

National Rural College Completion Trends, Challenges, and Solutions

Nearly 20 percent of the total U.S. population lives in rural America,¹ yet the experiences of rural communities² are often left out of many research and policy conversations. Higher education is no exception. The barriers to getting to and through college for students living in rural communities are deep, persistent, and they require solutions designed to address the challenges faced by rural students and the colleges that serve them.

Efforts that center rural students of color, like Stay the Course's Education Navigation³ (see Case Study), have helped students persist and complete college. They provide models for policymakers at all levels to better support rural students and increase educational attainment and economic mobility.

In this brief, we highlight the key facts, barriers rural students and colleges face, and make recommendations for how to address them. We show the imperative to foreground the diverse identities and backgrounds of rural communities in research and policy discussions.

Quick Facts



Despite relatively high graduation rates, rural communities have lower college enrollment and completion rates than urban or suburban communities.⁴



It is a misconception that rural America is monolithically white, however 15 to 20 percent of all rural residents identify as people of color.⁵ Between 2010 and 2020, the share of the rural population identifying as a people of color increased from 21 to 25 percent.⁶ Many rural counties in southern states have remained predominantly Black, while larger portions of residents in the rural Southwest predominantly Latino.⁷



Rural communities, on average, experience higher rates of poverty and lower household incomes than urban or suburban communities.

- U.S. poverty rates in 2019 were higher at 15.4 percent in rural areas than in urban areas at 11.9 percent.⁸
- The median income for rural households is \$11,000 lower than the national average (\$46,600 versus \$57,600).⁹
- In rural areas, the proportion of first-time students receiving financial aid to help cover college costs in 2020-21 was over 6 percentage points higher than for those in urban areas.¹⁰

Rising challenges for rural students and institution

In addition to similar affordability challenges faced by students from low-income backgrounds everywhere,¹¹ rural students face limited access to public transportation,¹² college and career advising,¹³ childcare, and broadband internet services¹⁴.

Despite common perceptions of students "shopping around" and going away to college, most students stay close to home, attending schools that are, on average, 19 miles away from their permanent address.¹⁵ Rural students have fewer public institutions within commuting distance, and institutions often lack the resources to provide quality online or hybrid education options. Altogether, these factors put rural students at a disadvantage compared to their urban and suburban peers.

Students at lower income levels tend to have lower educational mobility across all types of communities. The hurdles of income and accessibility make college attendance especially challenging for rural students with limited earnings. In addition, students of color are disparately affected no matter where they live, and “unequal geographic access to college drawn along lines of race and class, where opportunities are richly available in white and economically privileged communities, are too often limited in communities of color.”¹⁵

Black and Latino students are less likely to complete college and are doubly disadvantaged by the additional challenges rural students face. **Black and Latino students had completion rates of 31 percent and 38 percent, respectively.**⁵ Like other colleges that serve a large portion of students with high financial and support needs, Rural-Serving Institutions (RSIs) are often asked to do more with less.¹⁶

Attainment data by age shows that more rural residents aged 35-44 are returning to postsecondary opportunities as their attainment rates are higher than younger residents between 25-35 years of age. Adults aged 35-44 in rural areas have higher college attainment rates than rural residents in the younger 25–35-year-old age range. Policymakers, researchers, and advocates should all keep in mind the diverse identities and backgrounds encompassed within rural communities when addressing college access and success barriers faced by both rural students and the colleges and universities that serve them.

A Closer Look at the Challenges Rural Students and Institutions Face:

Student Challenges

- **Affordability:** As college cost rise across the country, clear racial and economic equity gaps persist. Particularly in rural communities with greater financial need and less favorable labor market outcomes.¹⁷
- **College Readiness:** High schools are less likely to offer students early postsecondary opportunities¹⁸ or to have a school counselor to provide college counseling and support.
- **College Recruitment:** Colleges overlook rural communities¹⁹ in their recruitment efforts, which creates inequities in admissions information and options.
- **Long Distances from Colleges:** Transportation is a crucial factor, as rural communities make up 75 percent of people living in education deserts,²⁰ with 3.1 million people living in complete education deserts.
- **College-Going Mindset:** Rural students and parents hold more negative perceptions²¹ of the value, attainability, and affordability of college.

