

Appendix: Rural Hispanics in Metro Counties

This report follows a widely accepted convention of using nonmetropolitan counties (defined by the Office of Management and Budget) as a proxy for “rural and small-town” America. The primary alternative is to use rural and urban areas, defined by the Census Bureau using population density criteria applied to much smaller geographical units (Cromartie, 2003). The metro-nonmetro county division is used because Federal agencies provide county-level data for certain demographic and economic characteristics on an annual basis, whereas data on the characteristics of rural and urban areas are available only from the decennial Censuses. Using nonmetro counties is an effective strategy for analyzing rural and small-town trends on a national scale and in most States. However, it does exclude rural residents in metro counties, a drawback that is particularly significant in large counties in the West.

The problem warrants discussion here because 1.2 million “rural metro” Hispanics are excluded from the analysis in this report. This group totals more than a third of the overall nonmetro Hispanic population. We focus to a large degree in this report on the situation of nonmetro Hispanics living in new, high-growth destinations outside the West, where this “exclusion” problem is not severe. However, throughout this report, comparisons are made with residents of established nonmetro Hispanic counties, and the exclusion causes severe truncation of this population group because large swaths of rural territory in the Southwest are located in metro counties.

Because this report uses 1990 and 2000 decennial Census data, it would have been technically possible to include the metro rural population in our analysis. However, between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau altered its urban and rural classification scheme, making it virtually impossible to measure *change* during the decade, either in rural population or residential separation (Cromartie, 2003).

Although located throughout the country, rural metro Hispanics tend to be concentrated in the Southwest. Just over half of rural metro Hispanics lived in Texas or California in 2000 (appendix table 1). Over 80 percent lived in 198 counties in which they numbered 1,000 or more (appendix fig. 1). Ninety-eight of these counties are in the 5 Southwestern States, including all but 2 of the 27 counties with 10,000 or more rural Hispanics. Metro counties in the Southwest average over 1,800 square miles, compared with the national average (outside Alaska) of just under 1,000 square miles. The 98 southwestern metro counties with large, rural Hispanic populations average over 2,000 square miles. Smaller concentrations of rural metro Hispanics outside the Southwest are found in counties in the Pacific Northwest and in Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Despite greater land area, rural areas in southwestern metro counties tend to be more sparsely populated than elsewhere, leaving a higher-than-average urban population share (93 percent urban versus 87 percent in metro counties elsewhere). In addition, Hispanics in general are more likely than non-Hispanics to live in urban settings. It is not surprising, then, that rural Hispanics made up just 5 percent of the overall Hispanic population in the

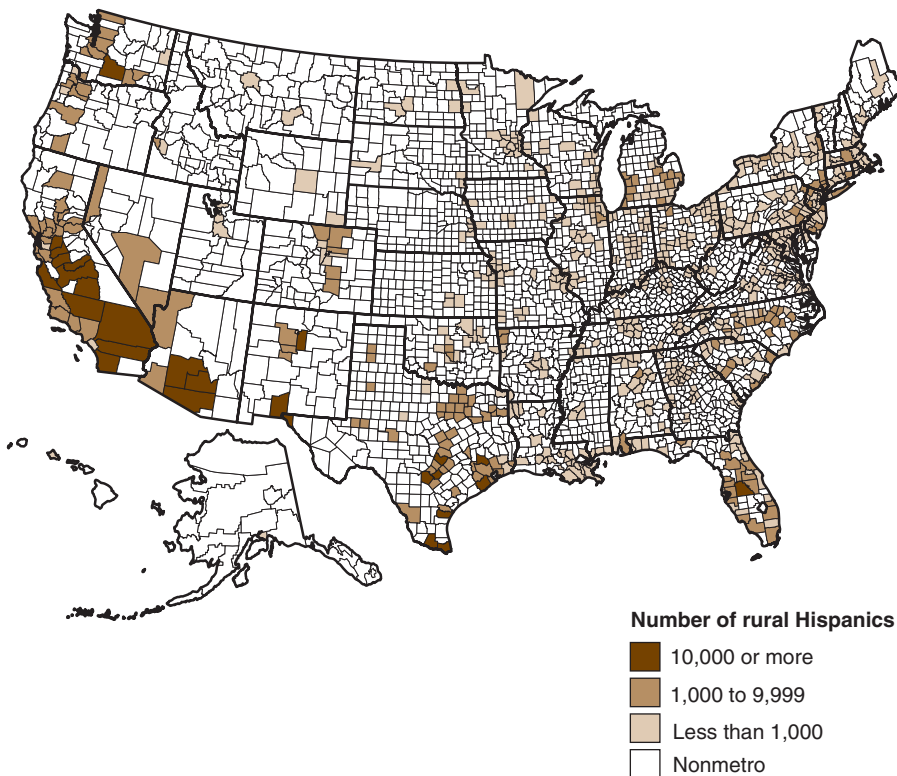
Appendix table 1—Characteristics of metropolitan counties and their rural populations, 2000

