

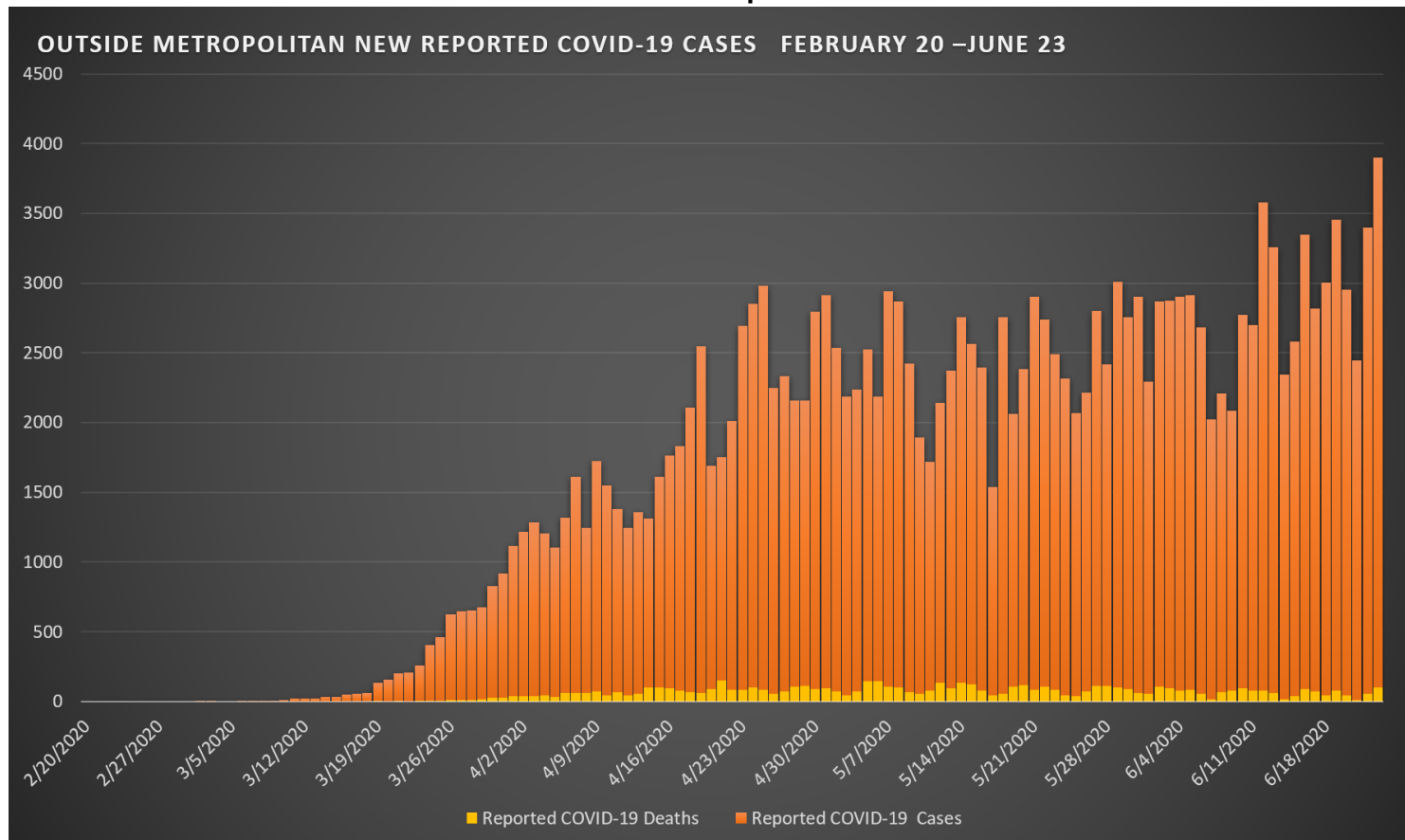
Rural Housing in the Time of COVID-19

*This story was made with [Esri's Story Map Journal](#).
Read the interactive version on the web at <https://arcg.is/fKTXL>.*