Institutional Challenges

- **Reduced Funding and Support:** RSIs are underfunded, underresourced, and overreliant on state appropriations funding.²² aCovid-19 related enrollment declines have created additional funding limitations.²³
- **Academic Constraints:** Lack of funding and support makes it harder to provide diverse academic offerings,²⁴ mentoring services to students,²⁵ and career counseling and resources.
- **Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Faculty:** RSIs struggle with retaining faculty and staff, especially faculty of color,²⁶ due to underfunding, location, and lack of housing.²⁷
- **Serving More Students in Need:** RSIs tend to serve higher percentages of students in need of financial,²⁸ personal, and academic support.



Education Desert - Area without higher education institutions within 25 miles, or with only one public broad-access community college within 25 miles.²⁹

Complete Education Desert - An education desert with little to no broadband internet limiting students' access to both in-person and online higher education.³⁰

Rural College Enrollment and Completion Trends: Research shows a 13-15 percentage point gap between bachelor's degree attainment in rural compared to urban communities, as well as lower enrollment rates for students from rural communities.³¹

Table 1.
Bachelor's degree attainment for adults over 25 is lower for those living in rural areas.

| Rural | Urban |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Rural: 24.7% | City: 37.0% |
| Town: 22.5% | Suburban: 36.7% |

Source: Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics "Table 104.25., Percentage distribution of persons aged 25 and over, by highest level of educational attainment, age group, and locale: 2019"

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_104.25.asp?current=yes

Table 2.
Students from rural areas enroll in postsecondary school at lower rates than those in urban areas.

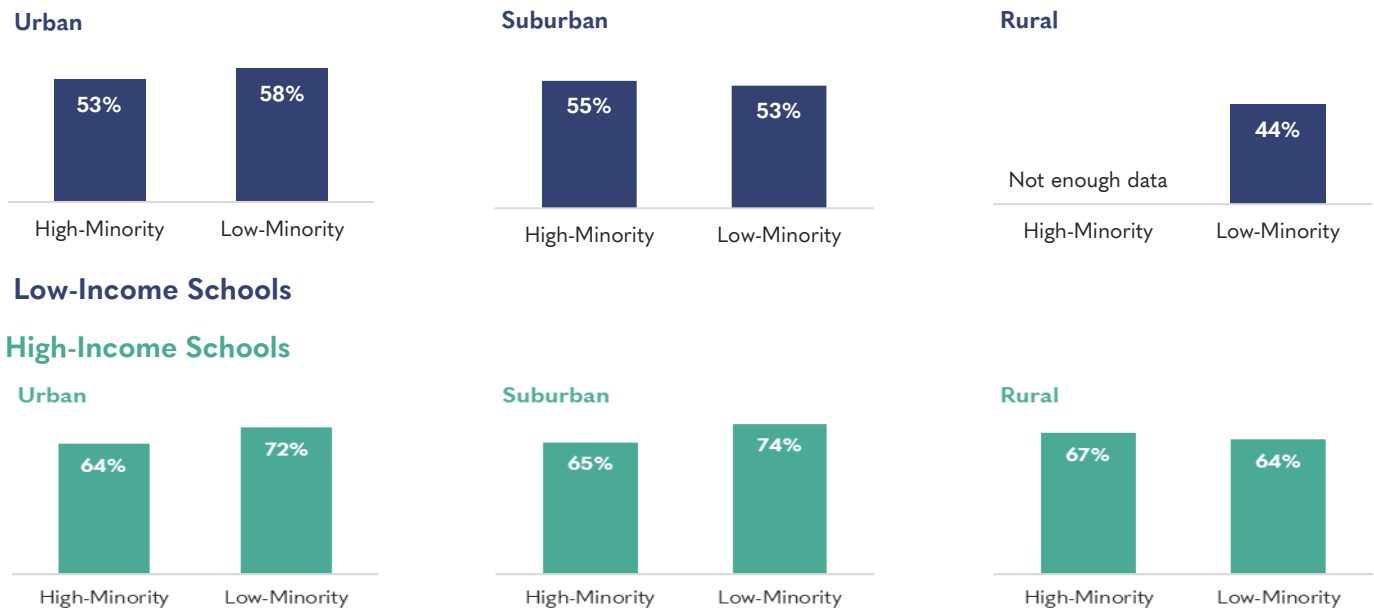
| Rural | Urban |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Rural: 71.0% | City: 72.9% |
| Town: 65.4% | Suburban: 76.4% |

