What makes a community **rural**?
(Rural & Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities, 2023)

1. **Rural**
   Counties with no urban core

   **Micropolitan**
   Urban core of 10K-50K people

   **Metro-politan**
   Urban core of 50K+

   How many people report they have disabilities?

   - **17.8%** Rural
   - **16.0%** Micro
   - **12.1%** Metro

2. Rural counties are made up of **small settlements** with open country and populations of **less than 2,500**
(Clark, Harper, & Weber, 2022)

3.1 million people with disabilities live in rural areas nationwide
(Rural Institute, 2020)

The counties with **highest disability rates** happen to be some of the most rural.

Healthcare systems are **not designed for rural areas**.

- Lack of healthcare providers in rural areas
- Lack of services for intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Increased travel time to access services
- Longer response times by emergency medical teams
- Increased reliance on social support network to access services

Healthcare providers often do not understand rural life constraints
(Sage, Mashinchi, & Ravesloot, 2023)

People living in rural areas report having **disabilities 10 years earlier in life** than urban-dwelling individuals.
(Sage, Ward, Myers, & Ravesloot, 2019)

**Benefits of Rural Living**

- Resourceful and resilient citizens
- Shared sense of community pride
- Shared value of service and civic engagement
- Strong social networks and support

People with disabilities living in rural areas are:

- More likely to have public healthcare coverage (compared to 73% in urban areas)
- **78%**

- Less likely to have private healthcare coverage (compared to 50% in urban areas)
- **47%**

- Less likely to be employed (compared to 39% in urban areas)
- **33%**

- More likely to be living in poverty (compared to 20% in urban areas)
- **25%**

(Rural & Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities, 2023)