The Housing Assistance Council


COVID-19 in Rural America: An Update



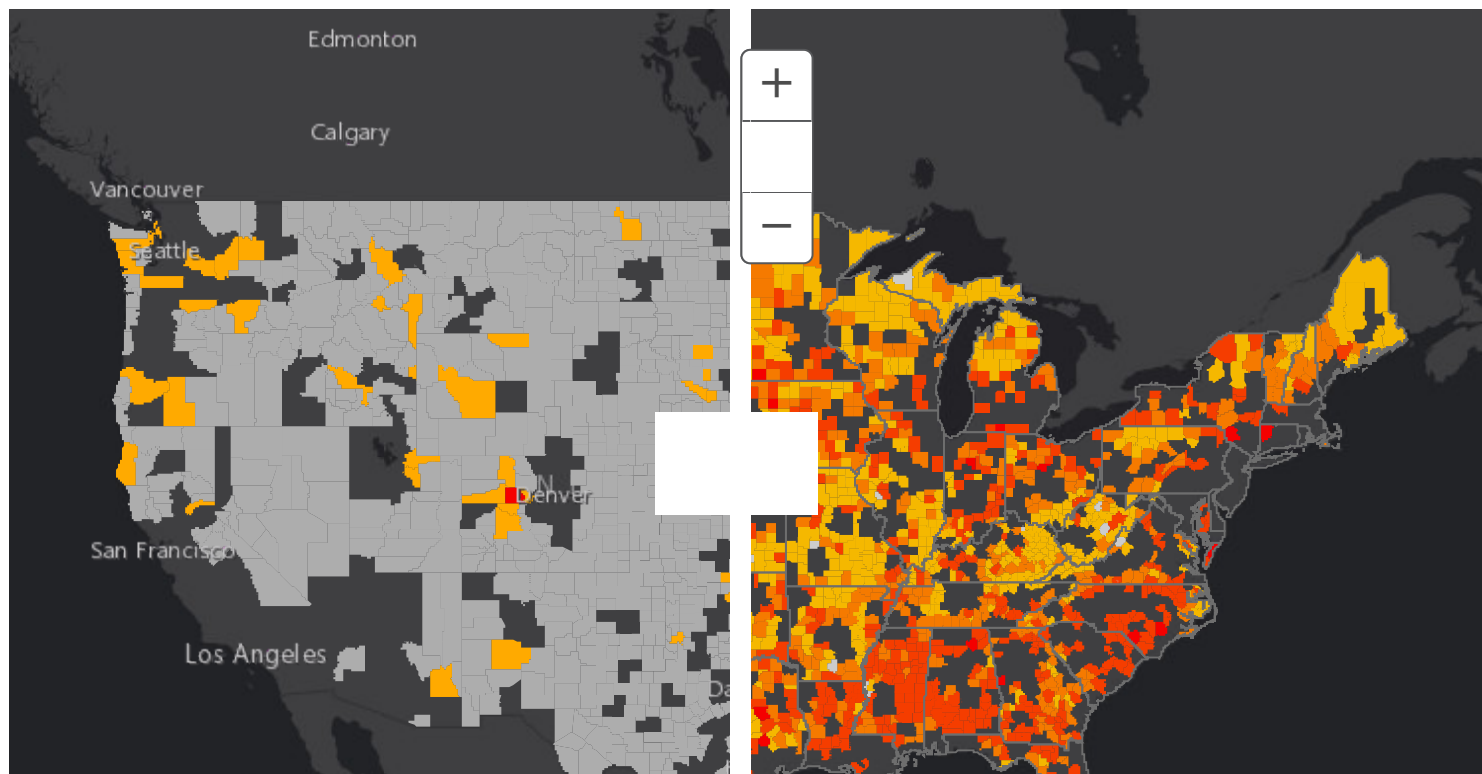
As of June 23, 2020 there were more than 202,000 reported cases of COVID-19 in rural(outside metropolitan) communities and over 6,600 associated deaths.