Source: Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics "Table 302.46., Percentage distribution of fall 2009 ninth-graders, by high school locale in 2009, high school completion status, postsecondary enrollment and work status or plans, and postsecondary attainment status: 2013 and 2016"

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_302.46.asp

Figure 1.

From the data available, students attending low-income, low-minority rural high schools had the lowest rate of college enrollment at 44 percent.



Source: National Student Clearinghouse 2015 High School Benchmarks "National College Progression Rates" <https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/HighSchoolBenchmarks2015.pdf>

Policy and research recommendations:

1 Provide collegiate wraparound services at the secondary level.

Secondary schools³² as postsecondary rural-serving institutions regarding teacher and staff shortages, reduced academic offerings, and limited resources. These constraints make it difficult for rural schools to offer as many college readiness programs – such as Advanced Placement (AP), dual enrollment, and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, or SAT/ACT preparation – as their urban counterparts. These programs often require subject matter expertise and additional licenses or certifications. Rural schools may also have less opportunity to offer dual enrollment courses or host college recruiters if there are limited postsecondary institutions nearby.

Secondary and postsecondary institutions can provide support and opportunities by:

- Increase collegiate counseling services such as career and college advisors and application support in high schools
- Increase collegiate course offerings at the secondary level, such as providing dual enrollment, IB, and AP courses³³
- Form connections between rural secondary and postsecondary schools by sending faculty to speak on relevant topics, creating summer programs for interested students, facilitating campus visits, and providing academic support and funding directly to secondary schools³⁴

Example: rootEd Alliance³⁵ places advisors in rural high schools to help students develop a strong post-graduation plan and provides resources – including financial assistance – to support student success. The Alliance has supported almost 12,000 students and increased college enrollment rates by 13 percent for schools participating in the program. A quarter of students say they would not attend college without the support of their rootEd advisor.³⁶

2 Increase access to state and federal funds designated for RSIs to provide comprehensive support programs.

Many performance measures of success related to funding cater to larger research institutions, leaving RSIs unequipped to fully address student needs. In addition, RSIs have higher proportions of marginalized students needing academic, financial, transportation, and childcare support.³⁷

Federal and state policymakers must invest in RSIs and create more targeted and rural-friendly policies, including:

- Amend the Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development (RPED) Program policies so institutions may spend funds on implementing comprehensive approaches to student success (CASS) principles and programs.³⁸
- Streamline grant application processes and offering technical assistance to enable smaller institutions to have equal opportunity to compete for state and federal funding.
- Designate funds to assist RSIs and rural students, such as providing direct financial support to students and incentivizing rural recruitment, enrollment, and completion.

State Policy Example: West Virginia set an attainment goal that 60 percent of working-age adults will earn a postsecondary credential by 2030.³⁹ To make this happen, rural institutions in the state are offering direct financial resources to low-income students, such as accessible textbooks, emergency aid, and tool grants to meet student needs.

3 Expand broadband access in education deserts to increase access to higher education.

Without proximity to physical campuses or, in many areas, access to broadband internet, many rural residents reside in education deserts. These areas have limited educational opportunities for recent high school graduates and returning adult learners alike.⁴⁰ Expanding broadband access allows students to engage and enroll with colleges and universities, regardless of location or transportation challenges.

