

Racing Toward Postsecondary Success: Rural Students

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Meet your presenters



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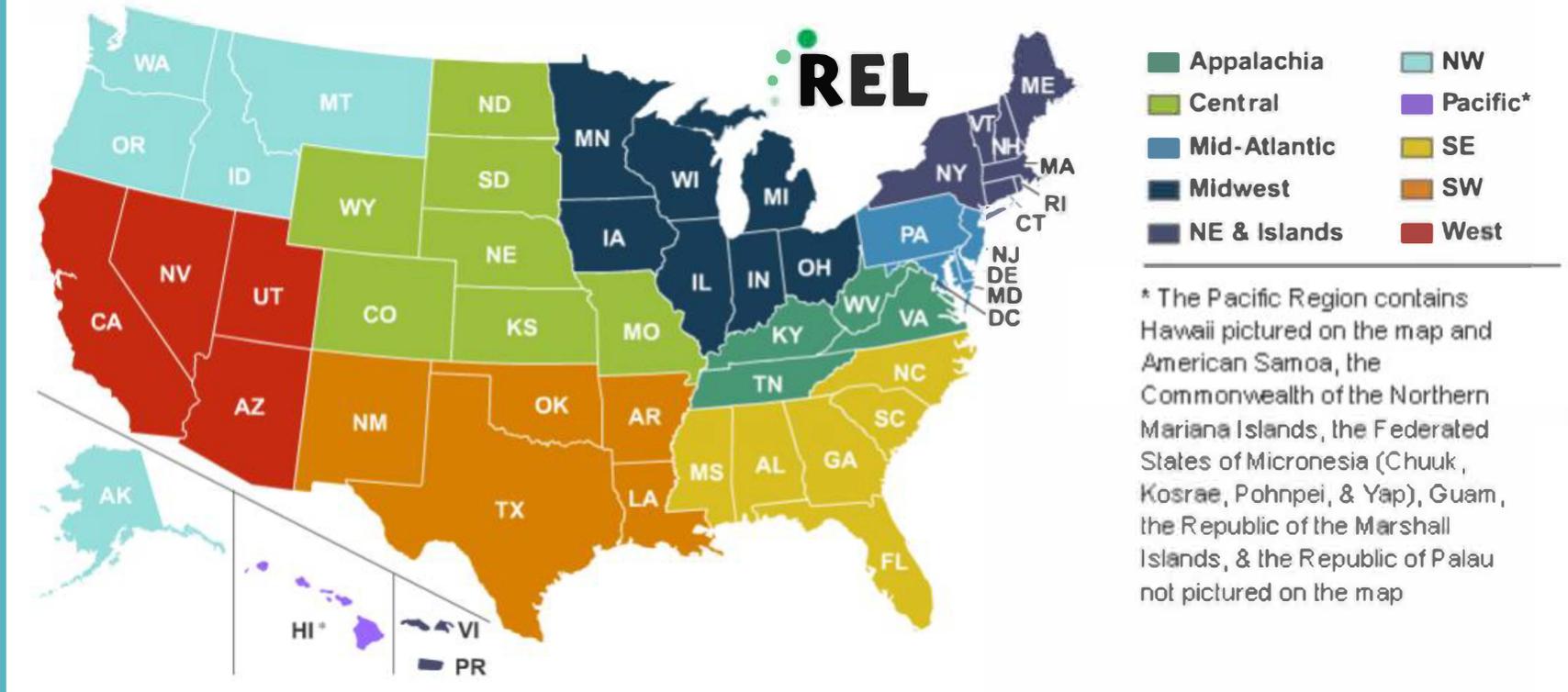


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Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview of Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) and REL Appalachia
- What is rural education?
- The rural challenge
- Postsecondary success for rural students
- Supporting rural education