COVID-19 in Rural America - An Update

Rural COVID Cases as of June 23 2020

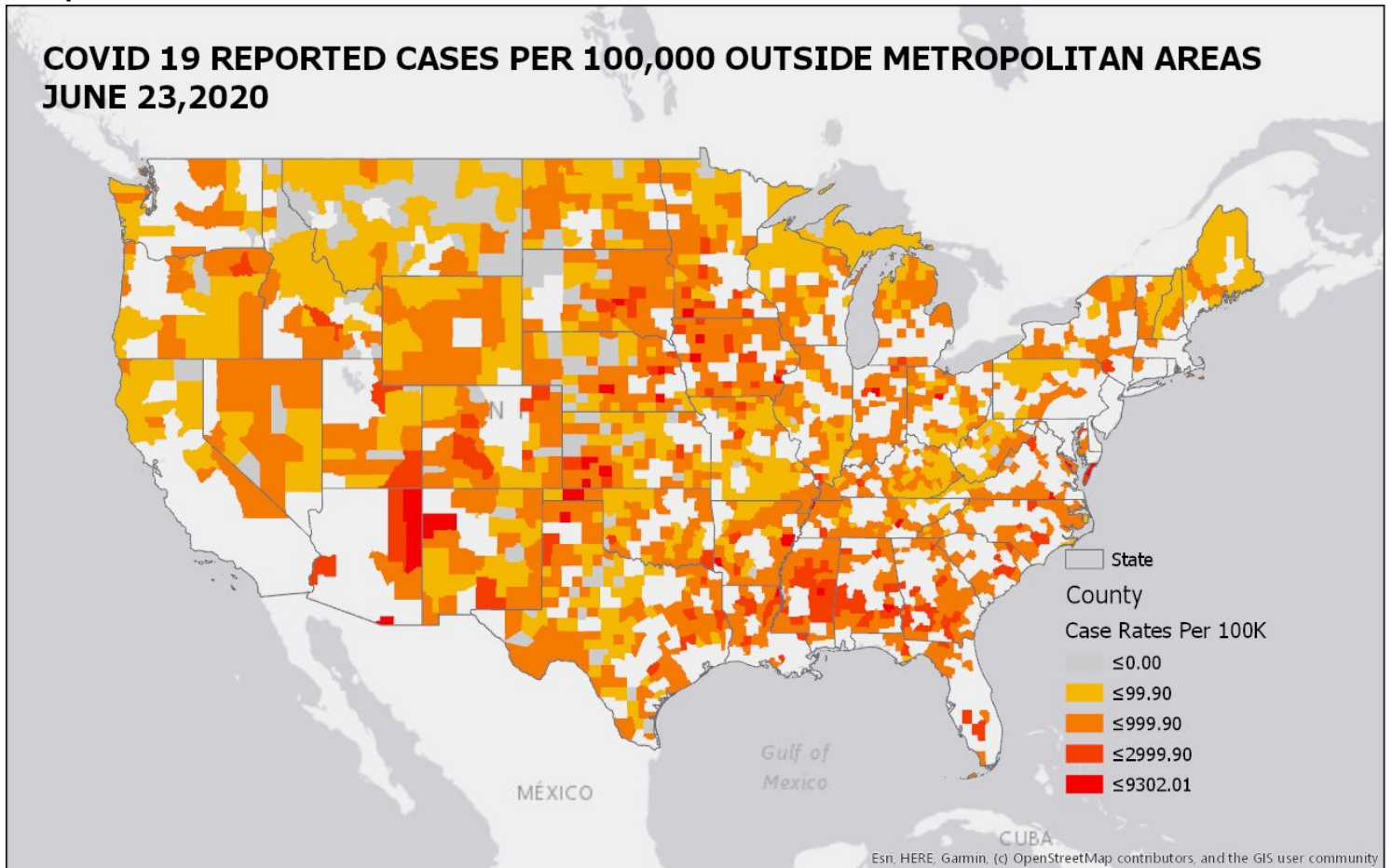
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A Story Map



capita infection rates in rural areas - notably in some communities with meat packing facilities in the Midwest, persistently poor African-American communities in the southeast and Native American communities.

