

U.S. Federal Policy to Advance Equitable Rural Development



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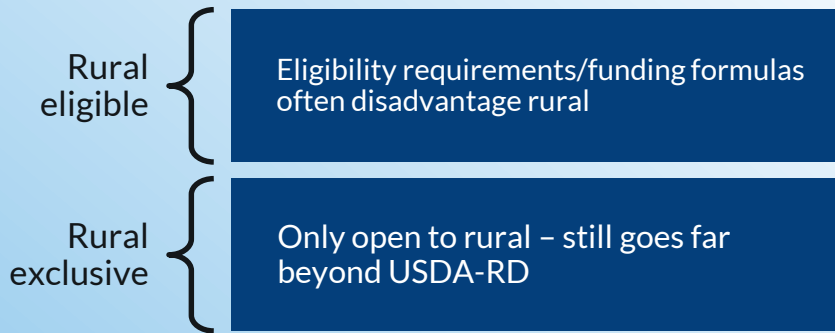
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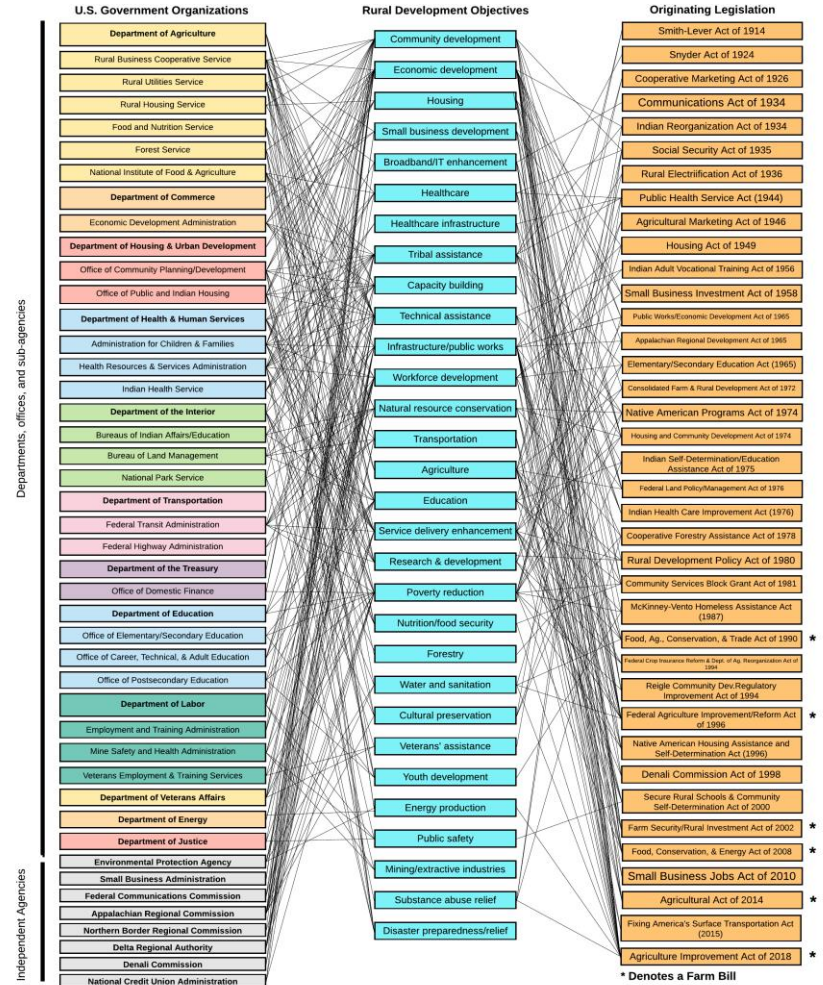
July 7, 2021

Today's Federal Policy: A fragmented & complex landscape

- ▷ Over 400 federal programs
- ▷ 13 departments
- ▷ 10 independent agencies
- ▷ Over 50 offices and sub-agencies



Federal Development Assistance for Rural and Tribal Communities

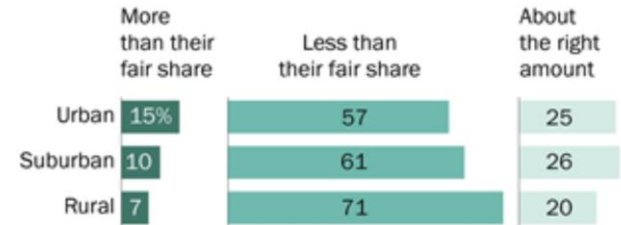


Rural Skepticism of Gov Assistance

- “Many rural residents perceive their communities as the **victims of government decisions** that routinely ignore or misunderstand rural needs and **use rural resources to disproportionately help more privileged urbanites**” (Cramer Walsh 2012)
- “Panelists were **generally suspect of government and believed it failed to recognize or address the unique challenges facing rural America** or generally overlooked it placing more emphasis on urban and suburban America” (Rural Voter Institute)
- **COVID changing perceptions?**
- “8 out of every 10 rural residents want the same or an increased amount of federal [COVID] relief paid directly to individuals compared to current levels” (Yale)