Federal and state policymakers should support rural communities by:

- Replicate and supporting state efforts to increase broadband access by forming local and state committees to tackle this issue and provide funds to upgrade equipment.⁴¹
- Support rural communities and total education deserts in the distribution of the \$42 billion from the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program.⁴²

Federal Policy Example: In November 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act establishing the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. A federal investment of \$42 billion to construct broadband networks, establish subsidies to offset the cost of internet service for lower-income households, and create programs to provide end users with the devices and training needed to use the new and upgraded networks.⁴³

4 Incentivize and resource RSIs to invest in comprehensive approaches to student success (CASS) to meet students holistic needs.

The students at RSIs come from different backgrounds and require specialized services and support to succeed. RSIs have larger proportions of low-income students receiving Pell Grants, adult students, online students, and student-parents. RSI students often work part- or full-time jobs while attending school.⁴⁴

Postsecondary institutions can better serve rural students by:

- Provide mentors and advisors to address institutional knowledge gaps and create a community of support.⁴⁵
- Assist students in accessing state, federal, and institutional aid through completing the FAFSA.
- Provide individualized and targeted financial aid and resources.⁴⁶

Examples: *Comprehensive approaches to student success (CASS) models such as CUNY ASAP, InsideTrack, MAAPS, One Million Degrees, Project QUEST, and Stay the Course.*⁴⁷

Call for Research

Unfortunately, while NSC data provides enrollment and completion rates for students across the country, rural students are underrepresented in the samples compared to the national average.⁴⁸ While the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) continue to collect national data on the effects of income, race, and other factors on college access and completion, there is still a lack of available data on the impact these factors have on rural communities. For example, the most recent NCES data on rural students is based on a High School Longitudinal Study (HSLs), which tracked high school freshmen in 2009 into and beyond postsecondary education.⁴⁹

Data should also consider race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic factors and the impact they have on postsecondary education outcomes in these communities.⁵⁰ Current efforts to address this gap, such as MDRC's Rural Higher Education Initiative, remain ongoing and may offer lessons for policymakers.⁵¹

Conclusion

- ✓ **Students from rural communities – particularly those who have historically experienced access barriers to higher education relative to their peers in urban areas – continue to face a number of challenges related to college access and completion. For years, researchers have sought to better understand the needs and challenges of disadvantaged populations, yet studies on rural communities have remained sparse. Even as policymakers have made strides in providing better opportunities and resources for underserved communities across the country, access to affordable, high-quality postsecondary education has proved an enduring challenge for rural communities.**
- ✓ **Policymakers should act now to improve access to postsecondary pathways for rural students and spur substantive improvement in rural educational attainment that would boost economic outcomes nationwide. Completing a quality degree unlocks the full range of benefits of higher education for students, including securing meaningful employment that supports their economic mobility after graduation. The path to securing the future of rural communities can be paved by breaking down barriers to college access and degree completion.**

CASE STUDY:

Solutions in Action-Applying a CASS Model in Rural Texas with Stay the Course

Following the CASS blueprint:

CASS programs are research-backed, individualized solutions to improving college completion rates. Six CASS models have been evaluated using randomized control trials, showing positive short-term outcomes related to college completion, such as persistence, credit accumulation and more.⁵² TICAS leads a community of practice with these six programs to better understand their impact and common design elements. TICAS elevates learnings from this group to help institutions, states, and communities think about way to implement or scale these efforts to improve college completion for underserved students.

Six CASS Programs:

1. CUNY ASAP
2. InsideTrack
3. MAAPS
4. One Million Degrees
5. Project Quest
6. Stay the Course

Stay the Course

Stay the Course⁵³ is one of the six communities of practice CASS programs, assisting economically disadvantaged students in north Texas to complete college. Created by Catholic Charities Fort Worth in partnership with the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) at the University of Notre Dame, Stay the Course provides proactive advising, financial support, and referrals for academic tutoring to participating students. Recognizing a need in their community, the Education Navigation (EN)⁵⁴ program was formed as part of Stay the Course, but specifically directs its services to rural students. It is a multi-year program that provides financial support in the form of scholarships, last-dollar-in funding, and personal support in the form of childcare, rent, healthcare, transportation, and food assistance.