Region/State	Average area of metro counties	Total rural metro population	Total rural metro Hispanic population	Hispanic share of total rural metro population
	<i>Square miles</i>	<i>---Number---</i>		<i>Percent</i>
Southwest	1,831	4,051,032	797,213	20
Texas	846	1,947,115	354,906	18
California	2,658	1,427,888	305,357	21
Arizona	8,283	284,023	64,738	23
New Mexico	1,890	127,824	50,782	40
Colorado	1,468	264,182	21,430	8
Outside Southwest	629	22,147,505	440,032	2
Florida	935	1,105,445	81,428	7
North Carolina	457	1,494,474	42,169	3
Washington	1,550	583,172	39,037	7
Michigan	728	1,296,864	33,089	3
New York	647	1,441,154	26,803	2
All other States	76	16,226,396	217,506	1
All 50 States	791	26,198,537	1,237,245	5

Source: Compiled by ERS using Census 2000 data, SF1 files.

Appendix figure 1

Rural Hispanics living in metro counties, 2000



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

98 southwestern metro counties in 2000. However, Hispanics made up a significant share of the overall rural metro population in this region, as high as 40 percent in New Mexico (appendix table 1).

Many of these rural metro settings, especially in the Southwest and Florida, are highly agricultural areas, and Hispanics provide crucial labor input to large, industrialized agricultural operations found throughout these counties. For instance, in California metro counties with 1,000 or more rural Hispanics, the proportion of the total rural population employed in the agricultural sector (10 percent) is double that of rural residents of other metropolitan counties (5 percent) and five times the proportion for the total U.S. population (2 percent). The percentage of rural metro Hispanics working in agriculture in California is undoubtedly higher than 10 percent, but industry data broken down by race and ethnicity are not available.

Rural metro Hispanics are likely to face many of the same challenges that confront Hispanics living in new nonmetro destinations—relatively high poverty and social isolation, for example—yet differ noticeably in their levels of U.S. experience and occupational distribution. Given these differences, especially their importance to agricultural labor markets, rural metro Hispanics merit separate, indepth demographic research.

Appendix table 2—States¹ with fastest growing nonmetro Hispanic populations, 1990-2000