The Regional Educational Laboratories



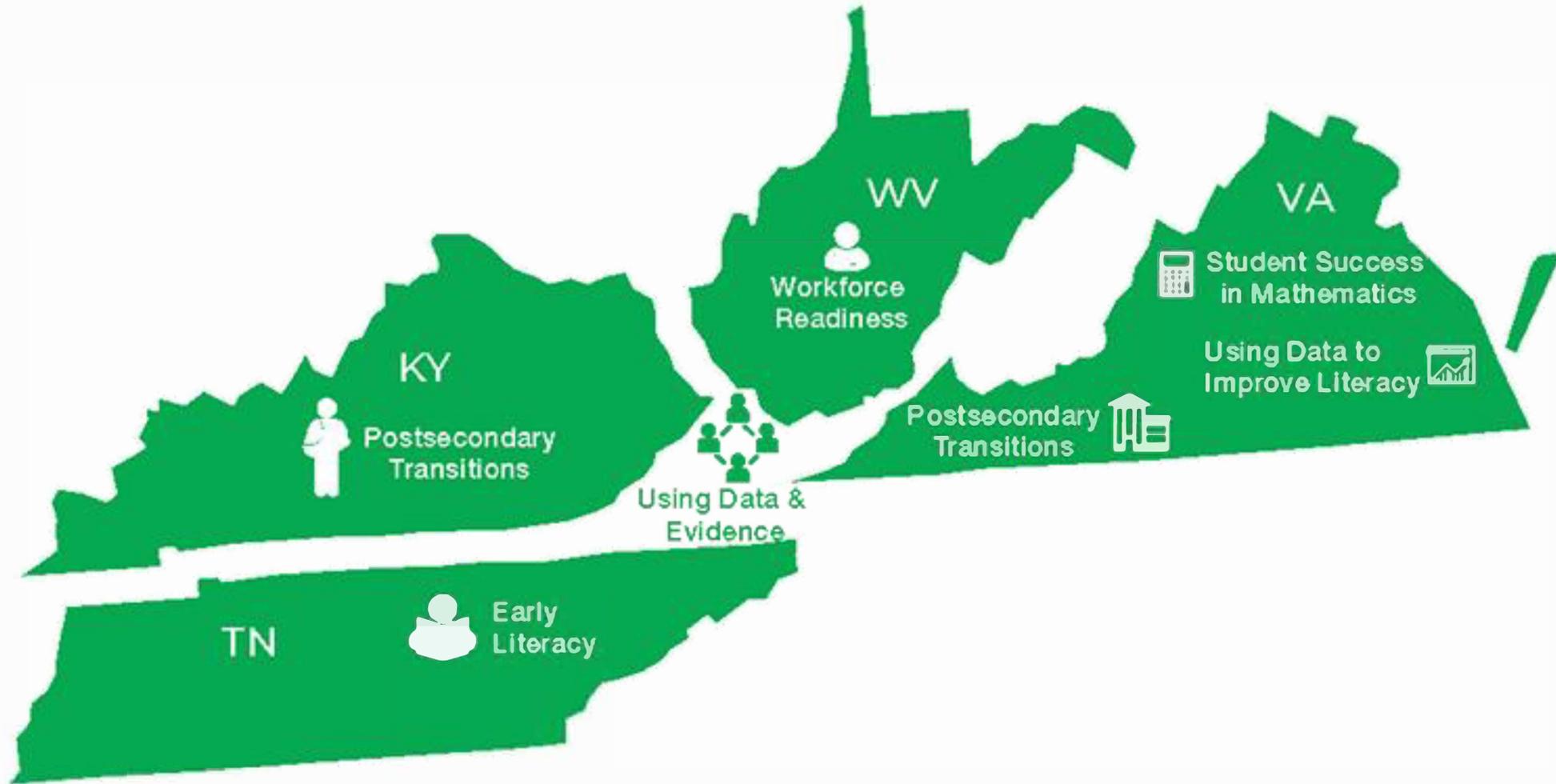
The ten Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) work in partnership with stakeholders to conduct applied research and trainings.

The REL mission is to support a more evidence-based education system.

