53,322	55,781	6.6%	8.0%	4.6%	3,444	4,147	2,459
Grant	5,974	6,353	6,552	10.2%	9.7%	3.1%	605	578	199
Greene	19,945	21,375	22,655	15.9%	13.6%	6.0%	3,115	2,710	1,280
Hempstead	10,611	10,658	10,747	-1.1%	1.3%	0.8%	(120)	136	89
Hot Spring	11,985	12,387	12,545	7.8%	4.7%	1.3%	912	560	158
Howard	9,050	8,852	8,378	-12.2%	-7.4%	-5.4%	(1,165)	(672)	(474)
Independence	19,913	21,465	23,106	9.9%	16.0%	7.6%	2,072	3,193	1,641
Izard	5,537	5,381	5,330	-7.4%	-3.7%	-0.9%	(428)	(207)	(51)
Jackson	7,414	7,306	7,381	-6.3%	-0.4%	1.0%	(493)	(33)	75
Jefferson	38,615	36,443	35,491	-14.0%	-8.1%	-2.6%	(5,779)	(3,124)	(952)
Johnson	11,507	11,339	11,533	-2.1%	0.2%	1.7%	(244)	26	194
Lafayette	2,235	2,154	2,124	-11.8%	-5.0%	-1.4%	(283)	(111)	(30)
Lawrence	6,749	6,524	6,685	-5.3%	-0.9%	2.5%	(374)	(64)	161
Lee	3,416	3,400	3,368	-2.4%	-1.4%	-0.9%	(82)	(48)	(32)
Lincoln	4,546	4,441	4,410	-6.4%	-3.0%	-0.7%	(301)	(136)	(31)
Little River	5,305	4,908	4,771	-24.4%	-10.1%	-2.8%	(1,543)	(534)	(137)
Logan	8,637	8,332	8,348	-8.1%	-3.3%	0.2%	(734)	(289)	16

Appendix Table 2. Total Employment and Employment Change (continued)

County Name	Total Employment			Employment Change %			Employment Change		
	2013	2018	2022	2008-2022	2013-2022	2018-2022	2008-2022	2013-2022	2018-2022
Lonoke	21,802	23,049	25,552	19.6%	17.2%	10.9%	4,180	3,750	2,503
Madison	6,572	6,553	7,145	13.2%	8.7%	9.0%	832	573	592
Marion	6,065	6,240	6,377	-2.2%	5.1%	2.2%	(144)	312	137
Miller	18,129	18,633	18,744	3.8%	3.4%	0.6%	679	615	111
Mississippi	23,480	22,833	23,152	-6.2%	-1.4%	1.4%	(1,525)	(328)	319
Monroe	3,522	3,402	3,306	-9.6%	-6.1%	-2.8%	(350)	(216)	(96)
Montgomery	3,064	2,991	2,876	-10.9%	-6.1%	-3.8%	(351)	(188)	(115)
Nevada	3,664	3,662	3,416	-8.1%	-6.8%	-6.7%	(303)	(248)	(246)
Newton	2,789	2,655	2,689	-8.1%	-3.6%	1.3%	(236)	(100)	34
Ouachita	10,259	9,613	9,823	-4.6%	-4.2%	2.2%	(469)	(436)	210
Perry	2,901	2,805	2,760	-10.0%	-4.9%	-1.6%	(308)	(141)	(45)
Phillips	8,731	8,371	7,899	-12.9%	-9.5%	-5.6%	(1,172)	(832)	(472)
Pike	3,959	4,427	4,430	-1.9%	11.9%	0.1%	(84)	471	3
Poinsett	8,225	8,461	8,802	2.7%	7.0%	4.0%	235	577	341
Polk	9,674	9,526	9,766	-2.2%	1.0%	2.5%	(218)	92	240
Pope	35,627	35,212	35,124	-2.6%	-1.4%	-0.2%	(929)	(503)	(88)
Prairie	2,875	2,920	3,075	2.4%	7.0%	5.3%	72	200	155
Pulaski	315,355	331,588	346,902	10.2%	10.0%	4.6%	32,096	31,547	15,314
Randolph	7,522	8,488	9,006	14.7%	19.7%	6.1%	1,155	1,484	518
St. Francis	11,489	10,668	10,553	-8.0%	-8.1%	-1.1%	(914)	(936)	(115)
Saline	35,112	39,977	44,567	34.2%	26.9%	11.5%	11,354	9,455	4,590
Scott	4,796	4,693	4,622	1.3%	-3.6%	-1.5%	61	(174)	(71)
Searcy	3,554	3,455	3,438	-10.9%	-3.3%	-0.5%	(422)	(116)	(17)
Sebastian	83,030	85,495	87,656	-3.7%	5.6%	2.5%	(3,348)	4,626	2,161
Sevier	7,016	7,184	7,264	-3.5%	3.5%	1.1%	(264)	248	80
Sharp	6,522	6,131	6,442	-7.6%	-1.2%	5.1%	(533)	(80)	311
Stone	4,843	5,061	5,193	-2.6%	7.2%	2.6%	(139)	350	132
Union	24,663	24,028	23,807	-8.0%	-3.5%	-0.9%	(2,081)	(856)	(221)
Van Buren	6,294	6,144	6,642	4.2%	5.5%	8.1%	268	348	498
Washington	130,911	151,413	168,402	34.6%	28.6%	11.2%	43,334	37,491	16,989
White	36,646	35,967	38,463	2.8%	5.0%	6.9%	1,052	1,817	2,496
Woodruff	2,945	2,794	2,948	-4.8%	0.1%	5.5%	(148)	3	154
Yell	9,606	9,428	9,542	-4.8%	-0.7%	1.2%	(480)	(64)	114
SUMMARY									
State	1,569,358	1,658,212	1,755,536	11.2%	11.9%	5.9%	176,286	186,178	97,324
Total Rural	574,219	573,708	587,235	-1.3%	2.3%	2.4%	(7,988)	13,016	13,527
Total Urban	995,139	1,084,504	1,168,301	18.7%	17.4%	7.7%	184,274	173,162	83,797
Coastal Plains	97,460	95,370	95,191	-7.6%	-2.3%	-0.2%	(7,816)	(2,269)	(179)
Delta	134,650	133,743	136,398	-1.8%	1.3%	2.0%	(2,467)	1,748	2,655
Highlands	342,109	344,595	355,646	0.6%	4.0%	3.2%	2,295	13,537	11,051

