



# Definitions of “Rural” in Texas Statutes and the Texas Administrative Code as of April 2012

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## Definitions of “Rural” in Texas Statutes and the Texas Administrative Code as of April 2012

This table provides information about the numerous definitions of “rural” in Texas statutes and state agency rules. In the following table, the **Def. No. (Map)** column provides the publication’s numerical designation for a definition of “rural.” In some instances, the definition has been geographically depicted in a map and a map notation below the number provides a link to the corresponding map. The **Definition** column contains definitions of “rural” categorized by “rural area” (Def. Nos. 1-19), “rural county” (Def. Nos. 20-39), and “rural community” (Def. Nos. 40-48). The **Source** column provides a hyperlinked Texas statute citation, Texas Administrative Code citation, or both, for each definition. The **Agency** and **Program(s)** columns indicate the state agencies and programs affected by the definitions.

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Area</b>				
1  <u>map</u>	<b>Rural area</b> means an area which is predominantly rural in character, being one which the board [of directors of the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority] defines and declares to be a rural area. <sup>1</sup>	<a href="#">Section 44.001(6), Agriculture Code</a>  <a href="#">Section 58.002(9), Agriculture Code</a>	Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA)	Agricultural diversification and microenterprise support programs  TAFA programs in general
2	<b>Rural area</b> [is an] area that is located: (A) outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area; <sup>2</sup> (B) within the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area, if the statistical area has a population of 25,000 or less and does not share a boundary with an urban area; or (C) in an area that is eligible for funding by the Texas Rural Development Office of the United States Department of Agriculture (TRDO-USDA), other than an area that is located in a municipality with a population of more than 50,000. <sup>3</sup>	<a href="#">Section 2306.004(28-a), Government Code</a>  <a href="#">10 T.A.C. § 1.1(a)(47)</a>	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs	Economic development programs involving both state and local governments  Housing Tax Credit Program, Multifamily Housing Revenue Bond Program, and other community development programs administered by the department

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Area</b>				
3	<p><b>Rural area</b> means an area that is located: (A) outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area;<sup>2</sup> (B) within the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area, if the statistical area has a population of 20,000 or less and does not share a boundary with an urban area; or (C) in an area that is eligible for funding by the Texas Rural Development Office of the United States Department of Agriculture.<sup>3</sup></p>	<p><a href="#">Section 2306.6702(a)(12), Government Code</a></p>	<p>Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs</p>	<p>Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program</p>
4	<p>[To receive a temporary exemption from requirements for certain minimum standards for emergency care or for occupational certification, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel must practice primarily in a <b>rural area</b>, which means] (1) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; or (2) a relatively large, isolated, and sparsely populated area in a county with a population of more than 50,000.</p> <p>[For purposes of requests by EMS personnel or applicants for EMS certification or licenses for an exemption to rules relating to emergency medical services,] a <b>rural area</b> is defined to be: (1) a county of 50,000 or less; or (2) a sparsely populated area in a county with a population of more than 50,000, as determined by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy designation (of rural areas within metropolitan areas).</p>	<p><a href="#">Section 773.0045(a), Health and Safety Code</a></p> <p><a href="#">25 T.A.C. § 157.5(b)</a></p>	<p>Texas Department of State Health Services</p>	<p>Emergency medical services</p>

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Area</b>				
5	<p><b>Rural area</b> means: (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; (B) an area that is not delineated as an urbanized area by the United States Bureau of the Census;<sup>4</sup> or (C) any other area designated as rural by a rule adopted by the commissioner [of insurance], subject to Section 845.003.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>[An area eligible to be designated a <b>rural area</b> under agency rules is] any area that is delineated as an urbanized area by the United States Bureau of the Census<sup>4</sup> and: (1) is contiguous with and not more than 10 miles away from a rural area described by Section 845.002(9)(A) or (B); (2) is sparsely populated, compared to areas within a 10-mile radius that are delineated as urbanized areas by the United States Bureau of the Census;<sup>4</sup> (3) has not increased in population in any single calendar year in the seven years before the commissioner [of insurance] makes the designation; and (4) in which emergency or primary care services: (A) are limited or unavailable in accordance with network access standards imposed by the commissioner; and (B) would be made materially more accessible by allowing access to care in a contiguous area that is otherwise eligible to participate in the system.</p>	<p><a href="#">Section 845.002(9), Insurance Code</a></p> <p><a href="#">Section 845.003, Insurance Code</a></p>	Texas Department of Insurance	Statewide rural health care system
6	<p><b>Rural area</b> means: (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; (B) an area that is not designated as an urbanized area by the United States Census Bureau;<sup>4</sup> or (C) any other area designated as rural under rules adopted by the commissioner [of insurance].<sup>5</sup></p>	<p><a href="#">Section 1305.004(a)(22), Insurance Code</a></p> <p><a href="#">28 T.A.C. § 10.2(a)(27)</a></p>	Texas Department of Insurance	Workers' compensation health care networks
7 <a href="#">map</a>	<p><b>Rural area</b> means any area not included in an urban area.<sup>4</sup></p>	<p><a href="#">Section 24.001(9), Parks and Wildlife Code</a></p>	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	State assistance for local parks

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Area</b>				
8 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural area</b> means an area, including both farm and nonfarm population of the area, that is not located in: (A) a municipality having a population greater than 1,500; or (B) an unincorporated city, town, village, or borough having a population greater than 1,500.	<a href="#">Section 161.002(7), Utilities Code</a>	Public Utility Commission of Texas	Electric cooperative corporations
9	<b>Rural area</b> is defined as a county that is not included in a metropolitan statistical area as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) according to the most recent United States Census Bureau population estimates. <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">1 T.A.C. § 354.1430(8)</a>	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	Medicaid provisions for telemedicine services <sup>6</sup>
10 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural area</b> [is an] area outside a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) or a Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA). <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">1 T.A.C. § 355.8065(b)(34)</a>	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	Additional reimbursement to disproportionate share hospitals for Medicaid hospital services
11 <a href="#">map</a>	[For purposes of allocating program funds, a project is considered to be located in a <b>rural area</b> if it] benefit[s] cities with populations under 10,000 and/or counties under 100,000.	<a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 30.10(b)(7)</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Renewable energy demonstration pilot program
12 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural hospital</b> [is a] hospital that is not located in [a] Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as determined by the Federal Office of Management and Budget. <sup>2,7</sup>  [For designation as a rural hospital, t]he hospital must be located in: (1) a county with a population density of less than 225 persons per square mile of land area; and (2) a municipality of 15,000 persons or less. <sup>7</sup>	<a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 30.141(2)</a>  <a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 30.142(b)</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Designation of a hospital as a rural hospital
13 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural area</b> or <b>rural service area</b> [is] any community located in a county not included within any Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) boundary, as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget, and any community within an MSA with a population of 20,000 or fewer not adjacent to the primary MSA city. <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">16 T.A.C. § 26.143(c)(6)</a>	Public Utility Commission of Texas	Advanced telecommunications and information services in rural areas

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Area</b>				
14 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural</b> [means] located in a nonmetropolitan area as defined by the United States Census Bureau in its most recent census. <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">19 T.A.C. § 22.102(9)</a> <a href="#">19 T.A.C. § 22.122(10)</a>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board	Scholarship programs for vocational nursing students  Scholarship programs for professional nursing students
15	<b>Rural area</b> [is an] area where there is no pharmacy within a 15-mile radius of the physician's office and which is within either a county with a total population of 5,000 or less according to the most recent federal census; or a city or town, incorporated or unincorporated, with a population of less than 2,500 according to the most recent federal census, but not including a city or town, incorporated or unincorporated, whose boundaries are adjacent to an incorporated city or town with an equal or greater population.	<a href="#">22 T.A.C. § 169.2(10)</a>	Texas Medical Board	Authority of physicians to supply drugs
16	<b>Rural area</b> [is a] county with a population of not greater than 50,000, or an area that has been designated under state or federal law as: (A) a health professional shortage area; (B) a medically underserved area; or (C) a medically underserved community. <sup>8</sup>	<a href="#">25 T.A.C. § 37.532(10)</a>	Texas Department of State Health Services	Maternal and infant health services; school-based health centers
17 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural area</b> [is] a county that had a population in the most recent decennial United States census of 150,000 or less, or that part of a county with a population of greater than 150,000 that is not delineated as urbanized by the United States Census Bureau. <sup>4,8</sup>	<a href="#">25 T.A.C. § 83.2(7)</a>	Texas Department of State Health Services	Public health improvement grants; Permanent Fund for Children and Public Health

<b>Def. No. (Map)</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Program(s)</b>
<b>Rural Area</b>				
18	<b>Rural area</b> [is] (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less as determined by the United States Census Bureau in the most recent decennial census report; (B) an area that is not designated as an urbanized area by the United States Census Bureau in the most recent decennial census report; <sup>4</sup> or (C) any other area designated as rural under rules adopted by the commissioner [of insurance], notwithstanding subparagraphs (A) and (B) of this paragraph. <sup>5</sup>	<a href="#">28 T.A.C. § 3.3702(21)</a>	Texas Department of Insurance	Health insurance provided through preferred provider benefit plans
19  <a href="#">map</a>	[For purposes of the requirement that a Medicare skilled nursing facility be in a <b>rural area</b> for consideration of a waiver of the requirement that the services of a registered nurse be provided in the facility for more than 40 hours a week,] <b>rural area</b> is any area outside the boundaries of a standard metropolitan statistical area. Rural areas are defined and designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget; are determined by population, economic, and social requirements; and are subject to revisions. <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">40 T.A.C. § 19.1001(a)(9)</a>	Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services	Nursing facility requirements for licensure and Medicaid certification



Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural County</b>				
20 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> means a county with a population of 50,000 or less.	<a href="#">Section 61.9601, Education Code</a>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board	Repayment of certain law school education loans by a person employed as an attorney by a district or county attorney's office that serves a rural area
21 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> means a county with a population of less than 50,000.	<a href="#">Section 88.621(6), Education Code</a>	Texas A&M University System	Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program
22 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> means: (A) a county that has a population of 150,000 or less; or (B) with respect to a county that has a population of more than 150,000 and that contains a geographic area that is not delineated as urbanized by the federal census bureau, that part of the county that is not delineated as urbanized. <sup>4,8</sup>  <b>Rural county</b> [is a] county that has a population in the most recent decennial United States census of 150,000 or less, or with respect to a county that has a population of more than 150,000 and contains a geographic area that is not delineated as urbanized by the federal census bureau, that part of the county that is not delineated as urbanized. <sup>4,8</sup>	<a href="#">Section 487.301(2), Government Code</a>  4 T.A.C. § 30.111(7)	Texas Department of Agriculture	Rural health facility capital improvement  Permanent Fund for Rural Health Facility Capital Improvement
23 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> [is] a county [in Texas] that has a population of not more than 125,000.	<a href="#">Section 487.751, Government Code</a>  4 T.A.C. § 30.130(9)	Texas Department of Agriculture	Rural Technology Center Grant Program
24 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural border county</b> means a county that: (A) has a population of less than 55,000; and (B) is adjacent to an international border.	<a href="#">Section 1403.003(a)(2), Government Code</a>	Texas Public Finance Authority and Texas Department of Transportation	Set-aside of general obligation bond proceeds for roadway projects in colonias located in rural border counties

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural County</b>				
25 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> means a county that is outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area. <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">Section 2306.004(33), Government Code</a>	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)	TDHCA economic development programs in general
26  <a href="#">map</a>	[To qualify as a <b>rural provider</b> , a health care facility must be] located in a county that: (A) has a population estimated by the United States Bureau of the Census to be not more than 35,000 as of July 1 of the most recent year for which county population estimates have been published; or (B) has a population of more than 35,000, but that does not have more than 100 licensed hospital beds and is not located in an area that is delineated as an urbanized area by the United States Bureau of the Census. <sup>4</sup>	<a href="#">Section 108.0025, Health and Safety Code</a> <sup>9</sup>	Texas Health Care Information Council	Designation of a health care facility as a rural provider
27	<p><b>Rural hospital</b> means a licensed hospital with 75 beds or fewer that: (A) is located in a county with a population of 50,000 or less; or (B) has been designated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a critical access hospital, rural referral center, or sole community hospital.</p> <p><b>Rural hospital</b> [is a] licensed hospital with 75 beds or fewer that: (A) is located in a county with a population of 50,000 or less as defined by the United States Census Bureau in the most recent U.S. Census; or (B) has been designated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a critical access hospital, rural referral center, or sole community hospital.</p>	<p><a href="#">Section 562.1011(a)(2), Occupations Code</a></p> <p><a href="#">22 T.A.C. § 291.72(42)</a></p>	Texas State Board of Pharmacy	Operation of a Class C pharmacy in certain rural hospitals

