



# Senate Agriculture, Broadband & Rural Development

CENTER FOR RURAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT –MARCH 8, 2023



# About us

In 1997, a group of rural Minnesota advocates came together to create a rural policy research organization that would provide policy makers, rural advocates and concerned citizens with an objective, unbiased and politically unspun examination of today's rural issues.

MN State Statute 116J.421

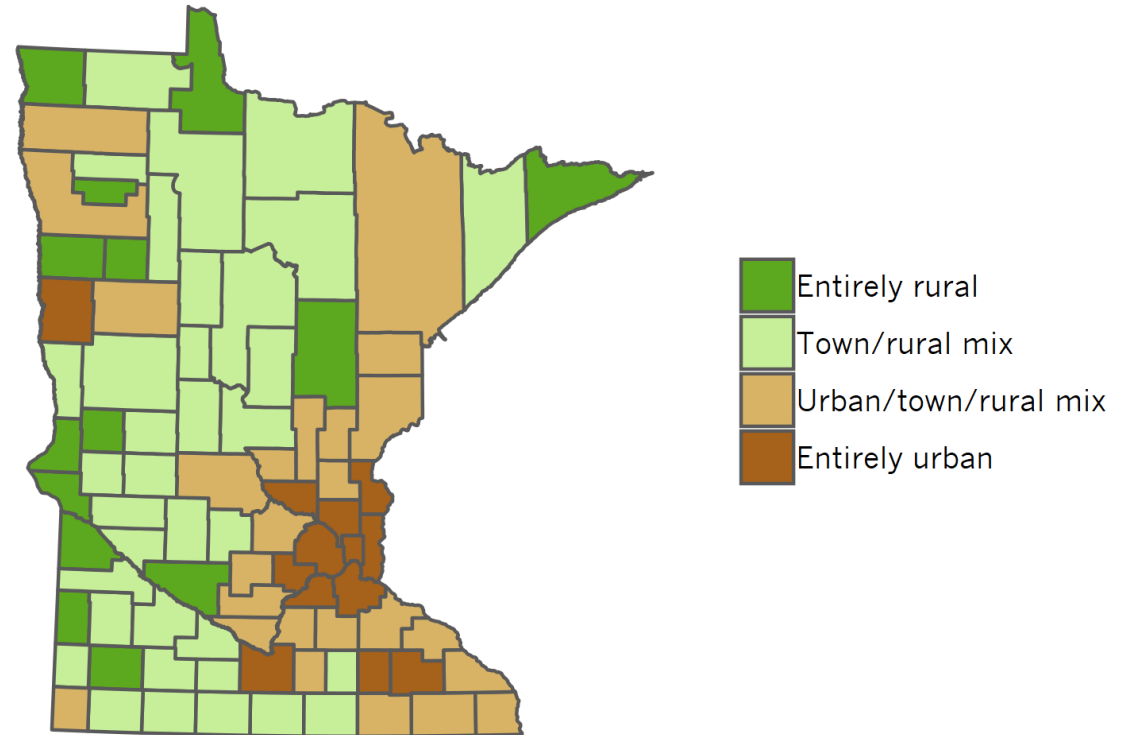
- Based in Greater Minnesota, serving Greater Minnesota.
- A non-partisan, non-profit policy research organization.
- Dedicated to providing Minnesota's policy makers with an unbiased evaluation of issues from a rural perspective.
- 20 Board members
  - 13 appointed by the Governor
  - 2 appointed by House & Senate leadership
  - 5 at-large positions
- 3 Staff members in home offices
  - – Waldorf, Mankato & New London

# What We Do

We take complicated and complex issues and present them in ways that give them meaning and relevance.

Our research is not designed to determine public policy, but instead to inform those making the decisions.