Broad agreement across community types that rural areas get less than their fair share of federal dollars

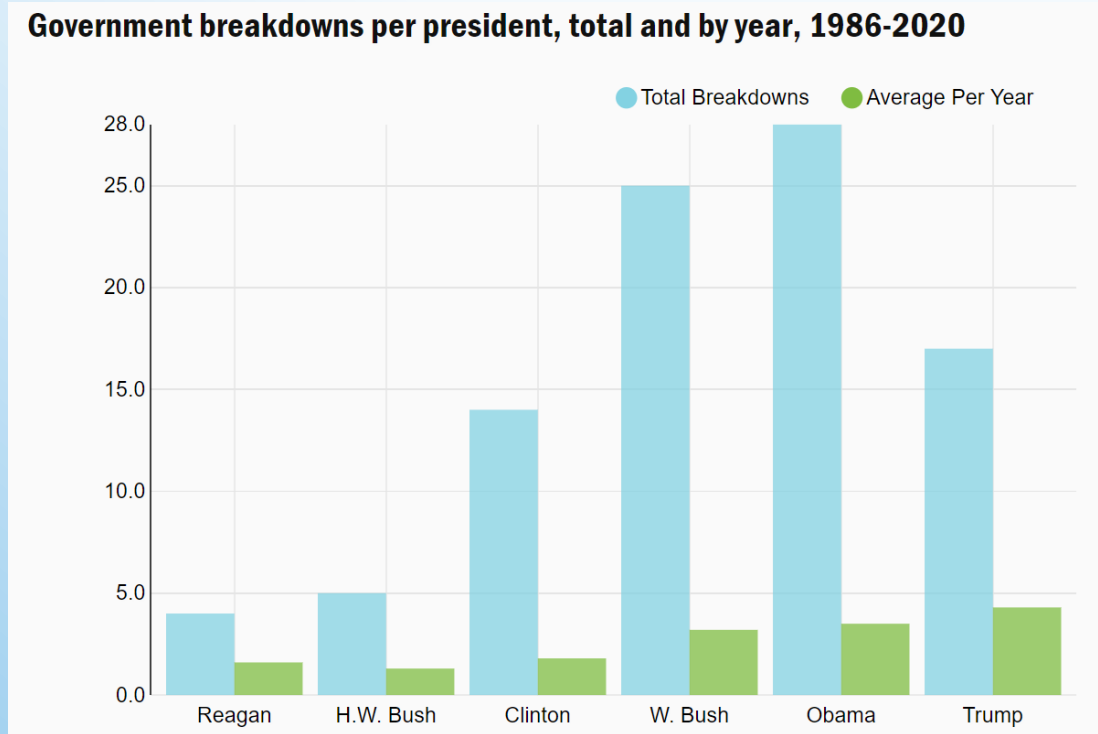
% of ___ residents saying that, when it comes to federal money, rural areas receive ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 26-March 11, 2018.
"What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities"

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Highly Visible Gov Breakdowns Breed Distrust

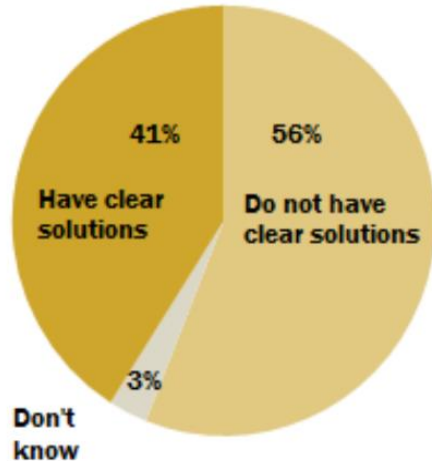


*“Trust in government...appears to be highly responsive to government breakdowns. Even if an occasional **breakdown** can be justified as the price of ambition, the recent acceleration creates a sense that the federal government cannot be trusted to meet minimal expectations for reliability and care”*

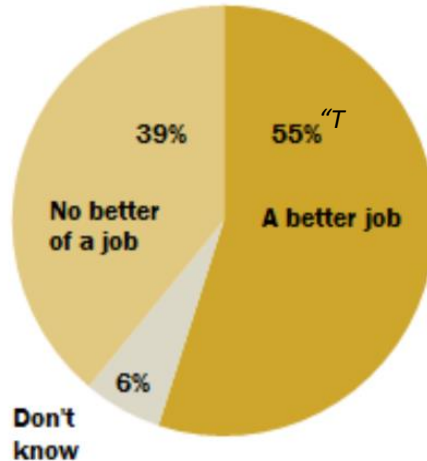
More Faith in Ordinary People to Solve Problems

How difficult are the problems facing the country, and could the public do a better job than elected officials?

Most big issues facing the country today ...



Compared with elected officials, job ordinary Americans would do solving the country's problems ...