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural County</b>				
28	[For purposes of eligibility for reimbursement for inpatient Medicaid hospital services for <b>rural hospitals</b> and certain other hospitals,] the hospital is: (1) located in a county with 50,000 or fewer persons, based on the 2000 decennial census; (2) a Medicare-designated Rural Referral Center (RRC) or Sole Community Hospital (SCH) not located in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget; <sup>2</sup> or (3) a Medicare-designated Critical Access Hospital (CAH). <sup>10</sup>	<a href="#">1 T.A.C. § 355.8055(a)</a>	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	Medicaid hospital services
29 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural public hospital</b> [is a] publicly owned hospital located in a county of less than 100,000 population based on the most recent federal decennial census completed prior to the beginning of the current calculation period for which supplemental [Medicaid] payments are being made. <sup>11</sup>	<a href="#">1 T.A.C. § 355.8069(b) (12)</a>	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	Supplemental Medicaid payments to certain rural public hospitals
30 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> [is a]ny county within Texas that is not designated as a Metropolitan Statistical Area by the United States Bureau of the Census. <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 30.81(7)</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Texas Health Service Corps Program
31 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> [is a] county in Texas that has a population of 50,000 or less.	<a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 30.180(4)</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Rural Health Information Technology Grant Program
32	[For purposes of meeting the eligibility requirement for an agreement to provide four consecutive service periods in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), which may be in an urban or rural area, in order for a physician to receive a loan under the Physical Education Loan Repayment Program,] <b>rural HPSA</b> [is a] HPSA-designated county or a HPSA-designated area or population in a county of less than 50,000 people. <sup>12</sup>	<a href="#">19 T.A.C. § 21.254(10)</a>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board	Physician Education Loan Repayment Program

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural County</b>				
33	<b>Rural county exempt pharmacy technicians</b> are pharmacy technicians working in counties with a population of 50,000 or less [who] meet [certain eligibility and petition] requirements. <sup>11</sup>	<a href="#">22 T.A.C. § 297.7(c)</a>	Texas State Board of Pharmacy	Exemption from pharmacy technician certification requirements for a pharmacy technician working in a rural county
34 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural county</b> [is a] county with a population of less than 50,000 based on the latest official federal census population figures.	<a href="#">25 T.A.C. § 157.130(a)(2)</a>  <a href="#">25 T.A.C. § 157.131(a)(2)</a>	Texas Department of State Health Services	Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care System Account and Emergency Medical Services, Trauma Facilities, and Trauma Care System Fund  Designated Trauma Facility and Emergency Medical Services Account
35	<b>Rural provider</b> [is a] health care facility located in a county with a population of not more than 35,000 as of July 1 of the most recent year according to the most recent United States Bureau of the Census estimate; or located in a county with a population of more than 35,000 but with 100 or fewer licensed hospital beds and not located in an area that is delineated as an urbanized area by the United States Bureau of the Census; <sup>4</sup> and is not state owned, or not managed or directly or indirectly owned by an individual, association, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity that owns or manages one or more other hospitals. A health care facility is not a rural provider if an individual or legal entity that manages or owns one or more other hospitals owns or controls more than 50 percent of the voting rights with respect to the governance of the facility. <sup>11</sup>	<a href="#">25 T.A.C. § 421.1(40)</a>	Texas Department of State Health Services	Rules governing the collection and release of hospital discharge data

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural County</b>				
36	[For purposes of obtaining a rural county waiver, which is designed to meet the needs of rural areas of the state that do not have reasonable access to quality nursing facility care,] a <b>rural county</b> is one that has a population of 100,000 or less according to the most recent census, and has no more than two Medicaid-certified nursing facilities. <sup>13</sup>	<a href="#">40 T.A.C. § 19.2322(h)(6)</a>	Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services	Requirements for Medicaid-bed allocation in Medicaid-certified nursing facilities
37	[For purposes of participation in the Medicaid Swing Bed Program for rural hospitals,] <b>rural hospital</b> [means a hospital] located in a county with a population of 100,000 or less and [meeting] the qualifying requirements of the Medicare Swing Bed Program. <sup>10</sup>	<a href="#">40 T.A.C. § 19.2326(b)</a>	Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services	Medicaid Swing Bed Program for rural hospitals
38  <a href="#">map</a>	[For purposes of a reduction in the minimum number of weekly work search contacts by a local workforce development board in counties designated as <b>rural</b> by the Texas Workforce Commission in response to specific local labor market information and conditions,] <b>rural counties</b> are defined as those counties having a population estimated by the Texas State Data Center at Texas A&M University to be not more than 10,000 as of July 1 of the most recent year for which county population estimates have been published.	<a href="#">40 T.A.C. § 815.28(e)</a>	Texas Workforce Commission	Work search requirements that must be met to receive unemployment compensation benefits
39	<b>Rural border county</b> [means an] eligible county <sup>14</sup> that: (A) has a population of less than 55,000, as determined by the latest decennial census; and (B) is adjacent to an international border.	<a href="#">43 T.A.C. § 15.101(12)</a>	Texas Department of Transportation	Border Colonia Access Program

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Community</b>				
40	[Financial assistance under the Rural Economic Development and Investment Program, which aims to encourage private economic development in <b>rural areas</b> , may be provided only to:] (1) a county with a population of not more than 75,000; (2) a municipality with a population of not more than 50,000; or (3) an economic development corporation or community development financial institution that primarily represents a county or municipality described [in paragraphs (1) and (2)]. <sup>10</sup>	<a href="#">Section 12.0271, Agriculture Code</a>  <a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 29.73</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Rural Economic Development and Investment Program
41	<b>Rural community</b> [is a] municipality with a population of less than 50,000 or a county with a population of less than 200,000.	<a href="#">Section 12.046, Agriculture Code</a>  <a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 29.62(6)</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Texas Rural Investment Fund Program
42 <a href="#">map</a>	<b>Rural community</b> means a municipality in a nonmetropolitan county [in Texas] as defined by the United States Census Bureau in its most recent census. <sup>15</sup>	<a href="#">Section 487.101(5), Government Code</a>  <a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 30.51(14)</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Texas outstanding rural scholar recognition and loan program for rural health care
43	<b>Rural community</b> means a rural area as defined by the [Office of Rural Affairs within the Texas Department of Agriculture].	<a href="#">Section 487.501(1), Government Code</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Rural Physician Recruitment Program
44	<b>Rural community</b> [is] (A) a community located in a county with a population not greater than 50,000; (B) an area designated under state or federal law as (i) a health professional shortage area; or (ii) a medically underserved area; or (C) a medically underserved community designated by the [Office of Rural Affairs within the Texas Department of Agriculture]. <sup>8</sup>	<a href="#">Section 487.601(3), Government Code</a>  <a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 30.161(6)</a>	Texas Department of Agriculture	Rural Physician Relief Program

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Community</b>				
45	<p><b>Rural community</b> means: (A) a municipality or county with a population of less than 5,000; (B) any portion of a political subdivision with a service population of less than 5,000 that is located outside the boundaries or extraterritorial jurisdiction of a municipality; or (C) a predominately residential area with a population of less than 5,000 that is located outside the corporate boundaries of a municipality.</p> <p><b>Disadvantaged rural community</b> means a rural community with a median household income that is not greater than 75 percent of the median state household income for the most recent year for which the applicable statistics are available.</p> <p><b>Rural community</b> [is a] municipality or county with a population of less than 5,000 or a district or authority created under the Texas Constitution, § 52, Article III or § 59, Article XVI,<sup>16</sup> with a population of less than 5,000 that is located outside the boundaries or extraterritorial jurisdiction of a municipality.<sup>17</sup></p>	<p><a href="#">Section 15.901(3), Water Code</a></p> <p><a href="#">Section 15.901(4), Water Code</a></p> <p><a href="#">31 T.A.C. § 363.902(2)</a></p>	Texas Water Development Board	<p>Program for Water and Wastewater Financial Assistance for Disadvantaged Rural Communities</p> <p>Pilot Program for Water and Wastewater Loans to Rural Communities</p>
46	<p><b>Rural political subdivision</b> [is] (A) a nonprofit water supply or sewer service corporation, district, or municipality with a service area of 10,000 or less in population or that otherwise qualifies for financing from a federal agency; or (B) a county in which no urban area exceeds 50,000 in population.<sup>18</sup></p>	<p><a href="#">Section 15.992(4), Water Code</a></p> <p><a href="#">31 T.A.C. § 384.2(6)</a></p>	Texas Water Development Board	Rural Water Assistance Fund

Def. No. (Map)	Definition	Source	Agency	Program(s)
<b>Rural Community</b>				
47	<p>[For purposes of becoming a certified member in the GO TEXAN Rural Community Program] <b>rural community</b> [is] either a non-metropolitan county [see definition below], or a Texas city with a population of less than 20,000 that does not adjoin another city or group of cities with an aggregate population of 50,000 or more and actively engages in community improvement as set forth in [rules relating to eligibility and application for certified membership in the program].</p> <p><b>Non-metropolitan county</b> [means] a Texas county that is not located in or does not encompass a metropolitan statistical area, as identified by the U.S. Census.<sup>2</sup> Counties located in a U.S. Census Bureau designated metropolitan statistical area are not eligible as a non-metropolitan county unless the county's population is less than 50,000.<sup>14</sup></p>	<p><a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 29.21(4)</a></p> <p><a href="#">4 T.A.C. § 29.21(10)</a></p>	Texas Department of Agriculture	GO TEXAN Rural Community Program
48	<p>[For the purpose of earning points in the evaluation of a sponsor's project proposal because the sponsor's location has a primary constituency that is rural] <b>rural</b> [means] cities or counties of 20,000 or less population.<sup>18</sup></p>	<p><a href="#">31 T.A.C. § 61.135(b)(5)(A)(ii)</a></p>	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Grants for community outdoor outreach programs



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> According to Michael West, Coordinator of Financial Programs, Office of Rural Affairs, Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority Board requires an applicant for rural economic development assistance to certify to the board that the project is located in a “nonmetropolitan statistical area” or, if the project is in a “metropolitan statistical area” (*see Note 2, below*), that it is in an unincorporated area or city with a population of 20,000 or fewer that is not adjacent to or contiguous with a city or group of cities with an aggregate population of 50,000 or greater. [Back to Table - [Definition 1](#)]

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is responsible for developing the standards for defining metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas and for applying those standards with decennial census data. According to [OMB Bulletin No. 10-02](#) (December 1, 2009), which provides the heads of executive departments and establishments with an update of statistical area definitions and guidance on their uses, the term “primary metropolitan statistical area,” which was used under the 1990 standards for statistical area definitions, is now obsolete for statistical use; however, the OMB recognizes that a number of agencies—both inside and outside the federal government—use OMB definitions for nonstatistical programmatic applications. Under the [2000 Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas](#) established by the OMB, “metropolitan statistical area” and “micropolitan statistical area” are the terms used for the basic set of county-based areas defined under this classification. In addition, as stated in the above OMB bulletin, the term “metropolitan division” is used to refer to a county or group of counties within a metropolitan statistical area that has a population core of at least 2.5 million. A metropolitan division is most generally comparable in concept, and equivalent to, the now obsolete primary metropolitan statistical area. [Back to Table - [Definitions 2, 3, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 19, 25, 28, 30, or 47](#)]

<sup>3</sup> According to Gayle Cargo, Public Information Coordinator for the Texas Rural Development Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the definition of “rural area” as it applies to programs administered by the office varies depending on the specific program. Additional information about population requirements for those programs is available at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ProgramsAndOpportunities.html>. [Back to Table - [Definitions 2 or 3](#)]

<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau, for purposes of Census 2010, classifies as an “urban area” an area comprising a densely settled core of census tracts or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent territory containing non-residential urban land uses as well as territory with low population density included to link outlying densely settled territory with the densely settled core. To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified according to criteria must encompass at least 2,500 people, at least 1,500 of which reside outside institutional group quarters. The Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas: Urbanized Areas (UAs) of 50,000 or more people, and Urban Clusters (UCs) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people. “Rural” encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. Additional information is available at <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/2010urbanruralclass.html>. [Back to Table - [Definitions 5, 6, 7, 17, 18, 22, 26, or 35](#)]

<sup>5</sup> According to Debra Diaz-Lara, deputy commissioner of the Health Workers' Compensation Network Division, Texas Department of Insurance, the department has considered adding language to its rules to provide an alternative definition for "rural area," but no such rule change has been proposed to date. In the meantime, the networks are allowed to use either of the definitions currently provided in Paragraphs (A) and (B); most networks use the definition in (B). [Back to Table - [Definitions 5, 6, or 18](#)]

<sup>6</sup> [1 T.A.C. § 354.1430\(1\)](#) defines "telemedicine" as the practice of health care delivery, by a provider who is located at a site other than the site where the patient is located, for the purposes of evaluation, diagnosis, consultation, or treatment that requires the use of advanced telecommunications technology. The term does not apply to telephone conversations, chart reviews, electronic mail messages, and facsimile transmissions. [Back to Table - [Definition 9](#)]

<sup>7</sup> "Rural hospital" is included in the category "rural area" because the types of areas encompassed by these definitions are broader than those for "rural county" and do not refer specifically to a "rural community." [Back to Table - [Definition 12](#)]

<sup>8</sup> Definition #16 for "rural area" is similar to Definition #44 for "rural community." Definition #17 for "rural area" is similar to Definition #22 for "rural county." [Back to Table - [Definitions 16, 17, 22, or 44](#)]

<sup>9</sup> This statute section is repealed, effective September 1, 2014, through the enactment of [Senate Bill 7, 82nd Legislature, First Called Session, 2011](#). [Back to Table - [Definition 26](#)]

<sup>10</sup> The definition of "rural" as it applies to this program is implied in the program's eligibility requirements. [Back to Table - [Definitions 28, 37, or 40](#)]

<sup>11</sup> This definition is included in the category "rural county" because it applies a population limitation at the county level. [Back to Table - [Definitions 29, 33, or 35](#)]