County categorizations based on rural-urban commuting areas



# CRPD Staff



Left to right:

Kelly Asche, Research Associate from New London

Marnie Werner, VP of Research & Operations from Mankato

Julie Tesch, President & CEO from Waldorf

# Research Agenda

Staff Input



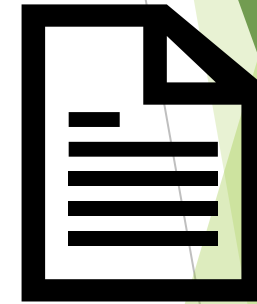
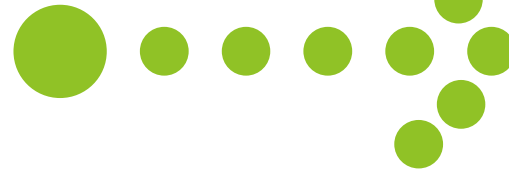
Research Committee



Decision Makers



Annual Survey



Research Agenda: Typically 4 – 6 topics

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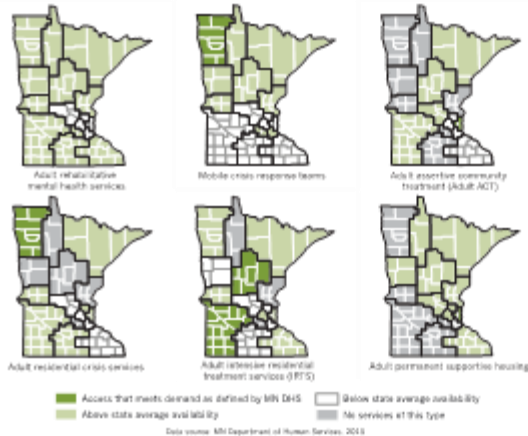
# Our research.

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## Rural Reality: Mental health services.

### An unsustainable model

An effective community mental health system should be able to offer a full array of services in its region. In rural areas, though, sparse populations, stigma, long distances and resulting transportation difficulties all contribute to fewer people seeking treatment. Fewer patients means fewer services provided and therefore fewer reimbursements from insurance and Medicaid, adding up to less revenue for the provider overall. Low revenue leads to difficulty recruiting and retaining staff as salaries grow due to increased demand on a shrinking workforce.



**A 2015 report by the Minnesota Department of Human Services shows the spottiness of community-based mental health services. At that time, no one region met DHS's measurement of demand for every service, and almost all of them were lacking in at least one critical service.**


# Our research over the years

- Childcare shortage in Greater MN
- Workforce shortage in Greater MN
- Mental health & substance abuse, access to services
- Agriculture and the farm economy
- EMS: Emergency medical services
- Diversity & immigration & their intersection with rural issues
- Housing shortage



# Our research over the years

- Property & sales taxes
- Water & wastewater infrastructure challenges
- Volunteer drivers
- Grocery stores & rural food deserts
- Broadband



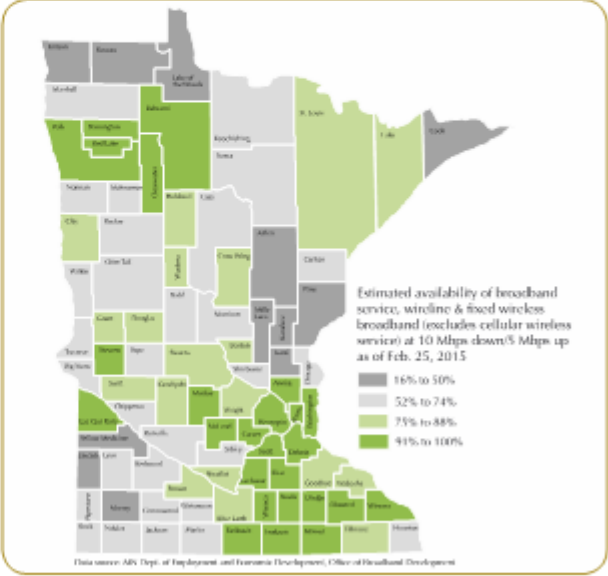
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*Seeking Solutions for Greater Minnesota's Future*

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[www.ruralmn.org](http://www.ruralmn.org)

### Rural Reality: Bringing broadband to rural Minnesota.

**Why shouldn't rural communities wait for broadband?**

- **It's good for the bottom line.** Although not always visible, a good part of the state's economy is rural. Productive companies produce not just goods and jobs but tax revenues for the local government and the state.
- People are interested in **moving to Greater Minnesota**, and they need broadband to start their own businesses or be "1099ers."
- The **workforce shortage**. To do more with fewer workers, companies are adopting new technology, including broadband.
- Improving efficiencies and quality in **education and health care**. Online content is expanding learning opportunities for students with no Internet access at home.
- **A stronger infrastructure overall.** Strengthening the rural network helps strengthen the state's and the nation's overall network. A strong, reliable, redundant network is far less prone to outages, which is very attractive to businesses that rely highly on dependability and security.



