

NED 2024



**SPRING FORWARD: Strengthening
Skills and Engaging with Colleagues**

ITHS

Institute of Translational Health Sciences
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RESEARCH IN RURAL AND FRONTIER COMMUNITIES:

THE JOURNEY OF A COMMUNITY RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



Erica McKeon-Hanson, MPH, MEd

Community Research Associate

Montana IDeA Community Engagement Core

Montana INBRE

Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity

Montana State University

NED 2024

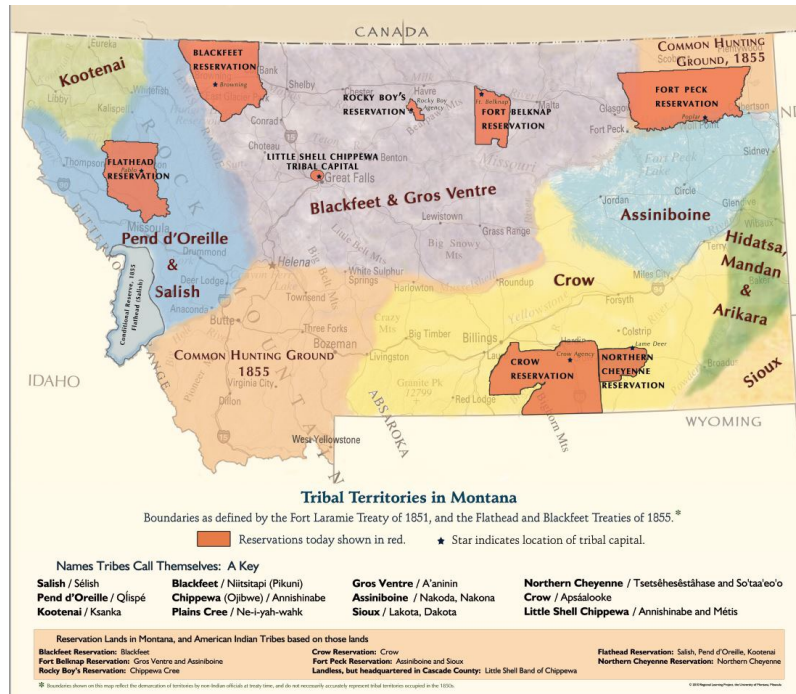
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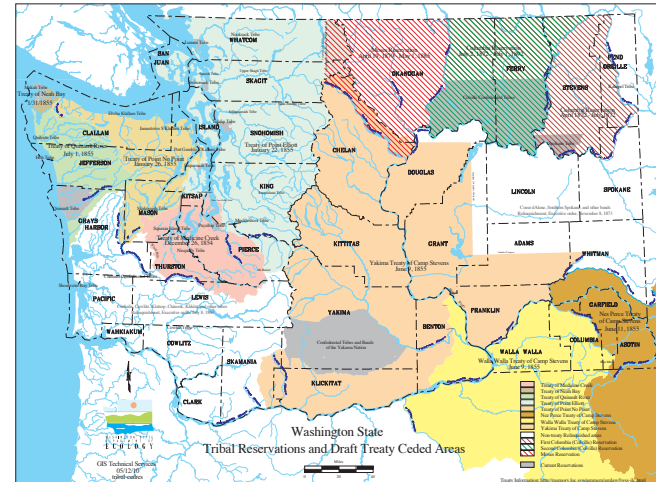
Goals for Today

- Identify two attributes of rural communities
- Identify two attributes of frontier communities
- Describe the role of a Community Research Associate
- List two best practices for building trusting relationships with communities and clinic practices in rural and frontier settings

Where I traveled from.



Where we are today.



UW Seattle land acknowledgement: The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.



What is my story?

- Born and raised in Malta, MT (population 1,860; U.S. Census 2020)
 - BS Biology @ University of Mary, Bismarck, ND
- Since 2000, have lived in Havre, MT (population 9,362; U.S. Census 2020)
- Tribal College Science Faculty for 12 years
 - MEd Learning Development @ Montana State University-Northern
 - MPH @ Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Primarily Undergraduate Institution (PUI) NASNTI Project Director for 7 years
- Community Research Associate at Montana State University



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Think & Share



take
5
minutes



- How do you define Urban?
- How do you define Rural?
- How do you define Frontier?