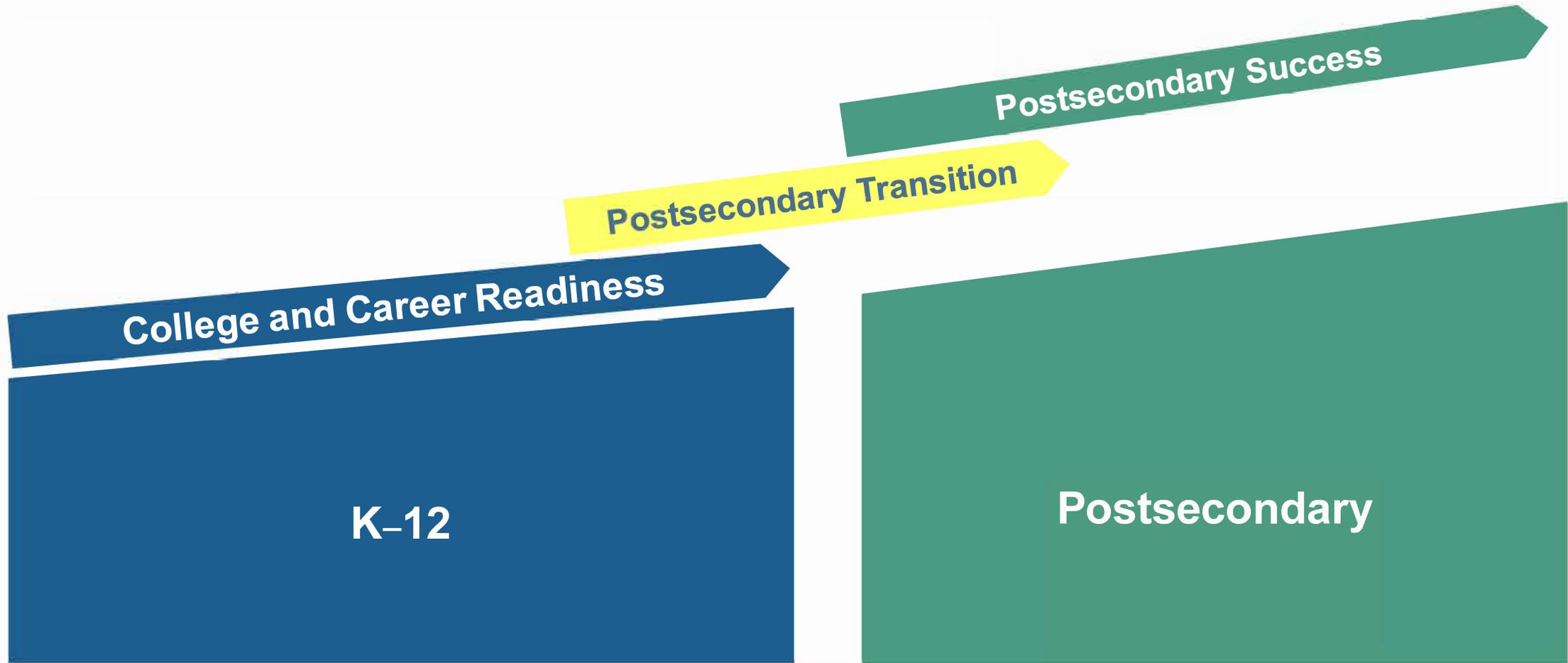
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Find us on the web! <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/>

Overview of REL Appalachia



What do we mean by “postsecondary transitions”?



How does REL Appalachia support postsecondary transitions in rural communities?



Workshops
Coaching
Webinars
Research reports



What is rural education?

