

County Government Survey:

Changes and Challenges in the New Millennium

July 2001

**Rural County Governance Center
Research Report No. 1**

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**County
Government**

**Survey: Changes and
Challenges in
the New
Millennium**

David Kraybill and Linda Lobao
The Ohio State University

July 2001



Executive Summary

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County governments provide essential public services and influence local economies in important ways. Counties have more than 230 million residents and serve vast areas of the United States not served by municipalities or other general-purpose local governments. Because they cover most of the national territory, counties play a critical role in American governance as federal programs are devolved to state and local levels. Devolution, however, does not ensure the availability of fiscal resources or local administrative capacity, and county governments face challenges to meet rising demands for public services.

Researchers at The Ohio State University and Colorado State University, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), have conducted a national survey to document the status of county governments in the new millennium. This report compares county governments in five key areas: public service provision, economic development, land-use planning, finances, and welfare reform. Survey findings are reported for three categories of counties: metropolitan, adjacent, and rural. *Metropolitan* counties contain or are located within regions that have large urban cores. *Adjacent* counties are nonmetropolitan counties located next to metropolitan counties. *Rural* counties are nonmetropolitan counties that are not adjacent to metropolitan counties and have relatively small or no urban population.

Major findings of the study include:

- The services provided most widely by county governments are law enforcement services (84% of counties), 911 emergency services (82%), senior citizen programs (57%), mental health services (53%), health clinic services (52%), emergency medical services (51%), and solid waste removal (51%). Rural governments are less likely than metropolitan governments to provide 16 of the 21 services documented in the survey.

- Fiscal stress is reported as an important problem by more than two-thirds of all county governments. Governments in 38% of rural counties, 31% of adjacent counties, and 24% of metropolitan counties report reduction in federal revenue as a very important problem. Declining local tax base is an important source of fiscal stress in 40% of rural counties, 31% of adjacent counties, but only 12% of metropolitan counties.

- Economic development activities are engaged in by a majority (72%) of county governments. However, nonmetropolitan county governments are less likely than metropolitan governments to engage in economic development activities. County governments have an economic development professional on staff in only 31% of rural counties and 39% of adjacent counties compared to 61% of metropolitan counties.

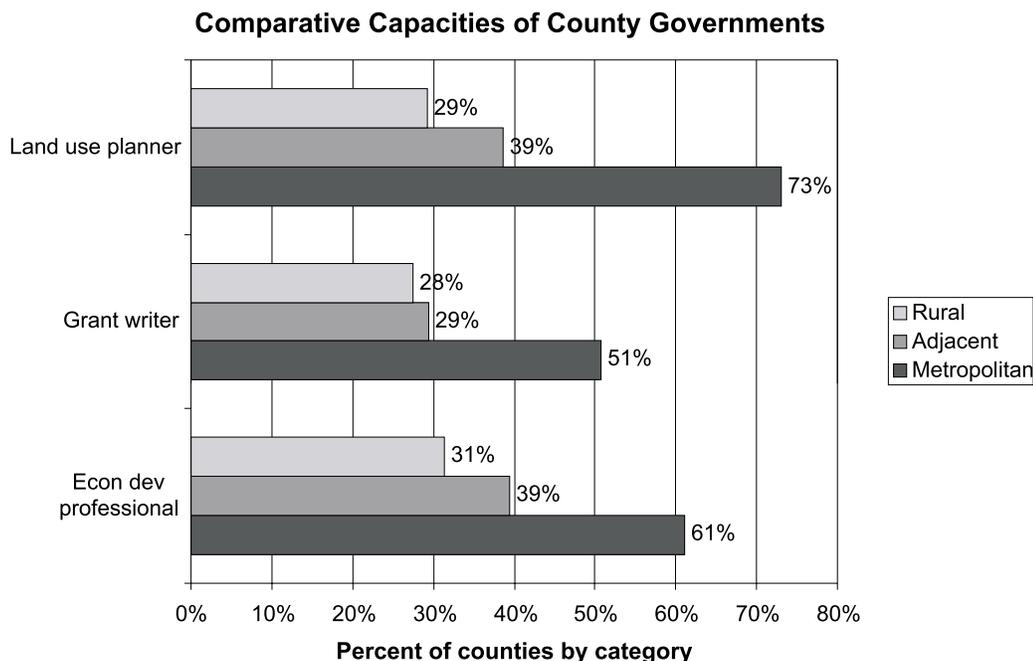
■ Grant-seeking capacity is much lower in nonmetropolitan counties as compared to metropolitan counties. Only 28% of rural counties but 51% of metropolitan counties have a grant writer on staff.

■ Land-use planning, such as zoning and farmland preservation, is undertaken by a much higher percent of metropolitan counties than nonmetropolitan counties. Only 29% of rural counties and 39% of adjacent counties compared to 73% of metropolitan counties have a land-use planner on the county government staff.

■ Administrative workload arising from devolution-related social program responsibilities is reported by the majority of county governments to have increased over the past three years. These programs include childcare, Medicaid, workforce training, and transportation.

■ Welfare programs (TANF) are administered locally by twenty-two percent of the counties in the survey. Rural counties are much less likely to have implemented jobs programs in response to welfare reform, and when they do so, they are less successful than metropolitan counties in placing former welfare recipients in jobs.

