



# People with Disabilities in Rural America: An ACS Snapshot

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5/11/15

ACS Data Users Conference College Park, Maryland

# Debate and Discussion

## Debate

- Focus on prevalence of Social Security disability claims in rural areas
- Access to services challenges in rural areas

## Discussion

- Ways to use data to better understand population and serve them

# Data Background

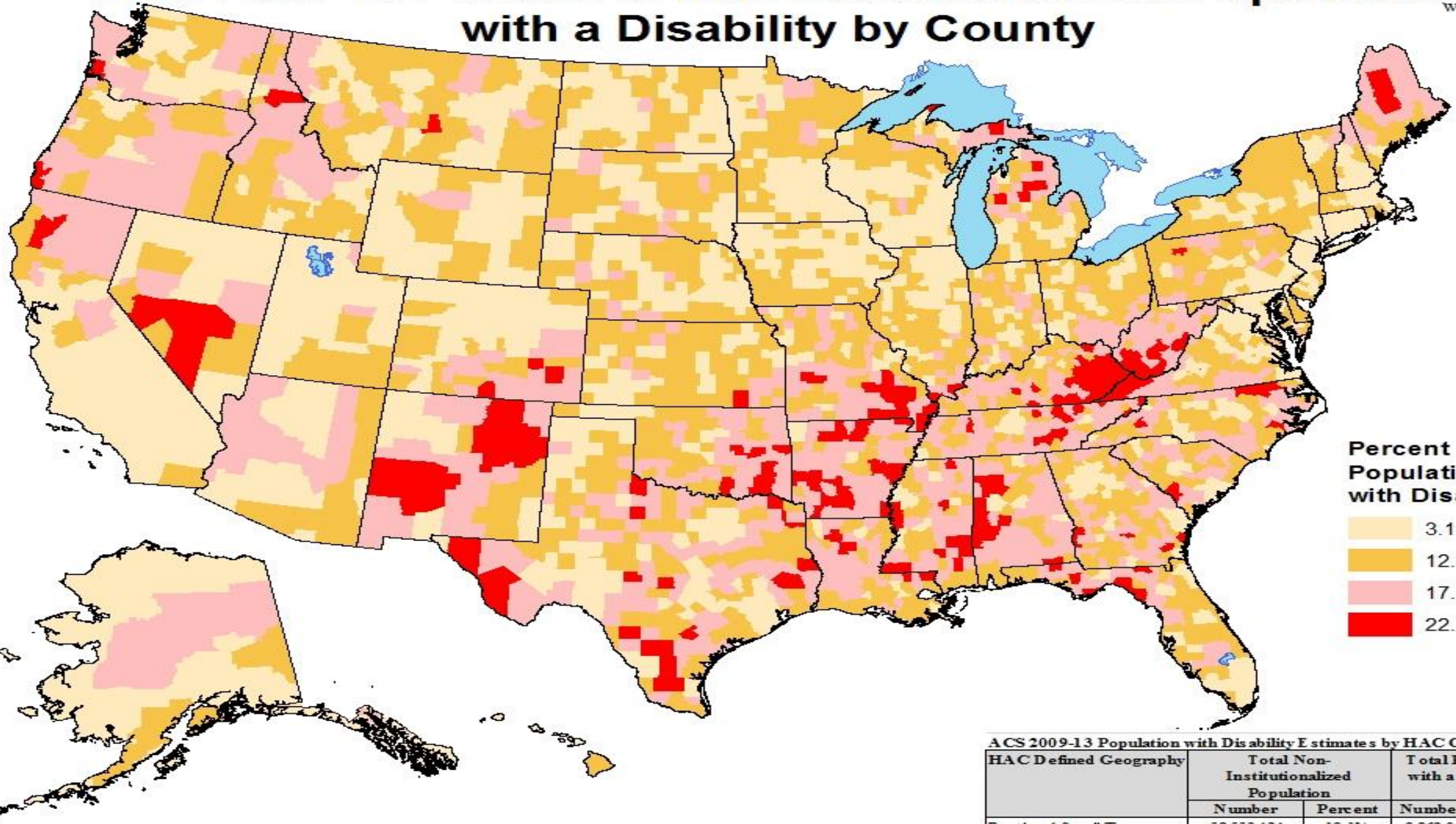
- Several data sources: Current Population Survey, Social Security Disability Program Administration data etc.
- ACS provides the most comprehensive geographic coverage
- Question changed in 2008, no estimate for small geographies until 2013