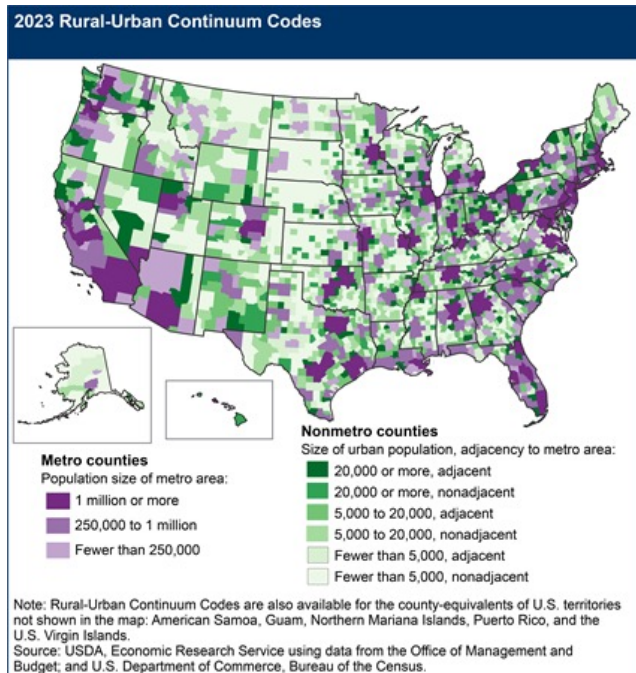
Defining Rural...is Complicated



“Rural is an **inexact term** that can mean different things to different people, organizations, and governments. Trying to define “rural” is a challenging task in a nation with diverse geography and changing demographics. However, a precise definition of rural is important to those interested in rural issues. Federal and state policymakers, funders, service providers, and researchers need a clearly stated definition that is current in its interpretation.”

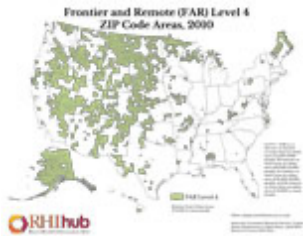
Source: <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/what-is-rural>

Many Common Rural Definitions Used



- [Rural-Urban Continuum Codes \(RUCCs\)](#)
- [Rural Urban Commuting Areas \(RUCAs\) by census tract](#)
- [Core Based Statistical Areas \(CBSAs\)](#)
- [Federal Office of Rural Health Policy \(FORHP\) defined rural areas](#)

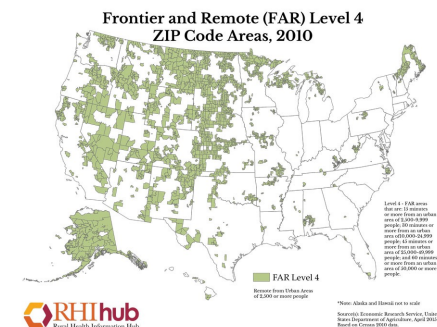
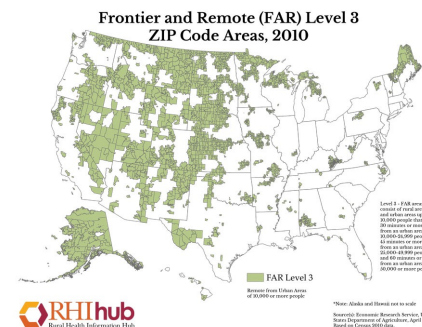
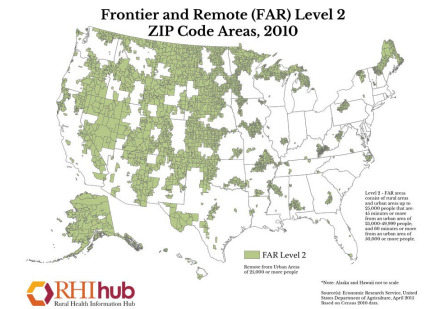
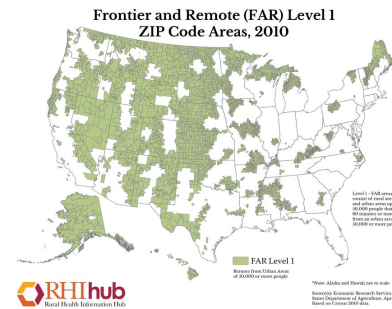




Many Common Rural Definitions Used

Census 2020 County Percent Rural

- Urban Areas
- Urban Influence Codes (UICs)
- Frontier and Remote Area (FAR) Codes by census tract defined rural areas



Disparities among Rural Populations



- Depending on the definitions, rural areas account for 72% to 97% of total landmass of the U.S. and 15% to 19% of the population.
- People living in rural areas represent a higher percentage of people who are unemployed, living in poverty, are elderly, and experience a disability.

