

CDC Office of Rural Health

Improving health for more than 60 million people living in rural America by advancing effective and clear public health methods and practices

About ORH

The Office of Rural Health (ORH) leads CDC's rural public health strategy and coordinates with other agency programs and partners to improve the health and well-being of rural communities throughout the United States. The office is located in the Public Health Infrastructure Center. ORH:

- **Guides and implements** CDC's [Rural Public Health Strategic Plan](#).
- **Integrates rural public health needs and proven strategies** into CDC programs from the beginning.
- **Works with organizations that serve rural areas** to guide program planning and enhance public health services in those communities.
- **Advances rural public health science** by leading CDC's work to include rural issues in data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- **Leads CDC's partnerships with other important government groups** focused on rural health, such as the Health Resources and Services Administration's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Office of Rural Health Transformation, and the Veterans Health Administration.



May 2026



By the Numbers



8 full-time employees



\$6 million budget
(from FY 2026 appropriations)

About **\$4 million**
of the budget goes to
rural-focused activities
outside CDC, such as:



Identifying and promoting
successful public health
programs in rural communities



Creating special training for
public health workers in rural
areas



Developing scientific and
communication materials
designed for rural communities

www.cdc.gov/rural-health



A Closer Look

ORH works to improve public health systems in rural areas. For example, the office:

- Funds the development of [rural public health training](#) for the public health workforce. The courses prepare professionals to build on rural strengths while responding to challenges and capitalizing on opportunities in rural communities.
- Funds and collaborates on the development of data tools for local-level decision-making such as the [Rural Health Mapping Tool](#), which offers dozens of publicly available county-level data sources in a single, easy-to-navigate web-based resource.
- Provides guidance for researchers, health professionals, and partners to analyze rural health data, accounting for the diverse characteristics of rural communities. Resources like the [Rural Health Science Tip Sheets](#) include step-by-step guidance, practical examples, and actionable tips.
- Provides rural health leadership and expertise for CDC's emergency responses and builds critical connections between the agency and rural partners. This enables community-driven strategies and enhances rural preparedness and response capacity.

When rural America is healthy, the whole nation is stronger.

Blueprint for Better Rural Health

ORH developed CDC's [Rural Public Health Strategic Plan](#) in 2024. It guides the agency's rural-focused programs and research. It also outlines key priorities, objectives, and outcomes through 2029.

The plan focuses on improving the public health system in rural areas, including:



• The workforce



• Research



• Emergency readiness



• Creating partnerships that deliver results