# ACS Definition of Disability

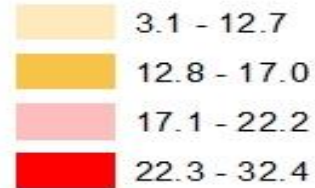
- Six Types of Disability
  - Hearing Difficulty: Deaf or serious difficulty hearing
  - Vision Difficulty: Blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses
  - Cognitive Difficulty: Having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions because of a physical, mental or emotional problem
  - Ambulatory Difficulty: Having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs
  - Self-Care Difficulty: Having difficulty bathing or dressing.
  - Independent Living Difficulty: Having difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctors office or shopping because of a physical, mental or emotional problem \*

\*US Census Bureau. 2012. Disability: American Community Survey (ACS). Webpage accessed 4/24/15 at the following url: [www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html](http://www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html)

# ACS 2009-13 Percent of Non-Institutionalized Population with a Disability by County



**Percent  
Population  
with Disability**



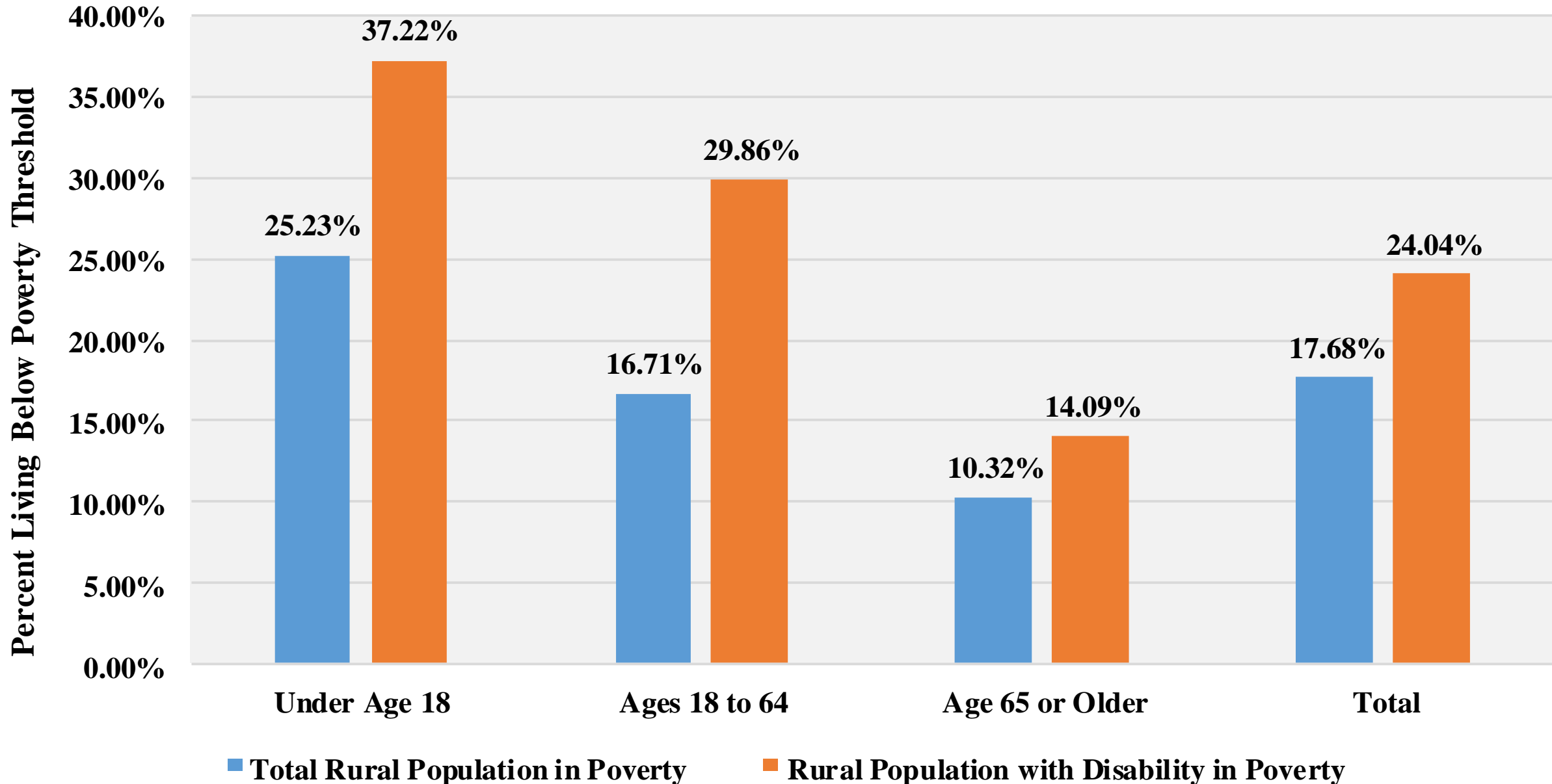
ACS 2009-13 Population with Disability Estimates by HAC Geography