CASS programs have three central design elements: (1) a counselor or case manager, (2) a strategy to help students stay on track, and (3) a real-time data system. Education Navigation applies the CASS design elements in a way that specifically supports rural communities. Education Navigation excels in the first two CASS design elements by providing:

1) A counselor or case manager

- Every Education Navigation student is assigned a Navigator, a case manager that provides mentorship and assists with accessing academic, financial, and personal resources necessary for success.
- Nine of 11 campuses have a designated Navigator, the remaining two share a Navigator
- Navigators become part of the campus community by forming relationships with faculty and staff and having offices in campus centers.

2) A strategy to help students stay on track.

- Navigators meet with students twice a month to set and track short- and long-term goals.
- The selection process requires students to pick majors that provide positive returns on investment and are responsive to workforce needs.
- Students are required to attend at least two quarterly life skills workshops.



Education Navigation has served 1240 students across 11 campuses

Institutions Served:

Community Colleges

- North Central Texas College (Bowie, Graham and Gainesville, Texas)
- Vernon College (Wichita Falls and Vernon, Texas)
- Ranger College (Stephenville, Texas)
- Hill College (Hillsboro, Texas)
- Weatherford College (Weatherford, Texas)

Four-Year Universities

- Midwestern State University (Wichita Falls, Texas)
- University of North Texas (Denton, Texas)
- Texas Woman's University (Denton, Texas)



Counties with Education Navigation programs have higher postsecondary attainment rates for Associate and Bachelor degree holders with rates ranging from 24-35% (with the exception of Denton County at 61%). Bachelor attainment rates have large equity gaps of 12-19 percentage points between White adults and Black, Latinx and Native adults.

Directly Addressing Rural Needs:

The Education Navigation program takes the strengths of CASS programs and applies them in a rural context to directly address the challenges and barriers mentioned above. Most of the students participating in Education Navigation are students of color, and nearly half of them are first-generation college students. Rather than applying blanket solutions, Education Navigation individualizes services to their students. Education Navigation accomplishes this individualization by assessing student needs upon entry, identifying which supports are necessary, and providing wraparound resources for transportation, childcare, housing, mental health, and food assistance needs. Education Navigation addresses financial barriers by helping students apply for federal and state funds like the Pell Grant, and any additional available funding to help cover costs. As a result, Education Navigation students have a 90 percent passing rate each semester and a 95 percent retention rate between the fall and spring semesters.

Acknowledgements:

The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) is a trusted source of research, design, and advocacy for student-centered public policies that promote affordability, accountability, and equity in higher education. To learn more about TICAS, visit ticas.org and follow us on Twitter and Instagram: [@TICAS_org](https://twitter.com/TICAS_org).

Dr. Jhenai Chandler and Dominique Baeta are co-authors of this brief, with special thanks to Jennifer Strand of Catholic Charities of Fort Worth, Angelica Gutierrez, and TICAS staff reviewers for their contributions.