Appendix Table 3. Median Household Income and Average Earnings per Job

County Name	Median Household Income (5-Year Estimate, 2022$)			Average Earnings per Job (2022$)				
	2018	2022	% Change 2017-2020	2013	2018	2022	% Change 2013-2022	% Change 2018-2022
Arkansas	$39,466	$58,695	48.7%	$62,984	$57,326	$55,418	-12.0%	-3.3%
Ashley	$39,635	$44,804	13.0%	$55,369	$55,381	$53,128	-4.0%	-4.1%
Baxter	$41,481	$47,403	14.3%	$42,626	$44,014	$43,726	2.6%	-0.7%
Benton	$64,141	$85,269	32.9%	$69,735	$69,250	$71,229	2.1%	2.9%
Boone	$43,262	$52,275	20.8%	$44,560	$46,887	$46,666	4.7%	-0.5%
Bradley	$39,510	$43,688	10.6%	$47,112	$50,598	$51,044	8.3%	0.9%
Calhoun	$44,022	$60,237	36.8%	$70,281	$75,954	$74,317	5.7%	-2.2%
Carroll	$43,505	$56,826	30.6%	$35,424	$37,877	$41,356	16.7%	9.2%
Chicot	$33,051	$36,593	10.7%	$61,346	$45,374	$43,707	-28.8%	-3.7%
Clark	$39,752	$48,071	20.9%	$43,671	$45,130	$43,852	0.4%	-2.8%
Clay	$33,935	$44,685	31.7%	$55,675	$40,606	$43,447	-22.0%	7.0%
Cleburne	$43,391	$52,780	21.6%	$39,572	$36,950	$37,230	-5.9%	0.8%
Cleveland	$42,460	$48,913	15.2%	$46,458	$47,142	$58,753	26.5%	24.6%
Columbia	$36,148	$47,441	31.2%	$52,001	$49,250	$48,607	-6.5%	-1.3%
Conway	$41,196	$50,282	22.1%	$49,479	$48,982	$50,421	1.9%	2.9%
Craighead	$45,868	$55,169	20.3%	$53,823	$51,067	$52,208	-3.0%	2.2%
Crawford	$46,619	$56,702	21.6%	$45,681	$44,779	$47,495	4.0%	6.1%
Crittenden	$39,002	$51,860	33.0%	$50,646	$49,533	$48,344	-4.5%	-2.4%
Cross	$43,838	$48,129	9.8%	$47,640	$40,961	$38,220	-19.8%	-6.7%
Dallas	$36,628	$40,085	9.4%	$40,418	$44,424	$44,946	11.2%	1.2%
Desha	$30,234	$38,067	25.9%	$66,182	$53,236	$55,814	-15.7%	4.8%
Drew	$43,014	$44,968	4.5%	$51,608	$47,708	$50,072	-3.0%	5.0%
Faulkner	$51,930	$61,273	18.0%	$51,044	$48,412	$47,168	-7.6%	-2.6%
Franklin	$39,463	$47,695	20.9%	$43,268	$42,839	$43,101	-0.4%	0.6%
Fulton	$36,184	$38,917	7.6%	$31,790	$28,903	$29,759	-6.4%	3.0%
Garland	$43,146	$54,229	25.7%	$44,609	$46,776	$45,908	2.9%	-1.9%
Grant	$51,920	$68,598	32.1%	$43,381	$45,820	$46,322	6.8%	1.1%
Greene	$47,497	$54,879	15.5%	$54,950	$50,128	$47,436	-13.7%	-5.4%
Hempstead	$41,355	$45,049	8.9%	$47,961	$48,482	$50,722	5.8%	4.6%
Hot Spring	$41,262	$50,260	21.8%	$43,633	$44,431	$45,190	3.6%	1.7%
Howard	$35,900	$44,824	24.9%	$47,776	$51,430	$56,622	18.5%	10.1%
Independence	$43,523	$52,361	20.3%	$49,720	$52,634	$54,915	10.4%	4.3%
Izard	$40,218	$46,159	14.8%	$37,812	$36,691	$35,549	-6.0%	-3.1%
Jackson	$33,174	$41,929	26.4%	$70,029	$65,146	$66,047	-5.7%	1.4%
Jefferson	$38,289	$46,855	22.4%	$57,750	$55,501	$55,171	-4.5%	-0.6%
Johnson	$37,170	$42,470	14.3%	$43,227	$44,465	$45,767	5.9%	2.9%
Lafayette	$32,412	$40,262	24.2%	$54,351	$43,381	$50,953	-6.3%	17.5%
Lawrence	$38,528	$43,606	13.2%	$48,308	$42,591	$44,489	-7.9%	4.5%
Lee	$28,367	$33,801	19.2%	$56,643	$36,976	$39,975	-29.4%	8.1%
Lincoln	$45,166	$50,526	11.9%	$57,182	$46,142	$49,481	-13.5%	7.2%
Little River	$45,388	$58,627	29.2%	$60,736	$58,858	$54,448	-10.4%	-7.5%
Logan	$39,748	$51,131	28.6%	$44,582	$42,906	$44,677	0.2%	4.1%

Appendix Table 3. Median Household Income and Average Earnings per Job (continued)

County Name	Median Household Income (5-Year Estimate, 2022$)			Average Earnings per Job (2022$)				
	2018	2022	% Change 2017-2020	2013	2018	2022	% Change 2013-2022	% Change 2018-2022
Lonoke	$57,509	$68,078	18.4%	$43,193	$40,469	$38,398	-11.1%	-5.1%
Madison	$43,891	$51,514	17.4%	$37,128	$41,420	$48,430	30.4%	16.9%
Marion	$35,518	$42,891	20.8%	$34,806	$35,665	$35,692	2.5%	0.1%
Miller	$41,903	$47,613	13.6%	$48,977	$48,997	$47,582	-2.8%	-2.9%
Mississippi	$37,237	$50,012	34.3%	$61,379	$60,961	$65,317	6.4%	7.1%
Monroe	$35,190	$41,786	18.7%	$61,691	$39,360	$37,760	-38.8%	-4.1%
Montgomery	$37,855	$47,103	24.4%	$35,439	$28,396	$28,605	-19.3%	0.7%
Nevada	$37,635	$43,421	15.4%	$44,697	$47,226	$49,076	9.8%	3.9%
Newton	$39,896	$50,699	27.1%	$24,395	$24,276	$23,625	-3.2%	-2.7%
Ouachita	$34,887	$47,348	35.7%	$46,332	$45,722	$49,122	6.0%	7.4%
Perry	$46,071	$53,980	17.2%	$35,075	$35,105	$40,121	14.4%	14.3%
Phillips	$29,263	$37,458	28.0%	$51,361	$41,734	$43,230	-15.8%	3.6%
Pike	$37,406	$49,248	31.7%	$39,194	$39,492	$42,219	7.7%	6.9%
Poinsett	$39,277	$43,440	10.6%	$56,733	$47,779	$51,028	-10.1%	6.8%
Polk	$37,035	$48,449	30.8%	$38,630	$41,398	$43,933	13.7%	6.1%
Pope	$41,914	$51,678	23.3%	$49,924	$53,244	$51,870	3.9%	-2.6%
Prairie	$41,846	$47,045	12.4%	$59,526	$42,032	$40,705	-31.6%	-3.2%
Pulaski	$50,093	$58,326	16.4%	$65,995	$66,255	$65,337	-1.0%	-1.4%
Randolph	$36,870	$45,993	24.7%	$40,300	$40,982	$42,375	5.1%	3.4%
St. Francis	$35,356	$39,822	12.6%	$50,481	$48,361	$45,792	-9.3%	-5.3%
Saline	$62,152	$73,236	17.8%	$43,314	$42,562	$42,840	-1.1%	0.7%
Scott	$35,509	$45,340	27.7%	$40,985	$43,734	$47,345	15.5%	8.3%
Searcy	$36,390	$42,063	15.6%	$25,986	$23,525	$24,001	-7.6%	2.0%
Sebastian	$43,240	$54,047	25.0%	$59,110	$58,532	$57,588	-2.6%	-1.6%
Sevier	$46,667	$53,567	14.8%	$47,936	$52,215	$59,531	24.2%	14.0%
Sharp	$33,708	$43,332	28.6%	$35,143	$42,036	$48,219	37.2%	14.7%
Stone	$36,162	$37,664	4.2%	$31,740	$33,268	$33,070	4.2%	-0.6%
Union	$44,000	$49,745	13.1%	$68,164	$59,716	$58,179	-14.6%	-2.6%
Van Buren	$36,897	$45,768	24.0%	$43,439	$36,873	$35,886	-17.4%	-2.7%
Washington	$49,629	$61,985	24.9%	$55,237	$58,134	$59,834	8.3%	2.9%
White	$43,822	$51,144	16.7%	$46,241	$44,763	$44,336	-4.1%	-1.0%
Woodruff	$31,023	$49,608	59.9%	$69,022	$50,713	$54,652	-20.8%	7.8%
Yell	$42,361	$55,879	31.9%	$42,149	$45,460	$50,618	20.1%	11.3%
SUMMARY								
State	$45,726	$56,335	23.2%	$62,984	$54,967	$55,552	-11.8%	1.1%
Total Rural	$39,121	$47,436	21.3%	$55,369	$45,082	$46,466	-16.1%	3.1%
Total Urban	$48,732	$59,588	22.3%	$42,626	$52,328	$52,239	22.6%	-0.2%
Coastal Plains	$40,039	$47,875	19.6%	$69,735	$52,452	$54,035	-22.5%	3.0%
Delta	$36,495	$44,780	22.7%	$44,560	$47,927	$48,627	9.1%	1.5%
Highlands	$40,032	$48,531	21.2%	$47,112	$41,142	$42,778	-9.2%	4.0%