HAC Defined Geography	Total Non-Institutionalized Population		Total Population with a Disability	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Rural and Small Town	58,553,424	19.1%	9,262,046	24.9%
Suburban and Exurban	149,168,099	48.7%	16,672,188	44.9%
Urban	98,726,972	32.2%	11,234,646	30.2%
Total	306,448,495	100.0%	37,168,880	100.0%

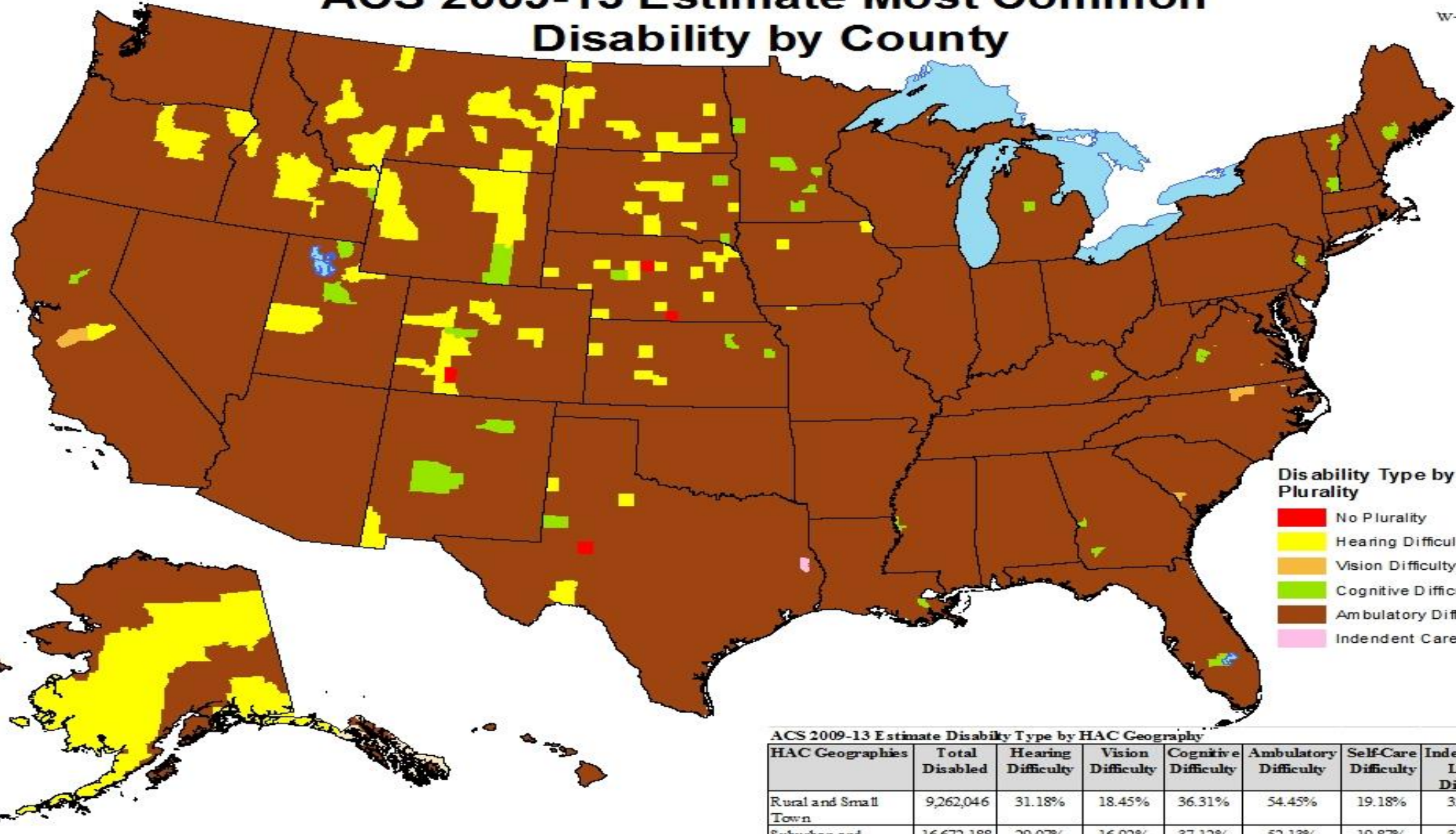
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# ACS 2009-13 Estimate Rural and Small Town Poverty by Age and Disability Status