Endnotes

-
- ¹ Rural: All locales falling under the National Center for Education Statistics' Rural or Town locale classification. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/LocaleBoundaries>. The definitions used by most of the referenced resources on rural education come from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) or the USDA's Economic Research Service (USDA ERS), both of which are based upon the Census Bureau's definition. When considering education research and policy recommendations, we believe the NCES' classification system is better suited to our purposes because it considers factors specific to education and the NCES conducts vast research relevant to education. It is also important to note that California's Department of Education and the National Student Clearinghouse use the NCES classification system.
- ² Koricich, Andrew, Xi Chen, and Rodney P. Hughes. 2018. "Understanding the Effects of Rurality and Socioeconomic Status on College Attendance and Institutional Choice in the United States." *Review of Higher Education*. <https://bit.ly/3PxeQXd>
- ³ Education Navigation Learn More here: <https://bit.ly/3sJucXo>
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09). 2013 Update and Second Follow-Up. (This table was prepared May 2019.) <https://bit.ly/45Vn6NS>
- ⁵ American Communities Project. 2019. "A New Portrait of Rural America". <https://bit.ly/3Z8CXpM>
- ⁶ Center on Rural Innovation (CORI). 2023. "Who lives in rural America? How data shapes (and misshapes) conceptions of diversity in rural America". <https://bit.ly/486tkvU>
- ⁷ Brookings. 2021. "Mapping rural America's diversity and demographic change". <https://bit.ly/462vkU7>
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. 2021. "Data show U.S. poverty rates in 2019 higher in rural areas than in urban for racial/ethnic groups". <https://bit.ly/3LfCtZf>
- ⁹ American Communities Project. 2019. "A New Portrait of Rural America". <https://bit.ly/3Z8CXpM>
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 2021. "Financial Aid: What is the percent of full-time, first-time students awarded financial aid?". <https://bit.ly/464ayUo>
- ¹¹ IHEP. 2023. "College Affordability Still Out of Reach for Students with Lowest Incomes, Students of Color". <https://bit.ly/3PckPqt> & TICAS. 2017. "College (Un)Affordability: Lowest Income Students Face Highest Cost Burdens at 2- and 4-Year Public Colleges in All 50 States, Even After Aid, New Analysis Finds." <https://bit.ly/3Ew1dJ5>
- ¹² Povich, E. 2022. "One Big Barrier for Community College Students: Transportation to Campus". <https://bit.ly/463Veag>
- ¹³ Brookings. 2019. "Rural schools need career counselors, too". <https://bit.ly/3Rggy8o>
- ¹⁴ Urban Institute. 2018. "Disconnected from Higher Education - How Geography and Internet Speed Limit Access to Higher Education". <https://urban.is/3r51mQy>
- ¹⁵ TICAS. 2023. Geography of Opportunity. <https://ticas.org/college-value/geography-of-opportunity/>
- ¹⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. 2021 Rural Education. <https://bit.ly/44J9pjU>
- ¹⁷ TICAS. 2021. DATA FOR EQUITY: Closing Racial and Economic Gaps Through a Federal-State Partnership. <https://bit.ly/48aBpQv>
- ¹⁸ Aspen Institute. 2023. Rural Community College Excellence: A Guide to Delivering Strong Opportunity for Students and Communities. <https://bit.ly/3PipiZ4>
- ¹⁹ Gettinger, A. 2019. A Big Reason Big Reason Rural Students Never Go to College: Colleges Don't Recruit Them. <https://bit.ly/3sJwlvO>
- ²⁰ Urban Institute. 2018. "Disconnected from Higher Education - How Geography and Internet Speed Limit Access to Higher Education". <https://urban.is/3r51mQy>
- ²¹ Bernsen, M. et al. 2022. Community Influences on Youth Educational Aspirations in Rural, Resource-Dependent Places. <https://bit.ly/3sLNzim>
- ²² Alliance on Research on Regional Colleges. 2022. Introducing our Nation's Rural-Serving Postsecondary Institutions Moving Toward Greater Visibility and Appreciation. <https://bit.ly/45E8Hpk>
- ²³ National Student Clearinghouse. 2021. High School Benchmarks - COVID-19 Special Analysis Update & Correction. <https://bit.ly/44KQ1mF>
- ²⁴ Marcus, J. 2022. Rural universities, already few and far between, are being stripped of majors. <https://bit.ly/3sFIEEi>
- ²⁵ University of Washington's Community College Research Initiatives. 2023. "UW's Community College Research Initiatives receives \$449,535 grant to increase rural educational equity". <https://bit.ly/48ammWM>
- ²⁶ MDRC. 202. Recognizing Diversity in Rural America - College Access Strategies in Rural Communities of Color. <https://bit.ly/3sLvEsd>
- ²⁷ Aspen Institute. 2023. Rural Community College Excellence: A Guide to Delivering Strong Opportunity for Students and Communities. <https://bit.ly/3PipiZ4>
- ²⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. 2021 Rural Education. <https://bit.ly/44J9pjU>