■ Use of the Internet for communicating with the public lags in nonmetropolitan counties. County governments in only 37% of rural counties and 55% of adjacent counties have a website for communicating with the public. In contrast, 85% of metropolitan county governments have websites.



Introduction

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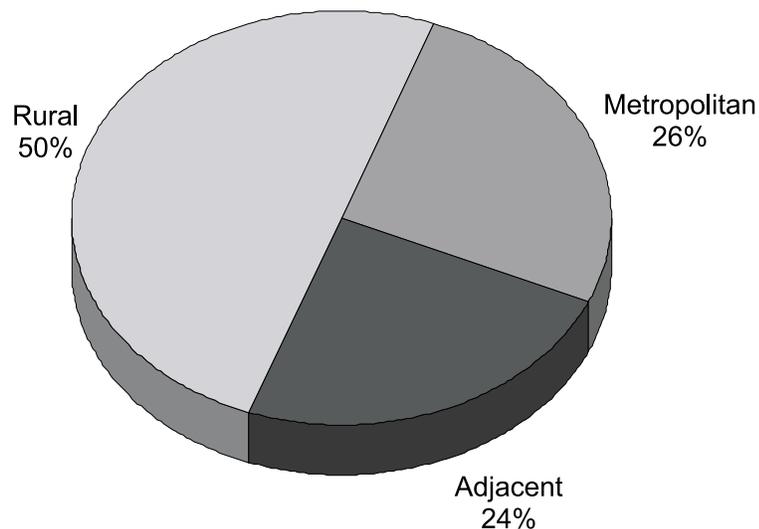
Counties play an important and expanding role in local governance in the United States, particularly in rural areas. Devolution, a trend in the American system of public administration that shifts responsibility for public services from the federal to state and local levels, has changed the types and level of services that county governments now provide. The role of county governments in the provision of local governmental services is particularly important because of the number of people — over 230 million — who reside within counties. County residents exceed the number of persons residing within municipalities, villages, townships, and other types of all-purpose, local government. County governments are the fastest growing all-purpose governments in terms of employment size, with growth rates exceeding those of the federal, state, municipal, and township units since the 1980s.

Researchers at The Ohio State University, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo), the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), and the University of Colorado have conducted a national survey to document the status of county governments in the new millennium. The survey identifies public services and economic development activities provided by county governments and changes in the scope of these services and activities compared to the past. It documents challenges faced by county governments in undertaking new responsibilities brought about by devolution, by shifts in public demand for local services, and by changing public views on governmental accountability. A major focus of the survey is the differing constraints and opportunities facing metropolitan and nonmetropolitan county governments.

The survey was sent to approximately 2,700 counties in the 46 continental states where counties are units of government. A total of 1678 governments responded — a response rate of 62%. Major findings from the survey are reported for the nation as a whole and separately for three categories of counties: metropolitan, adjacent, and rural. *Metropolitan* counties contain or are located within regions that have large urban cores. *Adjacent* counties are nonmetropolitan counties located next to metropolitan counties. *Rural* counties are nonmetropolitan counties that are not adjacent to metropolitan counties and have relatively small or no urban population. These categories correspond to widely used county demographic categories defined by the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The appendix of this report describes the categories in detail. As shown in Figure 1, 26% of counties responding to the survey are metropolitan, 24% are adjacent, and 50% are rural. These response percentages are identical to the metropolitan, adjacent, and rural proportions of all (responding plus non-responding) counties in the United States.

Five themes are emphasized in this report: 1) scope of county government, size of government, and services provided; 2) economic development activities; 3) land-use planning activities; 4) finances, and 5) welfare reform. Statistics discussed in the report are presented in a table in the appendix.

Figure 1: Responding Counties by Category



Scope of County Government

Scope of County Government

Size of County Governments

County governments are categorized into eight employment size categories (see Appendix 1). For all U.S. counties, the mode (the category with the largest number of counties) is 100-249 employees, with 28.9% of counties reporting employment in this range. Employment size varies enormously across counties, and nonmetropolitan county governments are typically much smaller than metropolitan county governments: the mode is 50-99 employees for rural counties, 100-249 employees for adjacent counties, and 1,000 or more employees for metropolitan counties. At the lower end of the size range, 5.9% of rural counties, 1.0% of adjacent counties, and 0.2% of metropolitan counties fall into the smallest category (0-24 employees). At the upper end of the size range, 0.1% of rural counties, 2.3% of adjacent counties, and 38.5% of metropolitan counties fall into the largest category (1,000 or more employees).