# ACS 2009-13 Estimate Most Common Disability by County



## Disability Type by Plurality

- No Plurality
- Hearing Difficulty
- Vision Difficulty
- Cognitive Difficulty
- Ambulatory Difficulty
- Independent Care Difficulty

ACS 2009-13 Estimate Disability Type by HAC Geography

HAC Geographies	Total Disabled	Hearing Difficulty	Vision Difficulty	Cognitive Difficulty	Ambulatory Difficulty	Self-Care Difficulty	Independent Living Difficulty
Rural and Small Town	9,262,046	31.18%	18.45%	36.31%	54.45%	19.18%	33.72%
Suburban and Exurban	16,672,188	29.07%	16.92%	37.12%	52.13%	19.87%	35.17%
Urban	11,234,646	24.62%	18.97%	39.28%	54.12%	21.48%	37.92%
Total	37,168,880	28.25%	17.92%	37.57%	53.31%	20.19%	35.64%

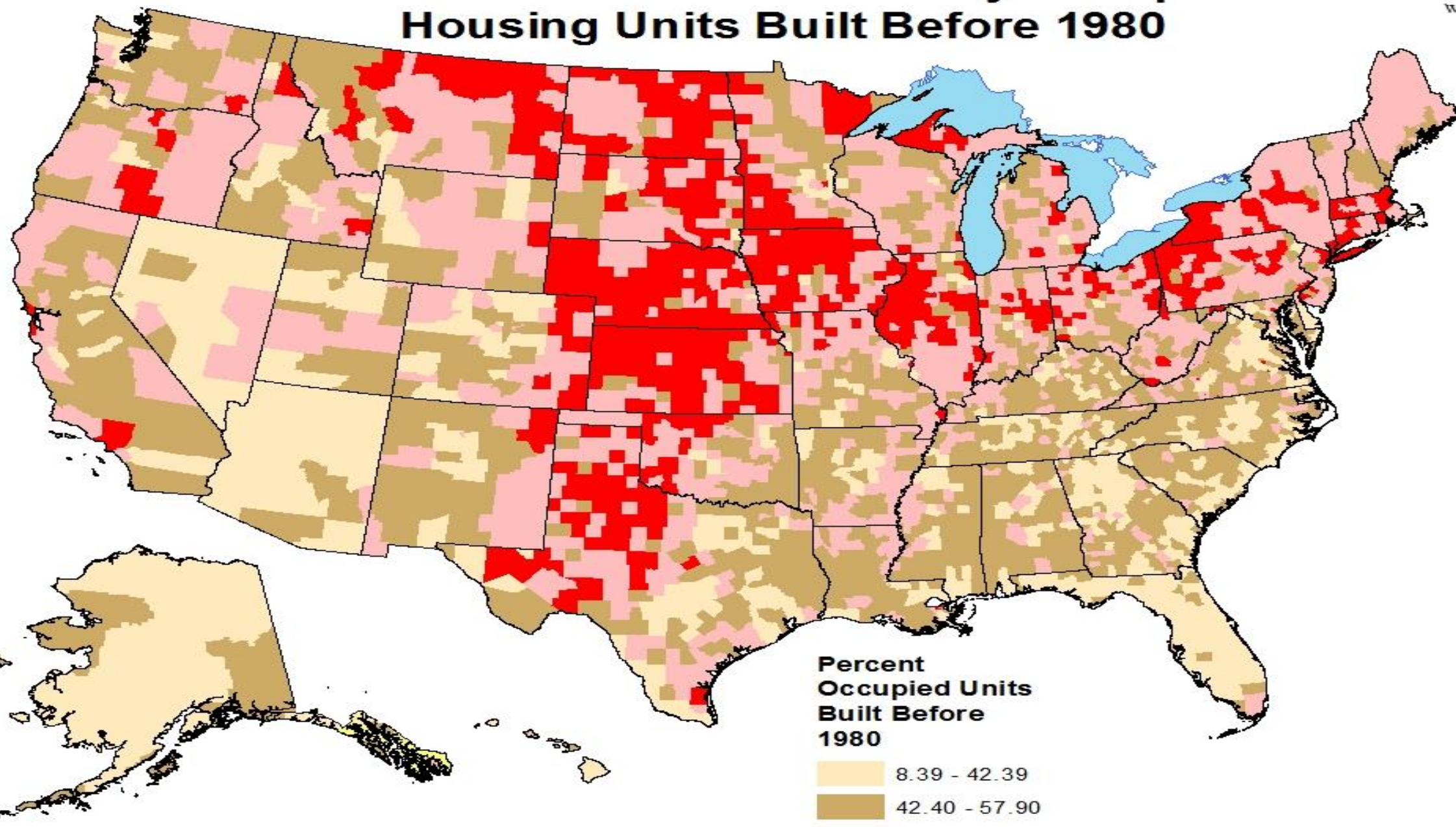
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# Housing Accessibility

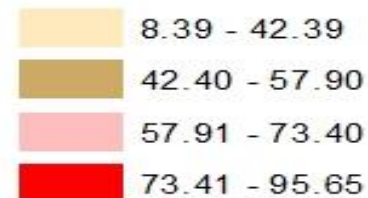
- No ACS measure of housing accessibility conditions
  - Housing age as proxy (Units built before 1980)
- No ACS measure specifically evaluating people with housing access difficulties
  - Ambulatory difficulties as proxy