Reported Rural COVID-19 Cases Per 100,000

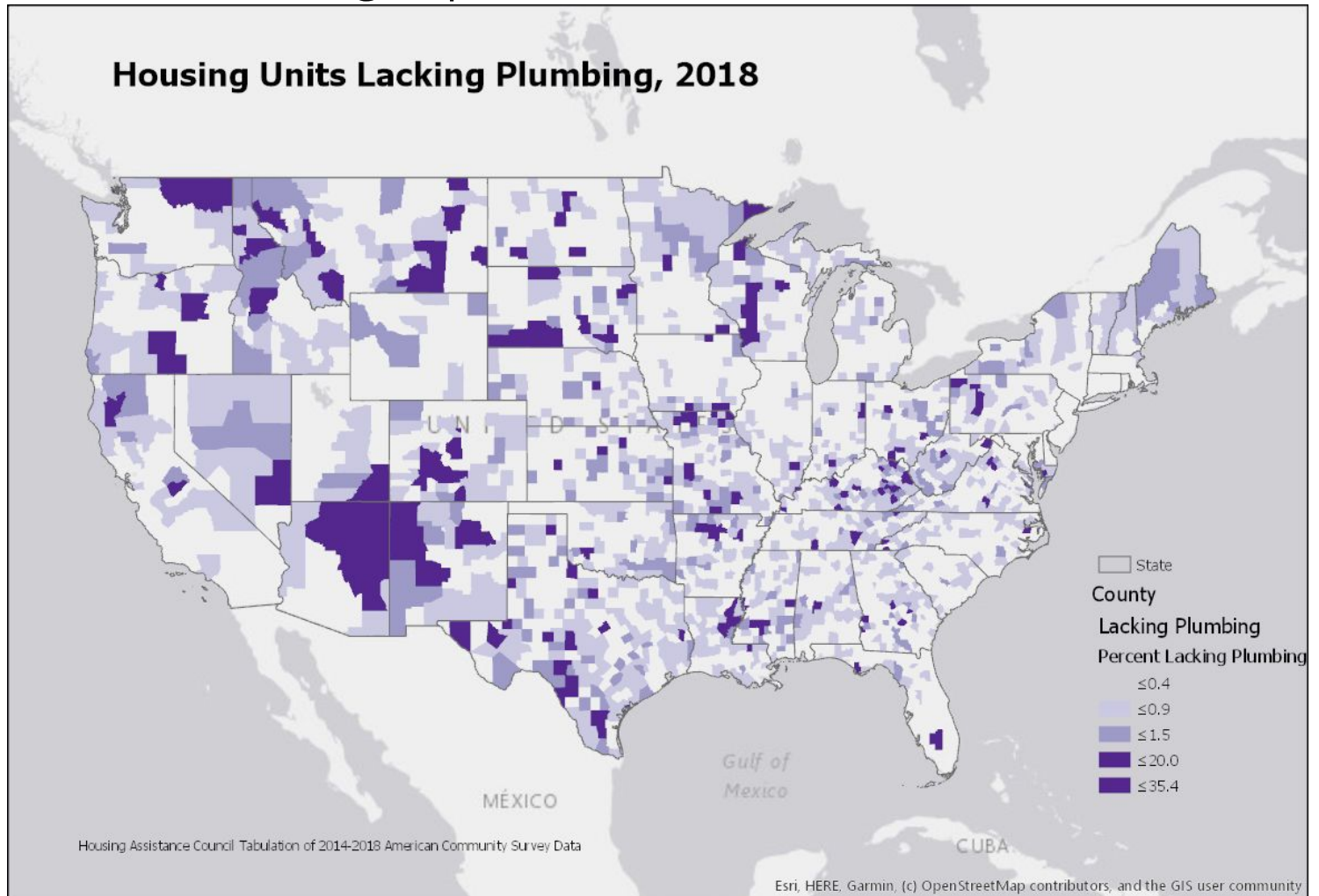


COVID-19 Infection Rates in Rural America

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The vast majority of rural communities have reported COVID-19 cases, but the virus' impacts vary widely across the nation's rural geography. There are several instances of extremely high per-capita infection rates in rural areas - notably in some communities with meat packing facilities in the Midwest, persistently poor African-American communities in the southeast and Native American communities. Communities on, or near, the Navajo Nation have some of the highest reported COVID-19 infection rates in the entire U.S.

