



Rural Area Code Caucus

States and territories that have one area code take pride in that fact! It's a badge of honor. For example, Montanans and Granite Staters PROUDLY display their single area codes on bumper stickers, wall hangings, window art, T-shirts, etc.; 406 and 603, respectively.

Area codes are often associated with places, regional cultures and accents, and geographies. They are also associated with political perspectives and parties, and are sometimes used to categorize political leanings. This is true in large states with multiple area codes—some area codes clearly describe urban city dwellers (614/380 for Kara) while others clearly label the “country folk” (814 in Celia’s world).

We propose the development of Rural Area Code Caucus (RACC) to engage UCEDDs on issues that manifest themselves in unique ways in rural, remote and frontier regions of states and territories. These issues include transportation—where public transit may be non-existent or limited to one or two roundtrip bus routes each week. Employment—where the nearest employer is a gas station 40 miles away. Housing—where public or affordable accessible housing stock is nonexistent. Healthcare—where the nearest medical specialist is 200 miles from a small community and where telemedicine is unreliable because Internet infrastructure is lacking or unfeasible due to the nature of the healthcare need.

The RACC would serve as a resource to the AUCD Public Policy Committee and as a ready-consultant to the Board of Directors on issues of unique interest or concern to rural, remote and frontier areas that UCEDDs serve.

In 2016, the U.S. Census Bureau¹ reported that rural areas cover 97% of the nation’s land area, but contain only 19% of the population—that’s still 60 million people, with up to 15 million having some type of disability². That may be an underestimate since rural dwelling citizens tend to be older.

¹ See <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-210.html>

² See https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6732a3.htm?s_cid=mm6732a3_w