<sup>12</sup> According to [19 T.A.C. § 21.254\(7\)](#), Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as having shortages of primary medical care, dental, or mental health providers and may be geographic (a county or service area), demographic (low-income population), or institutional (comprehensive health center, federally qualified health center, or other public facility). Designations meet the requirements of Sec. 332 of the Public Health Service Act, 90 Stat. 2270-2272 ([42 U.S.C. 254e](#)). Texas HPSAs are recommended for designation by HHS based on analysis of data by the Texas Department of State Health Services. [Back to Table - [Definition 32](#)]

<sup>13</sup> Additionally, under a rural county waiver, the Texas Department of State Health Services will approve no more than 120 additional Medicaid beds per county per year and no more than 500 additional Medicaid beds statewide in a calendar year. Such waivers are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Requests received in a year in which the 500-bed limit has been met will be carried over to the next year. The waiver must be requested by the county commissioners court. [Back to Table - [Definition 36](#)]

<sup>14</sup> [43 T.A.C. § 15.101\(8\)](#) defines “eligible county” as a county located in the El Paso, Laredo, or Pharr department districts, and Terrell County, that has adopted the model rules promulgated by the Texas Water Development Board under [Section 16.343, Water Code](#), to assure that minimum standards for safe and sanitary water supply and sewer services in residential areas of political subdivisions, including rules of any state agency relating to septic tanks and other waste disposal systems, are met. [Back to Table - [Definitions 39 or 47](#)]

<sup>15</sup> The OMB designates a county as “nonmetropolitan” if it is located outside a metropolitan area (*See Note 2, above*).  
[Back to Table - [Definition 42](#)]

<sup>16</sup> [Article III, Section 52, Texas Constitution](#), relates to the creation of navigation, irrigation, drainage, road, and turnpike districts. [Article XVI, Section 59](#), relates to the creation of conservation and reclamation districts. [Back to Table - [Definition 45](#)]

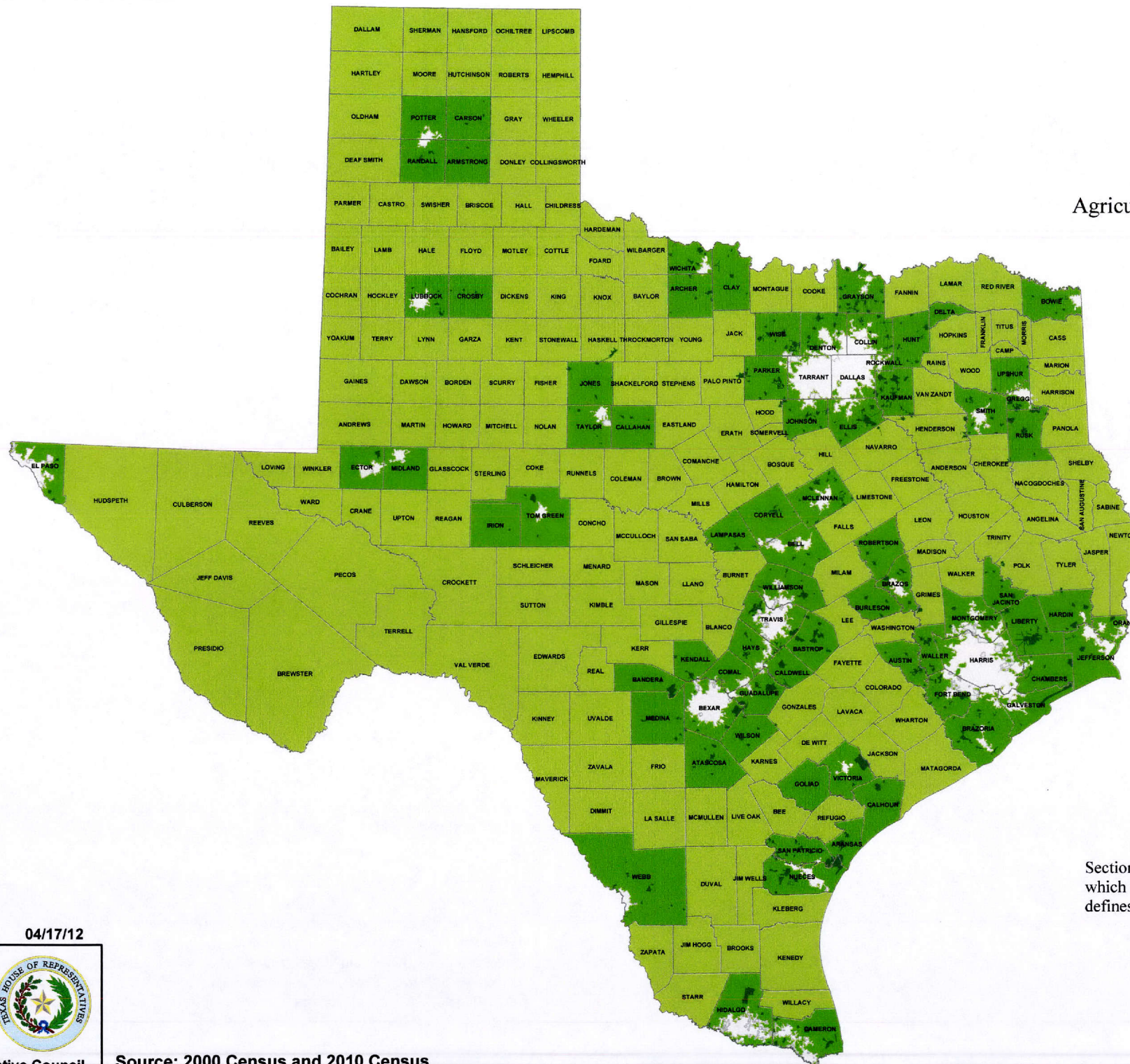
<sup>17</sup> The statutes for this pilot program ([Subchapter O, Chapter 15, Water Code](#)) were amended in 2005 through the enactment of [House Bill 3029 \(79th Legislature, Regular Session\)](#). Among other revisions, the bill renamed the program, including the removal of “Pilot,” and amended the definition for “rural community,” which originally was the same as the definition in the T.A.C. rule.  
[Back to Table - [Definition 45](#)]

<sup>18</sup> “Rural political subdivision” is included in the category “rural community” because the types of areas encompassed by this definition (district, municipality, and county) are the same as those included for the term “rural community” in [Definition #39](#).  
[Back to Table - [Definitions 46 or 48](#)]



# Rural Area Definition 1

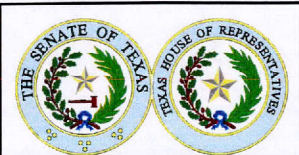
Sections 44.001(6) and 58.002(9), Agriculture Code  
Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA)  
Agricultural Diversification and Microenterprise Support Programs  
and TAFA Programs in General



- Rural, characterized by TAFA as a "non-metropolitan statistical area"
- Rural unincorporated area in an MSA (census 2000 MSA)
- Rural census-designated place or city with population < 20,000 within an MSA, and not adjacent to a city or group of cities with an aggregate population ≥ 50,000
- Urban core with aggregate population ≥ 50,000

Sections 44.001(6) and 58.002(9), Agriculture Code, define "rural area" as an area which is predominantly rural in character and which the board of directors of TAFA defines and declares to be a rural area. See [Note 1](#) in table.

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Texas Legislative Council

Source: 2000 Census and 2010 Census



[Back to Table - Definition 1](#)

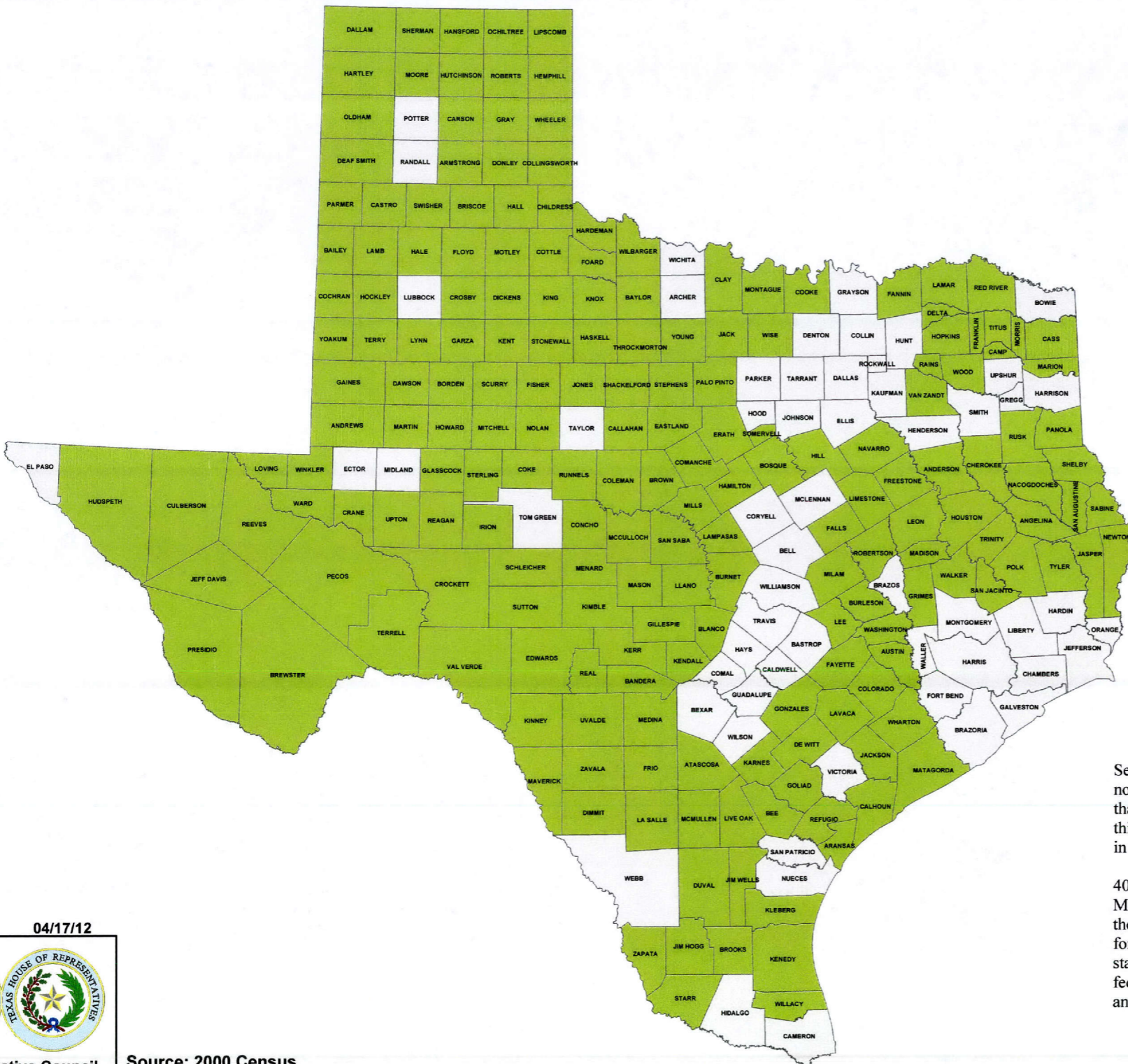
# Rural Area Definition 7

Section 24.001(9), Parks and Wildlife Code  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
State Assistance for Local Parks

# Rural Area Definition 19

40 T.A.C. § 19.1001(a)(9)  
Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services  
Nursing Facility Requirements for Licensure  
and Medicaid Certification

 Rural area  
 Urban area (census 2000 MSA)