Services Currently Provided by County Governments

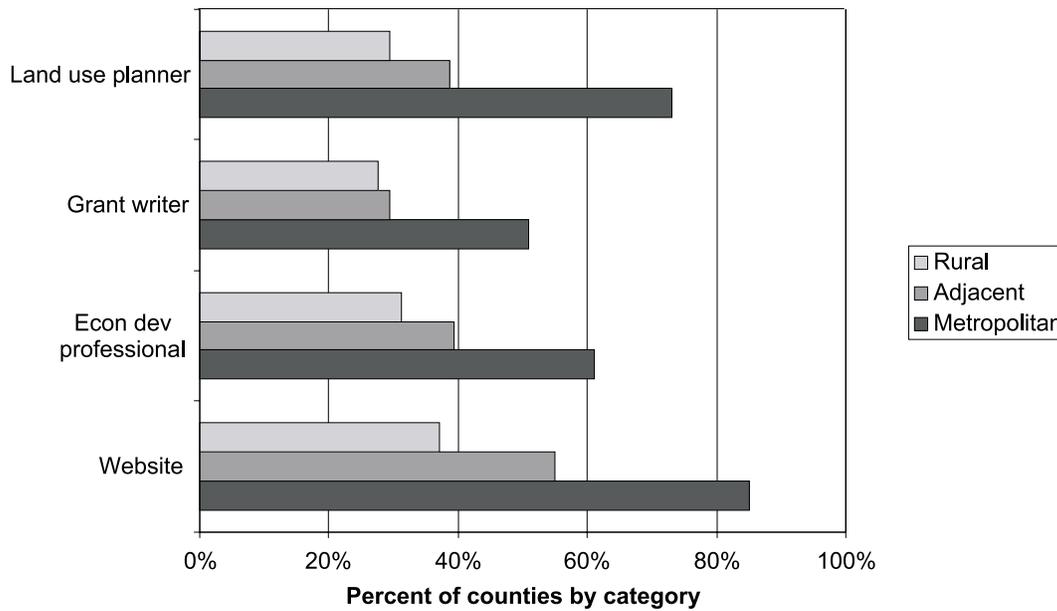
County governments provide a variety of public services, which they operate directly and in cooperation with other governments. Out of a list of twenty-one services that may be provided, seven services are provided by more than 50% of county governments. The most ubiquitous service is law enforcement, provided by 84% of all counties. Other widely provided services are 911 service (82%), senior citizen programs (57%), mental health services (53%), health clinic services (52%), emergency medical services (51%), and solid waste removal (51%).

For 16 of the 21 county government services documented, there are statistically significant differences across the three county categories in service provision, with rural counties providing fewer services than metropolitan counties. For the remaining five services, the differences across county categories are small and not statistically significant. The focus of this report is on the services for which the gaps between rural and metropolitan county governments are greatest. The largest disparity, 30 percentage points, is in the provision of housing assistance, a service that is provided by county governments in 17% of rural counties, 23% of adjacent counties, and 47% of metropolitan counties. The second largest disparity is in the provision of water and sewer service, for which the gap between rural and metropolitan counties is 28 percentage points. The third largest gap, 27 percentage points, is in the provision of drug and alcohol rehabilitation. The fourth largest service gap, 26 percentage points, is in the provision of elder care. Other services with a large disparity between metropolitan and rural counties include bus service (21% gap), child care/Head Start (21% gap), mental health service (21% gap), nutrition programs (20% gap), health clinic service (19% gap), homeless shelters (18% gap), shelters for battered persons (17% gap), senior citizen programs (15% gap), and public housing (9% gap).

In addition to the metropolitan-nonmetropolitan gap in the provision of traditional government services, there is a large disparity in the adoption of technology for communicating with the public. Eighty-five percent of metropolitan county governments, 55% of adjacent counties, and 37% of rural county governments report that they have developed a web site (see Figure 2 on next page).

Another trend in government service provision in recent years is privatization, contracting with non-governmental agencies to deliver public services. Among all counties, the services contracted out most often are solid waste removal (30% of all counties), mental health services (25%), drug and alcohol rehabilitation (21%), senior citizen programs (19%), and shelters for battered persons (15%). County governments in 17% of rural counties, 21% of adjacent counties, and 43% of metropolitan counties have privatized the production or delivery of one or more services over the past five years. Thus, rural counties rely much less than other counties on private delivery of county government services.

Figure 2: Comparative Capacities of County Governments



Changes in Workload and Spending Relative to the Past

Counties report an increase in administrative workload related to social services. An increase in workload in the last three years is reported in the following services: childcare (73%), workforce development (71%), Medicaid (65%), federal and state transportation programs (62%), and food stamps (37%). Metropolitan counties report larger increases than other counties in administrative workload. Administrative duties related to childcare increased in 78% of metropolitan counties, 71% of adjacent counties, and 70% of rural counties that administer childcare programs. Administrative duties related to federal and state transportation programs increased in 69% of metropolitan counties, 64% of adjacent counties, and 56% of rural counties that administer transportation programs. Food stamp administrative workload increased in 40% of metropolitan counties, 32% of adjacent counties, and 38% of rural counties that administer food stamps. Medicaid administrative workload increased in 69% of metropolitan counties, 65% of adjacent counties, and 61% of rural counties that administer Medicaid. Administrative duties related to workforce development and training programs increased in 74% of metropolitan counties, 74% of adjacent counties, and 67% of rural counties.

For counties reporting provision of selected social services, the greatest shortages of funding occur in two service categories: services to the aging (47%) and childcare (41%). In general, metropolitan counties are more likely than other counties to report funding shortages. Fifty-four percent of metropolitan governments, 49% of adjacent governments, and 35% of rural governments report that they face funding shortages for services to the aging and elderly. Forty-one percent of metropolitan governments, 25% of adjacent governments, and 17% of rural governments report funding shortages for transportation. Fifty-one percent of metropolitan governments, 41% of adjacent governments, and 29% of rural governments report funding shortages for child care and foster services. Thirty-six percent of metropolitan governments, 26% of adjacent governments, and 24% of rural governments report funding shortages for housing assistance.