# ACS 2009-13 Estimate County Occupied Housing Units Built Before 1980



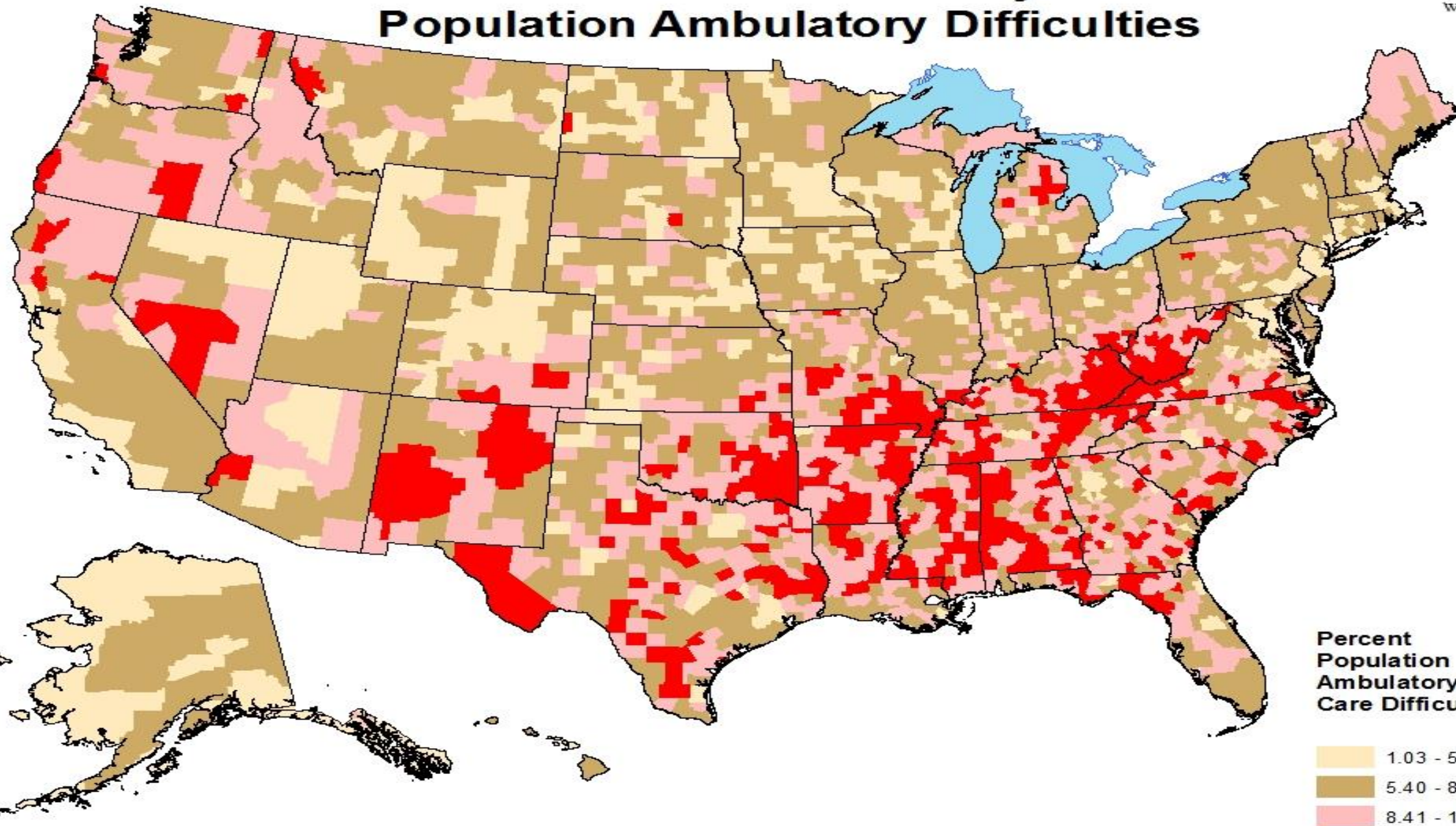
**Percent  
Occupied Units  
Built Before  
1980**



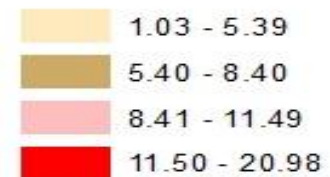
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# ACS 2009-13 Estimate County Percent Population Ambulatory Difficulties