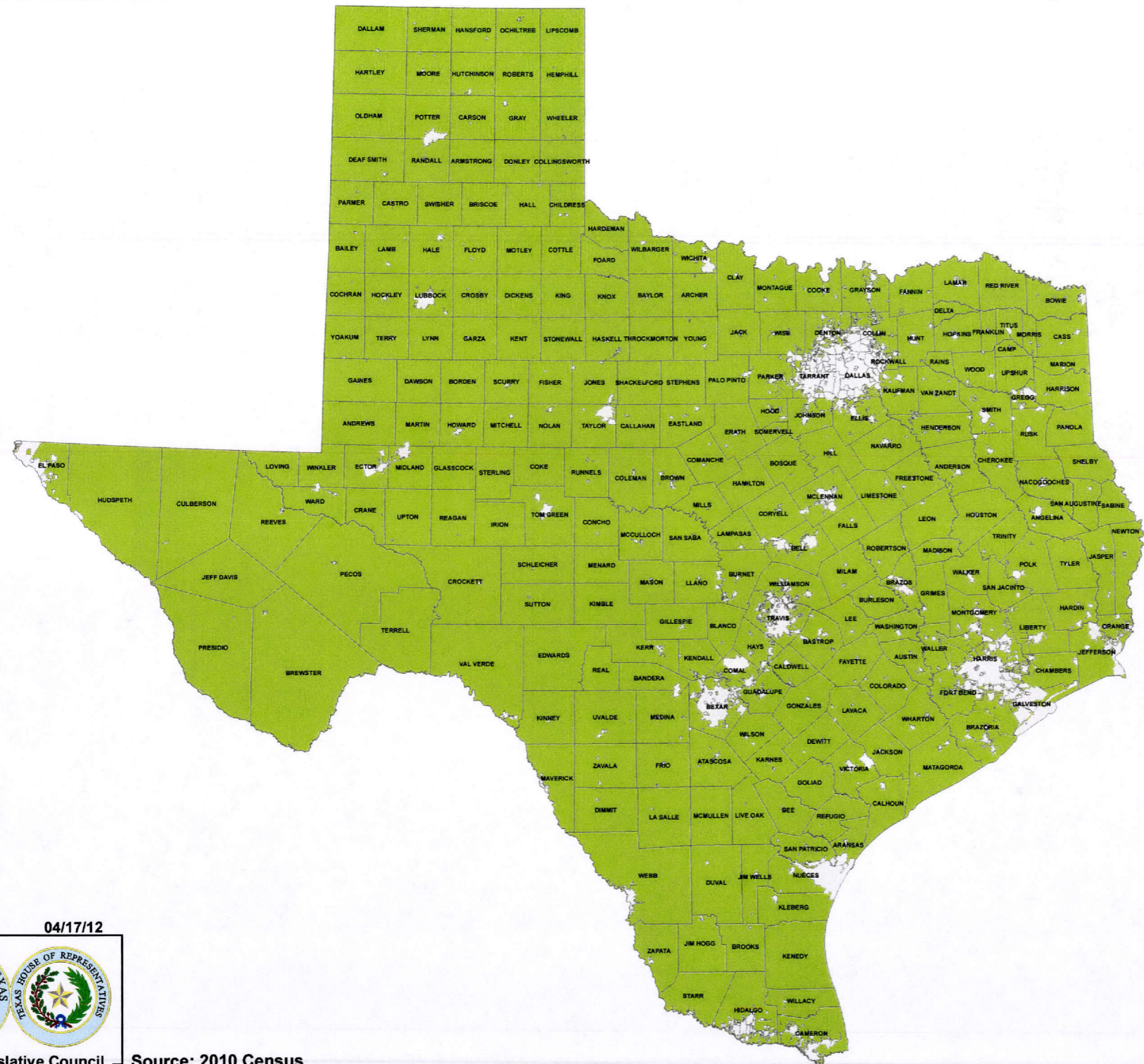
Section 24.001(9), Parks and Wildlife Code, defines "rural area" as any area not included in an urban area. An urban area is defined in Section 24.001(2) of that code as the area within a standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) in this state used in the last preceding federal decennial census. See [Note 4](#) in table.

40 T.A.C. § 19.1001(a)(9) provides that, for purposes of the requirement that a Medicare skilled nursing facility be in a rural area for consideration of a waiver of the requirement that the services of a registered nurse be provided in the facility for more than 40 hours a week, "rural area" is any area outside the boundaries of a standard metropolitan statistical area. Rural areas are defined and designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget; are determined by population, economic, and social requirements; and are subject to revisions.



# Rural Area Definition 8

Section 161.002(7), Utilities Code  
Public Utility Commission of Texas  
Electric Cooperative Corporations



- Rural area
- Municipality or unincorporated city, town, village or borough with population > 1,500

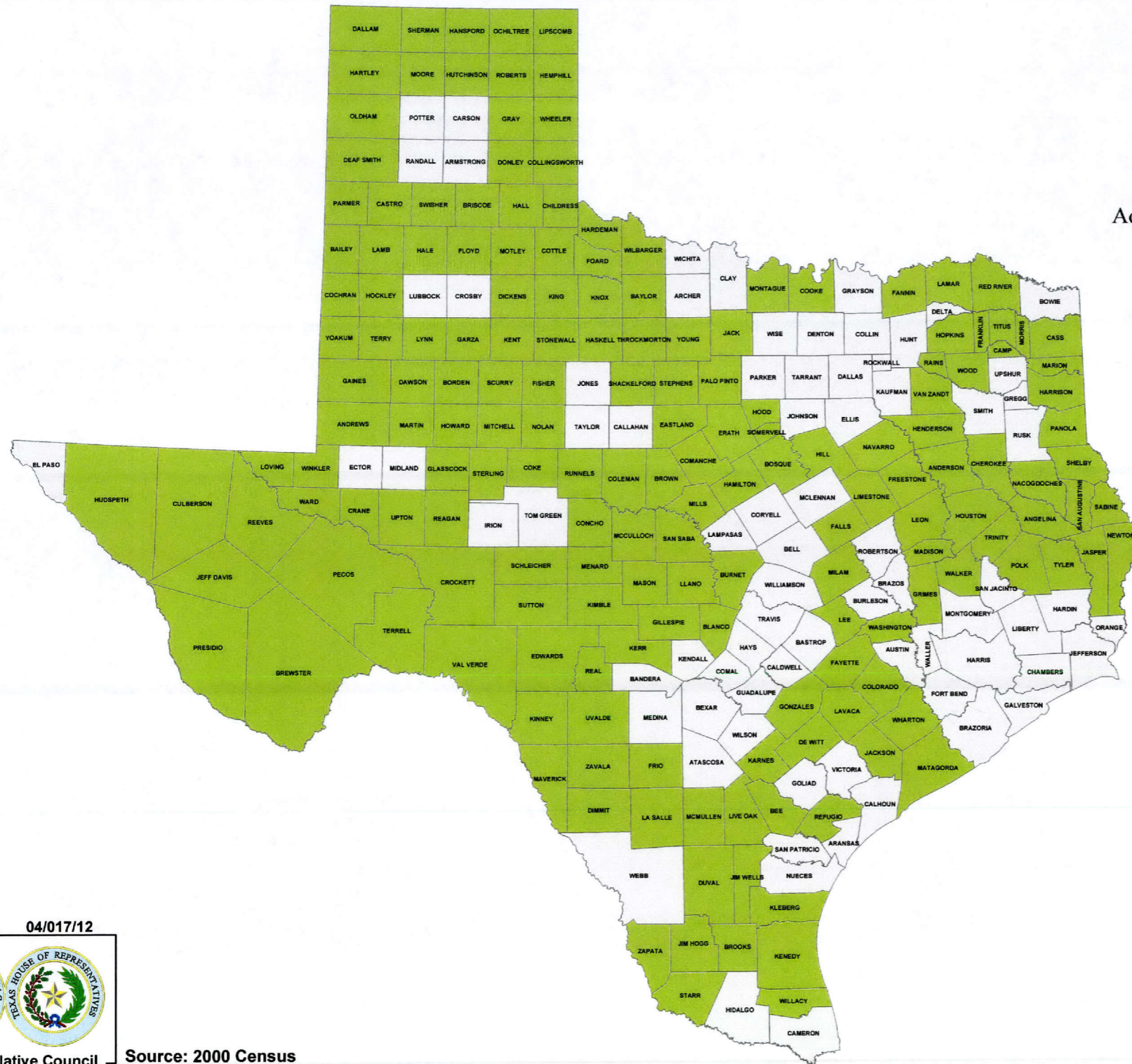
Section 161.002(7), Utilities Code, defines "rural area" as an area, including both farm and nonfarm population of the area, that is not located in a municipality or unincorporated city, town, village, or borough with a population greater than 1,500.

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# Rural Area Definition 10

1 T.A.C. § 355.8065(b)(34)  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
Additional Reimbursement to Disproportionate Share Hospitals  
for Medicaid Hospital Services



Rural area  
 PMSA or MSA (census 2000 MSA)

1 T.A.C. § 355.8065(b)(34) defines "rural area" as an area outside a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) or a primary metropolitan statistical area (PMSA). See [Note 2](#) in table.

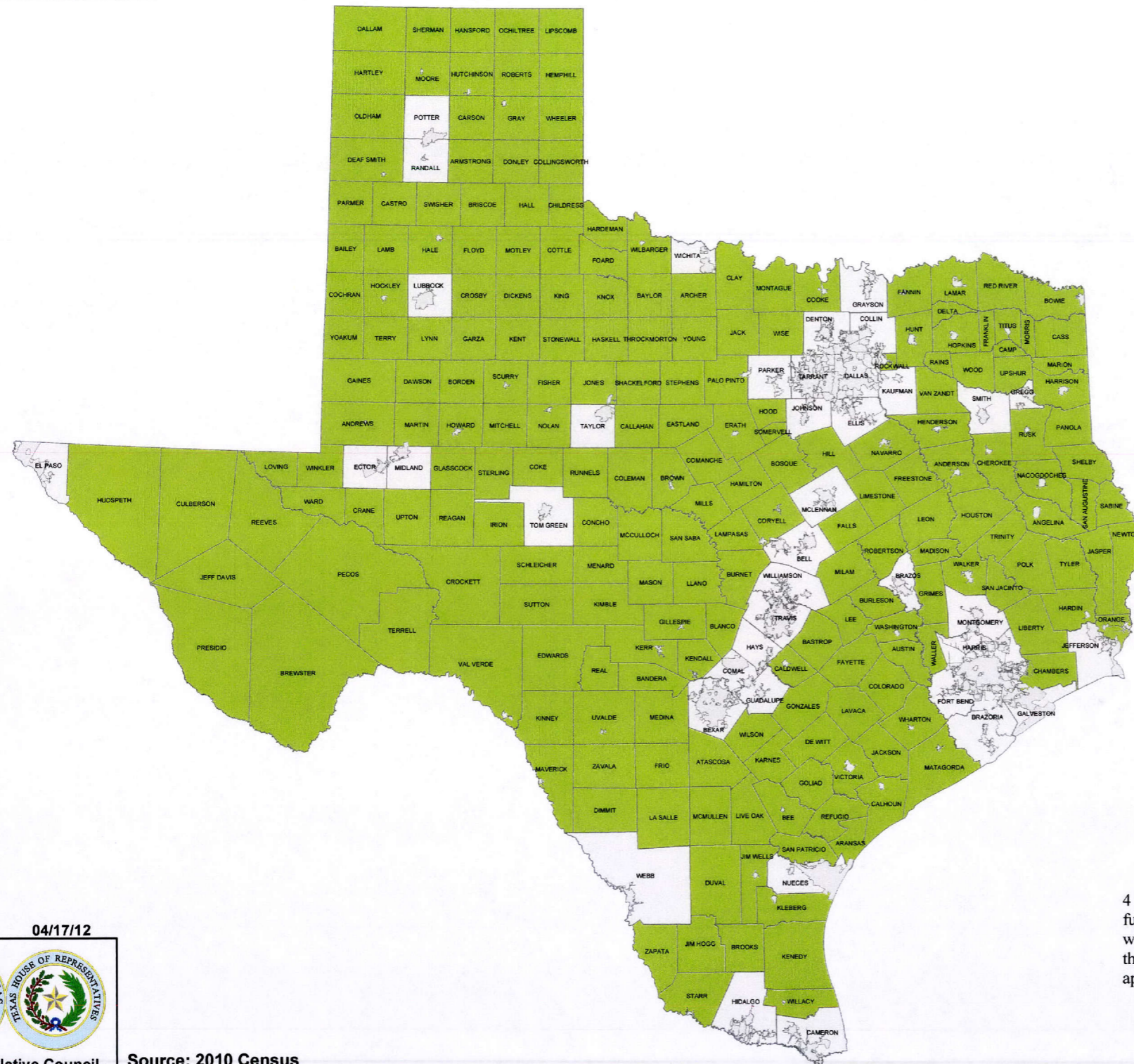
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Texas Legislative Council Source: 2000 Census



# Rural Area Definition 11

4 T.A.C. § 30.10(b)(7)  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Renewable Energy Demonstration Pilot Program



- Rural area
- Counties with population  $\geq$  100,000
- Cities with population  $\geq$  10,000

4 T.A.C. § 30.10(b)(7) specifies that, for purposes of allocating project funds, a location is considered to be in a "rural area" if it benefits cities with populations under 10,000 and/or counties under 100,000. In practice, the Office of Rural Affairs within the Texas Department of Agriculture applies the term to cities with populations under 10,000 or counties under 100,000.