Economic Development Activities

Scope of Current Activities

County governments in the three county types differ a great deal in the personnel devoted to economic development. Sixty-one percent of metropolitan county governments, 39% of adjacent county governments, and 31% of rural county governments have one or more economic development professionals on their staff (see Figure 2).

Even when they have no economic development professionals on staff, county governments often engage in economic development planning and implementation. Seventy-two percent of all county governments (80% of metropolitan, 75% of adjacent, and 67% of rural county governments) report playing a role in local economic development. Fifty-one percent of all county governments (51% of metropolitan, 55% of adjacent, and 50% of rural) report that county government is one of the two most important players in economic development in the county.

Forty-seven percent of county governments report devoting a portion of their economic development budget to activities designed to promote small business startups. Sixty-two percent of county governments engage in attraction of outside businesses, and 61% engage in business retention and expansion.

Rural county governments are much more likely than metropolitan governments to engage in no economic development activities at all. Fifty-eight percent of rural governments and 41% of metropolitan governments do not engage in small business development. Forty-seven percent of rural governments, compared to 22% of metropolitan governments, do not budget for attraction of outside businesses. Forty-nine percent of rural governments, compared to 21% of metropolitan governments, do not engage in business retention and expansion.

Changes in Scope of Activities Relative to the Past

In addition to comparing across counties, it is useful to compare a county's economic development activities today with its activities in the past. The survey data indicate that business retention and expansion activities have grown at a more rapid rate over the past five years than business attraction or small business development activities in both metropolitan and adjacent counties. In rural counties, however, business attraction activities grew at a more rapid rate than business retention and expansion or small business development. Forty percent of all governments, 52% of metropolitan governments, 41% of adjacent governments, and 34% of rural governments report increases in business retention and expansion activities. Thirty-nine percent of all county governments (42% of metropolitan, 41% of adjacent, and 36% of rural governments) report a greater focus on business attraction today than five years ago. Thus, over the past five years, while metropolitan counties have shifted their portfolio of economic development activities towards business retention and expansion, adjacent counties place somewhat more emphasis on business attraction as compared to the past.

While county governments as a whole have expanded their volume of economic development activities over the past five years, rural governments have expanded at a slower rate than metropolitan and adjacent governments. Thirteen percent of rural counties but 18% of adjacent governments and 20% of metropolitan governments report greater use of tax abatements today than five years ago. Thirteen percent of rural governments but 16% of adjacent governments and 22% of metropolitan governments report engaging in more national advertising of the county as a place to do business as compared to five years ago. Twenty percent of rural governments, 24% of adjacent governments, and 40% of metropolitan governments report engaging in more workforce development activities for low-income workers today as compared to five years ago. Even in the provision of economic development assistance to small communities, rural counties lag behind metropolitan and adjacent counties. Nineteen percent of rural governments, 22% of adjacent governments, and 23% of metropolitan governments provide economic development assistance to small communities.

Land-use Planning

Land-use Planning

In recent years, land-use planning has become a critical issue in most regions of the U.S. There are enormous differences across the three county types in land-use planning activities. Seventy-three percent of metropolitan governments but only 39% of adjacent governments and 29% of rural governments have a land-use planner on staff (see Figure 2). Land-use plans have been adopted by 64% of metropolitan governments but only 46% of adjacent governments and 38% of rural governments. Seventy percent of metropolitan governments but only 41% of adjacent governments and 39% of rural governments engage in comprehensive planning. Thirty-nine percent of metropolitan governments, 25% of adjacent governments, but only 16% of rural governments have farmland preservation policies in place. Wetland protection policies are implemented in 43% of metropolitan governments but only 26% of adjacent governments and 19% of rural governments. Forty-five percent of metropolitan governments but only 28% of adjacent governments and 23% of rural governments engage in watershed planning or management. Sixty-three percent of metropolitan governments but only 43% of adjacent governments and 45% of rural governments regulate land use through zoning. No land-use planning activities of any kind are reported by only 10% of metropolitan governments but more than a quarter of nonmetropolitan (27% of adjacent and 26% of rural) governments.