Appendix Table 4. Infrastructure

County Name	Percentage of Population with Access to Fast Internet, 2023		Structurally Deficient Bridges, 2023		
	1000/100 Mbps Fixed Broadband	35/3 Mbps 5G Mobile Broadband	Number	Percent Deficient by Number Of Bridges	Percent Deficient by Bridge Area
Arkansas	15.0%	24.6%	5	3.2%	1.0%
Ashley	59.0%	15.5%	1	1.0%	0.2%
Baxter	84.4%	29.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Benton	25.2%	69.9%	17	4.2%	3.6%
Boone	29.8%	39.4%	3	3.1%	4.8%
Bradley	32.5%	9.0%	3	2.8%	0.3%
Calhoun	88.1%	13.0%	5	4.5%	4.8%
Carroll	18.2%	42.8%	3	2.5%	1.7%
Chicot	16.8%	37.4%	8	8.9%	2.4%
Clark	61.4%	13.3%	7	3.4%	5.4%
Clay	47.8%	17.2%	20	10.0%	14.5%
Cleburne	20.1%	37.9%	4	7.5%	2.2%
Cleveland	22.1%	7.8%	3	3.7%	1.3%
Columbia	21.6%	17.8%	1	0.8%	0.2%
Conway	21.4%	48.6%	1	0.8%	0.8%
Craighead	45.7%	61.7%	18	4.1%	2.9%
Crawford	58.8%	49.2%	20	8.0%	6.3%
Crittenden	10.6%	61.2%	15	6.4%	1.2%
Cross	15.9%	28.0%	15	11.6%	9.9%
Dallas	49.5%	10.5%	6	5.7%	4.0%
Desha	0.0%	20.0%	8	9.6%	11.1%
Drew	3.5%	15.7%	3	2.0%	3.5%
Faulkner	74.1%	70.9%	3	1.4%	1.9%
Franklin	71.5%	28.5%	14	9.7%	16.9%
Fulton	91.4%	21.8%	14	13.3%	9.9%
Garland	13.8%	42.7%	5	1.6%	0.8%
Grant	75.5%	15.8%	1	0.8%	0.2%
Greene	99.5%	36.9%	9	3.6%	2.0%
Hempstead	62.5%	21.5%	4	2.3%	1.1%
Hot Spring	31.7%	27.3%	14	6.3%	20.5%
Howard	46.1%	14.4%	5	4.3%	10.6%
Independence	22.2%	27.4%	13	7.1%	3.3%
Izard	75.3%	20.8%	14	14.1%	11.9%
Jackson	5.7%	35.8%	11	8.1%	3.6%
Jefferson	2.6%	46.6%	15	4.4%	1.0%
Johnson	79.0%	26.6%	2	1.3%	0.3%
Lafayette	26.0%	12.8%	2	2.8%	6.5%
Lawrence	59.2%	24.1%	12	9.4%	5.5%
Lee	0.0%	18.5%	12	12.4%	10.4%
Lincoln	48.5%	21.5%	2	1.8%	1.5%
Little River	16.8%	13.4%	5	6.0%	8.3%
Logan	30.1%	42.2%	18	11.8%	10.6%

Appendix Table 4. Infrastructure (continued)

County Name	Percentage of Population with Access to Fast Internet, 2023		Structurally Deficient Bridges, 2023		
	1000/100 Mbps Fixed Broadband	35/3 Mbps 5G Mobile Broadband	Number	Percent Deficient by Number Of Bridges	Percent Deficient by Bridge Area
Lonoke	56.0%	75.2%	10	5.3%	4.4%
Madison	84.7%	20.4%	23	15.6%	12.0%
Marion	44.1%	26.5%	3	4.5%	0.6%
Miller	68.6%	36.2%	6	2.8%	1.1%
Mississippi	34.9%	40.1%	32	10.3%	9.6%
Monroe	19.1%	27.8%	7	8.3%	2.8%
Montgomery	18.1%	11.9%	3	1.5%	0.4%
Nevada	24.0%	11.4%	5	3.8%	6.0%
Newton	2.1%	12.3%	2	3.1%	3.7%
Ouachita	43.7%	21.3%	5	3.1%	2.8%
Perry	93.2%	29.6%	2	1.7%	1.2%
Phillips	3.0%	23.1%	25	24.8%	55.4%
Pike	97.0%	16.6%	3	3.2%	8.8%
Poinsett	31.2%	45.8%	31	15.9%	10.9%
Polk	0.1%	16.3%	27	12.2%	12.1%
Pope	8.6%	32.1%	1	0.5%	0.9%
Prairie	8.5%	36.5%	9	10.3%	13.2%
Pulaski	57.9%	81.5%	16	2.2%	5.6%
Randolph	56.8%	13.8%	6	4.0%	7.5%
St. Francis	4.4%	38.5%	13	6.4%	5.0%
Saline	40.3%	52.5%	7	3.0%	3.6%
Scott	3.7%	20.0%	13	6.6%	11.0%
Searcy	26.3%	25.5%	2	3.1%	0.9%
Sebastian	51.9%	67.4%	18	5.5%	2.7%
Sevier	74.2%	14.7%	9	5.5%	9.6%
Sharp	54.9%	11.1%	5	4.5%	3.9%
Stone	13.4%	15.9%	8	11.0%	12.2%
Union	1.1%	18.2%	1	0.3%	2.7%
Van Buren	83.4%	24.4%	5	5.1%	3.3%
Washington	73.8%	54.8%	34	7.6%	3.6%
White	27.7%	46.1%	13	4.0%	4.9%
Woodruff	55.6%	39.0%	5	6.4%	7.1%
Yell	50.6%	22.8%	7	3.1%	2.9%
SUMMARY					
State	39.9%	30.2%	697	5.4%	5.0%
Total Rural	38.9%	24.2%	513	5.9%	6.1%
Total Urban	44.6%	59.2%	184	4.3%	3.6%
Coastal Plains	33.4%	14.8%	38	2.4%	3.1%
Delta	25.4%	30.7%	212	9.2%	7.9%
Highlands	47.2%	24.4%	263	5.6%	6.0%

Appendix Table 5. Measures of Social and Economic Stress

County Name	Poverty Rate, 5-Year Estimate, 2018-2022			Food Insecurity Rate, 2021		Snap Participation Rates, 2022
	2018	2022	Number Of Population Change (%), 2018-2022	Overall Food Insecurity Rate (%)	Child Food Insecurity Rate (<18 Years) (%)	
Arkansas	20.0%	16.8%	-6.0%	14.4%	18.4%	17.6%
Ashley	20.2%	23.3%	-7.3%	17.5%	25.2%	23.0%
Baxter	14.0%	13.5%	1.6%	16.2%	18.0%	12.2%
Benton	9.9%	7.9%	10.5%	10.7%	9.0%	6.2%
Boone	14.9%	13.2%	0.9%	15.0%	13.9%	14.6%
Bradley	23.2%	15.2%	-4.2%	14.2%	20.0%	23.4%
Calhoun	15.6%	12.5%	-9.2%	12.1%	17.8%	14.7%
Carroll	15.0%	15.4%	1.6%	13.4%	12.3%	11.2%
Chicot	29.2%	27.4%	-6.0%	19.9%	36.4%	29.9%
Clark	19.8%	20.0%	-3.0%	16.2%	22.4%	15.4%
Clay	22.6%	19.4%	-3.3%	17.5%	19.8%	17.0%
Cleburne	14.6%	14.1%	-1.1%	16.1%	18.4%	14.3%
Cleveland	19.4%	13.6%	-8.0%	13.4%	16.0%	17.0%
Columbia	25.2%	22.5%	-6.0%	16.4%	24.8%	21.0%
Conway	18.2%	20.9%	-0.2%	17.7%	22.3%	17.0%
Craighead	18.4%	19.1%	5.6%	15.4%	19.0%	16.5%
Crawford	15.9%	17.8%	-3.6%	15.9%	18.3%	15.0%
Crittenden	22.2%	19.7%	-2.2%	14.2%	26.8%	25.4%
Cross	16.7%	20.2%	-0.5%	15.9%	19.8%	15.8%
Dallas	14.3%	11.9%	-8.7%	13.5%	21.9%	19.0%
Desha	29.1%	27.2%	-4.5%	17.1%	30.3%	28.6%
Drew	21.4%	21.4%	-5.6%	14.1%	21.4%	20.3%
Faulkner	16.8%	15.5%	1.4%	13.6%	13.7%	10.6%
Franklin	21.9%	20.2%	-3.3%	19.1%	20.6%	14.1%
Fulton	23.9%	15.3%	1.1%	17.2%	17.4%	18.8%
Garland	18.6%	16.9%	2.0%	16.5%	20.4%	16.7%
Grant	14.5%	13.5%	-0.2%	14.5%	13.6%	11.6%
Greene	16.3%	17.6%	2.7%	16.7%	18.4%	17.4%
Hempstead	24.3%	23.0%	-9.2%	15.9%	25.1%	19.2%
Hot Spring	17.6%	19.7%	-1.6%	16.7%	20.7%	14.8%
Howard	19.2%	18.3%	-4.6%	14.8%	21.6%	19.8%
Independence	17.3%	19.3%	1.9%	16.5%	16.6%	15.3%
Izard	17.1%	19.7%	0.4%	17.8%	20.4%	17.3%
Jackson	23.3%	20.4%	1.9%	18.2%	22.1%	22.8%
Jefferson	23.2%	19.5%	-5.7%	14.2%	29.0%	25.7%
Johnson	22.4%	21.2%	-1.6%	17.0%	18.2%	19.2%
Lafayette	22.2%	21.6%	-9.1%	16.6%	26.6%	23.1%
Lawrence	17.7%	17.8%	-2.3%	16.8%	18.3%	20.5%
Lee	26.0%	27.6%	-8.0%	17.9%	34.4%	30.8%
Lincoln	18.6%	17.7%	-5.4%	12.8%	18.5%	16.3%
Little River	15.8%	11.8%	-3.0%	12.7%	17.5%	18.2%
Logan	21.1%	14.5%	-2.4%	17.0%	18.6%	17.6%