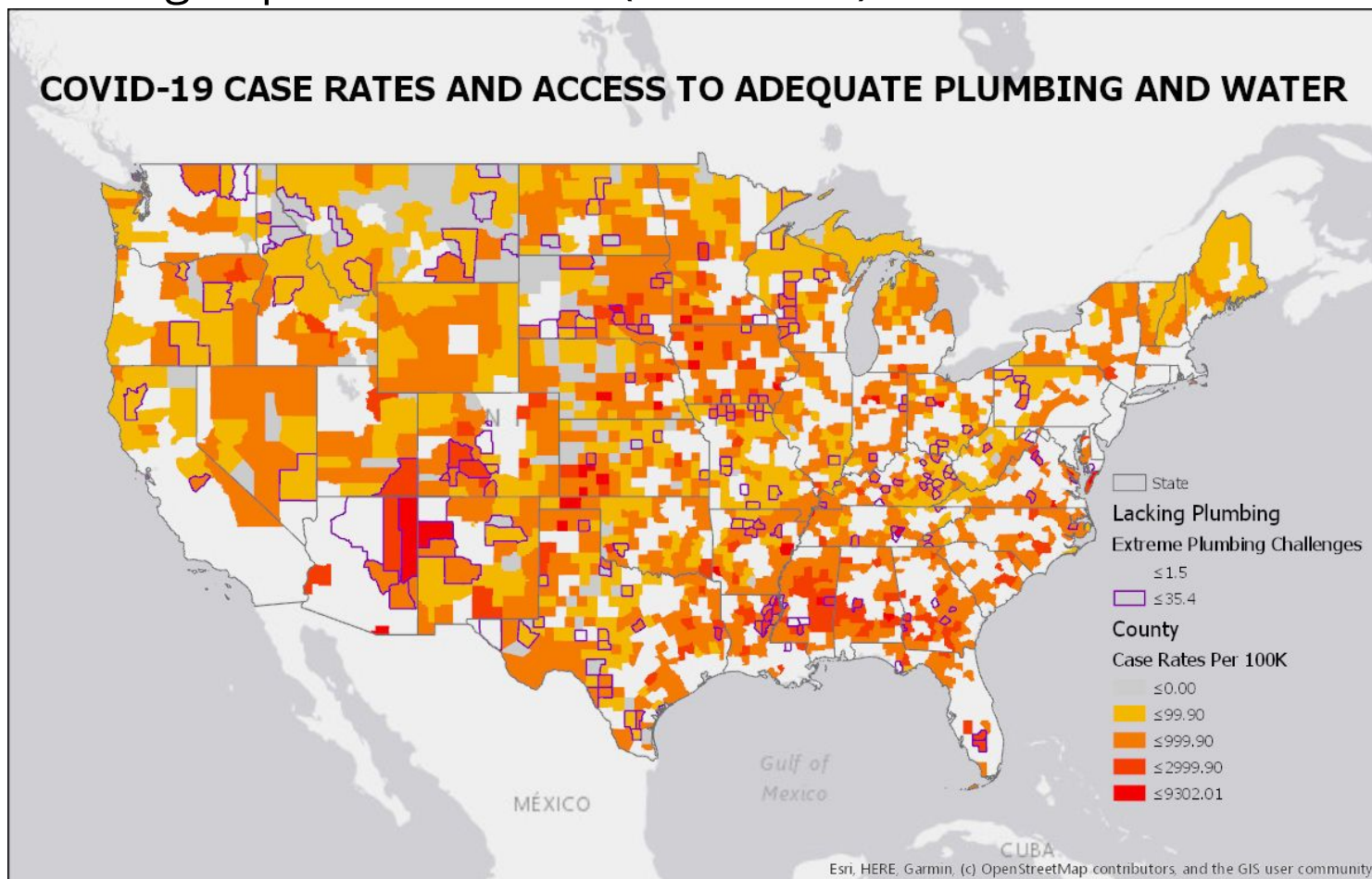
Potential Housing Impacts on Health



HOMES WITHOUT ADEQUATE PLUMBING OR ACCESS TO WATER

While inconceivable to most Americans, at least 460,000 homes in the United States do not have a functioning bathroom or lack adequate plumbing. Such third world conditions are not solely a housing problem, but also detrimental to public health and safety and the environment.

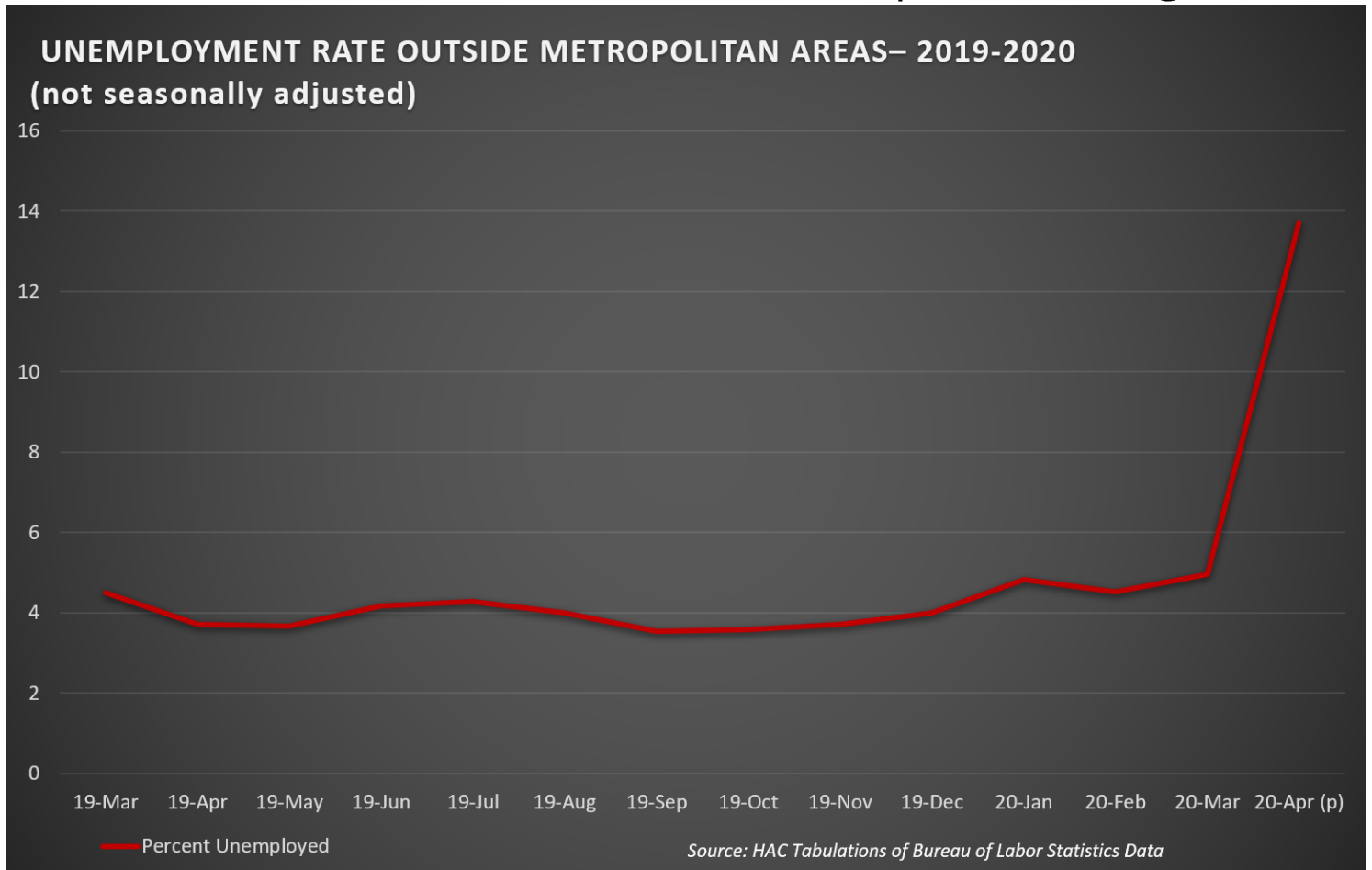
Housing Impacts on Health (continued)