Source: https://www.umd.edu/rural-disability-research/focus-areas/rural_disability/defining-rural.php



Disparities Among Rural Populations Worldwide

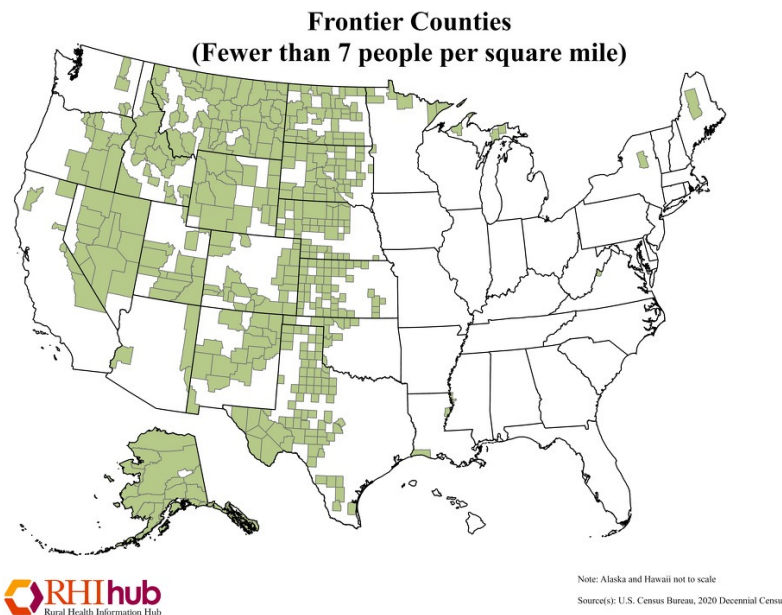
According to the World Health Organization (WHO):

- Globally, extreme poverty continues to be overwhelmingly rural, accounting for almost 4 in 5 people living in extreme poverty.
- Health inequities experienced by rural populations result from adverse social and environmental determinants, as well as weaker health systems in rural areas.

Source: <https://www.who.int/activities/addressing-health-inequities-among-people-living-in-rural-and-remote-areas>



What is a Frontier Area?



- Frontier areas are the **most remote** and **sparsely populated** places along the rural-urban continuum, with residents far from healthcare, schools, grocery stores, and other necessities.
- Frontier is often thought of in terms of **population density** and **distance** in minutes and miles to population centers and other resources, such as hospitals.
- Frontier areas may be defined at the community level by county, ZIP code or census tract; however, they are **most often delineated by county**.

Source:
<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/frontier#:~:text=Frontier%20areas%20are%20the%20most,grocery%20stores%2C%20and%20other%20necessities.>

Community-University Research Partnerships



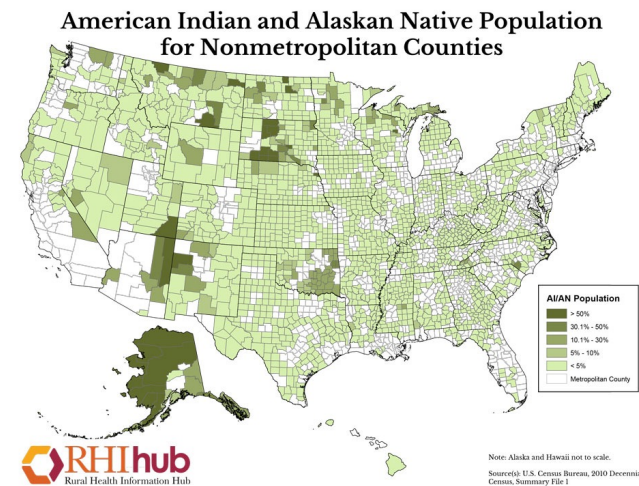
- What are some potential *challenges* in doing research with Rural and Frontier Communities?



Community-University Research Partnerships

Potential Challenges Partnering with Rural and Frontier Communities

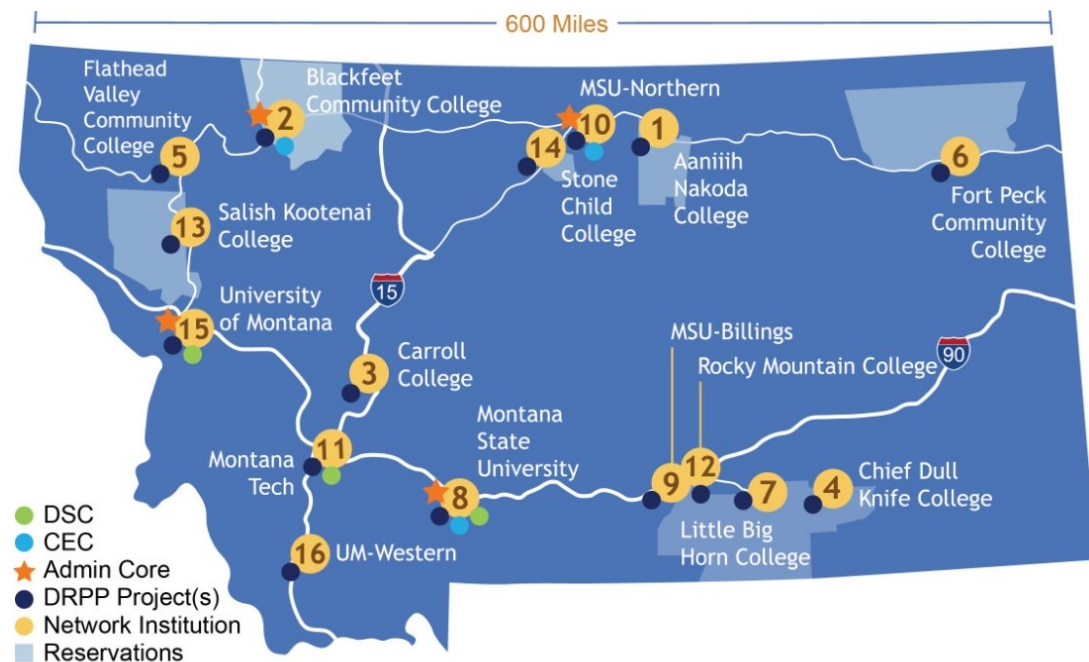
- Establishing Trust and Rapport
- Cultural Considerations
- Power Dynamics
- Travel Time and Distance