Appendix Table 5. Measures of Social and Economic Stress (continued)

County Name	Poverty Rate, 5-Year Estimate, 2018-2022			Food Insecurity Rate, 2021		Snap Participation Rates, 2022
	2018	2022	Number Of Population Change (%), 2018-2022	Overall Food Insecurity Rate (%)	Child Food Insecurity Rate (<18 Years) (%)	
Lonoke	12.2%	11.8%	2.6%	13.0%	13.3%	9.8%
Madison	16.8%	16.5%	4.3%	15.3%	16.9%	14.5%
Marion	20.6%	17.8%	2.9%	18.1%	21.0%	15.9%
Miller	21.2%	20.5%	-2.3%	15.6%	22.1%	20.0%
Mississippi	25.8%	21.9%	-6.2%	17.7%	27.2%	28.0%
Monroe	28.1%	23.8%	-6.8%	17.1%	30.8%	27.2%
Montgomery	18.9%	18.2%	-4.8%	18.8%	21.3%	15.3%
Nevada	27.7%	27.8%	-1.8%	17.6%	31.2%	16.0%
Newton	14.2%	11.4%	-7.9%	13.5%	13.6%	16.5%
Ouachita	24.1%	19.1%	-6.5%	16.0%	28.9%	20.2%
Perry	17.0%	15.3%	-2.3%	16.0%	16.3%	15.5%
Phillips	33.2%	30.5%	-13.8%	20.9%	39.1%	44.5%
Pike	16.6%	17.5%	-5.8%	17.2%	17.2%	19.8%
Poinsett	21.8%	21.0%	-4.3%	18.3%	21.5%	24.1%
Polk	24.5%	17.8%	-4.7%	17.8%	20.3%	18.4%
Pope	18.5%	17.9%	-0.1%	15.4%	16.7%	12.4%
Prairie	15.7%	10.0%	-1.0%	13.7%	15.4%	12.9%
Pulaski	17.0%	16.6%	1.0%	13.4%	21.9%	17.7%
Randolph	18.3%	19.2%	7.0%	17.5%	20.1%	17.2%
St. Francis	26.6%	28.1%	-11.5%	18.5%	33.2%	28.6%
Saline	8.5%	9.5%	5.2%	11.3%	12.1%	8.3%
Scott	22.1%	17.1%	-5.2%	15.7%	18.1%	25.2%
Searcy	21.1%	26.6%	-0.6%	19.9%	24.0%	16.0%
Sebastian	20.3%	16.5%	0.5%	16.6%	19.0%	17.5%
Sevier	21.0%	20.1%	-8.1%	16.8%	18.0%	17.6%
Sharp	21.6%	15.9%	2.5%	18.2%	21.6%	21.2%
Stone	22.5%	21.2%	-0.2%	19.6%	20.6%	17.8%
Union	20.1%	18.6%	-2.4%	14.6%	22.1%	18.5%
Van Buren	18.8%	18.9%	-4.6%	17.9%	18.3%	16.2%
Washington	16.8%	15.2%	8.2%	13.4%	12.2%	7.9%
White	17.0%	16.1%	-1.3%	15.3%	16.3%	15.9%
Woodruff	25.0%	19.0%	-6.1%	15.7%	22.9%	24.9%
Yell	16.3%	12.4%	-6.3%	14.7%	15.2%	15.1%
SUMMARY						
State	17.6%	16.2%	1.0%	14.6%	18.2%	15.2%
Total Rural	20.4%	18.8%	-2.6%	16.5%	20.7%	18.2%
Total Urban	17.0%	15.9%	3.4%	13.3%	16.6%	13.3%
Coastal Plains	21.6%	19.2%	-5.6%	15.7%	24.2%	19.8%
Delta	23.6%	21.8%	-4.4%	17.6%	25.5%	23.7%
Highlands	18.5%	17.3%	-1.0%	16.3%	17.9%	15.7%

Appendix Table 6. Health Indicators

County Name	The Maternal Vulnerability Index (MVI), 2021 0 = The Least Vulnerable, 100 = The Most Vulnerable	Percent of Adult Population Obese, 2024	Children And Adolescents, 2021					County Health Scores, 2024	
			Under weight	Healthy weight	Overweight	Obese	Overweight or Obese	Health Outcomes Scores	Health Factors Scores
Arkansas	67.4	37.9%	1.0%	49.8%	20.1%	29.2%	49.2%	1.27	0.37
Ashley	81.8	42.0%	1.4%	48.6%	19.3%	30.6%	50.0%	1.39	0.71
Baxter	50.1	35.5%	2.0%	54.6%	18.3%	25.0%	43.4%	0.28	-0.10
Benton	27.7	34.6%	2.4%	57.7%	17.1%	22.7%	39.9%	-0.61	-0.47
Boone	59.1	39.0%	1.8%	54.9%	18.4%	24.9%	43.3%	0.18	-0.15
Bradley	86.4	42.2%	1.4%	39.3%	20.3%	39.0%	59.3%	1.48	0.65
Calhoun	68.6	41.9%	0.0%	37.9%	10.3%	48.3%	58.6%	1.10	0.39
Carroll	74.9	36.7%	0.6%	54.6%	16.4%	28.4%	44.9%	0.11	0.14
Chicot	92.4	47.1%	0.0%	46.1%	15.6%	37.8%	53.3%	1.91	1.18
Clark	80.4	42.6%	2.2%	52.3%	20.2%	25.3%	45.5%	0.32	0.20
Clay	90.8	39.1%	2.1%	51.0%	16.6%	30.2%	46.9%	0.65	0.52
Cleburne	62.7	37.6%	1.3%	58.9%	16.7%	23.2%	39.8%	0.38	0.18
Cleveland	73.4	40.4%	1.8%	54.2%	17.7%	26.4%	44.1%	0.59	0.23
Columbia	70.3	41.7%	1.3%	54.0%	18.2%	26.5%	44.7%	1.17	0.52
Conway	82.5	40.6%	1.7%	49.8%	18.7%	29.8%	48.5%	0.58	0.27
Craighead	76.9	42.7%	2.0%	54.9%	17.3%	25.8%	43.1%	0.35	-0.04
Crawford	85.6	39.4%	2.9%	57.2%	16.7%	23.3%	40.0%	0.38	0.18
Crittenden	89.6	43.8%	1.7%	51.2%	15.0%	32.1%	47.1%	1.80	0.63
Cross	87.6	43.0%	1.8%	52.2%	17.9%	28.1%	46.0%	0.98	0.63
Dallas	83.8	40.4%	1.3%	42.4%	18.1%	38.3%	56.4%	1.57	0.41
Desha	90.5	45.1%	1.3%	44.4%	19.4%	34.9%	54.3%	1.82	0.97
Drew	78.4	41.5%	2.2%	52.9%	17.8%	27.1%	45.0%	0.83	0.43
Faulkner	72.4	36.8%	1.9%	57.3%	17.4%	23.4%	40.8%	-0.09	-0.21
Franklin	83.4	39.9%	6.9%	51.6%	15.9%	25.6%	41.5%	0.84	0.33
Fulton	77.7	40.6%	1.1%	54.7%	17.4%	26.8%	44.2%	0.90	0.38
Garland	82.9	36.5%	2.5%	54.3%	17.9%	25.4%	43.3%	0.72	0.09
Grant	56.2	39.3%	1.5%	54.6%	20.0%	23.8%	43.8%	0.35	0.04
Greene	71.2	39.5%	2.2%	56.0%	17.0%	24.8%	41.8%	0.29	0.23
Hempstead	90.7	44.8%	1.7%	49.8%	21.1%	27.4%	48.5%	0.66	0.59
Hot Spring	83.4	35.5%	1.3%	51.0%	19.3%	28.4%	47.7%	0.59	0.26
Howard	91.1	41.3%	2.1%	53.5%	14.6%	29.9%	44.4%	0.76	0.42
Independence	70.5	37.4%	1.9%	53.3%	17.7%	27.2%	44.9%	0.41	0.11
Izard	72.6	37.6%	2.0%	55.9%	15.9%	26.2%	42.1%	0.57	0.54
Jackson	89.7	40.0%	1.2%	52.5%	22.5%	23.9%	46.3%	1.04	0.73
Jefferson	81.6	43.3%	1.8%	51.5%	16.6%	30.2%	46.8%	1.67	0.70
Johnson	89.9	38.6%	2.6%	52.6%	16.8%	28.1%	44.8%	0.73	0.43
Lafayette	93	43.3%	0.0%	48.8%	19.0%	30.8%	49.8%	0.80	0.95
Lawrence	69.8	39.1%	0.9%	53.6%	19.1%	26.4%	45.5%	0.95	0.48
Lee	98.8	46.9%	0.0%	38.8%	17.6%	43.6%	61.2%	2.18	1.30
Lincoln	93.8	41.5%	2.4%	50.9%	18.7%	28.0%	46.7%	0.53	0.80
Little River	81.1	40.6%	2.8%	60.8%	15.5%	21.0%	36.5%	0.68	0.32
Logan	66.4	39.9%	2.3%	54.6%	18.0%	25.1%	43.1%	0.93	0.44