PERSISTENTLY POOR RURAL COMMUNITIES HAVE THE GREATEST PLUMBING AND ACCESS TO WATER CHALLENGES

Homes without working plumbing are present across the nation. A large portion of these substandard homes are located in persistently poor rural communities such as Central Appalachia, the Lower Mississippi Delta and the rural Southeast, the Border Colonias region along the U.S. – Mexico Border and among migrant and seasonal farmworkers. In some rural communities, especially on Native American lands, the incidence of homes lacking basic plumbing can exceed 20 times the national rate.

Economic Fallout and the Potential to Impact Housing




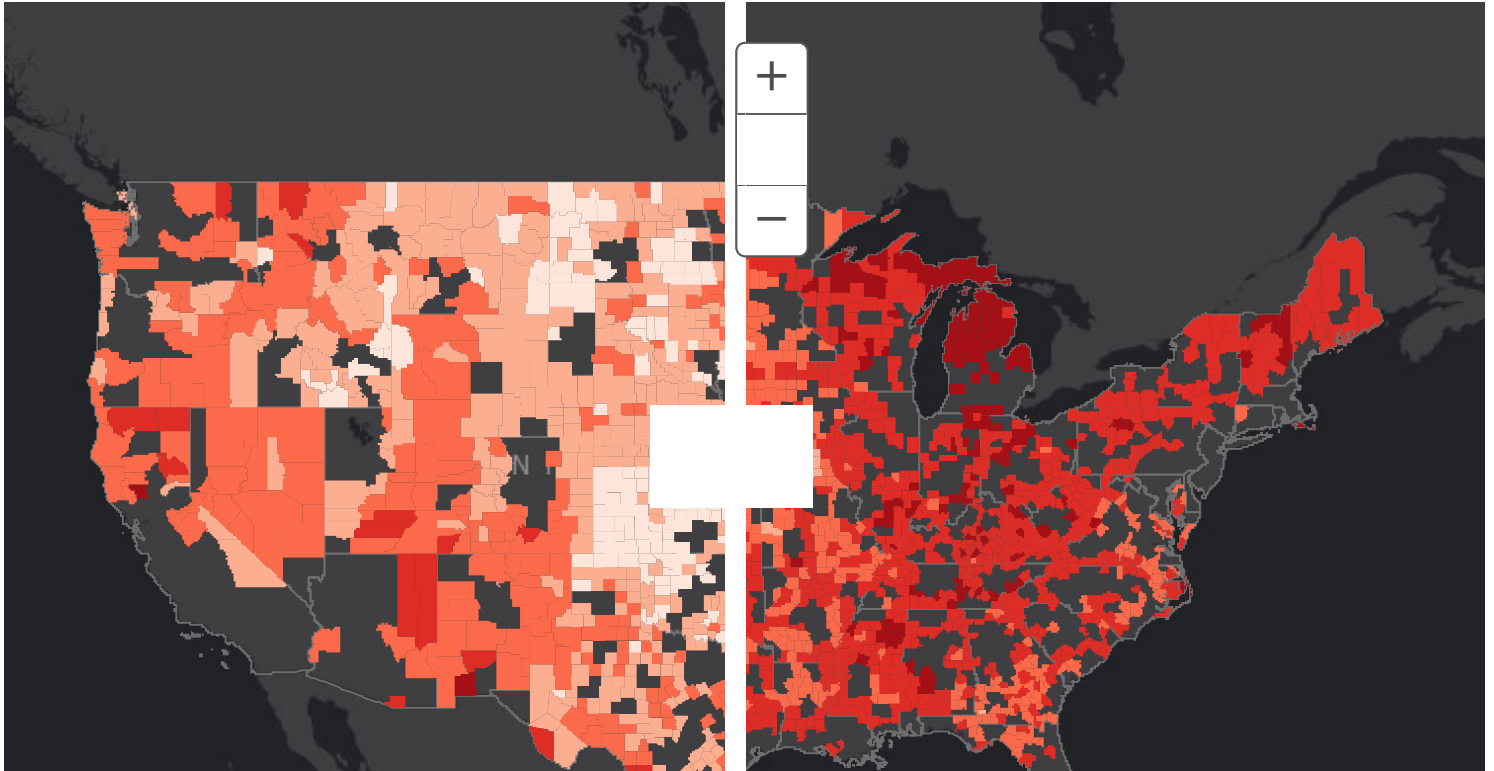
RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT SKYROCKETS AFTER ECONOMIC FALLOUT FROM COVID-19

The April jobs numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed a seasonally unadjusted rural unemployment rate of 13.7 percent. The rural unemployment rate for March was 4.9 percent and the overall rural unemployment rate had been trending downwards until the onset of health crisis.