**Percent  
Population  
Ambulatory  
Care Difficulties**



0 245 490 980 Miles

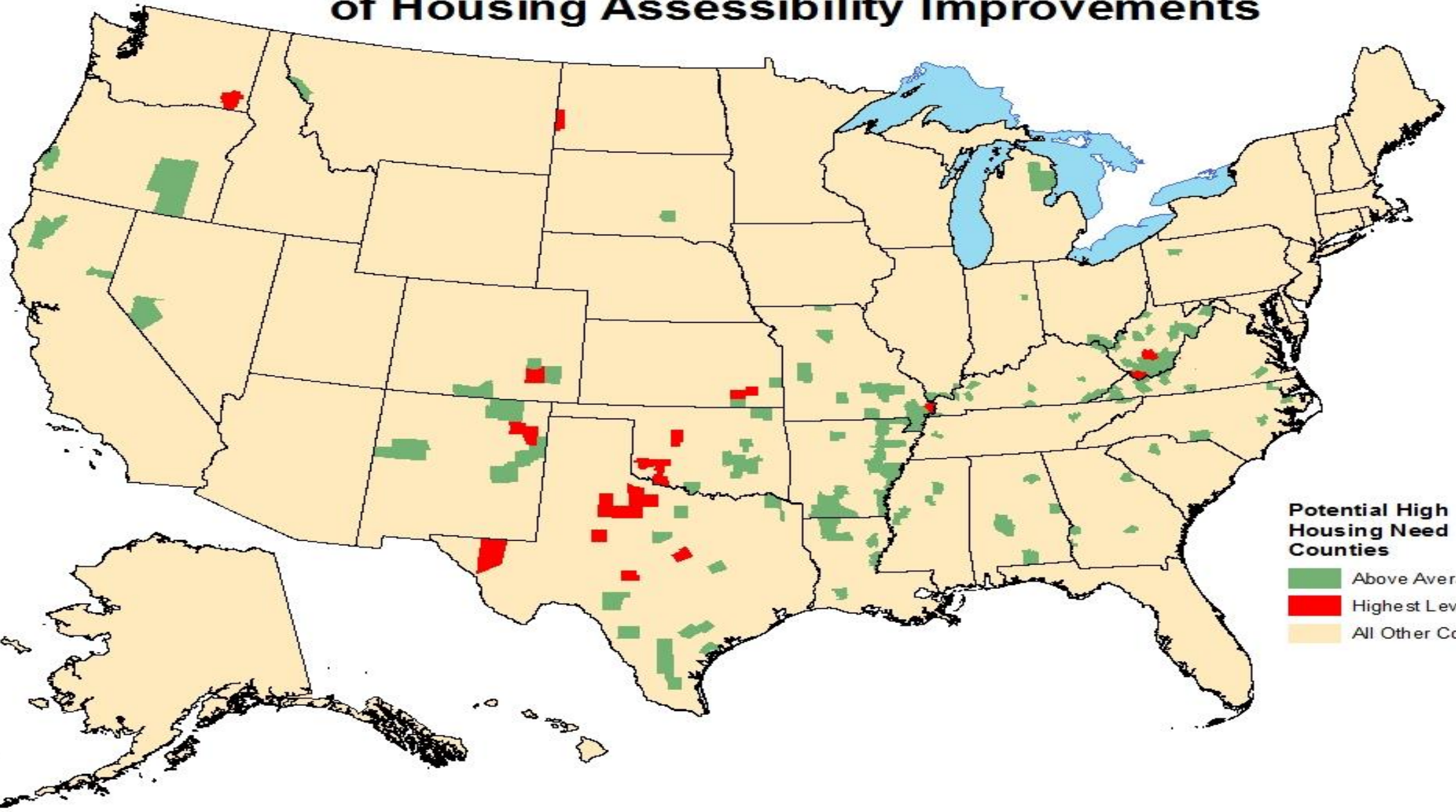
# Identifying Counties With Potentially Elevated Housing Accessibility Problems

**ACS 2009-13 County Estimates Ambulatory Difficulties and Pre 1980 Housing**

<b>Percent Occupied Housing Units Built Before 1980</b>	<b>Percent Population Ambulatory Difficulty</b>				
	<b>Less than 5.4 Percent</b>	<b>5.4 to 8.4 (Average) Percent</b>	<b>Above 8.4 Percent to 11.4 Percent</b>	<b>Above 11.4 Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Less than 42.4 Percent</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>466</b>
<b>42.4 to 57.9 (Average) Percent</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>1,303</b>
<b>Above 57.9 Percent to 73.4 Percent</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>863</b>
<b>Greater than 73.4 Percent</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>3,143</b>



# Counties Potentially With Greatest Need of Housing Assessability Improvements



## Potential High Housing Need Counties

- Above Average Need
- Highest Level Need
- All Other Counties

0 245 490 980 Miles