

NFCB Rural Unmet Needs Study

Rural needs questionnaire

Draft: 3/3/2026



SAMPLE SUMMARY

Sample	Sources	Target	Description
Rural general population	DataZapp CATI service	n=5,250	Adults age 18+ from rural zip codes based on geographic definition from the Census.
Urban general population	Datazapp	n=1,000	Adults age 18+ from urban zip codes based on geographic definition from the Census, as a control group.

SURVEY WELCOME SCREEN:

Thank you for participating in our survey! This survey asks about your experiences of living where you do, the kinds of information and media you seek, and what you find valuable in your local area.

A few quick notes

- The information you provide here will be confidential and will only be analyzed in aggregate
- Your contact information and responses will not be shared with any third-parties (so you will not be contacted by others as a result of completing this survey)

The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you're unable to complete this in one sitting, simply close your browser wherever you pause. When you are able to return to the survey, click on the link provided, and the answers you have already provided will be saved there.

Click "Next" to begin the survey.

First, just a few questions about you.

1. *[Single select]*

In what year were you born?

2. *[Dropdown list with option "I do not live in the United States"]* **[SCREEN OUT if do not live in US]**

In which state do you live?

3. *[Open-ended text]*

And what is the zip code of your current residence?

4. *[Single select]*

Did you grow up in [Q2], or did you move from another place?

- a. I grew up in this state
- b. I moved here from another state
- c. I moved here from another country
- d. Prefer not to answer

Next, we'd like to learn a bit about your experiences and opinions about where you live.

5. *[Multiple select, randomize]*

Which of the following words would you use to describe where you live? Please select all that apply.

- a. Affordable
- b. Artsy
- c. Busy
- d. Comfortable
- e. Dangerous
- f. Declining
- g. Diverse
- h. Educated
- i. Elite
- j. Fun
- k. Improving
- l. Limited opportunities
- m. Lonely
- n. Safe
- o. Slow-paced
- p. Stable
- q. Stressful
- r. Tight-knit
- s. Traditional
- t. Vibrant
- u. Well-resourced
- v. Welcoming
- w. None of the above

6. *[Single select]*

When you think about your "local community," which of the following best describes the area you have in mind?

- a. The nearby area around my home
- b. My town, city, or village
- c. My county, region, or reservation
- d. A larger area that includes multiple towns or cities
- e. I don't usually think of "local community" in geographic terms

7. [Rating scale, randomize]

How easy or difficult is it for you to access the following services when you need them?

Please think about availability, distance, cost, and reliability.

Columns:

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult
5. Not sure

Rows:

- a. Basic utilities (*electricity, water, heating*)
- b. Childcare
- c. Eldercare
- d. Emergency services
- e. Entertainment and recreational activities
- f. Counseling or mental health support [STICK]
- g. Healthcare (*doctors, clinics, hospitals, dentists*) [STICK]
- h. Grocery stores and markets
- i. Local news and information about my community
- j. Necessary retail (*basic or seasonal clothing, home goods*)
- k. Parks and places to walk or exercise
- l. Pharmacies or prescription medication
- m. Public library
- n. Public transportation

8. [Rating scale, randomize]

Please rate your agreement with the following statements about where you live.

Columns:

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Rows:

- a. Decisions made by those in charge often overlook the needs of places like mine
- b. I am hopeful about the future of where I live
- c. I feel a strong sense of pride and belonging where I live
- d. I feel comfortable expressing who I am and what I believe
- e. I trust information I hear from people where I live more than what I see in the news or online
- f. Local leaders (like community, tribal, faith leaders) are important sources of information for me
- g. My primary language is respected where I live
- h. People here like to take care of their own problems without outside help
- i. People where I live usually help out when someone is struggling

- j. People outside my area often misunderstand what life is like here
- k. The government needs to do more to support basic services where I live

9. *[Multiple select, randomize]*

In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following? Select all that apply.

- a. A loss or reduction of income
- b. A clear improvement in internet or technology access
- c. Conflict or disagreement within my community
- d. Felt isolated or lonely
- e. Felt stretched thin trying to balance all my responsibilities
- f. Fixed or built something myself instead of getting help
- g. Had an experience that changed how I think about people or ideas
- h. Had difficulty accessing enough food
- i. Major disruption due to severe weather or a natural disaster
- j. Spent leisure time outdoors as a daily routine
- k. Started a new job that was a good fit for my goals
- l. Traveled out of state for a leisure or vacation trip
- m. Unreliable cell phone service or internet access
- n. None of the above

10. *[Rating scale, randomize]*

Below is a list of organizations. For each one, please indicate how much you trust information or help from them.