Appendix Table 6. Health Indicators (continued)

County Name	The Maternal Vulnerability Index (MVI), 2021 0 = The Least Vulnerable, 100 = The Most Vulnerable	Percent of Adult Population Obese, 2024	Children And Adolescents, 2021					County Health Scores, 2024	
			Under weight	Healthy weight	Overweight	Obese	Overweight or Obese	Health Outcomes Scores	Health Factors Scores
Lonoke	71.9	36.8%	2.3%	57.0%	17.3%	23.5%	40.8%	0.02	-0.09
Madison	72.6	38.6%	1.4%	60.3%	16.4%	21.9%	38.3%	0.15	0.28
Marion	84.9	37.3%	2.0%	54.3%	20.3%	23.4%	43.7%	0.78	0.24
Miller	91.9	38.1%	1.7%	53.9%	17.4%	27.0%	44.4%	1.01	0.44
Mississippi	94.9	39.2%	1.8%	50.3%	16.6%	31.3%	47.9%	1.96	0.89
Monroe	97.5	43.0%	0.0%	50.9%	18.2%	30.5%	48.7%	2.00	1.04
Montgomery	77.1	37.8%	0.0%	59.2%	15.8%	24.0%	39.9%	0.79	0.64
Nevada	92.3	40.1%	3.0%	57.0%	14.2%	25.8%	40.1%	1.19	0.65
Newton	64.8	39.9%	0.0%	65.4%	17.3%	16.1%	33.3%	0.21	0.22
Ouachita	77.9	40.0%	1.4%	47.8%	18.1%	32.7%	50.8%	1.28	0.41
Perry	70.4	37.7%	1.3%	54.8%	18.5%	25.4%	43.9%	0.40	0.08
Phillips	90.2	43.1%	1.8%	44.4%	21.1%	32.8%	53.8%	2.60	1.24
Pike	86.1	37.2%	1.2%	54.7%	20.5%	23.7%	44.1%	0.42	0.37
Poinsett	96.5	45.1%	0.9%	50.2%	17.8%	31.1%	48.9%	1.51	0.69
Polk	92.2	35.5%	2.3%	54.9%	17.1%	25.7%	42.8%	0.59	0.29
Pope	81.7	38.3%	1.3%	52.8%	19.0%	26.8%	45.9%	0.06	0.06
Prairie	69.4	36.7%	1.9%	50.5%	21.4%	26.2%	47.6%	0.47	0.10
Pulaski	60.6	39.0%	2.1%	55.3%	17.5%	25.1%	42.6%	0.69	-0.05
Randolph	81	42.0%	0.0%	52.6%	16.9%	30.0%	46.9%	0.58	0.34
St. Francis	84.9	48.4%	2.3%	56.5%	18.3%	23.0%	41.3%	1.38	1.09
Saline	44.3	35.0%	4.0%	56.4%	17.4%	22.2%	39.6%	-0.04	-0.28
Scott	81.9	39.5%	1.6%	44.1%	18.0%	36.3%	54.2%	1.02	0.41
Searcy	65.7	39.0%	1.3%	52.9%	18.6%	27.2%	45.8%	0.65	0.66
Sebastian	86.7	38.6%	1.4%	47.2%	19.0%	32.4%	51.4%	0.45	0.01
Sevier	95.5	42.5%	1.9%	47.2%	16.5%	34.5%	50.9%	0.55	0.70
Sharp	94.2	40.0%	1.0%	47.1%	20.5%	31.4%	51.9%	0.85	0.50
Stone	70.9	40.9%	4.4%	53.7%	17.8%	24.1%	41.9%	0.66	0.54
Union	75.6	39.0%	1.6%	53.1%	17.2%	28.1%	45.3%	1.25	0.44
Van Buren	81.6	39.9%	3.2%	56.7%	14.3%	25.8%	40.1%	0.38	0.49
Washington	63.3	33.4%	1.6%	55.3%	17.8%	25.3%	43.1%	-0.25	-0.41
White	88.6	36.9%	1.8%	55.1%	18.5%	24.6%	43.1%	0.51	0.23
Woodruff	95.5	39.8%	2.0%	51.2%	14.4%	32.5%	46.9%	0.86	0.71
Yell	89.1	37.3%	2.0%	48.0%	19.4%	30.6%	50.0%	0.42	0.62
SUMMARY									
State	96.00	39.3%	1.9%	52.3%	17.9%	28.0%	45.8%	0.79	0.40
Total Rural	80.86	40.2%	1.9%	51.8%	18.0%	28.5%	46.4%	0.86	0.48
Total Urban	71.95	38.3%	2.0%	55.0%	17.3%	25.7%	43.0%	0.47	0.04
Coastal Plains	80.79	41.5%	1.9%	50.3%	18.0%	30.3%	47.7%	1.04	0.52
Delta	88.19	42.2%	1.6%	49.1%	18.5%	31.0%	49.5%	1.34	0.78
Highlands	77.44	38.9%	2.0%	53.5%	17.8%	26.8%	44.5%	0.57	0.32

Appendix Table 7. Education

County Name	Pre-K Enrollment		K 12 Public School Enrollment		Educational Attainment, 25 Years of Age and Over (2022)				Home School Student Count by County, 2023-2024	Private Schools and Enrolment by County (Kindergarten to 12th Grade), 2022	
	2022	Percent 3-5 Year Olds	2023-2024	Change, 2014-15 to 2023-2024	High School	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree		Number of Students	Percent in Private school
Arkansas	215	47.7%	2,655	-9.0%	42.5%	12.4%	10.4%	5%	131	296	10.4%
Ashley	246	52.7%	3,046	-18.1%	48.4%	6.1%	8.2%	3%	165	89	2.9%
Baxter	278	49.0%	4,970	-3.2%	35.2%	11.7%	12.5%	6%	456	359	6.5%
Benton	3,047	37.1%	52,553	26.4%	28.8%	7.0%	22.9%	13%	4,161	6,102	11.5%
Boone	361	38.9%	5,717	-5.8%	34.9%	11.1%	11.0%	6%	892	406	6.6%
Bradley	221	68.0%	1,812	-12.0%	47.1%	6.2%	8.7%	4%	96	11	0.5%
Calhoun	45	39.5%	506	-5.9%	45.4%	8.8%	7.7%	5%	27	17	2.4%
Carroll	413	58.8%	3,806	-1.9%	35.9%	7.9%	14.5%	7%	467	681	14.5%
Chicot	105	41.2%	1,115	-24.5%	37.9%	4.8%	12.6%	5%	54	325	19.6%
Clark	152	48.4%	2,361	-9.5%	31.2%	5.8%	17.4%	9%	166	120	4%
Clay	128	42.0%	2,132	-11.8%	41.1%	8.5%	8.7%	7%	149	181	8.2%
Cleburne	98	26.5%	3,277	-1.8%	39.4%	9.2%	11.4%	6%	353	398	11.3%
Cleveland	85	42.5%	1,271	-10.2%	43.8%	5.1%	10.1%	6%	81	25	1.9%
Columbia	168	26.5%	3,741	-4.5%	41.5%	6.6%	13.3%	6%	178	208	6.8%
Conway	188	44.3%	3,134	-0.2%	43.2%	9.2%	14.1%	5%	266	504	14.8%
Craighead	1,830	51.7%	19,838	11.3%	33.1%	7.8%	17.3%	11%	1,096	959	5%
Crawford	620	35.6%	10,486	-4.2%	34.4%	8.4%	14.5%	6%	944	623	6.1%
Crittenden	935	56.0%	8,891	-12.6%	36.3%	8.3%	12.5%	5%	302	852	9.1%
Cross	267	66.9%	3,100	-9.5%	42.7%	7.3%	10.7%	5%	158	76	2.6%
Dallas	92	51.1%	701	-16.1%	48.4%	6.3%	8.7%	4%	30	134	13.2%
Desha	146	36.0%	1,960	-23.6%	43.7%	2.5%	8.3%	5%	44	69	3.3%
Drew	174	50.4%	2,744	-9.4%	36.0%	6.4%	17.0%	8%	132	201	6.2%
Faulkner	1,246	39.7%	18,439	0.2%	29.7%	8.2%	20.2%	12%	1,790	1,606	8.2%
Franklin	75	52.8%	3,120	-2.4%	42.6%	9.6%	8.7%	4%	255	198	7.2%
Fulton	42	19.9%	1,674	4.1%	38.2%	7.2%	9.5%	5%	177	280	15.4%
Garland	898	49.2%	14,103	-4.7%	31.2%	9.8%	15.8%	9%	980	1,338	9.4%
Grant	91	18.0%	4,743	0.9%	42.6%	7.7%	13.7%	5%	315	221	7.6%
Greene	544	45.6%	7,044	-4.1%	44.4%	6.6%	10.6%	6%	563	421	5.5%
Hempstead	140	39.2%	3,137	-11.9%	39.1%	8.0%	9.6%	6%	146	200	4.9%
Hot Spring	344	56.8%	5,008	-4.1%	39.3%	8.4%	10.1%	5%	398	285	5.6%
Howard	235	60.6%	2,784	-3.9%	42.9%	9.6%	9.9%	5%	125	188	7.7%
Independence	295	39.4%	6,152	2.2%	38.6%	8.2%	11.6%	5%	538	395	6.1%
Izard	70	32.9%	1,743	0.8%	34.5%	7.2%	13.3%	6%	186	102	5.4%
Jackson	86	23.8%	1,932	-8.7%	44.6%	7.5%	7.8%	4%	147	187	7.8%
Jefferson	670	41.7%	9,042	-22.1%	42.3%	5.3%	14.0%	6%	359	636	6.3%
Johnson	146	20.6%	4,312	-6.1%	41.0%	5.0%	10.3%	5%	324	332	7.4%
Lafayette	56	56.0%	480	-25.9%	48.4%	5.8%	7.2%	3%	34	27	2.9%
Lawrence	102	28.4%	3,017	1.3%	37.5%	7.1%	8.7%	4%	272	256	10.2%
Lee	73	49.0%	621	-24.9%	49.3%	5.8%	6.4%	1%	42	156	12.6%
Lincoln	34	9.9%	1,384	-11.8%	50.7%	4.5%	5.5%	3%	63	213	13.8%
Little River	151	54.7%	1,769	-9.2%	45.5%	8.1%	11.6%	4%	105	117	5.9%
Logan	331	50.9%	3,060	-7.2%	43.7%	8.0%	9.1%	5%	239	306	9.7%