County

Government

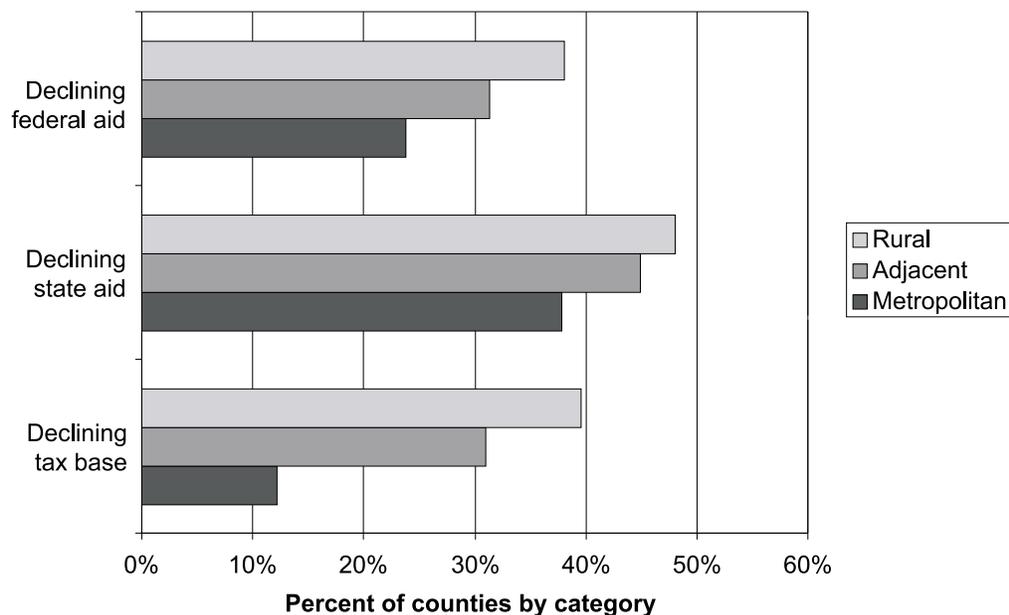
Finances

County Government Finances

Fiscal stress is reported as an important problem by more than two-thirds of all county governments. Compared to metropolitan county governments, nonmetropolitan (both adjacent and rural) county governments report greater fiscal stress due to recent changes in federal and state revenue sharing. Thirty-eight percent of rural governments, 31% of adjacent governments, and 24% of metropolitan governments report that loss of federal revenue is a very important problem (see Figure 3). Forty-eight percent of rural governments, 45% of adjacent governments, and 38% of metropolitan governments report that decline in state revenue is a very important problem. Sixty-two percent of counties, with no difference between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan county governments, report mandated costs from higher levels of government represent a very important problem.

Fiscal stress in nonmetropolitan counties is exacerbated by additional factors. Approximately 44% of county governments report that rising service demands from citizens represent a very important problem, with little difference among the three county government types. However, at the same time, nonmetropolitan counties are subject to greater countervailing pressures to reduce local taxes: 37% of rural governments, 33% of adjacent governments, and 24% of metropolitan governments report pressures from local taxpayers to reduce taxes represent a very important problem. Further, nonmetropolitan governments have less capacity to seek external grant funds as compared to metropolitan governments. Fifty-one percent of metropolitan governments but only 30% of adjacent governments, and 28% of rural governments report having a grant writer on staff (see Figure 2). A much higher proportion of rural governments (40%) compared to adjacent governments (31%) and metropolitan governments (12%) report decline in their tax base as a very important problem.

Figure 3: Sources of Fiscal Stress Reported as "Very Important"



Welfare Reform

Welfare Reform

The role of county governments in welfare reform varies by state. At the time the survey was conducted, 15 states had devolved administration of welfare programs to the county level. These 15 states are more urbanized than the other states. Twenty-two percent of all counties in the survey (33% of metropolitan governments, 21% of adjacent governments, and 16% of rural governments) administer Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) directly. For these counties, administrative burdens have increased. Eighty-seven percent of the counties that administer TANF indicate that the reporting structure for providing data on county welfare has become more complex since TANF began in 1996.

Most counties that administer TANF operate or sponsor programs to help welfare recipients find work. Among TANF counties, 88.7% of metropolitan governments, 84.5% of adjacent governments, and 73.0 percent of rural governments report that they have jobs programs for welfare recipients. Metropolitan counties have had greater success than rural counties in placing welfare recipients in jobs. Thirty percent of rural counties with TANF-related jobs programs report placing 20% or less of their welfare recipients in jobs. In contrast, only 10.6% of metropolitan counties with jobs programs report job placement at 20% or under.

Conclusions

Conclusions

County governments play an important role in public service provision, economic development, land-use planning, and welfare reform. This report, based on a recent survey of county governments in the 46 continental states with county governments, documents the status, changes, and challenges of county governments at the beginning of the 21st century. The report focuses on three categories of county governments: metropolitan counties, adjacent counties, and rural counties. A clear pattern emerges among the three county government categories, with metropolitan governments being the largest in size and scope of community services, economic development and land-use planning activities, personnel, and human and fiscal resources. Rural county governments are the smallest in terms of these size, scope, and capacity indicators, while adjacent governments fall midway between metropolitan and rural governments.

The report documents 21 community services provided by county governments. The services provided most widely are law enforcement (84% of counties), 911 emergency services (82%), senior citizen programs (57%), mental health services (53%), health clinic services (52%), emergency medical services (51%), and solid waste removal (51%).

Land-use planning and economic development activities are “new” services in which nonmetropolitan county governments lag behind metropolitan counties. Nonmetropolitan county governments are much less likely to engage in comprehensive planning, farmland preservation, zoning, watershed protection, and other land-use planning activities. They are also less likely to engage in economic development activities. While county governments generally play a larger role in economic development than in the past, nonmetropolitan governments are less likely to have both land-use planners and economic development professionals on staff. Some rural governments are shifting their portfolio of economic development activities towards attraction of outside businesses. In contrast, metropolitan governments have shifted away from business attraction and place relatively more emphasis than in the past on the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Fiscal stress is reported by many county governments. Service demands by residents have risen at a similar rate in both nonmetropolitan and metropolitan counties, but nonmetropolitan residents report greater fiscal constraints in meeting those demands. Nonmetropolitan county governments are more likely to report significant problems with reduced federal and state revenues, declining local tax base, pressure from citizens to reduce taxes, and mandates from higher levels of government. These fiscal constraints are compounded by the fact that nonmetropolitan governments are much less likely to have grant writers on staff to seek additional outside funds.

States that have devolved the administration of TANF to the county level are more urbanized than states that administer TANF centrally. Rural counties are much less likely to have implemented jobs programs in response to welfare reform, and when they do so, have less success in placing former welfare recipients in jobs.