Columns:

- 1. Trustworthy
- 2. Neutral
- 3. Untrustworthy

Rows:

- a. Federal government agencies
- b. Local colleges and universities
- c. Local governments (*town, city, county, tribal council or government*)
- d. Local cultural centers and museums
- e. Local news outlets (*radio, newspapers, or websites*)
- f. Local nonprofits or community organizations
- g. Local places of worship or faith communities
- h. My local library
- i. National news organizations
- j. State government offices

11. *[Multiple select, randomize]*

Have you recently found yourself seeking out any of the following types of support or assistance? Select all that apply.

- a. A trusted community space to share or get local information
- b. Help understanding how my local government works and how to participate
- c. Help with managing money or planning for the future
- d. How neighbors can help each other during tough times

- e. How to find affordable housing
- f. Information about jobs, training, or educational opportunities
- g. Live cultural or community events to connect with others
- h. Opportunities to learn media communication skills
- i. Opportunities to learn digital or technology skills
- j. Support for small businesses, side work, or self-employment
- k. Translation services
- l. Updates during emergencies or severe weather
- m. None of the above

12. *[Single select]*

Which of these terms best describes where you live?

- a. Urban
- b. Suburban
- c. Rural

13. *[Single select]*

Regardless of where you currently live, do you usually think of yourself as:

- a. a city person
- b. a suburb person
- c. a small-town person
- d. a country or rural person
- e. None of these

14. *[Single select]* **[ONLY IF A-D in Q13]**

How important is being **[PIPE OPTION SELECTED IN Q13] to your identity?**

- a. Extremely important
- b. Very important
- c. Moderately important
- d. Slightly important
- e. Not at all important

Next, we'd like to learn a bit about how you stay connected, through the internet and different types of media. We'll ask questions about your internet access, as well as how you watch, listen to, or find the content that matters to you.

15. *[Multiple select]*

Which of the following services does your household use to access the internet?

- a. There is no internet access at home [EXCLUSIVE]
- b. Cable or fiber broadband (*high-speed internet through a fixed connection*)
- c. Mobile broadband (*high-speed internet through a wireless connection*)
- d. Mobile data (*cellphone or hotspot*)
- e. DSL or Dial-up
- f. Satellite internet
- g. I'm not sure [EXCLUSIVE]

16. [Single select, randomize] [ONLY IF B-F SELECTED IN Q15]

How would you rate your home internet service in the following categories?

Columns:

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Poor
5. Very Poor

Rows:

- a. Affordability of your monthly cost
- b. Availability of other good providers you could switch to
- c. Reliability (*how consistently your internet works*)
- d. Speed for your everyday needs (*like browsing, streaming, video calls, gaming*)

17. [Single select] [ONLY IF A SELECTED IN Q15]

Which of the following best describes the main reason your household does not have internet service at home?

- a. Internet service is not available where I live
- b. Internet service is available, but too expensive
- c. Internet service is available, but not reliable enough for my needs
- d. My household chooses not to have internet service
- e. Other (please specify): _____

18. [Multiple select, randomize] [ONLY IF A SELECTED IN Q15]

Do you regularly access the internet from these places outside your home? Select all that apply.

- a. A friend's or family member's home
- b. Coffee shop, restaurant, or other business
- c. Public library
- d. Public Wi-Fi or community access point
- e. Work or school
- f. I do not regularly access the internet elsewhere [STICK]

19. [Multiple select, randomize]

Which of the following devices do you have access to?

- a. A basic cell phone (not a smartphone)
- b. A laptop computer
- c. A satellite radio
- d. A smart speaker
- e. A smart TV set that can stream video from the internet [STICK]
- f. A TV set connected to the internet with a device (like Fire TV Stick, Roku, etc.) [STICK]
- g. A smartphone
- h. A tablet

- i. A traditional radio (access only to AM/FM stations via antenna) at home
- j. A traditional radio in my vehicle
- k. A TV set that is not connected to the internet
- l. None of the above

20. *[Multiple select]* *[USE LOGOS AS VISUALS]*

Which of the following social media platforms do you use regularly?