Appendix Table 7. Education (continued)

County Name	Pre-K Enrollment		K 12 Public School Enrollment		Educational Attainment, 25 Years of Age and Over (2022)				Home School Student Count by County, 2023-2024	Private Schools and Enrolment by County (Kindergarten to 12th Grade), 2022	
	2022	Percent 3-5 Year Olds	2023-2024	Change, 2014-15 to 2023-2024	High School	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree		Number of Students	Percent in Private school
Lonoke	586	30.9%	13,077	-1.8%	37.1%	10.6%	13.3%	7%	914	934	7%
Madison	266	65.5%	2,269	-1.5%	49.5%	4.4%	8.3%	4%	418	379	13.3%
Marion	103	43.1%	1,751	16.3%	37.2%	8.2%	9.0%	6%	271	46	2%
Miller	481	45.4%	5,997	-6.7%	38.0%	7.6%	9.0%	7%	313	676	8.8%
Mississippi	600	54.1%	5,934	-22.8%	39.9%	7.4%	9.2%	6%	208	322	4.3%
Monroe	116	74.4%	797	-25.4%	41.1%	6.2%	9.8%	4%	49	199	19.5%
Montgomery	19	13.6%	990	-6.3%	35.0%	8.4%	11.8%	5%	152	124	11.3%
Nevada	78	29.4%	1,344	-5.2%	49.8%	7.9%	8.4%	3%	81	130	9.8%
Newton	46	34.8%	1,186	-3.7%	37.1%	7.9%	9.4%	5%	169	184	19.7%
Ouachita	121	34.8%	3,290	-18.8%	39.8%	7.6%	10.0%	5%	142	146	3.7%
Perry	65	37.4%	1,545	-2.7%	44.5%	6.1%	10.9%	4%	136	84	5.1%
Phillips	212	47.2%	3,014	-26.5%	31.2%	12.0%	9.6%	6%	57	204	6%
Pike	112	47.9%	2,015	0.3%	39.7%	7.3%	12.1%	6%	171	115	6.8%
Poinsett	322	50.3%	3,544	-14.0%	46.9%	4.5%	8.3%	3%	210	282	7%
Polk	169	39.1%	3,314	-6.8%	36.1%	7.4%	11.2%	5%	313	205	6.7%
Pope	592	40.3%	10,066	2.6%	34.0%	7.1%	15.7%	8%	630	439	4.3%
Prairie	47	30.3%	1,149	-3.9%	42.0%	6.4%	9.9%	6%	65	83	7%
Pulaski	5,680	53.5%	59,351	5.3%	25.3%	8.1%	21.8%	15%	2,462	11415	17.8%
Randolph	121	35.0%	2,464	5.8%	40.5%	10.1%	9.8%	6%	239	326	9.7%
St. Francis	206	68.2%	2,710	-27.8%	41.9%	7.2%	7.4%	6%	65	307	8.1%
Saline	233	42.4%	18,295	9.1%	31.0%	9.3%	19.6%	9%	1,123	1219	5.9%
Scott	1,127	39.2%	1,387	-8.8%	41.7%	8.4%	9.2%	3%	132	93	5.3%
Searcy	84	46.4%	1,282	-13.0%	39.1%	7.9%	11.1%	4%	351	174	14.5%
Sebastian	20	19.4%	19,969	-2.8%	30.2%	7.4%	15.1%	9%	1,230	2636	12.2%
Sevier	1,272	38.0%	3,012	-7.9%	34.7%	8.6%	7.8%	4%	84	156	4.6%
Sharp	268	39.9%	2,679	-7.1%	40.9%	6.4%	7.5%	4%	383	82	3.1%
Stone	56	17.8%	1,546	-6.9%	35.5%	11.9%	9.3%	5%	343	339	17.9%
Union	400	44.1%	6,722	-10.1%	38.2%	8.4%	12.3%	6%	238	483	6.9%
Van Buren	95	31.8%	2,024	-8.1%	40.3%	6.9%	10.4%	6%	362	308	12.8%
Washington	2,809	42.5%	42,278	7.4%	27.7%	6.5%	20.1%	14%	2,381	3811	9%
White	671	39.9%	12,153	-4.8%	40.1%	8.8%	12.0%	8%	1,384	1460	11.2%
Woodruff	50	39.4%	881	-11.9%	48.0%	8.4%	8.5%	8%	43	0	0%
Yell	215	44.3%	3,792	-9.2%	37.9%	6.7%	9.4%	4%	242	192	5.6%
SUMMARY											
State	32,685	43.5%	475,207	-0.2%	34.1%	7.9%	15.6%	9%	32,767	47,653	9.5%
Total Rural	13,630	41.8%	182,888	-7.6%	40.1%	7.8%	10.8%	6%	14,712	14,846	8.0%
Total Urban	19,055	44.8%	292,319	5.1%	30.0%	7.9%	18.9%	12%	18,055	32,807	8.9%
Coastal Plains	1,885	43.4%	29,862	-11.6%	42.0%	7.3%	11.0%	5%	1,425	1,654	4.6%
Delta	3,151	46.3%	39,972	-16.0%	42.8%	7.1%	9.1%	5%	2,048	3,321	8.5%
Highlands	8,594	40.1%	113,054	-3.0%	38.6%	8.2%	11.4%	6%	11,239	9,871	9.0%

