2024 List of Distressed or Underserved Nonmetropolitan Middle-Income Geographies
Source Information and Methodology

Release notes
- The U.S. Census Bureau has yet to release the County Intercensal Estimates for 2010-2020. These estimates were delayed due to the pandemic. While they are expected later this year, they were not available at the time of release. As a result, this release will continue to use the 2000-2010 Intercensal Estimates for population estimates. Next year, the correct County Intercensal Estimates are likely to be used.
- The 2024 list now includes the four island areas (American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). The Decennial Census of Island Areas was not available to include these territories in 2022 or 2023.
- Due to pandemic restrictions, the poverty and unemployment data in the 2020 Decennial Census files for American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are only available at the "population in households" level rather than the "total population" level. In these territories, all non-metropolitan, middle income tracts met at least one of the criteria for being flagged as distressed.

Poverty rate (updated annually)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2022. The variable used was "Estimated percent of people of all ages in poverty." For the four island areas, the 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas was used.

Note: Due to the U.S. Census Bureau's adoption of American Community Survey (ACS) data in the estimation procedure for SAIPE, SAIPE data is available with a two-year lag from the year of the List of Distressed or Underserved Nonmetropolitan Middle-Income Geographies.

Unemployment (updated annually)
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Labor Force Data by County, 2023 Annual Averages. For the four island areas, the 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas was used.

County unemployment rate = (unemployment level) / (labor force) * 100

National unemployment rate = (total unemployment) / (total labor force) * 100

Note: BLS does not collect employment data for Kalawao County, Hawaii, and considers it to be part of Maui County. We assume unemployment data for Kalawao County is the same as that of Maui County.

Population loss (changes decennially)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau County Intercensal Estimates (for change between 2000 and 2010 populations and for change between 2005 and 2010 populations) and 2020 and 2010 Decennial Census of Island Areas (for the four island areas).

10-year population loss from 2000 to 2010 = (2010 population - 2000 population) / 2000 population

5-year population loss from 2005 to 2010 = (2010 population - 2005 population) / 2005 population

Note: With the newly created Chugach Census Area, Alaska (02-063) and Copper River Census Area, Alaska (02-066), the population loss for each area is assumed to be the same as the population loss for the original area, Valdez-Cordova Census Area, Alaska (02-261), from which they were created.

Remote rural (low density)
Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service Urban Influence Codes, 2013. An area is considered low density if the Urban Influence Code is 7, 10, 11, or 12.

Note: At the time of the release of this file, USDA has not yet released new Urban Influence Codes. Therefore, this release continues to use the 2013 codes. Additionally, with the newly created Chugach Census Area, Alaska (02-063) and Copper River Census Area, Alaska (02-066), the Urban Influence Code for each area is assumed to be the same as the Urban Influence Code for the original area, Valdez-Cordova Census Area, Alaska (02-261), from which they were created.