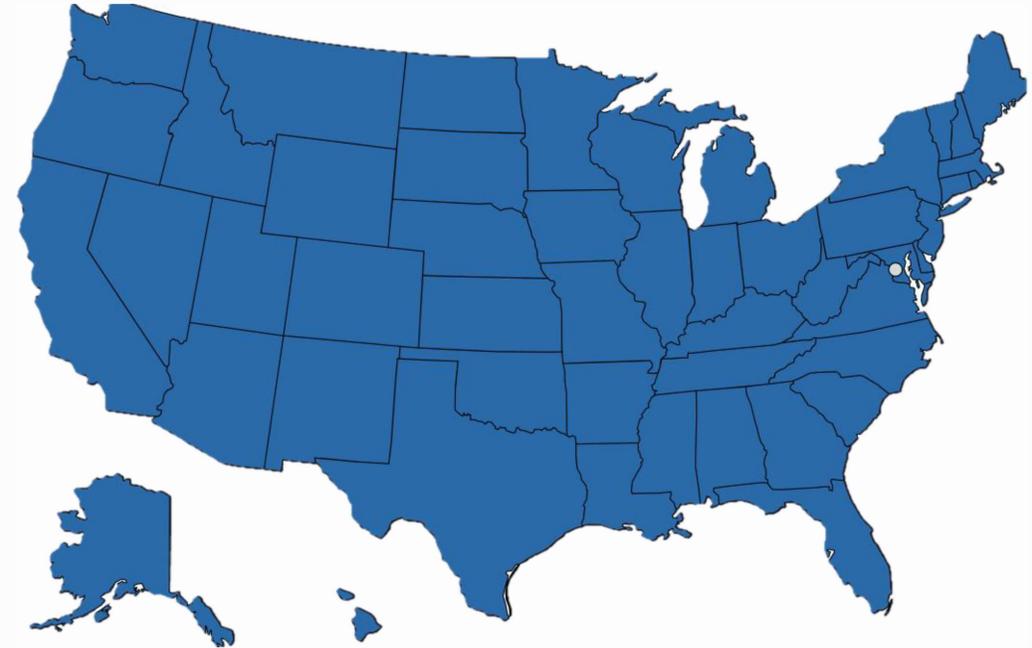
Defining rural schools

- Urbanicity: concentration of population.
- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has defined four major types of schools based on their location:
 - City
 - Suburban
 - Town
 - Rural



Rural education, by the numbers

- In fall 2015, over 9.2 million students were enrolled in public schools in rural communities (18.7% of all students nationwide).
- In 31 states, more than 20% of students were enrolled in public schools in rural communities.
- NCES considers 53% of all public school districts in the U.S. to be rural.