This report provides an overview of changes and challenges that county governments face today. It documents the resource constraints under which county governments operate during an era when public service and economic development responsibilities have been devolved to the local level. In particular, a gap between metropolitan and rural counties in the staffing and scope of economic development and land-use activities and identifies a need for capacity building in these program areas.

The study presents base-line measurement of county government activities in the first year of the new millennium. It is imperative that the survey be replicated every 2-3 years to provide national, state, and county officials with longitudinal data to inform planning and policy decisions.

Appendix 1:

Appendix 1: Description of Survey Methods

County rural-urban categories

Counties were assigned to metropolitan, adjacent, and rural categories based on the rural-urban continuum codes, developed by the Economic Research Service. Rural-urban continuum codes:

Metropolitan Counties

- 0 Central counties of metropolitan areas of 1 million population or more
- 1 Fringe counties of metropolitan areas of 1 million population or more
- 2 Counties in metropolitan areas of 250 thousand to 1 million population
- 3 Counties in metropolitan areas of less than 250 thousand population

Nonmetropolitan Counties

- 4 Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 5 Urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 6 Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 7 Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 8 Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metropolitan area
- 9 Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metropolitan area

Metropolitan counties are defined to include rural-urban continuum codes 0-3. Metropolitan status is determined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Adjacent counties are defined to include codes 4 and 6. Adjacency is determined by physical boundary adjacency and commuting flows. Rural counties are defined to include codes 5, 7, 8, and 9. Codes were prepared in the Rural Economy Division, Economic Research Service, USDA (<http://www.ers.usda.gov>).

County government size categories

Eight employment categories were used to measure the size of county governments: 0-24, 25-49, 50-99, 100-249, 250-499, 500-749, 750-999, and 1,000 or more employees.

Survey period

Questionnaires were mailed during Fall 2000 to approximately 2,700 counties in the 46 contiguous U.S. states that have county governments. The two continental states that do not have county governments are Rhode Island and Connecticut.

Key respondents

Questionnaires were sent to a key respondent in each county government. The public office selected to receive the questionnaire varied by state, and was chosen by the researchers in consultation with NACo staff. NACo provided the survey mailing list.

Survey response rate

Rural counties: 843 (50% of responding counties). Adjacent counties: 403 (24% of responding counties). Metropolitan counties: 432 (26% of responding counties). Total responding counties: 1678 (a 62% response rate from the counties in 46 states to which the survey was sent). The distribution of responding counties across the three county categories (rural, adjacent, and metropolitan) is approximately the same as the distribution of all counties combined (both those that responded and those that did not respond).

Statistical significance

All differences reported for the three county categories (metropolitan, adjacent, and rural) are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.1$ level using a chi-square test.

Appendix 2:

Appendix 2: County Government Survey Data

(Expressed in percentages. “Yes” in the “Significant” column implies that differences among the three county categories are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.1$ level using a chi-square test. “N” refers to the number of observations).

County Categories

	Metro-politan	Adja-cent	Rural	All	Signi-ficant	N
How many full-time employees does your county government employ?					Yes	1664
0-24	0.2	1.0	5.9	3.3		
25-49	0.7	3.0	21.1	11.5		
50-99	4.0	21.4	34.5	23.5		
100-249	15.9	41.1	29.8	28.9		
250-499	17.8	20.9	7.3	13.2		
500-749	14.2	9.3	0.6	6.2		
750-999	8.9	1.0	0.7	2.9		
1,000+	38.5	2.3	0.1	10.5		
Does your county government provide the following services?						
Solid waste removal	49.3	49.4	52.3	50.8	No	1678
Water and sewer	46.3	23.3	18.0	26.6	Yes	1678
Law enforcement	85.2	79.4	84.6	83.5	Yes	1678
Fire protection	42.8	38.2	43.1	41.8	No	1678
911 service	87.7	81.4	79.1	81.8	Yes	1678
Emergency medical services	47.9	50.4	53.4	51.3	No	1678
Bus service	38.0	21.3	16.8	23.4	Yes	1678
Child care/Head Start	35.7	20.1	14.6	21.3	Yes	1678
Drug-alcohol rehabilitation	54.4	35.5	26.7	35.9	Yes	1678
Elder care	42.8	25.6	17.2	25.8	Yes	1678
Food pantry	20.4	14.1	15.5	16.5	Yes	1678
Health clinic	66.0	46.2	46.6	51.5	Yes	1678
Homeless shelter	21.8	8.0	4.0	9.5	Yes	1678
Hospital	22.2	21.1	21.1	21.4	No	1678
Housing assistance	47.0	22.8	17.1	26.2	Yes	1678
Landfill	45.8	44.9	42.1	43.7	No	1678
Mental health services	67.6	49.4	46.5	52.6	Yes	1678
Nutrition programs	49.3	32.0	28.9	34.9	Yes	1678
Public housing	19.9	10.7	10.9	13.2	Yes	1678
Senior citizen programs	67.6	53.1	52.6	56.6	Yes	1678
Shelter for battered persons	34.3	21.1	16.8	22.4	Yes	1678