Appendix Table 8. Property Tax Assessments and Retail Sales

County Name	Assessments			Retail Sales			County Tax Rates		Tax Revenue, 2021	
	Total Assessments, 2022 ($M)	Per Capita Assessments, 2022	Change in Assessments, 2018-2022	Retail Sales, 2017($M)	Per Capita Retail Sales, 2017	Change in Retail Sales (Excl. Gas), 2018-2022	Sales Tax Rate, 2024	Millage, 2023	Property Tax Revenue	Sales Tax Revenue
Arkansas	$426	$25,807	-3.8%	$302	$16,888	3.4%	1.00	9.15	$2,870,787	$4,025,736
Ashley	$374	$20,391	-14.5%	$183	$9,007	14.8%	1.50	7.21	$2,116,811	$3,140,657
Baxter	$917	$21,598	1.3%	$571	$13,822	19.0%	1.25	8.50	$4,088,227	$7,469,732
Benton	$7,517	$24,819	14.8%	$3,717	$13,949	32.6%	1.00	8.29	$35,307,779	$12,827,914
Boone	$648	$16,916	1.0%	$622	$16,602	24.0%	1.25	5.60	$1,895,207	$6,419,561
Bradley	$142	$14,043	-5.6%	$71	$6,579	3.0%	2.00	9.40	$995,682	$1,864,239
Calhoun	$140	$29,919	8.2%	$13	$2,409	-0.3%	2.50	8.30	$910,449	$1,452,937
Carroll	$656	$22,819	12.7%	$250	$8,948	30.4%	0.50	12.39	$4,519,768	$2,604,534
Chicot	$192	$19,484	4.3%	$58	$5,483	56.6%	2.00	10.00	$1,563,078	$1,890,612
Clark	$346	$16,286	-1.6%	$377	$16,994	17.8%	1.50	6.10	$1,977,513	$6,260,741
Clay	$270	$18,928	2.4%	$128	$8,567	15.9%	1.50	10.00	$2,017,861	$1,230,129
Cleburne	$815	$32,242	4.2%	$413	$16,471	34.9%	1.63	5.10	$3,104,659	$6,032,165
Cleveland	$113	$15,122	-1.7%	$16	$1,980	28.4%	3.25	9.00	$730,275	$1,808,040
Columbia	$461	$20,770	1.4%	$199	$8,400	14.9%	1.50	9.00	$3,178,966	$5,925,859
Conway	$496	$23,586	-1.1%	$242	$11,592	13.9%	1.75	9.80	$3,696,463	$4,989,648
Craighead	$2,427	$21,476	9.6%	$1,829	$17,087	26.6%	1.00	6.86	$10,898,250	$4,684,690
Crawford	$895	$14,660	-0.1%	$501	$7,958	25.5%	1.25	7.30	$4,607,104	$9,457,534
Crittenden	$899	$19,110	1.4%	$665	$13,652	13.0%	1.75	5.36	$1,000,889	$12,582,495
Cross	$316	$19,020	4.5%	$213	$12,667	17.4%	3.00	9.50	$2,273,983	$6,806,973
Dallas	$97	$15,716	-7.9%	$77	$10,506	-8.1%	2.00	8.30	$584,895	$2,050,412
Desha	$266	$24,721	0.1%	$124	$10,545	3.8%	1.50	8.40	$1,904,005	$1,529,252
Drew	$292	$17,259	2.2%	$254	$13,837	7.4%	2.25	5.70	$1,264,471	$5,667,808
Faulkner	$2,335	$18,286	4.0%	$1,880	$15,236	30.6%	0.50	8.30	$13,926,165	$11,913,358
Franklin	$347	$20,116	7.1%	$203	$11,397	28.6%	2.00	9.40	$2,356,548	$3,223,899
Fulton	$176	$14,179	2.8%	$55	$4,574	39.7%	3.00	6.00	$680,692	$3,010,361
Garland	$2,418	$24,161	5.8%	$1,684	$17,109	15.0%	1.50	3.60	$5,642,726	$32,770,875
Grant	$303	$16,664	7.9%	$132	$7,271	25.0%	1.25	9.00	$1,797,387	$3,441,731
Greene	$766	$16,496	5.4%	$580	$12,885	5.1%	1.38	5.60	$3,200,671	$5,136,881
Hempstead	$456	$23,437	-6.9%	$217	$9,926	10.1%	2.00	7.20	$2,811,015	$8,644,790
Hot Spring	$524	$15,794	3.6%	$248	$7,387	22.2%	1.50	9.00	$3,597,826	$6,442,017
Howard	$240	$19,075	1.6%	$157	$11,740	14.4%	2.75	6.60	$1,239,863	$5,154,811
Independence	$683	$18,002	-0.1%	$492	$13,139	19.8%	1.50	8.60	$4,360,276	$7,504,552
Izard	$209	$14,903	-1.9%	$110	$8,066	34.6%	0.50	7.70	$1,106,482	$685,379
Jackson	$301	$18,088	7.3%	$230	$13,466	10.0%	2.25	9.00	$1,833,985	$3,769,545
Jefferson	$1,077	$16,766	-1.8%	$777	$11,214	3.6%	1.25	9.21	$7,444,510	$5,762,759
Johnson	$393	$15,129	4.0%	$266	$10,038	23.8%	1.00	10.30	$2,837,391	$1,827,086
Lafayette	$115	$18,854	-0.1%	$27	$3,947	37.2%	2.25	9.00	$749,425	$1,088,934
Lawrence	$271	$16,711	6.1%	$206	$12,444	21.9%	2.50	9.00	$1,803,345	$2,277,024
Lee	$157	$18,742	-4.8%	$40	$4,387	20.8%	1.00	8.40	$1,015,910	$467,431
Lincoln	$159	$12,322	3.5%	$67	$4,956	-1.7%	2.00	9.00	$1,060,060	$1,933,703
Little River	$299	$25,298	-12.5%	$130	$10,452	32.6%	2.88	6.20	$1,657,935	$4,089,618
Logan	$335	$15,756	-1.5%	$165	$7,575	24.3%	2.00	7.90	$1,880,737	$4,421,059

Appendix Table 8. Property Tax Assessments and Retail Sales (continued)

County Name	Assessments			Retail Sales			County Tax Rates		Tax Revenue, 2021	
	Total Assessments, 2022 ($M)	Per Capita Assessments, 2022	Change in Assessments, 2018-2022	Retail Sales, 2017($M)	Per Capita Retail Sales, 2017	Change in Retail Sales (Excl. Gas), 2018-2022	Sales Tax Rate, 2024	Millage, 2023	Property Tax Revenue	Sales Tax Revenue
Lonoke	$1,233	$16,392	1.5%	$557	$7,645	23.3%	1.50	6.40	$5,697,154	$5,001,622
Madison	$267	$15,254	12.1%	$96	$5,865	46.0%	2.50	9.00	$0	$0
Marion	$290	$16,787	4.2%	$113	$6,850	32.8%	1.75	8.90	$1,753,345	$3,109,863
Miller	$720	$16,921	10.8%	$379	$8,631	32.1%	1.25	6.30	$3,278,638	$5,043,403
Mississippi	$832	$21,392	2.7%	$419	$9,971	15.3%	2.50	9.70	$7,324,301	$13,544,323
Monroe	$149	$22,757	2.2%	$63	$8,935	17.6%	0.00	8.40	$942,645	$0
Montgomery	$150	$17,490	0.1%	$29	$3,239	25.9%	3.00	8.30	$896,966	$2,819,792
Nevada	$121	$14,812	0.5%	$102	$12,218	21.3%	2.00	8.30	$0	$0
Newton	$114	$16,132	-1.4%	$21	$2,630	34.6%	1.00	9.00	$695,525	$635,528
Ouachita	$302	$13,695	-1.6%	$242	$10,168	7.0%	2.00	8.36	$1,714,484	$6,779,641
Perry	$134	$13,321	4.7%	$34	$3,259	31.3%	2.75	8.60	$815,973	$1,849,325
Phillips	$253	$16,533	-7.3%	$148	$7,980	5.9%	2.00	10.70	$1,873,465	$2,367,183
Pike	$178	$17,446	5.1%	$80	$7,445	19.8%	2.00	3.30	$419,602	$2,594,351
Poinsett	$374	$16,618	0.9%	$166	$6,892	20.2%	1.75	5.81	$1,670,465	$3,572,199
Polk	$301	$15,546	3.6%	$194	$9,610	16.6%	2.00	5.70	$1,076,993	$3,832,255
Pope	$1,556	$24,287	5.1%	$895	$14,064	14.1%	1.00	4.50	$5,113,231	$5,439,346
Prairie	$168	$20,856	3.4%	$51	$6,220	22.5%	1.50	10.00	$1,272,902	$1,095,098
Pulaski	$9,270	$23,225	3.2%	$7,998	$20,320	10.6%	1.00	9.50	$54,593,491	$12,868,668
Randolph	$297	$15,781	3.5%	$189	$10,739	26.8%	1.25	6.00	$1,383,250	$2,305,819
St. Francis	$326	$14,522	-1.8%	$254	$9,801	-4.2%	3.00	6.20	$1,502,319	$5,297,152
Saline	$2,410	$18,923	8.1%	$1,277	$10,670	30.6%	0.38	9.70	$16,052,552	$8,108,970
Scott	$124	$12,665	-1.6%	$45	$4,315	31.8%	2.00	2.80	$0	$0
Searcy	$107	$13,575	-0.7%	$51	$6,457	38.2%	1.50	11.00	$819,696	$1,129,665
Sebastian	$2,384	$18,476	-4.4%	$2,251	$17,601	17.4%	1.00	8.45	$14,071,032	$12,179,670
Sevier	$214	$13,668	1.8%	$202	$11,798	24.4%	3.13	7.30	$1,090,364	$6,309,300
Sharp	$255	$14,342	2.7%	$169	$9,846	37.5%	1.75	5.85	$988,556	$3,463,391
Stone	$194	$15,457	1.3%	$126	$10,098	17.7%	1.50	7.30	$949,594	$2,296,767
Union	$1,040	$27,557	-4.0%	$560	$14,208	10.6%	2.00	7.87	$6,412,254	$7,046,841
Van Buren	$436	$27,049	-2.9%	$160	$9,651	32.2%	1.50	7.30	$2,324,198	$3,103,305
Washington	$5,255	$20,522	15.1%	$3,588	$15,413	24.3%	1.25	6.37	$23,829,287	$31,403,421
White	$1,449	$18,633	-0.8%	$1,052	$13,325	22.1%	1.75	4.10	$4,386,969	$16,799,898
Woodruff	$170	$28,081	-8.2%	$45	$6,789	7.4%	2.00	9.00	$1,353,851	$1,285,771
Yell	$280	$13,893	-1.7%	$126	$5,846	22.4%	1.13	9.00	$1,870,404	$2,148,026
SUMMARY										
State	$61,625	$1,406,075	4.7%	$40,174	$13,374	20.0%	-	-	$2,870,787	$4,025,736
Total Rural	$22,784	$1,152,338	1.0%	$27,103	$15,329	18.3%	-	-	$2,116,811	$3,140,657
Total Urban	$38,841	$253,737	7.0%	$13,071	$10,577	20.9%	-	-	$4,088,227	$7,469,732
Coastal Plains	$3,857	$241,156	-4.3%	$2,014	$10,108	12.3%	-	-	$35,307,779	$12,827,914
Delta	$5,126	$314,365	1.2%	$2,889	$9,989	10.3%	-	-	$1,895,207	$6,419,561
Highlands	$13,801	$596,817	2.5%	$8,168	$10,930	22.9%	-	-	$995,682	$1,864,239