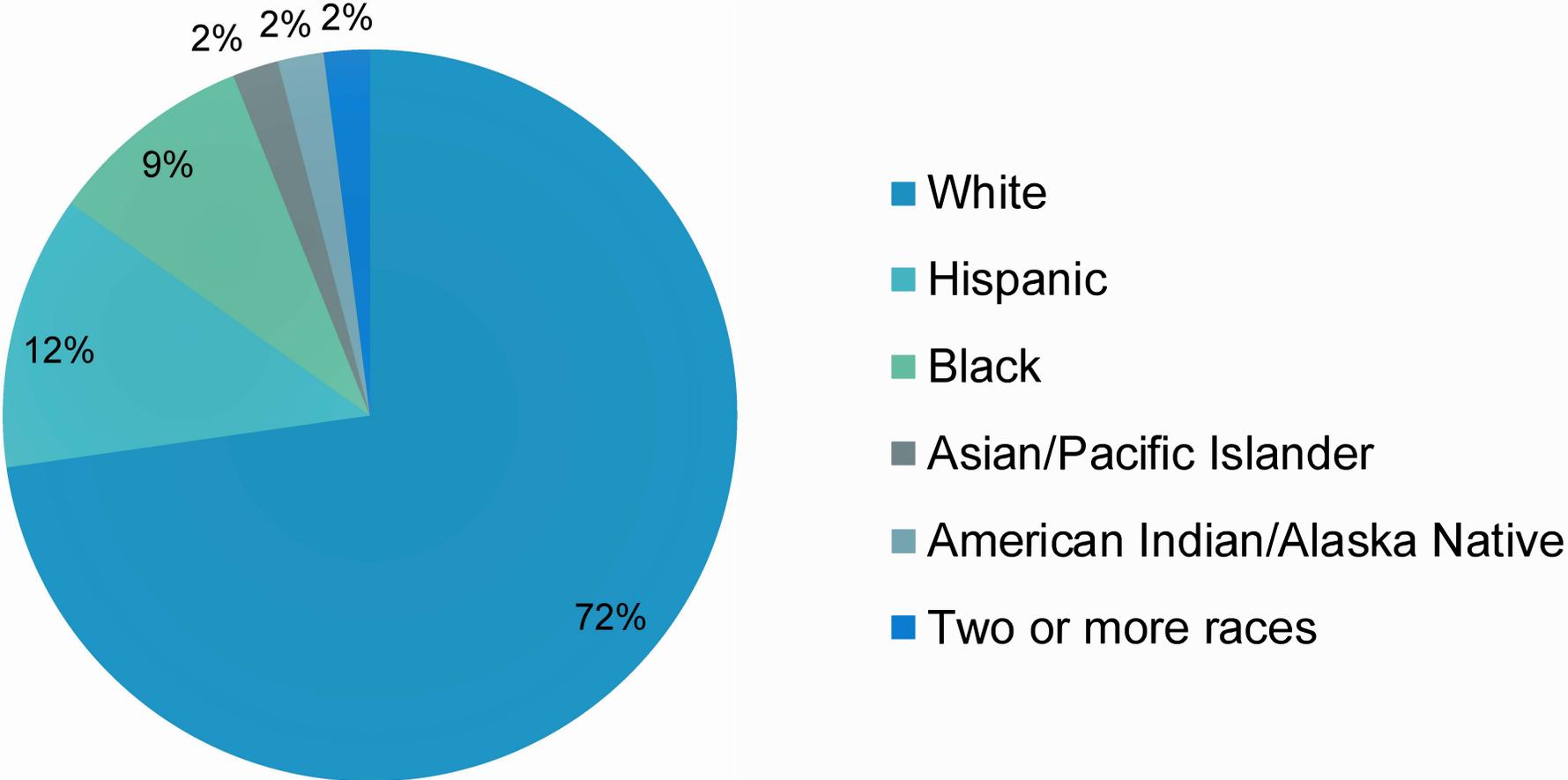


Rural education, by the numbers

- Rural students can be found all over the country – states with the largest proportions of rural students (40+ percent) include Vermont, Maine, Mississippi, West Virginia, and South Dakota.
 - Rural regions differ in both culture and geography.
 - Challenges differ across rural areas.

State	Percent rural students
Vermont	55.7
Maine	53.6
Mississippi	46.9
West Virginia	42.4
South Dakota	41.3
Alabama	39.7
North Dakota	39.2
North Carolina	37.0
Kentucky	36.5
Montana	36.1

Rural education, by the numbers



Rural education, by the numbers

- Student achievement in rural schools is comparable to other localities...

	Rural	National
Reading Grade 4	36%	35%
Reading Grade 8	32%	33%
Math Grade 4	40%	39%
Math Grade 8	31%	32%