Economic Fallout and the Potential to Impact Housing

Unemployment Rates by County - March and April 2020

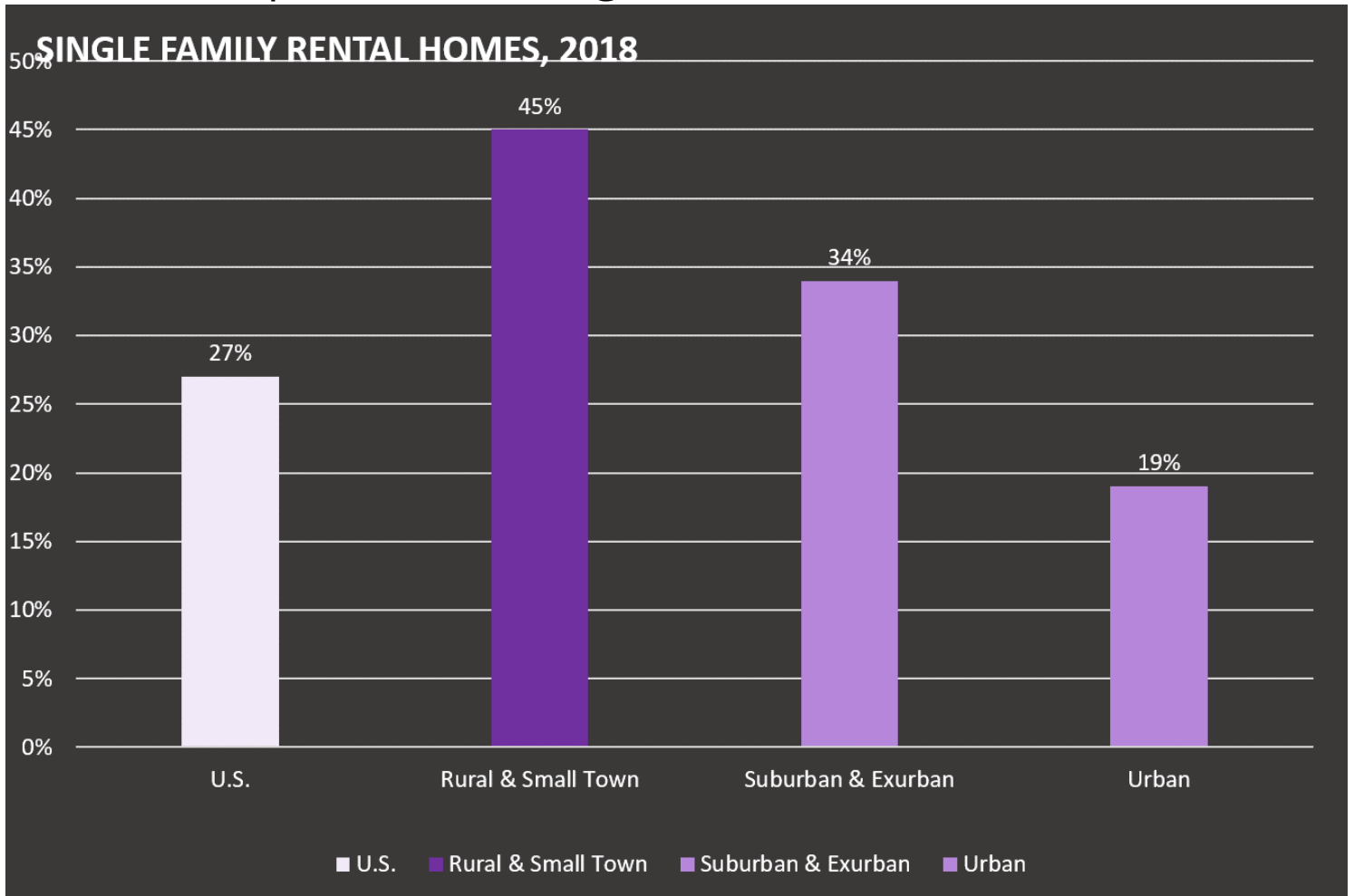
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Across the nation, over 2.8 million rural workers were unemployed in April – an astounding increase of 1.8 million jobless in a single month.

Source: HAC Tabulations of BLS LAUS data.