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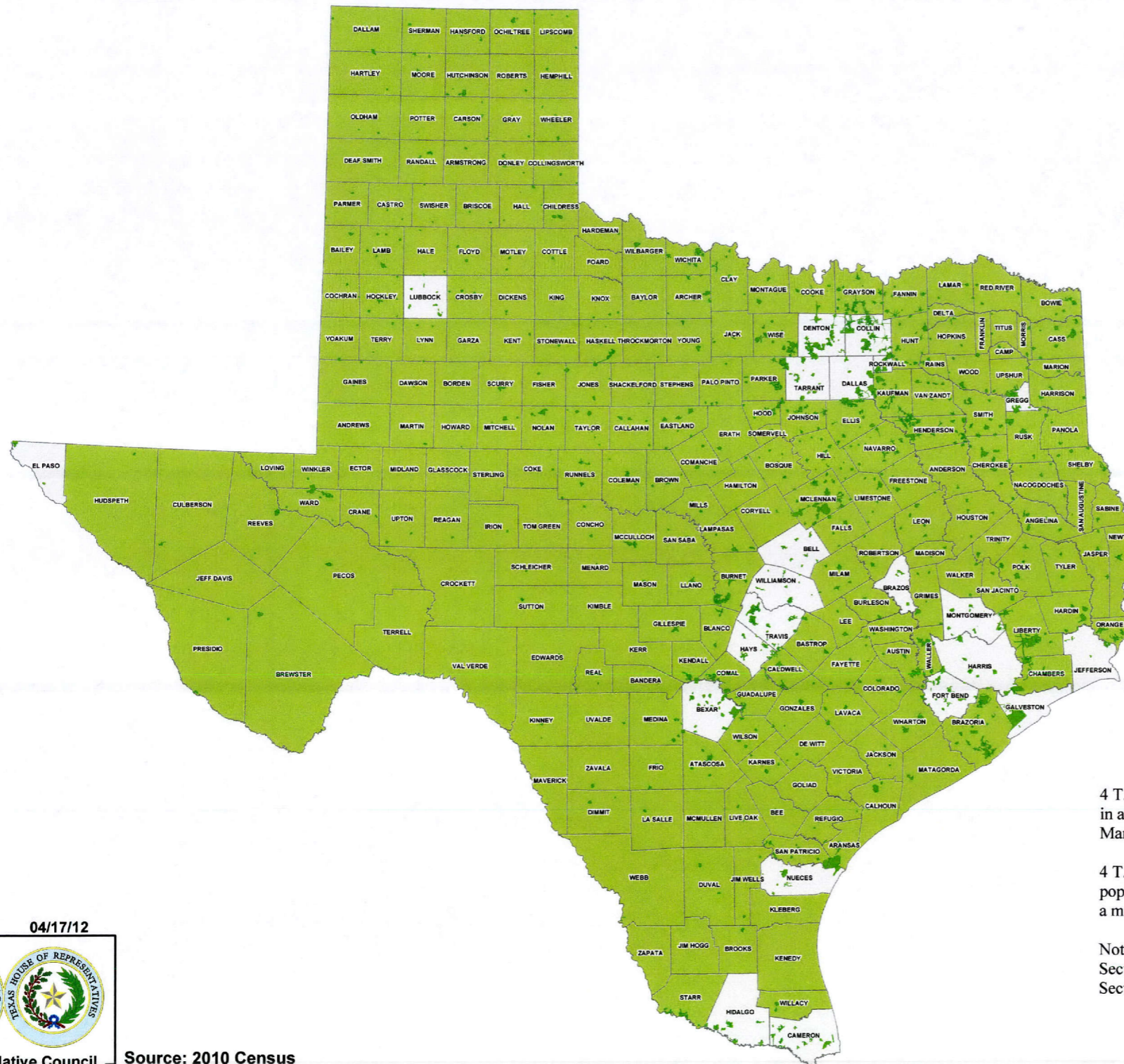



Texas Legislative Council      Source: 2010 Census

[Back to Table - Definition 11](#)

# Rural Hospital Definition 12

4 T.A.C. § 30.141(2) and 4 T.A.C. § 30.142(b)  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Designation of a Hospital as a Rural Hospital



- Rural county with population density < 225 persons/square mile
- Rural municipality with population ≤ 15,000
- County with population density ≥ 225 persons/square mile

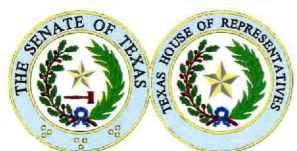
4 T.A.C. § 30.141(2) defines "rural hospital" as a hospital that is not located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as determined by the Federal Office of Management and Budget. See [Note 2](#) in table.

4 T.A.C. § 30.142(b) requires that a hospital be located both in a county with a population density of less than 225 persons per square mile of land area and in a municipality of 15,000 persons or less to be designated as a "rural hospital."

Note: The Office of Rural Affairs within the Texas Department of Agriculture uses Section 30.142(b) as its designation criterion. MSAs are not mapped because Section 30.141(2) is not used.

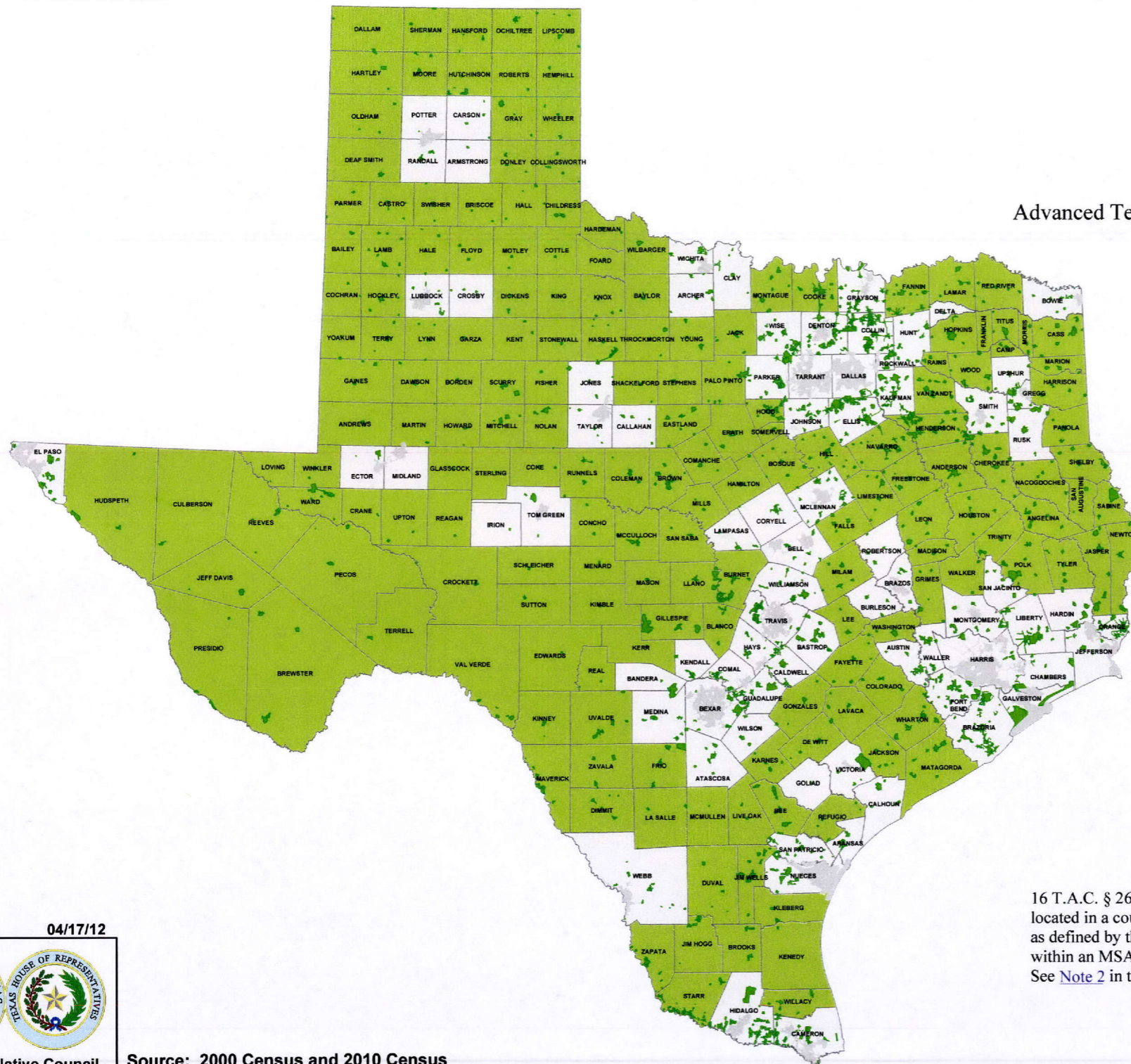
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# Rural Area Definition 13

16 T.A.C. § 26.143(c)(6)  
Public Utility Commission of Texas  
Advanced Telecommunications and Information Services in Rural Areas



- Rural county not in an MSA
- Rural community not in an MSA, or a community with population ≤ 20,000 in an MSA and not adjacent to the MSA's primary city
- MSA (census 2000 MSA)
- MSA primary city (census 2000 MSA)

16 T.A.C. § 26.143(c)(6) defines "rural area" or "rural service area" as any community located in a county not included within any metropolitan statistical area (MSA) boundary, as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget, and any community within an MSA with a population of 20,000 or fewer not adjacent to the primary MSA city. See [Note 2](#) in table.

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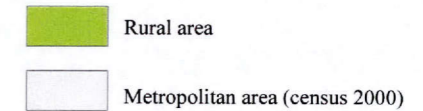
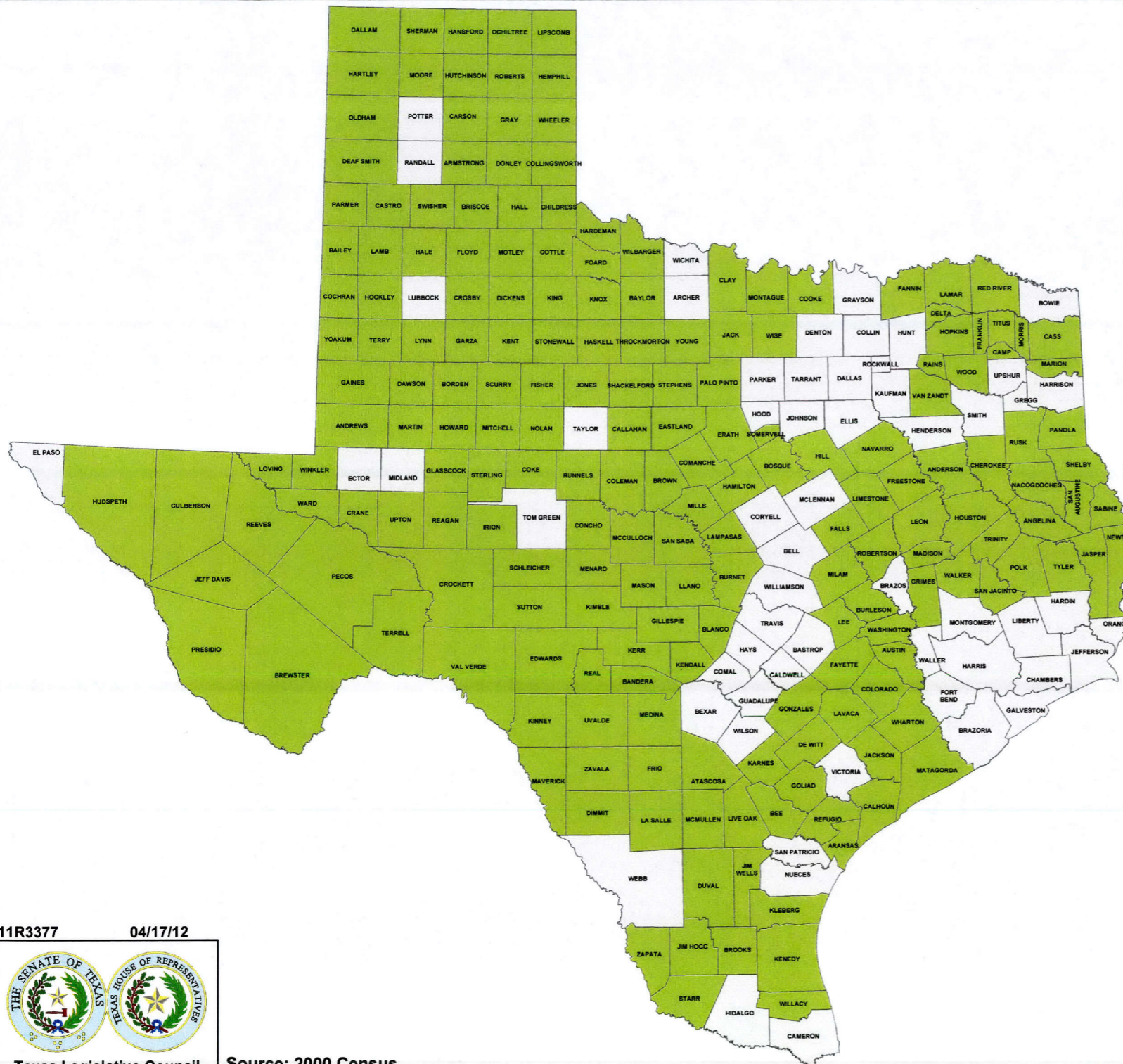
Source: 2000 Census and 2010 Census

[Back to Table - Definition 13](#)

# Rural Area Definition 14

19 T.A.C. § 22.102(9)  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Scholarship Programs  
for Vocational Nursing Students

19 T.A.C. § 22.122(10)  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Scholarship Programs  
for Professional Nursing Students