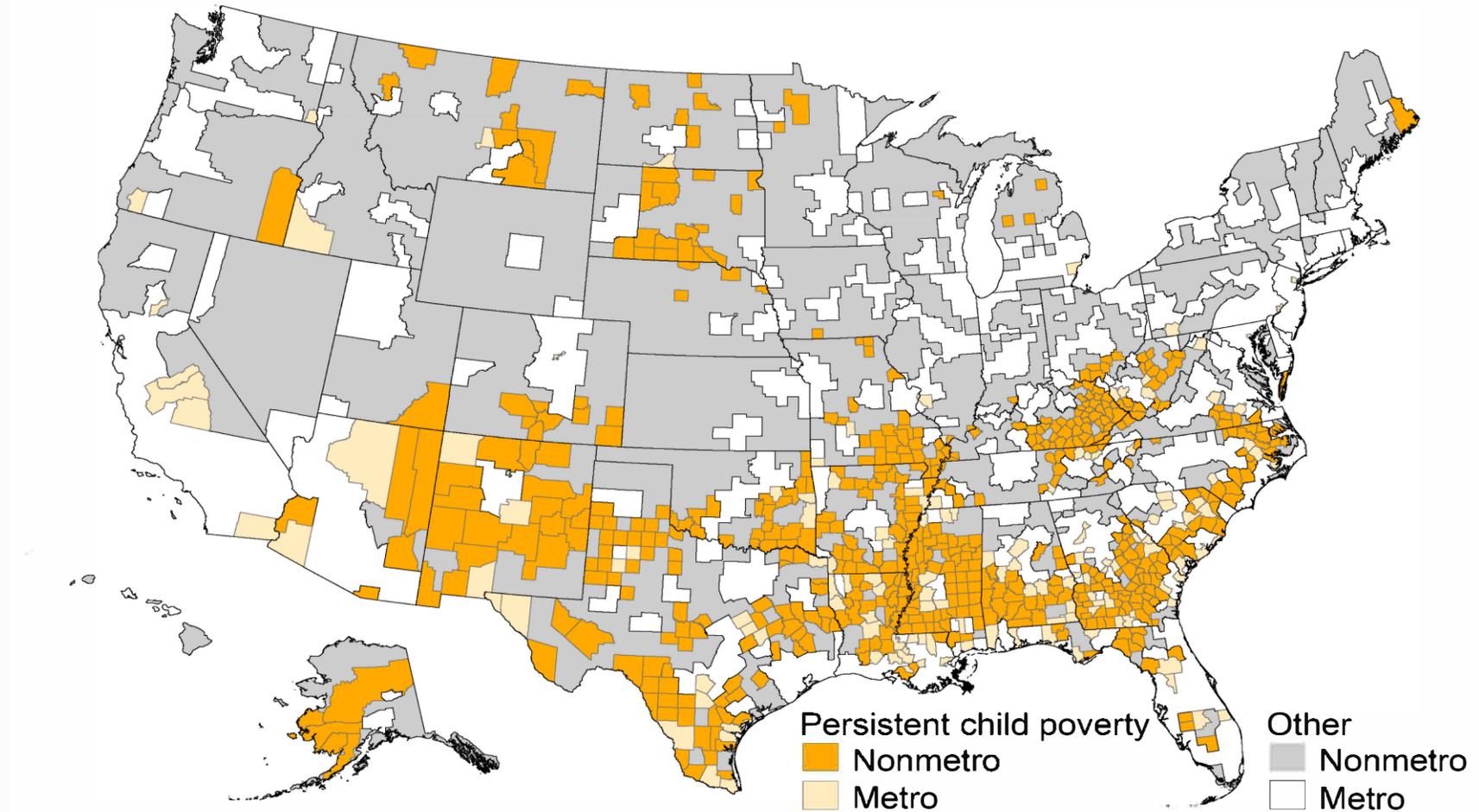


- But postsecondary participation is not comparable.
 - 29% of rural people ages 18–24 were enrolled in a postsecondary program, compared to 42% nationally.

Persistent child poverty counties, 2015 edition

Rural education, by the numbers

Children ages 2 through 8 years old who live in persistently poor families score lower on achievement tests than children in families who were never poor.¹



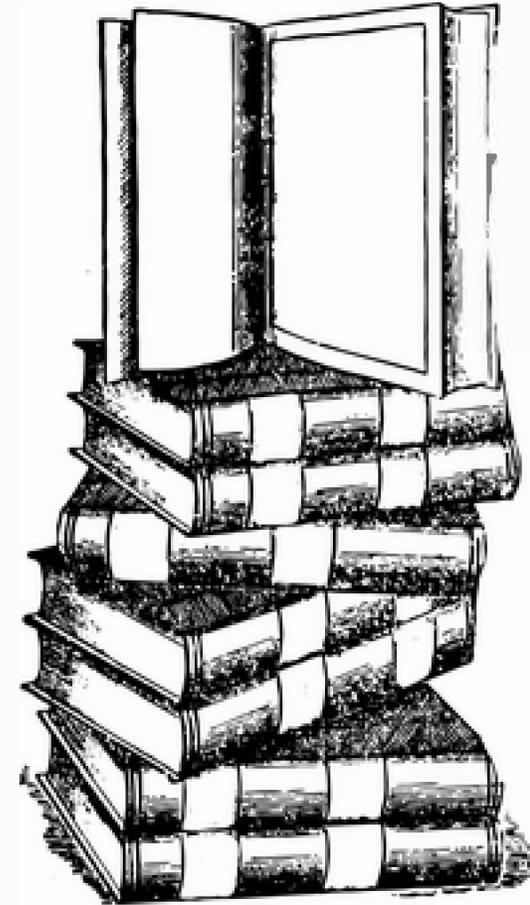
Persistent child poverty counties are those where 20 percent or more of county related children under 18 were poor, measured in the 1980, 1990, 2000 censuses, and the 2007-11 American Community Survey.