State	Hispanic nonmetro population			Total nonmetro population			Hispanic share	
	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000
	---Number---		Percent	---Number---			---Percent---	
1 North Carolina	19,153	98,846	416	2,252,775	2,612,257	16	0.9	3.8
2 Alabama	5,582	26,155	369	1,330,857	1,453,233	9	0.4	1.8
3 Delaware	1,476	6,915	368	113,229	156,638	38	1.3	4.4
4 Tennessee	7,379	32,737	344	1,579,336	1,842,679	17	0.5	1.8
5 South Carolina	6,465	27,853	331	1,064,088	1,205,050	13	0.6	2.3
6 Georgia	29,543	124,296	321	2,126,654	2,519,789	18	1.4	4.9
7 Arkansas	9,933	36,504	268	1,310,724	1,434,529	9	0.8	2.5
8 Virginia	8,649	28,258	227	1,414,093	1,550,447	10	0.6	1.8
9 Minnesota	11,434	34,860	205	1,364,205	1,456,119	7	0.8	2.4
10 Indiana	13,253	36,921	179	1,581,713	1,690,582	7	0.8	2.2
11 Iowa	13,177	35,611	170	1,576,857	1,600,191	1	0.8	2.2
12 Kentucky	9,131	24,465	168	1,905,535	2,068,667	9	0.5	1.2
13 Mississippi	9,133	24,321	166	1,797,542	1,932,670	8	0.5	1.3
14 Nebraska	16,965	44,564	163	791,050	811,425	3	2.1	5.5
15 Pennsylvania	10,774	27,403	154	1,798,645	1,889,525	5	0.6	1.5
16 Missouri	11,281	27,807	146	1,626,202	1,800,410	11	0.7	1.5
17 Wisconsin	11,993	28,893	141	1,560,597	1,723,367	10	0.8	1.7
18 Washington	44,329	99,973	126	830,311	994,967	20	5.3	10.0
19 Florida	42,458	95,689	125	914,571	1,144,881	25	4.6	8.4
20 Utah	14,145	31,168	120	387,033	530,719	37	3.7	5.9
21 Maryland	3,496	6,958	99	342,581	385,446	13	1.0	1.8
22 Oregon	34,146	67,924	99	857,597	997,186	16	4.0	6.8
23 Kansas	43,484	86,016	98	1,144,646	1,167,355	2	3.8	7.4
24 Nevada	17,319	32,813	89	187,926	250,521	33	9.2	13.1
25 Connecticut	6,168	11,631	89	276,617	291,284	5	2.2	4.0
26 Oklahoma	29,166	54,881	88	1,275,743	1,352,292	6	2.3	4.1
27 South Dakota	2,804	5,206	86	475,425	493,867	4	0.6	1.1
28 Michigan	18,657	33,510	80	1,597,654	1,768,978	11	1.2	1.9
29 Idaho	35,533	63,768	79	710,898	861,608	21	5.0	7.4
30 Massachusetts	1,013	1,792	77	87,743	96,042	9	1.2	1.9
31 North Dakota	2,477	4,277	73	381,412	358,234	-6	0.6	1.2
32 Illinois	22,789	38,857	71	1,856,803	1,877,585	1	1.2	2.1
33 New Hampshire	2,405	3,854	60	423,101	465,353	10	0.6	0.8
34 Colorado	79,810	126,052	58	608,053	809,860	33	13.1	15.6
35 Vermont	2,326	3,644	57	385,699	409,938	6	0.6	0.9
36 California	180,393	275,669	53	961,303	1,121,254	17	18.8	24.6
37 Montana	7,618	11,344	49	607,955	692,486	14	1.3	1.6
38 New York	30,502	44,795	47	1,475,170	1,503,399	2	2.1	3.0
39 Rhode Island	1,712	2,409	41	87,194	85,433	-2	2.0	2.8
40 Arizona	97,209	133,073	37	559,476	719,952	29	17.4	18.5
41 Ohio	24,087	32,947	37	2,021,046	2,139,364	6	1.2	1.5
42 Texas	655,911	859,880	31	2,820,852	3,159,940	12	23.3	27.2
43 West Virginia	5,050	6,619	31	1,045,317	1,042,776	0	0.5	0.6
44 Maine	3,788	4,964	31	732,933	760,599	4	0.5	0.7
45 Alaska	8,545	11,053	29	323,705	366,649	13	2.6	3.0
46 New Mexico	233,414	292,788	25	673,385	783,991	16	34.7	37.3
47 Wyoming	16,189	19,515	21	319,220	345,642	8	5.1	5.6
48 Hawaii	24,506	28,970	18	271,998	335,381	23	9.0	8.6
49 Louisiana	15,648	17,505	12	1,060,433	1,098,766	4	1.5	1.6
Totals	1,902,418	3,175,953	67	50,897,902	56,159,326	10	4.0	5.6

¹ District of Columbia and New Jersey do not appear because they have no nonmetro counties.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from 1990 and 2000 Censuses, SF1 files.