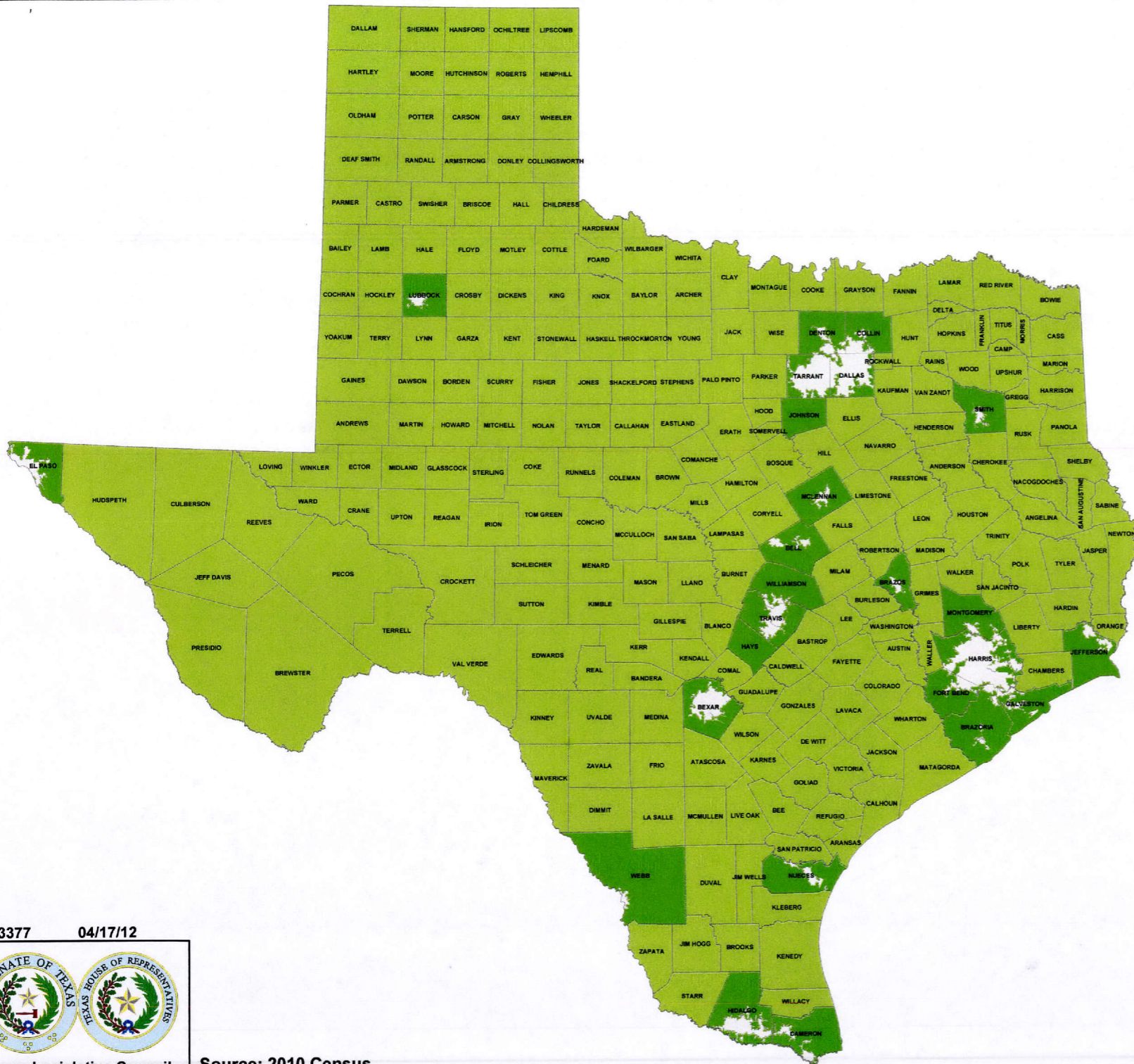


19 T.A.C. §§ 22.102(9) and 22.122(10) define "rural" as located in a nonmetropolitan area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau in its most recent census. See [Note 2](#) in table.

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## Rural Area Definition 17

25 T.A.C. § 83.2(7)

Texas Department of State Health Services  
Public Health Improvement Grants  
Permanent Fund for Children and Public Health

## Rural County Definition 22

Section 487.301(2), Government Code  
4 T.A.C. § 30.111(7)

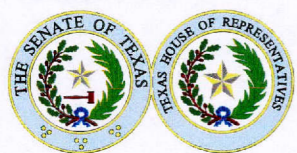
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Permanent Fund for Rural Health Facility Capital Improvement

- Rural county with population ≤ 150,000
- Rural area of county with population > 150,000 outside of census bureau-delineated urbanized area
- Census bureau-delineated urbanized area

25 T.A.C. § 83.2(7) defines "rural area" as a county that had a population in the most recent decennial census of 150,000 or less, or that part of a county with a population greater than 150,000 that is not delineated as urbanized by the U.S. Census Bureau. See [Note 4](#) and [Note 8](#) in table.

Section 487.301(2), Government Code, and 4 T.A.C. § 30.111(7) define "rural county" as a county that has a population of 150,000 or less, or with respect to a county that has a population of more than 150,000 and contains a geographic area that is not delineated as urbanized by the federal census bureau, that part of the county that is not delineated as urbanized. See [Note 4](#) and [Note 8](#) in table.

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Texas Legislative Council Source: 2010 Census

Back to Table - [Definitions 17](#) or [22](#)

# Rural County Definitions 20, 21, and 31

Section 61.9601, Education Code  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Repayment of Certain Law School Education Loans

Section 88.621(6), Education Code  
Texas A&M University System  
Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program

4 T.A.C. § 30.180(4)  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Rural Health Information Technology Grant Program

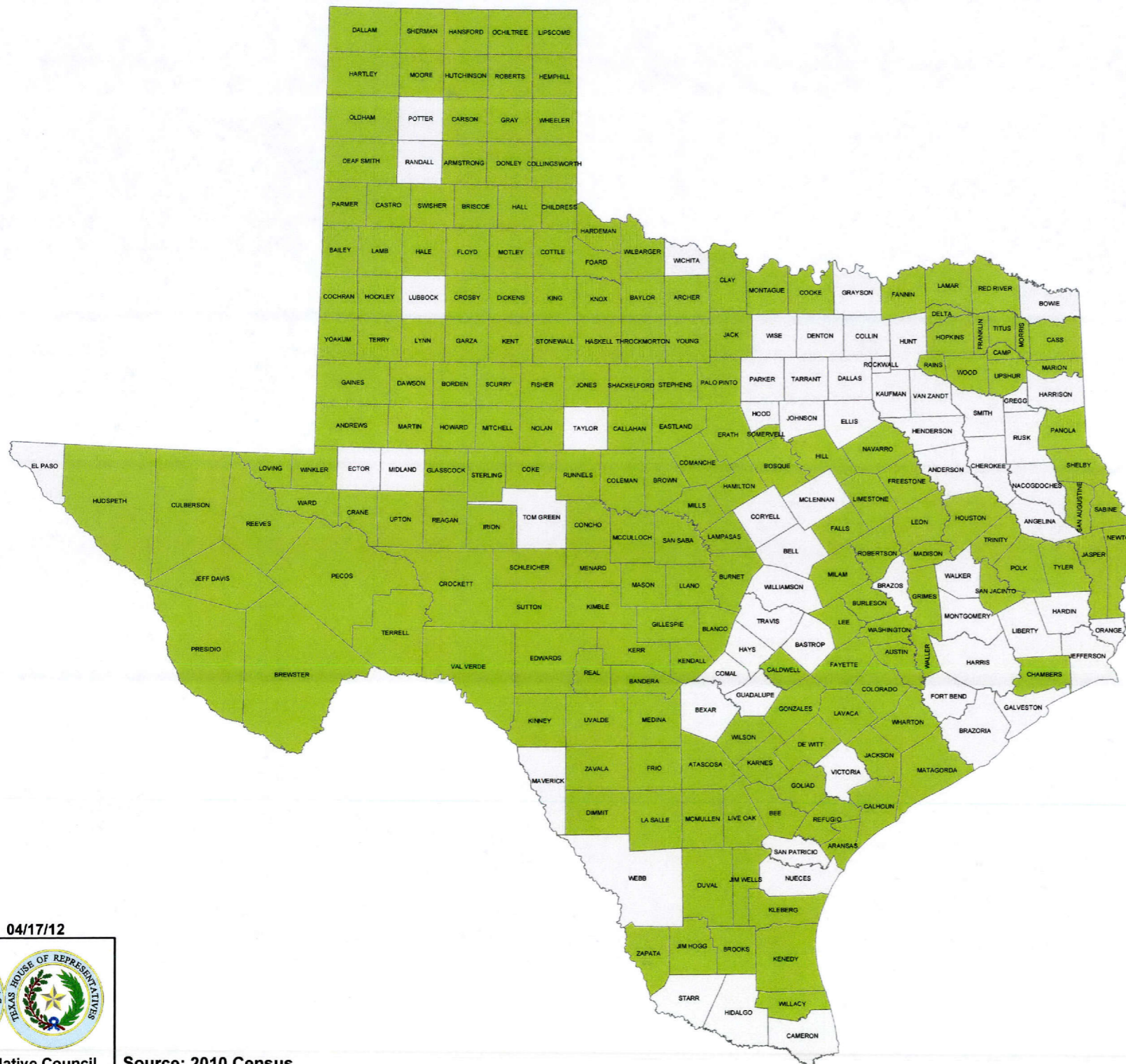
- Rural county (population ≤ 50,000)
- Non-rural county (population > 50,000)

Section 61.9601, Education Code, defines "rural county" as a county with a population of 50,000 or less.

Section 88.621(6), Education Code, defines "rural county" as a county with a population of less than 50,000.

4 T.A.C. § 30.180(4) defines "rural county" as a county in Texas that has a population of 50,000 or less.

Back to Table - [Definitions 20, 21, or 31](#)

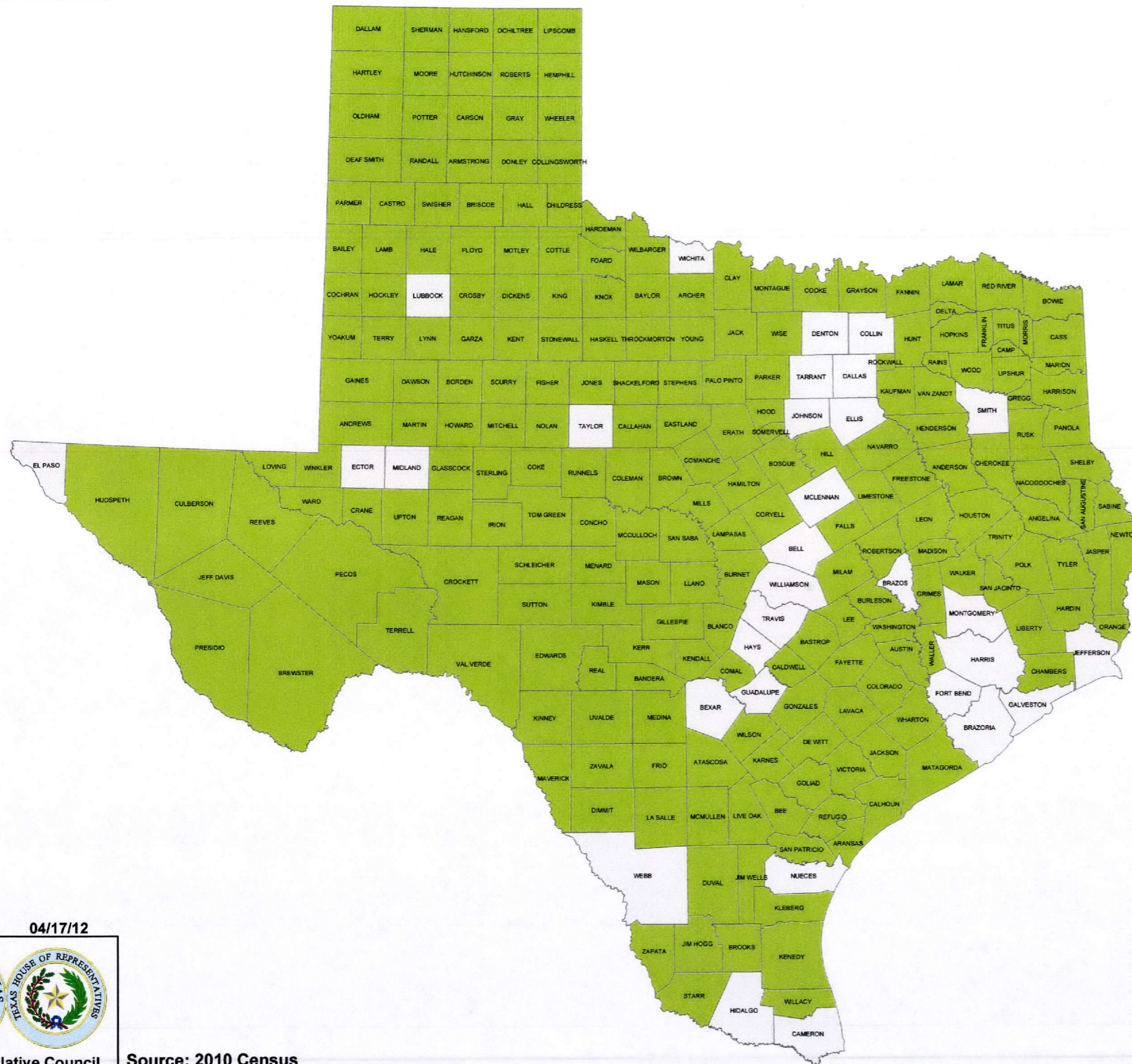


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# Rural County Definition 23

Section 487.751, Government Code  
4 T.A.C. § 30.130(9)  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Rural Technology Center Grant Program



Rural county  
 County with population ≥ 125,000

Section 487.751, Government Code, defines "rural county" as a county that has a population of not more than 125,000.

4 T.A.C. § 30.130(9) defines "rural county" as a county in Texas that has a population of not more than 125,000.



Source: 2010 Census



[Back to Table - Definition 23](#)

# Rural Border County

## Definition 24

Section 1403.003(a)(2), Government Code  
Texas Public Finance Authority and  
Texas Department of Transportation  
Set-aside of General Obligation Bond Proceeds for  
Roadway Projects for Colonias Located in Rural Border Counties



 Rural border county  
 Other county

Section 1403.003(a)(2), Government Code, defines "rural border county" as a county that has a population of less than 55,000 and is adjacent to an international border.