- a. Bluesky
- b. Facebook
- c. Facebook Messenger
- d. Instagram
- e. LinkedIn
- f. Nextdoor
- g. Pinterest
- h. Reddit
- i. Snapchat
- j. Substack
- k. TikTok
- l. Threads
- m. Truth Social
- n. Twitch
- o. WhatsApp
- p. X/Twitter
- q. None of the above

21. *[Rating scale]*

How often do you typically follow news about each of the following?

Columns:

- 1. Several times a day
- 2. Once a day
- 3. A few times a week
- 4. A few times a month
- 5. Rarely or never

Rows:

- a. Local or community news (your city or town)
- b. State or regional news
- c. National news
- d. International or global news

22. *[Multiple select – UP TO THREE, randomize]*

When you need to stay informed specifically about local or community news and events, which of the following sources do you turn to? Select up to three.

- a. Email newsletters
- b. Local government or community websites (*like city, county, school district*)
- c. Local newspapers (*print or online*)
- d. Local radio stations (*AM/FM or community radio*)

- e. Messaging apps (*like WhatsApp, SMS groups*)
- f. Online search
- g. Social media (*like Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram, TikTok*)
- h. Television news (*local stations or local segments*)
- i. Word of mouth (*friends, family, neighbors, coworkers*)
- j. Other (please specify): _____ [STICK]
- k. I do not actively seek local or community news [STICK]

23. [Multiple select, randomize]

Which of these locally-focused topics do you most often follow or try to stay up-to-date on?

- a. Arts and culture
- b. Community events
- c. Crime, public safety, or law enforcement activities
- d. Diversity issues (*race, gender, immigration*)
- e. Environmental issues affecting my area
- f. Farming or agriculture
- g. Fisheries and wildlife
- h. Food scenes
- i. Housing issues
- j. Economy and local businesses
- k. Live music, musicians, or music scenes
- l. Local government decisions and meetings
- m. Nonprofit, volunteer, or community organization activities
- n. Places of interest (*local or historic landmarks*)
- o. Public health issues and alerts
- p. Schools, education, or youth activities
- q. Sports
- r. Stories or news about people in my community
- s. Traffic, road conditions, or transit updates
- t. Weather and severe weather alerts
- u. None of the above

24. [Rating scale] [ONLY IF U NOT SELECTED IN Q23]

For each of those news topics that you seek out, do you feel like there's not enough of this out there, just the right amount, or too much?

Columns:

- 1. Not enough
- 2. Just the right amount
- 3. Too much

Rows:

- a. [PIPE SELECTIONS FROM Q27]

25. [Single select]

How often do you typically listen to music in any way?

- a. Several times a day
- b. Once a day

- c. A few times a week
- d. A few times a month
- e. Rarely or never

26. *[Multiple select – UP TO FIVE, randomize]*

Please complete the following sentence: “I like it best when the music I listen to...” Select up to five.

- a. Brings back memories of important times in my life
- b. Brings people together
- c. Connects me to my heritage or where I’m from
- d. Creates a soothing atmosphere
- e. Exposes me to new sounds, artists, or cultures I didn’t know before
- f. Feels authentic rather than overly commercial
- g. Helps me feel connected to others who like the same music
- h. Helps me cope with life’s challenges
- i. Helps me tune out the rest of the world
- j. Includes stories or commentary about the song, artist, or tradition
- k. Is presented by a host, DJ, or personality I enjoy
- l. Is uplifting
- m. Mixes different music genres and styles
- n. Reflects the kind of person I see myself as
- o. Works well as background while I’m doing other things
- p. None of the above

27. *[Multiple select, randomize]*

How do you prefer to listen to music or music-related content? Select all that apply.

- a. Commercial radio stations *(using traditional radio or livestreamed)*
- b. Large concerts, shows, or festivals I attend in person
- c. Live music at local venues, bars, churches, fairs, or community events
- d. Livestreamed concerts or performances
- e. Local public or community radio stations *(using traditional radio or livestreamed)*
- f. Physical formats *(like CDs, vinyl records, cassette tapes)*
- g. Podcasts about music or musicians
- h. Social media platforms *(like Instagram or TikTok)*
- i. Watching TV shows or programs dedicated to music
- j. A streaming platform *(like Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music)* [STICK]
- k. YouTube videos [STICK]
- l. None of the above

28. *[Single select]*

How often would you say you typically listen to or seek out *any kind of content* from a radio station—whether live on the radio, or streamed online from an app or website?