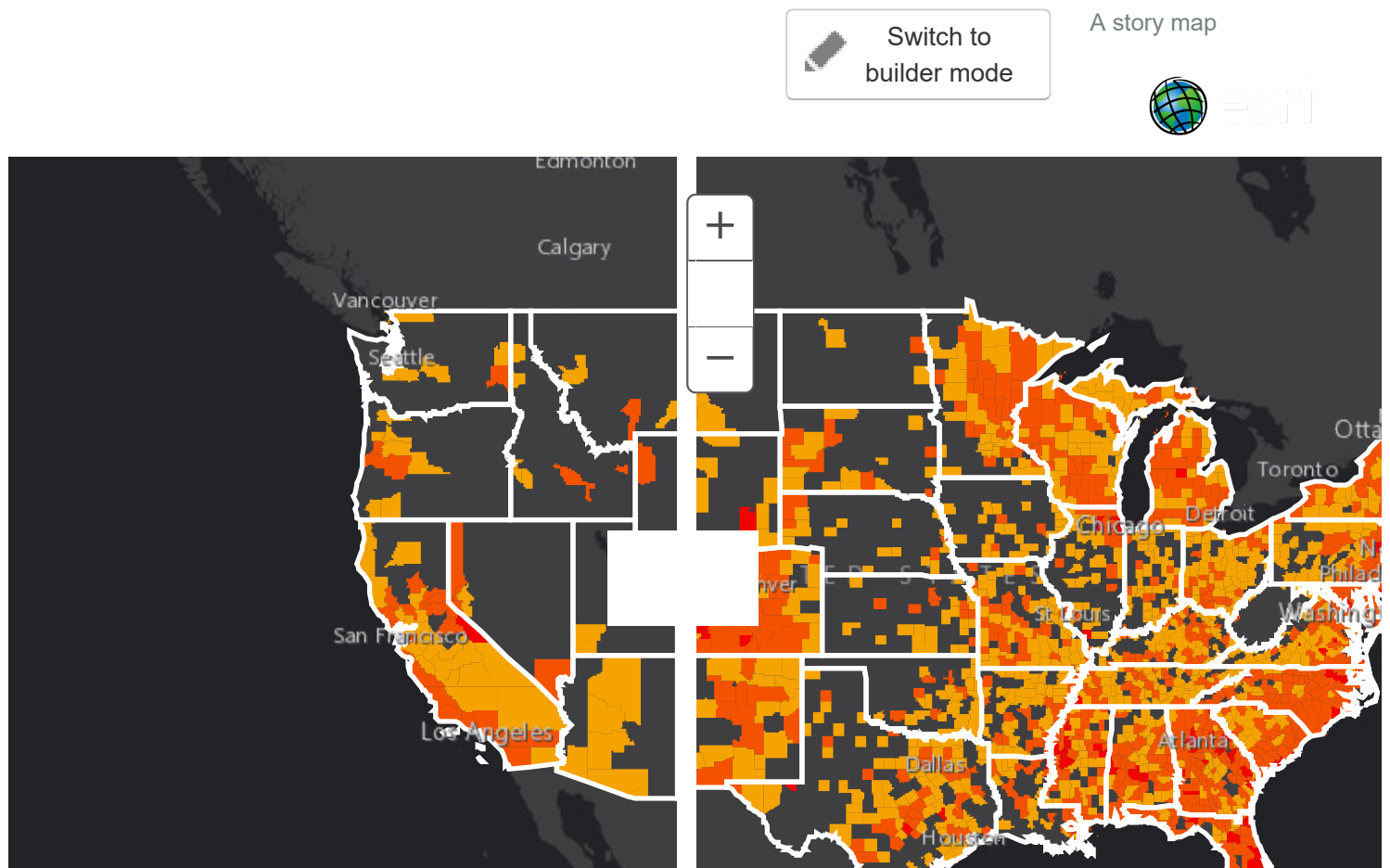
Potential Impact on Housing



AN UNEVEN LANDSCAPE

Harvard's [Joint Center for Housing Studies](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/covid-19-rent-shortfalls-in-small-buildings/) (link: <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/covid-19-rent-shortfalls-in-small-buildings/>) examined the characteristics of tenants in such homes and concluded that job losses related to the current economy could leave 20% unable to pay some or all of their rent. For larger apartment buildings the estimate is 12%. Smaller properties are also more likely to be owned by individuals who may be less able to weather a loss of rental income. JCHS did not analyze geographic differences, but HAC data tabulations show that 45% of rural renters live in single-family homes, compared to only 19% in cities and 34% in suburbs.

Housing Affordability is Still the Main Rural Housing Challenge



especially problematic for low-income households and renters in rural areas nationwide. Housing costs tend to be lower in rural areas than in suburbs and cities.

Despite the lower costs in rural areas, an increasing number of rural households find it challenging to pay their monthly housing expenses. Over 7 million rural households – three in ten – pay more than 30 percent of their monthly incomes toward housing costs and are considered cost burdened.

The Housing Assistance Council



www.ruralhome.org

The Rural Data Portal:

<http://www.ruraldataportal.org/> (link: <http://www.ruraldataportal.org/>)