Note that county boundaries are drawn for the persistent child poverty counties only.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau.

The rural education challenge

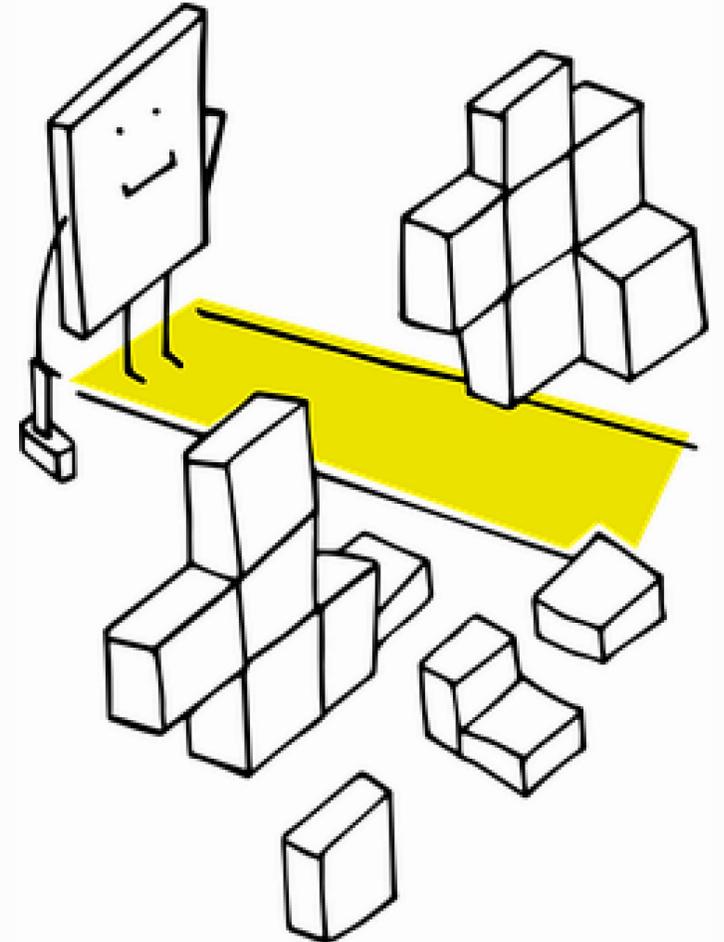
Rural youth in postsecondary

- Rural students have the same aspirations to attend four-year institutions as their suburban and urban peers.²
- Rural youth attend college at lower rates than non-rural students, especially those who are poor, African-American, or Hispanic.^{3, 4, 5, 6}
- Rural students have lower rates of college completion, although these differences disappear when socioeconomic background is considered.⁴
- In middle Appalachia, lower percentages of adults have college degrees, especially bachelor's degrees, than adults in the rest of the country.⁷



Rural barriers to postsecondary education

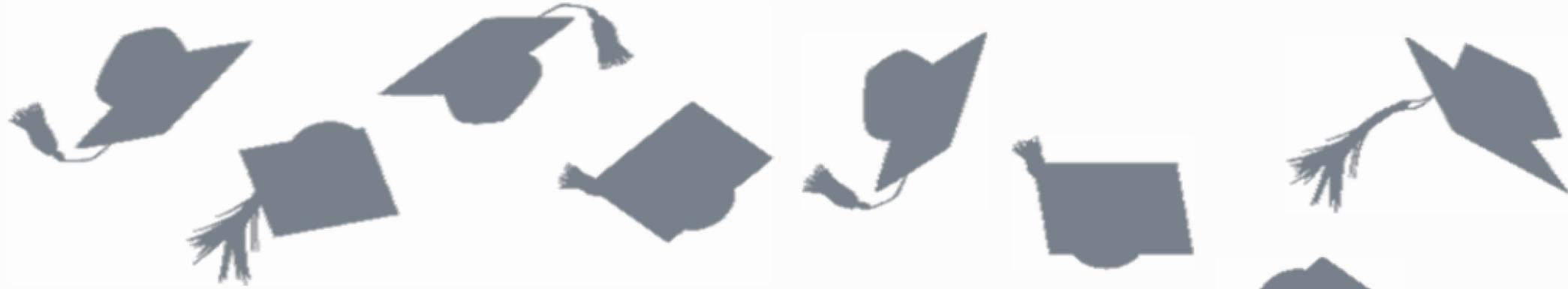
- Confidence^{8,9,10}
- Geographic isolation¹¹
- Localism^{12,13}
- Family culture, family obligations^{11, 12}
- Lack of college knowledge¹⁴
- Low levels of family educational expectations and involvement in education³
- Financial considerations¹⁵