Estimated availability of broadband service, wireline & fixed wireless broadband (excludes cellular wireless service) at 10 Mbps down/5 Mbps up as of Feb. 25, 2015

- 56% to 50%
- 52% to 74%
- 75% to 88%
- 91% to 100%

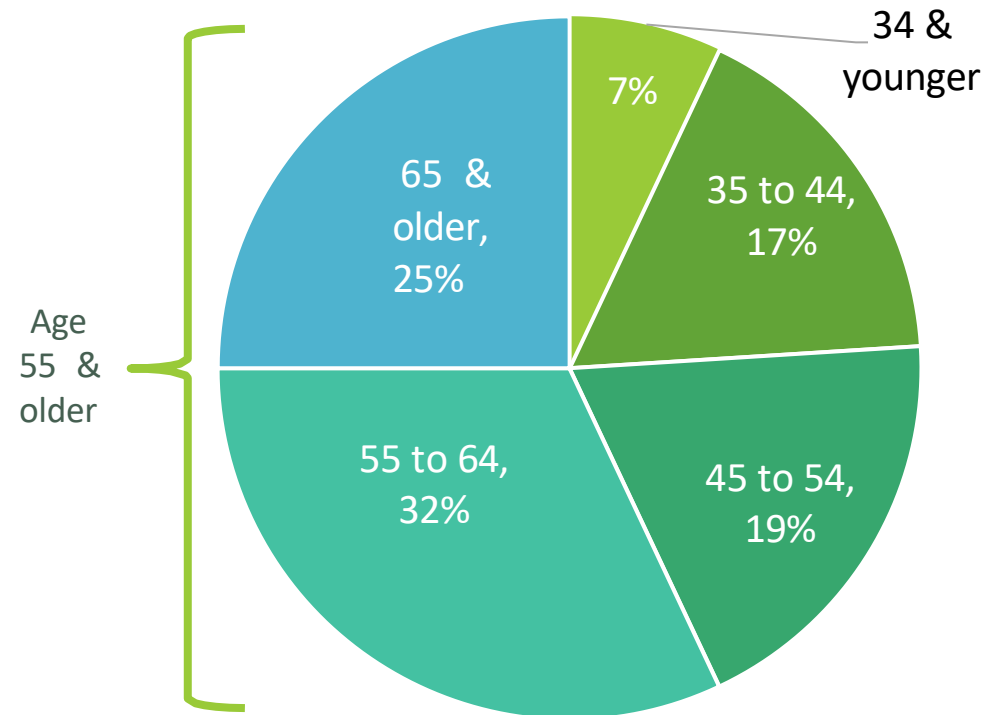
This source: MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development, Office of Broadband Development

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# What we're working on this year

- “Identifying bottlenecks and roadblocks in the rural mental health career pipeline”
- Environmental scan of rural childcare solutions
- MN’s K-12 Education formula: How it works and what it does
- Career & Technical Education programs and migration patterns in southwest MN
- Local newspapers and civic engagement in rural MN
- Incentivizing small-scale housing development

From “Identifying Bottlenecks and roadblocks in the rural mental health career pipeline”



Licensed providers in MN



# CENTER of EVERY WHERE

MN Center for Rural Policy & De

## Podcast

- ▶ Episodes featuring:
  - ▶ Grant Writing for Rural Municipal Government
  - ▶ Importance of Community Newspapers
  - ▶ Childcare Access for the Latino Population
  - ▶ Census Data & Differential Privacy
  - ▶ Artists on Main Street
  - ▶ Volunteer Drivers
  - ▶ Importance of Rural Grocery Stores
  - ▶ Pandemic Trends in Rural MN



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# Thank you!

Find us online at: [ruralmn.org](http://ruralmn.org)

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