Montana INBRE Research Network

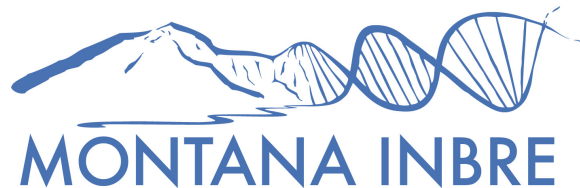


What is Montana INBRE?
The Montana IDeA Network of
Biomedical Research Excellence



Montana INBRE is funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences division of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number P20GM103474.

Community Research Associates



MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY

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and Rural Health Equity

- Often have established relationships with rural, frontier and tribal communities
- Identify, establish, and help to develop research partnerships
- Serve as a liaison among researchers, rural, frontier & tribal communities, and other stakeholders engaged in health equity research
- Introduce researchers to communities interested in research partnerships
- Facilitate dissemination of research results to partner communities



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Community Research Associates



Emily Matt Salois, MSW
Tribal Community Engagement



Erica McKeon-Hanson, MPH, MEd
Rural Community Engagement

- Advise and mentor researchers on best practices in community-based participatory research (CBPR) and formulation of successful project design
- Help to design and deliver training in CBPR, research ethics, and related topics
- Collaborate with other organizations through consultations, trainings in community engagement practices, grant writing and written reports of specific projects

Community Research Associates



- Suggest Community Partners and Collaborators
- Identify Study Participants & Develop Strategies
- Assist with establishing Community Advisory Boards (CABs), establishing informed consent and facilitating focus groups, and planning CAB meetings
- Assist with Media Outreach Strategies
- Relay Relevant Resources to Faculty Investigators and Communities such as Webinars, Publications, Conferences and Announcements

Community Based Participatory Research

CBPR Best Practices often include...

- Recognizing the community as a unit of identity
- Building on the strengths and resources of the community
- Promoting co-learning among research partners
- Achieving a balance between research and action that mutually benefits both scientist and community
- Emphasizing the relevance of community-defined problems

Israel BA, et al. Critical issues in developing and following community-based participatory research principles. In: Community-based Participatory Research for Health: Jossey-Bass; 2003. pp. 53–76.

Community Based Participatory Research

- Employing a cyclical and iterative process to develop and maintain community/research partnerships
- Disseminating knowledge gained from the CBPR project to and by all involved partners
- Requiring long-term commitment on the part of all partners

Israel BA, et al. Critical issues in developing and following community-based participatory research principles.

In: Community-based Participatory Research for Health: Jossey-Bass; 2003. pp. 53–76.

Emily's 3 R's



- Relationship
- Respect
- Reciprocity



Emily Matt Salois, MSW

Tribal Community Research Associate
Montana IDeA Community Engagement Core
Montana INBRE
Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity

Salois, EM, Swaney, G. Positive Mentoring Model, presented in *Developing research partnerships between investigators and tribal communities mitigating health disparities in American Indian Reservation populations*, NIH Western Regional Conference, Jackson, WY, October 18 – 20, 2017.

Best Practices – Emily's 3 R's

Relationship

- Established long before the research project begins
- Informed Consent, Focus Groups, Participant Recruitment

Respect

- Equality of Community and Academic Expertise

Reciprocity

- Beneficial to the Research Team AND to the Community

Resources



<https://inbre.montana.edu/>

- The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) currently funds Rural Health Research Centers and Rural Health Policy Analysis Initiatives, located throughout the nation.
- <https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/centers>



<https://familymedicine.uw.edu/rhrc/>



<https://www.montana.edu/cairhe/>



Contact Information



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Please reach out!

Questions?