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Texas Legislative Council Source: 2010 Census

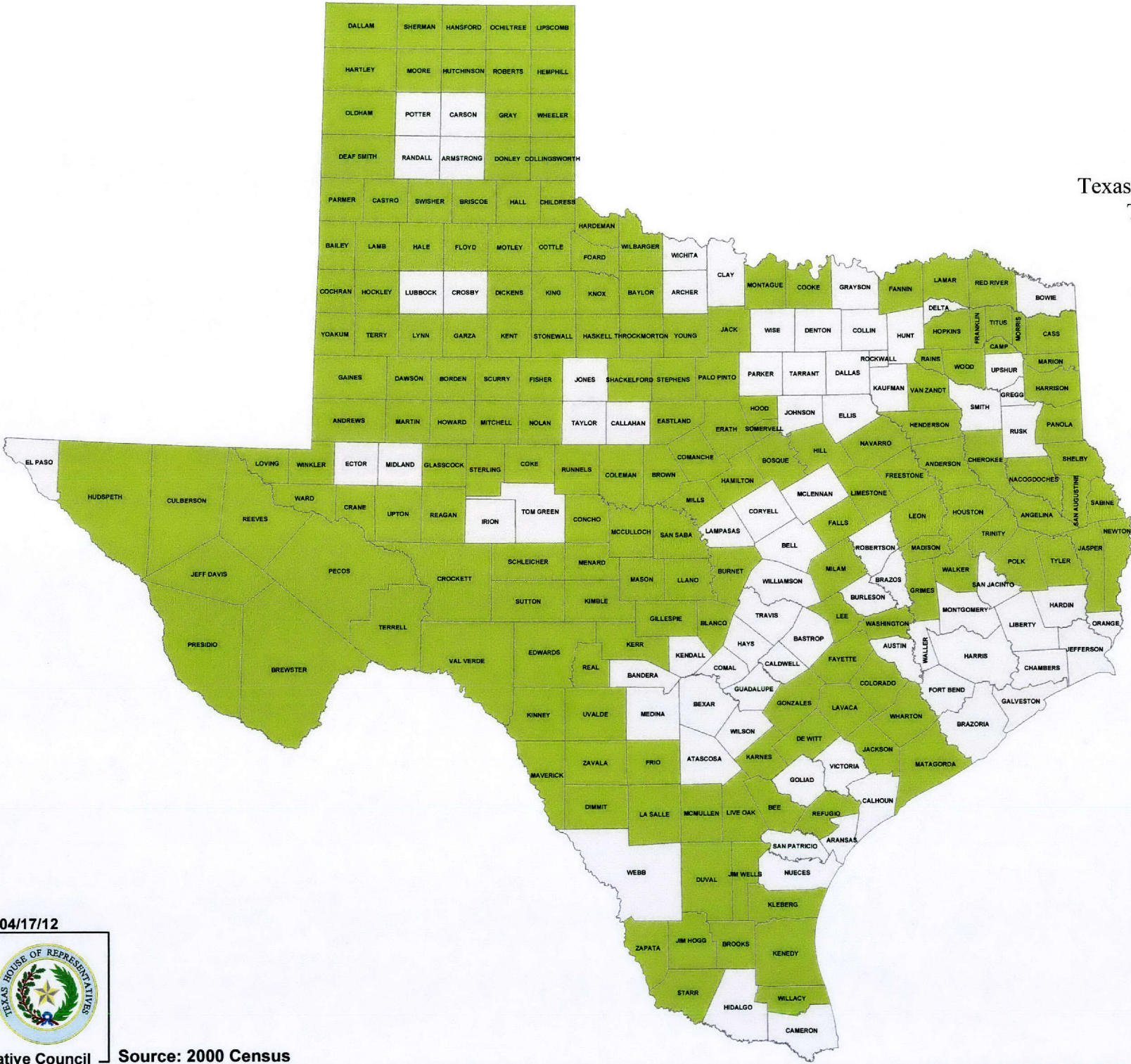
Back to Table - Definition 24



# Rural County Definitions 25 and 30

Section 2306.004(33), Government Code  
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)  
TDHCA Economic Development Programs in General

4 T.A.C. § 30.81(7)  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Texas Health Service Corps Program



Rural county  
 PMSA or MSA (census 2000 MSA)

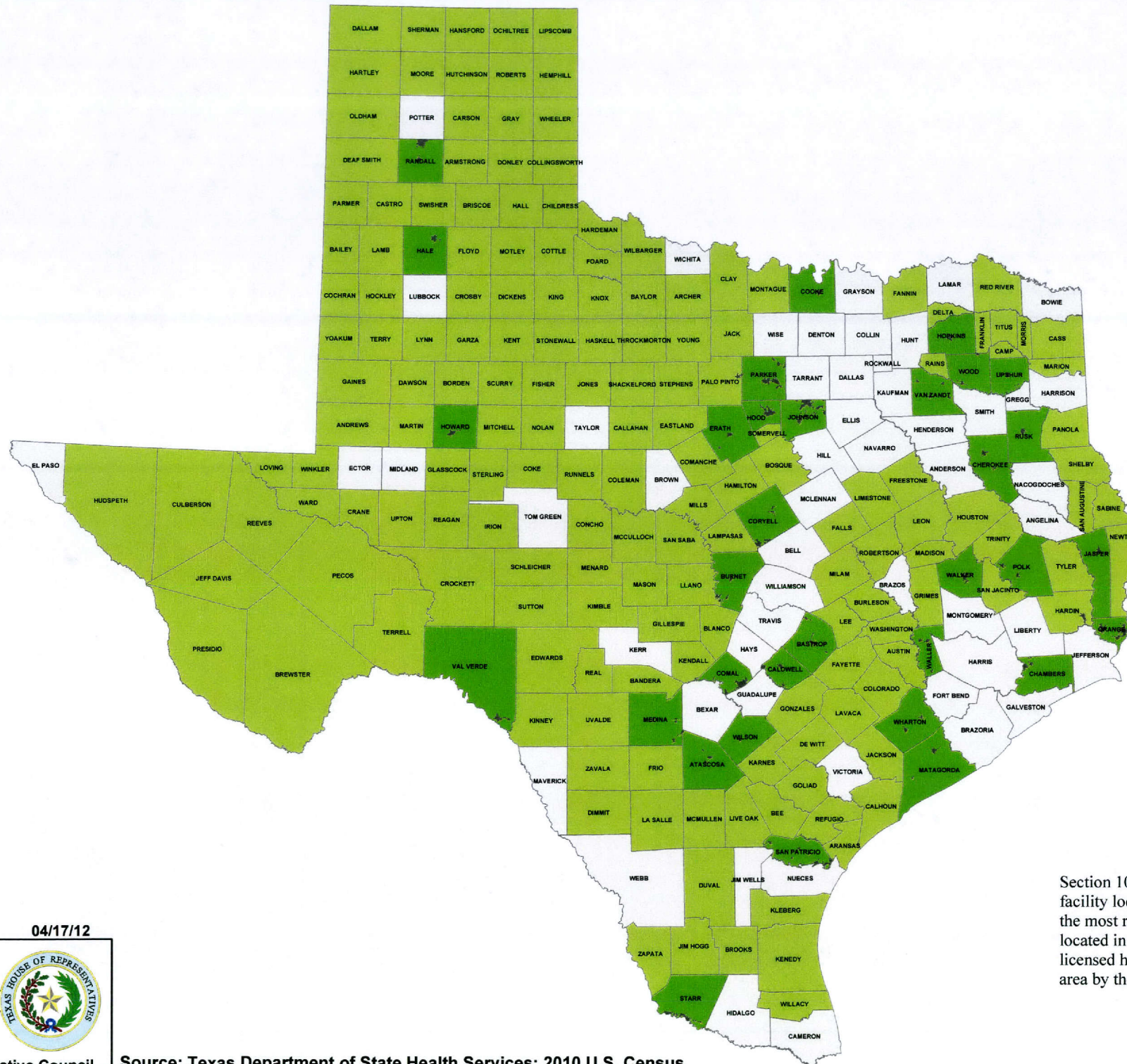
Section 2306.004(33), Government Code, defines "rural county" as a county that is outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area (PMSA) or a metropolitan statistical area (MSA). See [Note 2](#) in table.

4 T.A.C. § 30.81(7) defines "rural county" as any county within Texas that is not designated as a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) by the U.S. Census Bureau. See [Note 2](#) in table.



# Rural Provider Definition 26

Section 108.0025, Health and Safety Code  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
Designation of a Health Care Facility  
as a Rural Provider



- Rural county with population  $\leq 35,000$
- Rural area of county with population  $> 35,000$  and  $< 100$  hospital beds, not in any census bureau-delineated urbanized area
- Census bureau-delineated urbanized area in county with population  $> 35,000$
- Non-rural county

Section 108.0025, Health and Safety Code, defines "rural provider" as a health care facility located in a county with a population of not more than 35,000 as of July 1 of the most recent year for which county population estimates have been published or located in a county with a population of more than 35,000 but with not more than 100 licensed hospital beds and not located in an area that is delineated as an urbanized area by the U.S. Census Bureau. See [Note 4](#) and [Note 9](#) in table.

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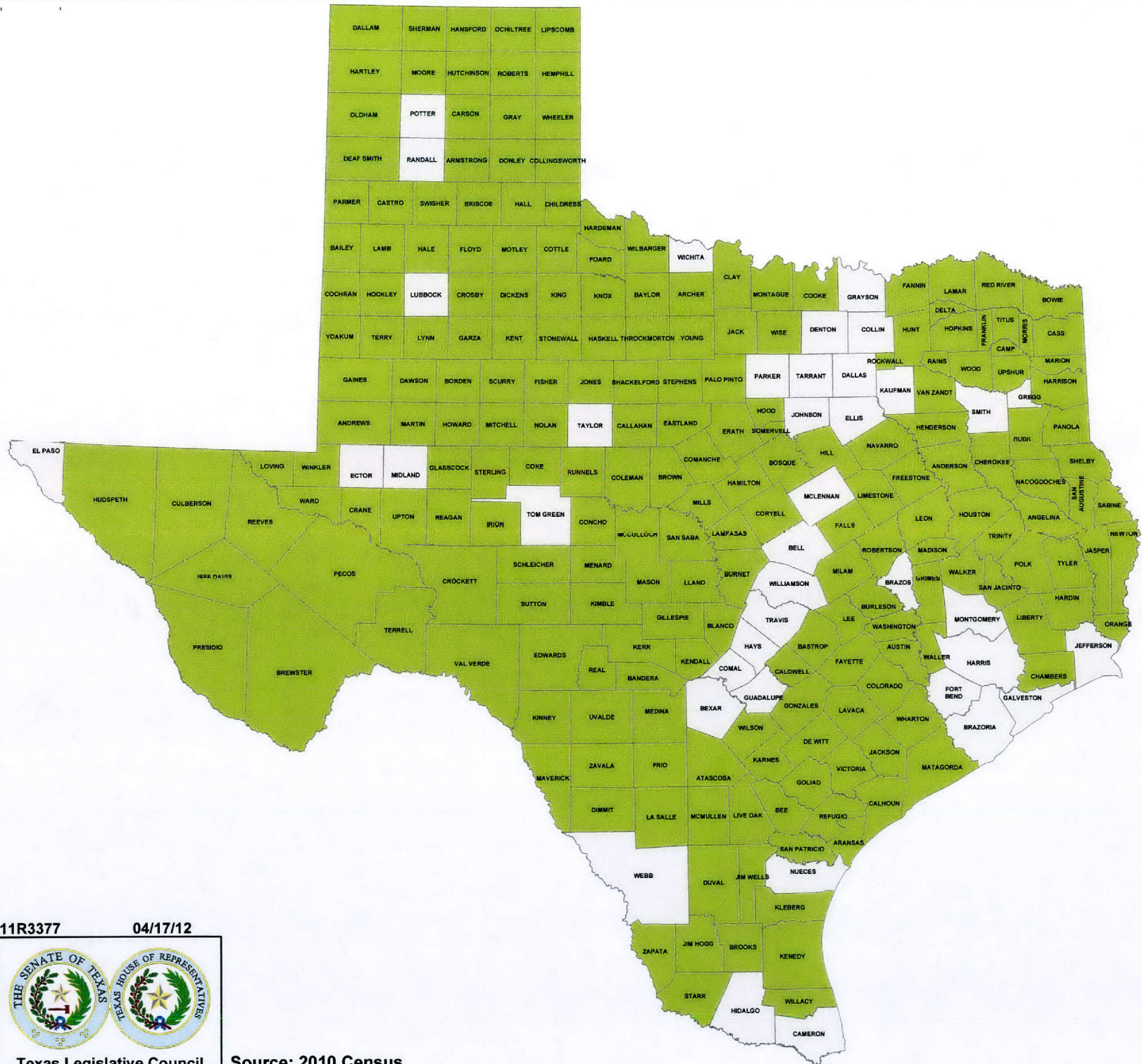
Texas Legislative Council

Source: Texas Department of State Health Services; 2010 U.S. Census

Back to Table - [Definition 26](#)

# Rural Public Hospital Definition 29

1 T.A.C. § 355.8069(b)(12)  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
Medicaid Hospital Services  
Supplemental Medicaid Payments to Certain Rural Public Hospitals



Rural county  
 County with population  $\geq$  100,000

1 T.A.C. § 355.8069(b)(12) defines "rural public hospital" as a public hospital affiliated with a city, county, hospital authority, or hospital district located in a county of less than 100,000 population based on the most recent federal decennial census. See [Note 11](#) in table.