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank everyone who contributed to this publication. Without their financial and professional support, it would not have been possible. We extend our gratitude to the following individuals from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture for their assistance and support:

Dr. John Anderson, Sr., Associate Vice President for Agriculture-Extension and Director of the Cooperative Extension Service, for his support of Community, Professional and Development programs.

Dr. Stacey McCullough, Assistant Vice President of Community, Professional and Economic Development, for administrative support and editing of this publication.

Oliver Williams, Publications Specialist, for the design and layout of this publication.

Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Frank Seo,
Assistant Professor – Rural Development
University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service
2301 S. University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204
(501) 671-2083 fseo@uada.edu

ARKANSAS IS OUR CAMPUS

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Migrant Entrepreneurial Readiness in Rural Areas of the United States
Frank L. Farmer, Zola K. Moon. 2011. Journal of Rural and Community Development 6(2):85-103.

An Empirical Examination of Characteristics of Mexican Migrants to Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Areas of the United States
Frank L. Farmer, Zola K. Moon. 2009. Rural Sociology Vol. 79, No. 2.

Understanding Community Demographics
Frank L. Farmer, Zola K. Moon, Wayne P. Miller. 2007. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture publication MP472.

Arkansas' Retirement-Age Migration: A Statewide Overview
Wayne P. Miller, Katy Elliot. 2015. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture publication FSCED2.

Arkansas' Retiree In-Migration: A Regional Analysis
Wayne P. Mille, Katy Elliot. 2015. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture publication FSCED5.

The Definition of Rural
Frank L. Farmer. 2008. The Encyclopedia of Rural America: The Land and the People (2nd Edition).

The Measurement of Rural
Zola K. Moon, Frank L. Farmer. 2008. The Encyclopedia of Rural America: The Land and the People (2nd Edition).

Revenue Trends of County Governments in Arkansas, 2000-2017
Wayne P. Miller, Ellie Wheeler. 2020. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture publication MP512.

Highlights of Spending Trends of County Governments in Arkansas, 2000-2017
Wayne P. Miller, Ellie Wheeler. 2020. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture publication FSCED9.

Arkansas Property Tax: A Local Tax Supporting Local Services
Wayne P. Miller, Tyler R. Knapp. 2018. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture publication FSCED17.

Arkansas Property Tax: Revenue, Assessments & Rates
Wayne P. Miller, Ellie Wheeler. 2020. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

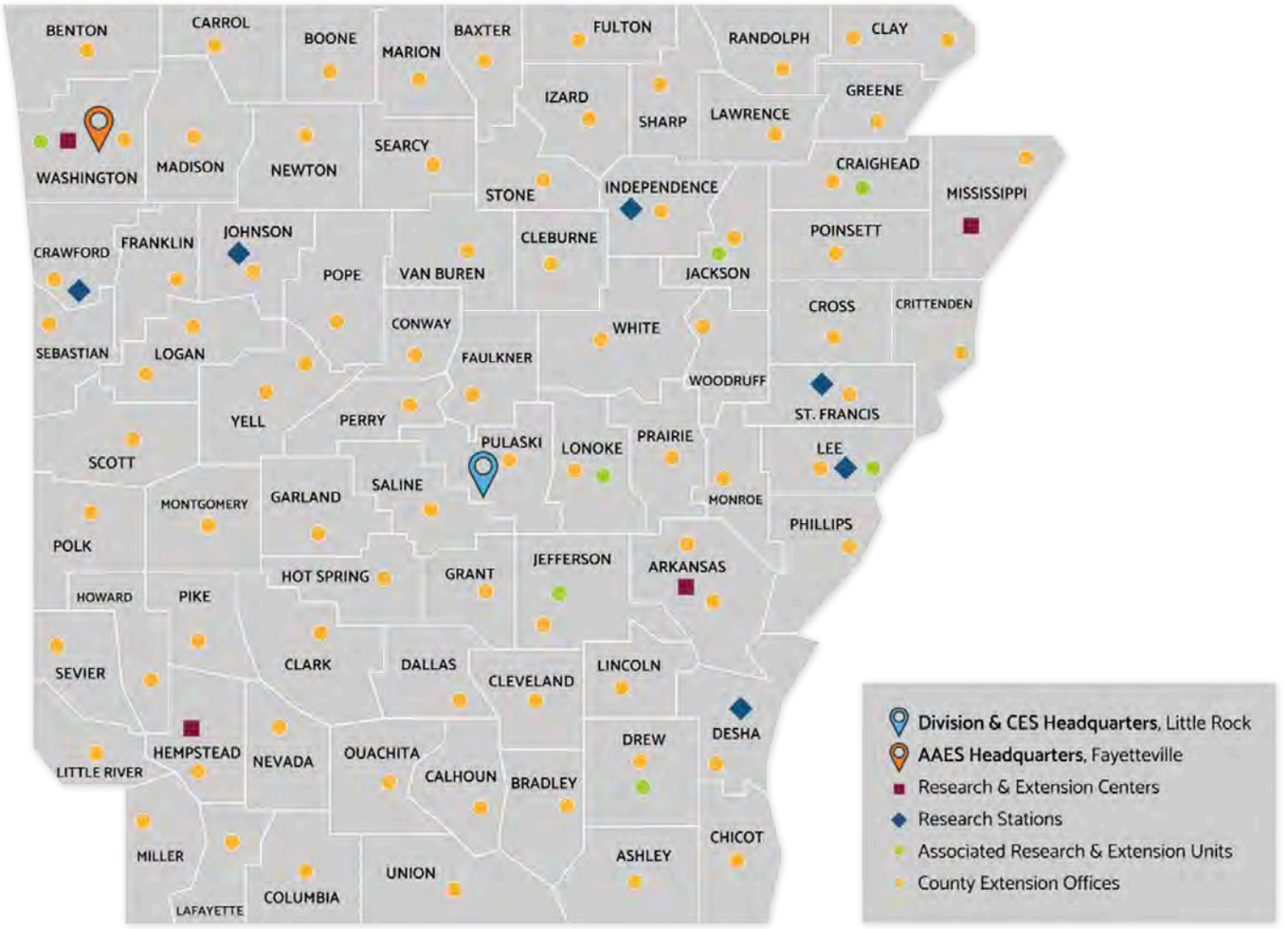
Interlocal Agreements
Wayne P. Miller, Abby Davidson. 2015. University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture publication FSPPC110.

For additional publications on rural Arkansas go to:
uaex.uada.edu/localgov

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Community & Economic Development
Strengthening Arkansas Communities

ARKANSAS IS OUR CAMPUS



Visit our website for more information:
www.uaex.uada.edu

United States Department of Agriculture, University of Arkansas, and County Governments Cooperating

 MP585-PD-6-2025