	Metro-politan	Adja-cent	Rural	All	Signi-ficant	N
In the last five years, has your county government maintained a county government web site?						
					Yes	1640
Yes	85.3	55.4	36.8	53.7		
No	14.0	41.0	59.4	43.3		
Don't know	0.7	3.6	3.9	3.0		
In the past three years, has your county government's administrative workload changed in the following programs? (Calculated only for counties that administer these programs)						
Child care					No	553
Workload increased	77.8	71.4	70.3	73.2		
Workload decreased	1.5	3.2	3.1	2.5		
Workload unchanged	20.7	25.4	26.6	24.2		
Federal/state transportation programs					Yes	745
Workload increased	69.3	64.2	55.8	62.3		
Workload decreased	1.2	2.9	1.6	1.7		
Workload unchanged	29.5	33.0	42.7	36.0		
Federal/state housing programs					No	566
Workload increased	52.1	48.0	45.5	48.6		
Workload decreased	3.7	4.0	1.8	3.0		
Workload unchanged	44.2	48.0	52.7	48.4		
Food stamps					Yes	643
Workload increased	39.5	32.0	38.0	37.0		
Workload decreased	30.3	34.0	23.4	28.0		
Workload unchanged	30.3	34.0	38.6	35.0		
Medicaid					No	682
Workload increased	68.7	65.2	60.9	64.5		
Workload decreased	4.8	3.8	4.1	4.3		
Workload unchanged	26.5	31.0	35.0	31.2		
Workforce development and training programs					Yes	769
Workload increased	73.8	74.1	66.7	70.9		
Workload decreased	4.2	0.0	1.6	2.1		
Workload unchanged	22.1	26.0	31.8	27.1		
Does your county government face funding shortages for any of the following services? (Calculated only for counties that provide each of the following services)						
Services to the aging					Yes	371
Transportation					Yes	1678
Child care/foster services					Yes	358
Housing assistance					Yes	439
In the past five years, has your county government had an economic development professional on staff?						
					Yes	1631
Yes	61.1	39.4	31.3	40.8		
No	37.7	55.4	64.2	55.4		
Don't know	1.2	5.2	4.5	3.8		
Which of the following engage in economic development planning and implementation in your county?						
City government	22.2	19.4	28.8	24.9	Yes	1678
County government	79.6	74.9	67.4	72.4	Yes	1678
Chamber of Commerce	85.7	80.7	71.1	77.1	Yes	1678
Private business	46.3	38.5	34.5	38.5	Yes	1678
Citizen advisory board/commission	40.3	39.5	33.0	36.4	Yes	1678
Public/private partnership(s)	54.2	32.5	24.1	33.9	Yes	1678
Private economic development foundation(s)	31.5	23.1	16.8	22.1	Yes	1678

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	Metro-politan	Adja-cent	Rural	All	Signi-ficant	N
Utility company(ies)	51.2	42.4	29.5	38.2	Yes	1678
State government	63.9	48.9	38.7	47.6	Yes	1678
Federal government	18.3	14.9	13.6	15.1	Yes	1678
Of the organizations listed in the preceding question, which two play the largest role in economic development in your county? (Only the two selected most often are listed below)						
County government	50.7	54.9	49.6	51.1	No	1619
City government	38.0	49.0	46.5	44.8	Yes	1619
What percent of your county's economic development budget is devoted to small business development?						
					Yes	1486
None	40.6	53.7	57.8	52.5		
1-20%	41.4	31.6	26.0	31.2		
21-40%	15.1	10.5	11.1	11.9		
41-60%	1.9	3.4	3.0	2.8		
61-80%	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.7		
81-100%	0.5	0.3	1.3	0.9		
What percent of your county's economic development budget is devoted to attraction of outside businesses?						
					Yes	1513
None	21.5	36.1	46.9	37.9		
1-20%	26.2	25.3	24.1	24.9		
21-40%	26.2	18.7	14.8	18.6		
41-60%	16.5	13.8	9.8	12.4		
61-80%	6.5	5.0	3.0	4.4		
81-100%	3.1	1.1	1.4	1.8		
What percent of your county's economic development budget is devoted to retention/expansion of existing businesses?						
					Yes	1508
None	20.7	37.3	49.0	39.0		
1-20%	26.8	24.9	23.5	24.7		
21-40%	29.1	17.8	15.4	19.4		
41-60%	16.3	14.8	9.6	12.5		
61-80%	5.8	4.1	1.6	3.3		
81-100%	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.1		
How has the focus of your county economic development organization's activities changed over the past 5 years?						
Attraction of outside businesses					Yes	1612
More	42.2	40.7	35.6	38.5		
Less	4.0	5.3	4.2	4.4		
Same	41.9	37.3	36.0	37.8		
Doesn't apply	11.9	16.7	24.3	19.2		
Retention and expansion of existing local businesses					Yes	1610
More	52.0	41.1	34.1	40.4		
Less	1.7	2.1	3.8	2.9		
Same	35.4	41.1	38.9	38.5		
Doesn't apply	10.9	15.7	23.2	18.2		
Small business development aimed at local entrepreneurs					Yes	1585
More	33.2	29.1	26.3	28.8		
Less	1.9	2.7	3.4	2.8		
Same	47.1	45.6	41.9	44.2		
Doesn't apply	17.8	22.7	28.2	24.2		