- ²⁹ Urban Institute. 2018. "Disconnected from Higher Education - How Geography and Internet Speed Limit Access to Higher Education". <https://urban.is/3r51mOy>
- ³⁰ Urban Institute. 2018. "Disconnected from Higher Education - How Geography and Internet Speed Limit Access to Higher Education". <https://urban.is/3r51mOy>
- ³¹ National Center for Education Statistics. 2023. Educational Attainment in Rural Areas. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. <https://bit.ly/3r4WURU>
- ³² Koricich, A. et al. 2018. Understanding the Effects of Rurality and Socioeconomic Status on College Attendance and Institutional Choice in the United States. <https://bit.ly/3Et3Lb0>
- ³³ Dounay Zinth, J. 2014. Dual enrollment: A strategy to improve college-going and college completion among rural students. <https://bit.ly/4509foB>
- ³⁴ Boggs, B. 2019. Planting the Seeds, Working the Land: Postsecondary Programs in Rural Areas. <https://bit.ly/44Jcroi>
- ³⁵ rootED Alliance, learn more: <https://rootedalliance.org/>
- ³⁶ rootED Alliance. 2023. Our Impact. <https://bit.ly/4877PLy>
- ³⁷ Alliance on Research on Regional Colleges. 2022. Introducing our Nation's Rural-Serving Postsecondary Institutions Moving Toward Greater Visibility and Appreciation. <https://bit.ly/45E8Hpk>
- ³⁸ TICAS. 2021. Comprehensive Approaches to Student Success Design Principles. <https://bit.ly/44JEkN1>
- ³⁹ MDRC. 2020. Rural Higher Education Realities & Opportunities. <https://bit.ly/3EymIZG>
- ⁴⁰ Urban Institute. 2018. "Disconnected from Higher Education - How Geography and Internet Speed Limit Access to Higher Education". <https://urban.is/3r51mOy>
- ⁴¹ Deye, S. 2015. Expanding Broadband Access for All Learners. <https://bit.ly/3EunYgD>
- ⁴² Broadband USA. 2023. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. <https://bit.ly/3sJ0a5T>
- ⁴³ Broadband USA. 2023. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. <https://bit.ly/3sJ0a5T>
- ⁴⁴ Alliance on Research on Regional Colleges. 2022. Introducing our Nation's Rural-Serving Postsecondary Institutions Moving Toward Greater Visibility and Appreciation. <https://bit.ly/45E8Hpk>
- ⁴⁵ University of Washington's Community College Research Initiatives. 2023. " UW's Community College Research Initiatives receives \$449,535 grant to increase rural educational equity". <https://bit.ly/48ammWM> & Stars College Network. 2023. Small Town and Rural Students (STARS) College Network. <https://bit.ly/3ReHaq5>
- ⁴⁶ MDRC. 2023. Ohio Programs Based on CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) Boost Earnings During the Pandemic. <https://bit.ly/3P929ls>
- ⁴⁷ TICAS. 2023. Comprehensive Approaches to Student Success Programs Nationwide by State and Institution. <https://bit.ly/3P36wVi>
- ⁴⁸ National Student Clearinghouse. 2020. Community Colleges, For-Profit and Rural Institutions, Black Undergraduates, and Male Undergraduates Suffered Most from Online-Only 2020 Summer Sessions, According to Latest Enrollment Data. <https://bit.ly/484JjuC>
- ⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09). <https://bit.ly/3ZbYf5T> & U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, The Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS). <https://bit.ly/3EwM7mA>
- ⁵⁰ Lumina Foundation. 2019. In rural America, too few roads lead to college success. <https://bit.ly/3Zq3dMR>
- ⁵¹ MDRC. 2023. Rural Higher Education Initiative. <https://bit.ly/3sM7UnQ>
- ⁵² TICAS. 2021. Comprehensive Approaches to Student Success Design Principles. <https://bit.ly/44JEkN1>
- ⁵³ Learn more about Stay the Course: <https://stay-the-course.org/>
- ⁵⁴ Learn more about Catholic Charities Fort Worth: <https://bit.ly/3Ze9jzx>