- a. Several times a day
- b. Once a day
- c. A few times a week
- d. A few times a month
- e. Rarely or never

29. [Multiple select, randomize]

In which of the following ways do you typically listen to radio (including music, news, or talk radio)?

- a. On a satellite radio service (*like SiriusXM*)
- b. On a station's website
- c. On a traditional AM/FM radio at home
- d. On a traditional AM/FM radio while driving a car
- e. On public transportation (bus, train, subway)
- f. Through a smartphone app (*station app or radio app*)
- g. Through a smart speaker (*like Alexa, Google Home*)
- h. None of the above

30. [Rating scale, randomize]

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about radio.

Columns:

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree

Rows:

- a. I rely on radio when internet or mobile service is unreliable
- b. I trust information from the radio more than online sources
- c. I would miss radio if it ever went away
- d. Radio feels familiar and comforting
- e. Radio feels more human and personal than streaming or social media
- f. Radio fits easily into my day without demanding my full attention
- g. Radio helps me discover music, stories, or perspectives I might otherwise miss
- h. Radio helps me feel connected to local community and causes
- i. Radio is accessible to people of all ages and income levels
- j. Radio keeps me company or makes me feel less alone

Next, we'd like to ask a few questions about community radio.

31. [Open text]

In just a few words, what comes to mind when you think "community radio"?

32. [Single select]

Before today, how familiar were you with the term "community radio"?

- a. Very familiar – I know what it is
- b. Somewhat familiar – I've heard the term and have a general idea what it is
- c. Not very familiar – I may have heard it, but I'm not sure what it means
- d. Not at all familiar – I've never heard this term before

33. [Multiple select – UP TO THREE, randomize] [ONLY IF A-B SELECTED IN Q32]

In your view, which of these BEST describe what "community radio" does? You may select up to three.

- a. Bringing people together around local issues or concerns
- b. Giving a voice to people or groups not often heard in other media
- c. Playing commercials for local products
- d. Playing popular music to attract large audiences
- e. Providing a local source for NPR programming
- f. Providing non-commercial or listener-supported programming
- g. Serving as an emergency or public safety information source
- h. Sharing local news, information, and events
- i. Supporting local music, arts, or culture

34. *[Rating scale, randomize]* [ONLY IF A-B SELECTED IN Q32]

How important do you think community radio is for the following?

Columns:

- 1. Very important
- 2. Moderately important
- 3. Slightly important
- 4. Not at all important

Rows:

- a. Connecting people in a community
- b. Reaching people who may not use other media
- c. Providing information during emergencies or severe weather
- d. Preserving local culture or traditions
- e. Serving people without reliable internet or mobile service
- f. Supporting local music, arts, or creative voices
- g. Staying informed about local or community issues

35. *[Single select]* [ONLY IF C-D SELECTED IN Q32]

Community radio stations focus mainly on serving a local community. They are always non-profit or community-funded, and often feature local hosts or DJs, and include local news, music, culture, and voices.

How interested would you be in listening to this type of radio?

- a. Very interested
- b. Moderately interested
- c. Slightly interested
- d. Not at all interested

36. *[Multiple select, randomize]*

Regardless of whether you currently listen to community radio, which of the following services would you personally find valuable from a local, community-funded radio station that focuses on serving its community? Select all that apply.

- a. A place to hear local stories
- b. Chances to hear local music or musicians
- c. Chances to learn media communication skills
- d. Coverage of local nonprofits and community groups

- e. Emergency and safety alerts
- f. Faith-based programming
- g. Information on local jobs and job training
- h. Live events and gatherings
- i. Music and programs not heard on commercial radio
- j. Practical tips or skills people can use everyday
- k. Programming for kids and teens
- l. Programming in languages or for cultures that represent my community
- m. Programming that brings people together around local issues
- n. Trustworthy news coverage
- o. Ways to get involved with the station
- p. Weather updates and road or travel conditions
- q. None of these

Thanks so much for your responses! Before you go, the remaining questions ask about your background and experiences to help us better understand the survey results. Please remember that your answers will be combined with others' and reported only in summary form. They will not be shared with any third parties.