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Texas Legislative Council Source: 2010 Census

[Back to Table - Definition 29](#)

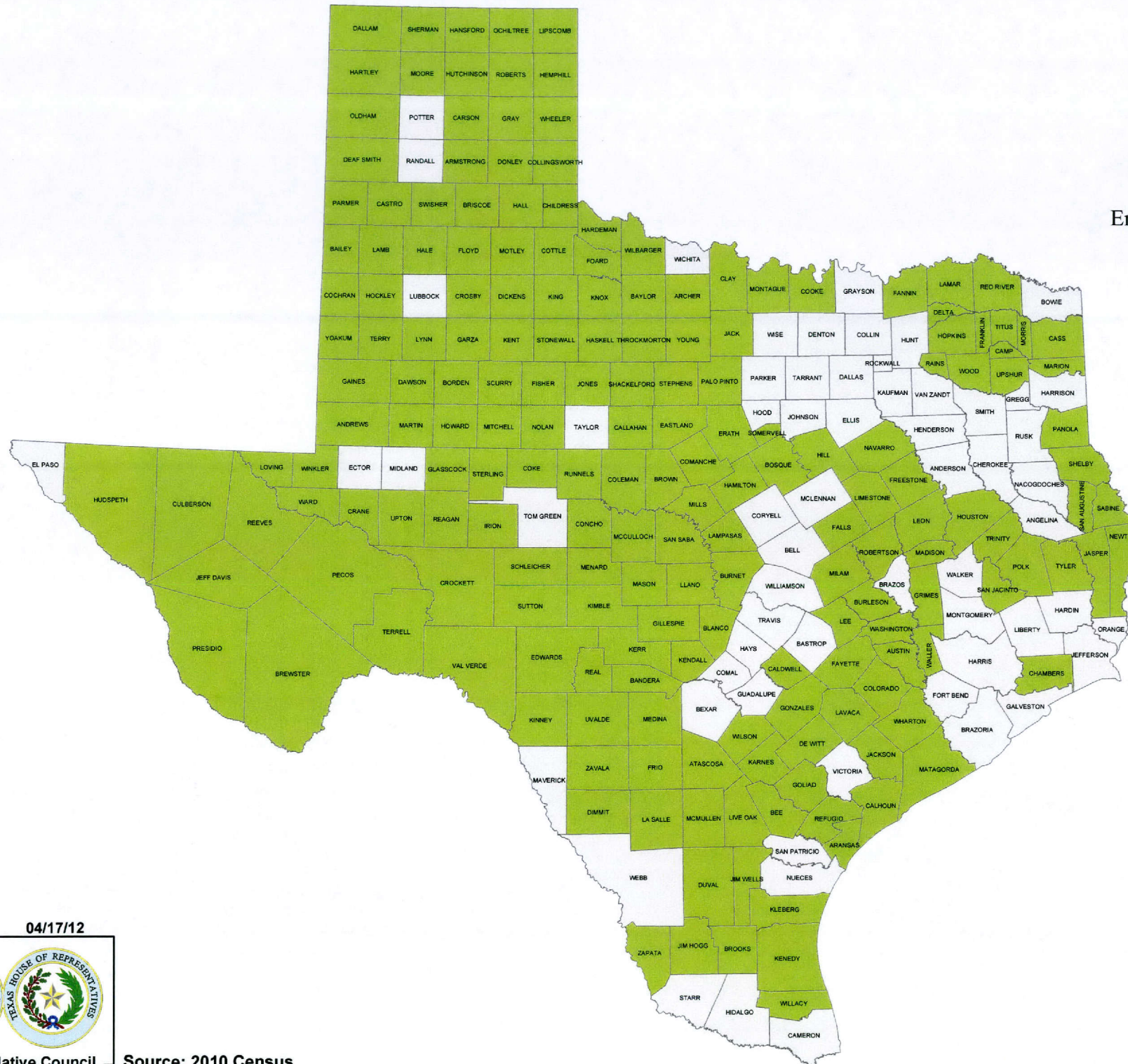
# Rural County Definition 34

25 T.A.C. § 157.130(a)(2)

Texas Department of State Health Services  
Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care System Account  
and Emergency Medical Services, Trauma Facilities,  
and Trauma Care System Fund

25 T.A.C. § 157.131(a)(2)

Texas Department of State Health Services  
Designated Trauma Facility  
and Emergency Medical Services Account



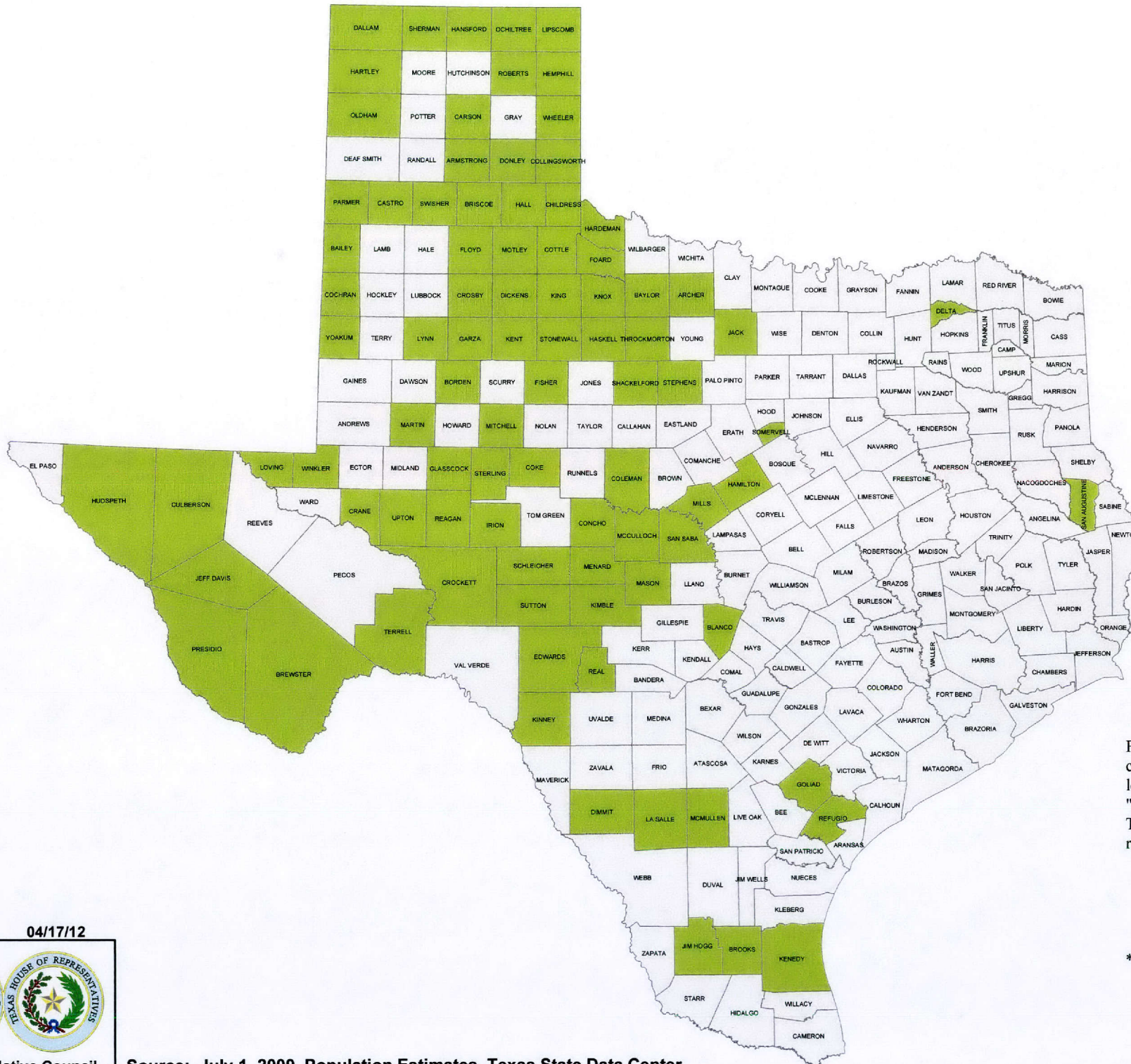
Rural county  
 County with population ≥ 50,000

25 T.A.C. §§ 157.130(a)(2) and 157.131(a)(2) define "rural county" as a county with a population of less than 50,000 based on the latest official federal census population figures.



# Rural County Definition 38

40 T.A.C. § 815.28(e)  
Texas Workforce Commission  
Work Search Requirements Relating to  
Unemployment Compensation Benefits



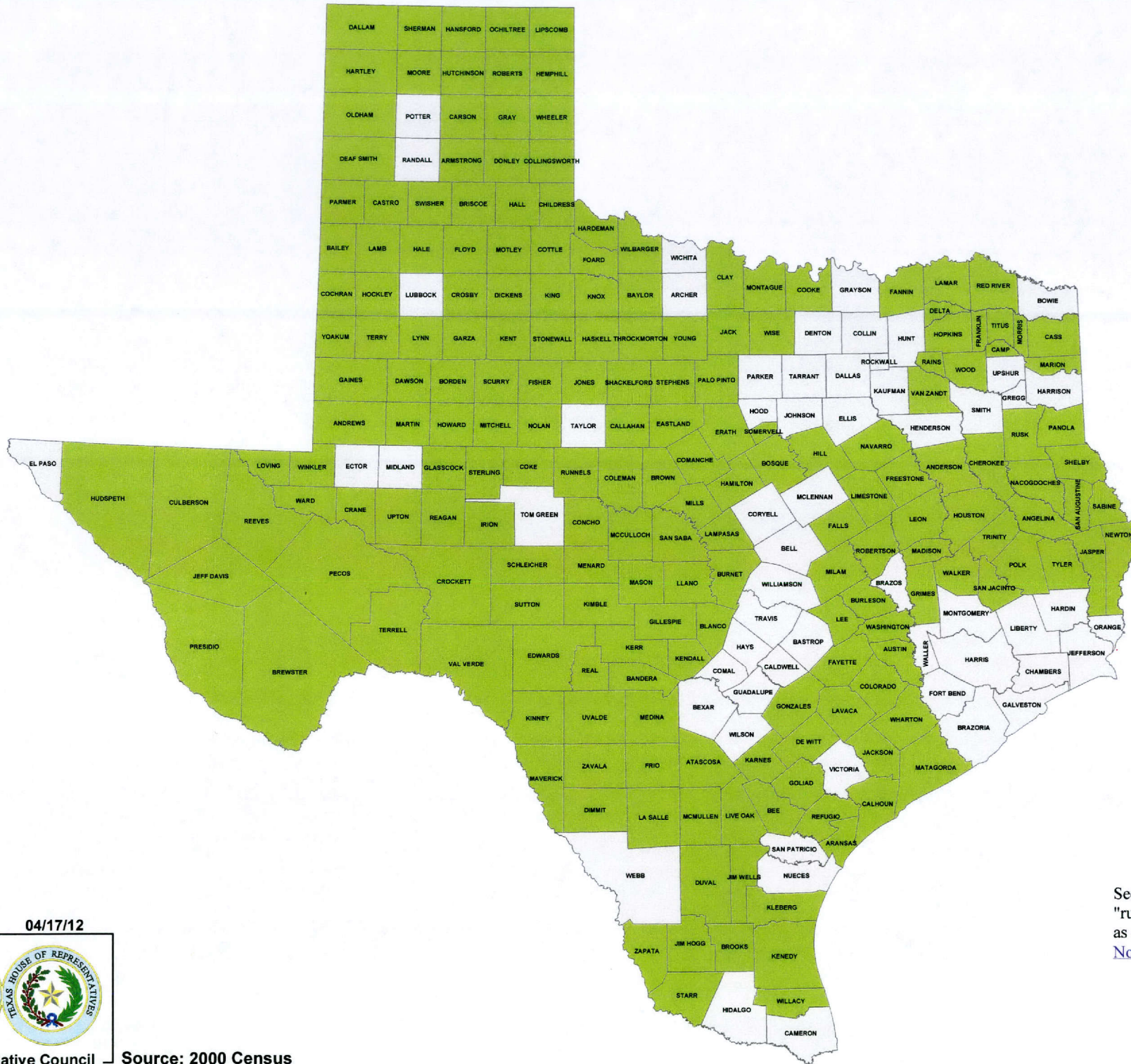
Rural county  
 County with population > 10,000

For purposes of a reduction in the minimum number of weekly work search contacts by a local workforce development board in response to specific local labor market information and conditions, 40 T.A.C. § 815.28(e) defines "rural counties" as those counties having a population estimated by the Texas State Data Center to be not more than 10,000 as of July 1 of the most recent year for which county population estimates have been published.\*

\*Values used for this map reflect estimated population as of July 2009.

# Rural Community Definition 42

Section 487.101(5), Government Code  
4 T.A.C. § 30.51(14)  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Outstanding Rural Scholar Recognition and  
Loan Program for Rural Health Care



Rural county  
 Metropolitan county (census 2000)

Section 487.101(5), Government Code, and 4 T.A.C. § 30.51(14) define "rural community" as a municipality in Texas in a nonmetropolitan county as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau in its most recent census. See [Note 15](#) in table.

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Texas Legislative Council

Source: 2000 Census

[Back to Table - Definition 42](#)

*The mission of the Texas Legislative Council is to provide professional, nonpartisan service and support to the Texas Legislature and legislative agencies. In every area of responsibility, we strive for quality and efficiency.*

This publication can be found at <http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/policy.htm> and [http://capweb/RMD/rmd\\_index.html](http://capweb/RMD/rmd_index.html).