	Metro-politan	Adja-cent	Rural	All	Signi-ficant	N
Compared to five years ago, to what extent does your county government undertake the following activities today?						
Tax abatements					Yes	1624
More	19.5	17.8	12.5	15.6		
Less	3.6	3.6	2.0	2.8		
About same	35.4	31.5	30.0	31.8		
Not at all	35.2	39.8	46.0	41.7		
Don't know	6.4	7.2	9.6	8.2		
National advertising of your county as a place to do business					Yes	1605
More	22.1	15.9	13.3	16.2		
Less	3.4	2.4	1.0	1.9		
About same	26.1	17.2	14.5	18.2		
Not at all	41.3	55.1	61.9	54.9		
Don't know	7.2	9.4	9.3	8.8		
Workforce development for low-income workers					Yes	1624
More	40.1	24.0	19.7	26.1		
Less	0.7	1.8	1.0	1.1		
About same	25.7	26.9	19.5	22.8		
Not at all	26.1	40.4	49.8	41.4		
Don't know	7.4	6.9	10.1	8.6		
Economic development assistance to small communities					Yes	1602
More	23.3	22.3	19.4	21.1		
Less	0.5	1.8	0.9	1.0		
About same	35.3	27.8	25.9	28.4		
Not at all	35.3	37.3	44.5	40.4		
Don't know	7.2	10.8	9.3	9.1		
In the last five years, has your county government had a land-use planner on staff?						
Yes	73.1	38.6	29.3	42.9	Yes	1630
No	24.8	57.0	65.9	53.2		
Don't know	2.1	4.4	4.7	4.0		
In the last five years, has your county government adopted a land-use plan?						
Yes	64.4	45.7	38.2	46.7	Yes	1630
No	33.2	48.6	55.8	48.3		
Don't know	2.4	5.7	6.1	5.0		
Has your county enacted any of the following land-use policies?						
Comprehensive planning	69.7	41.2	38.8	47.3	Yes	1678
Farmland preservation	39.1	25.1	15.5	23.9	Yes	1678
Impact fee	22.2	4.7	3.8	8.8	Yes	1678
Wetland protection	43.3	26.3	19.2	27.1	Yes	1678
Urban growth boundaries	27.8	12.4	8.1	14.2	Yes	1678
Watershed planning or management	45.1	28.3	22.8	29.9	Yes	1678
Zoning	63.0	42.7	44.5	48.8	Yes	1678
County has not enacted any of the above	9.7	26.8	25.9	21.9	Yes	1678
In the past three years, how important has the loss of federal revenue been for your county government's finances?						
					Yes	1563
Very important	23.8	31.3	38.1	32.7		
Somewhat important	37.9	31.0	31.9	33.2		
Not important	33.4	26.6	19.6	24.9		
Don't know	5.0	11.2	10.5	9.2		

	Metro-politan	Adja-cent	Rural	All	Signi-ficant	N
In the past three years, how important has the loss of state revenue been for your county government's finances?						
					Yes	1586
Very important	37.8	44.9	48.0	44.6		
Somewhat important	35.9	30.0	28.3	30.6		
Not important	22.3	16.0	13.8	16.5		
Don't know	4.2	9.3	9.9	8.3		
In the past three years, how important have mandated costs from federal and state governments been for your county government's finances?						
					Yes	1599
Very important	61.8	61.8	62.0	61.9		
Somewhat important	26.3	27.8	25.2	26.1		
Not important	9.1	3.6	5.9	6.2		
Don't know	2.9	6.8	6.9	5.8		
In the past three years, how important have rising service demands from citizens been for your county government's finances?						
					Yes	1587
Very important	45.3	43.1	43.0	43.6		
Somewhat important	46.0	40.8	40.7	42.1		
Not important	7.7	9.1	9.4	8.9		
Don't know	1.0	7.0	7.0	5.4		
In the past three years, how important has pressure from local taxpayers to reduce taxes been for your county government's finances?						
					Yes	1580
Very important	24.1	32.8	36.7	32.5		
Somewhat important	46.5	42.0	40.6	42.5		
Not important	27.7	19.2	17.0	20.3		
Don't know	1.7	6.0	5.7	4.8		
In the past three years, how important has declining tax base been for your county government's finances?						
					Yes	1527
Very important	12.2	31.0	39.6	30.4		
Somewhat important	15.7	19.4	22.9	20.2		
Not important	69.1	40.7	29.8	42.6		
Don't know	3.0	8.9	7.8	6.8		
In the last five years, has your county government had a grant writer on staff?						
					Yes	1630
Yes	50.8	29.4	27.5	34.0		
No	47.0	65.7	69.0	62.6		
Don't know	2.2	4.9	3.5	3.5		
Does your county administer TANF?						
					Yes	1670
Yes	32.7	20.5	16.2	21.5		
No	67.3	79.5	83.8	78.5		
The reporting structure for providing data on county welfare has: (Calculated only for counties that administer TANF)						
					No	327
Become more complex	89.9	87.0	82.6	86.5		
Not changed	9.3	13.0	14.1	11.9		
Become less complex	0.8	0.0	3.3	1.5		
Has your county implemented a jobs program for county welfare recipients in response to welfare reform? (Calculated only for counties that administer TANF)						
					Yes	362
Yes	88.7	84.5	73.0	81.8		
No	11.4	15.5	27.0	18.2		
What percent of recipients on the 1999 welfare rolls in your county have taken jobs? (Calculated only for counties that administer TANF and that have implemented a jobs program)						
					Yes	291
20 percent or less of recipients	10.6	16.9	29.9	18.6		

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