37. *[Multiple select, randomize]*

In the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Select all that apply.

- a. Attend a local government or public meeting (like a school board, town council)
- b. Contacted a public official or member of Congress
- c. Helped organize a community event
- d. Helped neighbors during an emergency
- e. Made a donation to a charitable cause or non-profit organization
- f. Participated or marched in a rally or protest
- g. Served on a local board or committee
- h. Signed a petition online or in-person
- i. Swapped or traded food, tools, or favors with neighbors
- j. Volunteered for a charity, non-profit, or community organization
- k. Voted in a local, state, or national election
- l. None of the above

38. *[Multiple select, randomize]*

In the last 12 months, have you visited, attended, or participated in any of the following? Select all that apply.

- a. A concert or live musical performance
- b. A community food event *(like a chili cook-off or community supper)*
- c. A county rodeo or fair
- d. A cultural or heritage celebration
- e. A family reunion
- f. A farmer's market
- g. A lecture
- h. A live sporting event
- i. A local parade

- j. A museum, historical site, or art gallery
- k. A neighborhood gathering
- l. A public library
- m. A school-related event
- n. A seasonal celebration or activity (*like fall harvest or apple picking*)
- o. A wilderness or outdoor activity (*like hiking, kayaking, hunting, fishing*)
- p. An event at a house of worship (*like a church, synagogue, or mosque*)
- q. None of the above

39. [Open text, to be coded]

What is your gender?

40. [Single select] [same page as Q39]

Do you identify as LGBTQ+ or similar?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

41. [Single select] [same page as Q39]

Which term best describes your marital status?

- a. Married or Partnered
- b. Divorced or Separated
- c. Single
- d. Widowed

42. [Single select] [same page as Q39]

Are there any children living in your own household 18 years old or younger?

- a. Yes
- b. No

43. [Single select] [same page as Q39]

Which of the following best describes your living situation?

- a. I live alone
- b. I live with family members
- c. I live with others who are not family members

44. [Single select]

What is the highest level of education you've completed?

- a. Less than 4 years of high school
- b. High school degree / GED
- c. Vocational school
- d. 2-year college (Associate degree)
- e. 4-year college graduate (Bachelor degree or similar)
- f. Graduate or doctoral degree (Masters, PhD, MD, or similar)

45. [Single select] [same page as Q44]

Which of the following best describes your political orientation, regardless of how or whether you're registered to vote?

- a. Very conservative
- b. Somewhat conservative
- c. Moderate
- d. Somewhat liberal
- e. Very liberal
- f. I wouldn't use any of these terms; I would describe myself as: _____

46. *[Multiple select]* [same page as Q44]

What is your race and/or ethnicity? You may select multiple options.

- a. Native American or Alaska Native
- b. Asian
- c. Black or African American
- d. Hispanic or Latino
- e. Middle Eastern or North African
- f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- g. White or Caucasian
- h. Other: _____
- i. Prefer not to answer

47. *[Multi select]* [same page as Q44]

Which of the following languages are spoken in your household? Select all that apply.

- a. An indigenous or Native language
- b. Arabic
- c. Chinese (including Mandarin or Cantonese)
- d. English
- e. French
- f. German
- g. Portuguese
- h. Spanish
- i. Tagalog
- j. Vietnamese
- k. Other: _____

48. *[Single select]*

Which of the following best describes your current occupational status?

Would you describe yourself as...

- a. Employed full-time
- b. Employed part-time
- c. Self-employed or business owner
- d. Unemployed
- e. Homemaker, stay-at-home parent or similar
- f. Full-time or part-time student
- g. Retired
- h. Unable to work due to disability

49. *[Multiple select]* [same page as Q48]

Which of the following are sources of income for you or your household? Select all that apply.

- a. Wages or salary from a job
- b. Seasonal or temporary work
- c. Self-employment or business income
- d. Farming, ranching, or fishing
- e. Retirement income (*pension, Social Security, retirement accounts*)
- f. Investment income
- g. Disability income
- h. Public assistance or benefits
- i. Support from family members or friends
- j. None of the above

50. *[Single select]* [same page as Q48]

And finally, which of the following ranges represents your total household income last year?

- a. Less than \$50,000
- b. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- c. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- d. \$100,000 to \$149,999
- e. \$150,000 to \$199,999
- f. \$200,000 or more
- g. Prefer not to say