Rural assets for postsecondary education

- School community
 - Frequent center of social engagement
 - Feeling teachers care about them¹⁶
- Localism
 - Connection to their community, pride of place
- Strong family and community influences^{11,12,13}
- A can-do attitude, self-sufficiency





Postsecondary success for rural students

Postsecondary success in rural high-poverty schools

- Partners in Kentucky and Virginia have shared that even academically well-prepared students do not always succeed in college.
- Partners want to know more about **nonacademic** interventions to boost college enrollment and persistence.
- They are particularly interested in interventions with a proven track record in **rural** locales and with **high poverty** students.

REL Appalachia: Systematic evidence review



- Search peer-reviewed publications, dissertations, and What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) intervention reports:
 - Nonacademic interventions,
 - With students aged 5–19 at the time of the intervention,
 - With measured postsecondary outcomes,
 - Using rigorous quantitative designs.
- Identify which interventions have evidence disaggregated for rural and high-poverty students.
- Identify gaps in the research.

What Works Clearinghouse:

Studies identifying rural students in the population.

<u>WWC Topic Area</u>	Relevant to Rural	Total	Percent
Literacy	28	228	12%
Math	19	150	13%
Science	2	10	20%
Behavior	10	54	19%
Children w/ Disabilities	7	36	19%
ELL	4	32	13%
Teacher Excellence	2	8	25%
Charter Schools	2	9	22%
Early Childhood	4	84	5%
K-12	49	449	11%
Path to Graduation	5	43	12%
Postsecondary	3	10	30%
Total	135	1,113	12%

What Works Clearinghouse:

Conducting studies in rural education creates unique challenges.¹⁷

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Evidence-based strategies to support students and their successful transition

- Equip students with **college knowledge**: norms and expectations of postsecondary institutions.
- Incorporate **social and emotional skills** into school experiences.
- Expose students to **careers** and postsecondary **majors**.



Equip students with college knowledge: Norms and expectations

- Create high school-college partnerships.
- Share common process expectations.
- Host school or districtwide initiatives.



Incorporate social and emotional skills into school experiences



- **Conscientiousness:** the degree to which a person is efficient and organized.
 - Associated with higher GPAs among university students.
 - Associated with one's ability to maintain focus and surmount challenges.
- **Self-regulation:** being aware of one's self including his/her learning processes; monitoring and reflecting; knowing when to seek out resources and help.
 - Associated with better academic performance.

Expose students to majors and careers

*Students who begin college with a major in mind are more likely to **persist and graduate.***

- Light-touch exposure strategies
 - Career inventories
 - College visits
 - Guidance counseling
- More intensive exposure strategies
 - Career pathway programs (career academies)
 - Job experiences through internships, service learning, and apprenticeships
 - Career-focused dual enrollment



“Going away to college” doesn’t have to mean going away.

Appalachians, and many rural students across the country, have a strong sense of belonging to the family and the land, and of the history present in both family and land.

Investing in local education opportunities allows students to both “become” and “remain.”



What do Appalachian community college students say are benefits of local programs?



Lower tuition.



Ability to stay at home and pay reduced rent.



Being able to continue working at an established place of employment.

Supporting rural education

The rural context: Priorities and perspectives on research



- Your priorities may not be their priorities.
- Your perspective may not be their perspective.
- Implications for research:
 - Aim for a set of shared priorities and develop a shared perspective on the research project.

Keep in mind . . .

- Know that each rural community, district, and school is unique; understand local assets and needs.
- Engage stakeholders early and build buy-in.
- Build community partnerships for project success.
- Anticipate capacity limitations and plan for variation.



Questions





Thank you!

REL Appalachia



[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/
regions/appalachia/](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/)



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