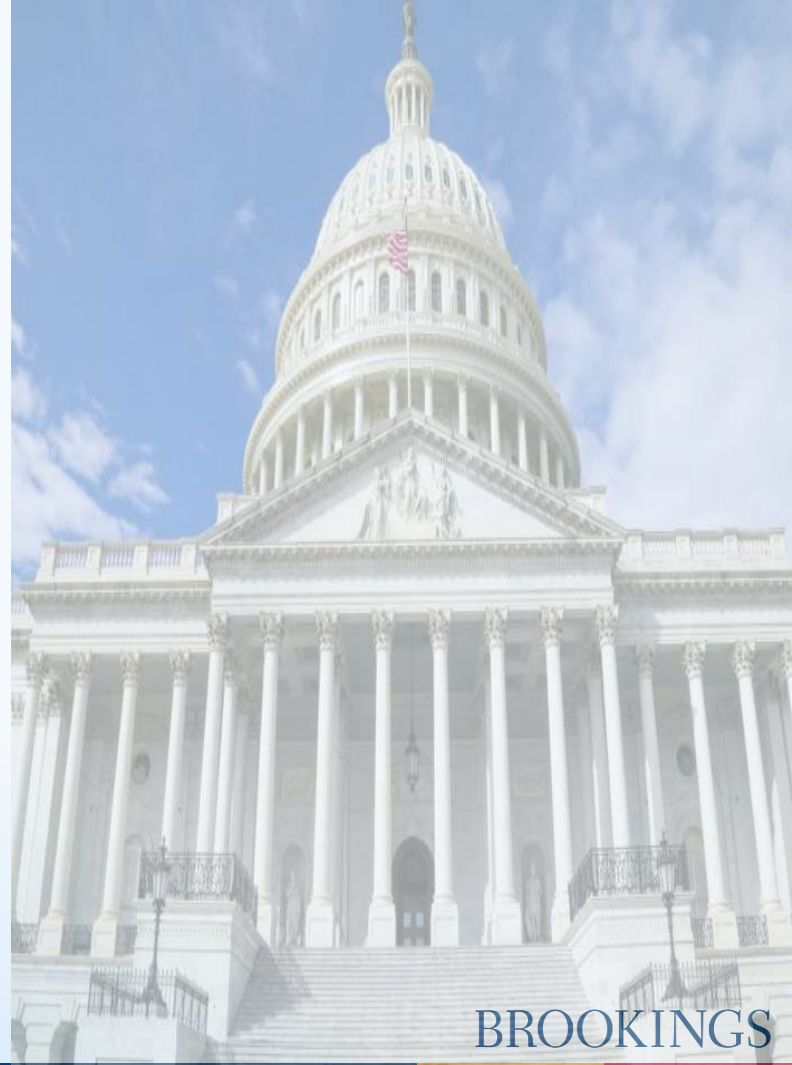
Survey conducted Aug. 27-Oct. 4, 2015. Q107t/u.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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“Most Americans (56%) acknowledge that the problems facing the country do not have clear solutions. Even so, most (55%) also say ordinary Americans could do a better job of solving national problems than elected officials.”

Rural Policy Today: Early Signs

- ▶ Biden commitment
 - Dedicated staff at Domestic Policy Council
 - Rural outreach director in White House Public Affairs
- ▶ USDA leadership with new vision of rural development
- ▶ But...
 - Continuing barriers to public investment
 - Election/Democratic institutions under pressure
 - Agricultural influence dominates



Today's Possibilities: American Rescue Plan

(selected provisions)

- ▶ **\$350 billion** for coronavirus state/local relief funds, with additional \$12 billion for capital projects fund and community navigator program
- ▶ **\$4 billion** in food supply chain and agriculture pandemic response funding
- ▶ **\$10 billion** for State Small Business Credit Initiative, with new set asides for very small businesses, socially/economically disadvantaged businesses, and TA
- ▶ **\$3 billion** for EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance program, with 25% set-aside for travel/tourism/outdoor recreation communities
- ▶ **\$1 billion** for farmers and ranchers of color
- ▶ **\$7 billion** to expand broadband through FCC
- ▶ **\$500 million** in emergency rural healthcare grants

Today's Possibilities: American Jobs Plan

(selected provisions)

- ▷ \$5 billion for a **Rural Partnership Program**
- ▷ \$100 billion in **broadband** infrastructure
- ▷ \$31 billion for **small business**
- ▷ ~\$14 billion through EDA **Public Works** program, USDA/HUD **“Main Street”** grant initiatives, ARC **POWER** Initiative, DOE retooling grants for idled factories
- ▷ \$10 billion **Community Revitalization Fund** to support redevelopment projects
- ▷ Funding for vulnerable communities through FEMA's Building **Resilient Infrastructure and Communities** program, HUD CDBG, and other programs

“Help rural regions, including Tribal Nations, build on their unique assets and realize their vision for inclusive community and economic development.”

This program will empower rural regions by supporting locally-led planning and capacity building efforts, and providing flexible funding to meet critical needs”