

# Minority Populations Driving Community Growth in the Rural West



HEADWATERS  
ECONOMICS

Methods and Data Sources, August 2017

This section describes data collection and decisions made during data analysis for the report *Minority Populations Driving Community Growth in the Rural West*.

(<https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/minority-populations-driving-county-growth/>)

## GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

This study reviews the 278 non-metro counties in the 11 contiguous western states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

“Rural” is defined as non-metro, or [all counties not designated as metro](#) by the United States Census Bureau. Metro counties either contain a core population of 50,000 or more or are outlying counties tied economically to the core areas by labor force commuting. In the West, there are [278 rural counties](#).

## DEMOGRAPHIC SCOPE

We use “minority” for lack of a better term, recognizing that “minority” homogenizes the differences among many ethnic and racial communities. For the purposes of this report, we define minority as any of the following (as defined by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#)):

- [Hispanic ethnicity](#): a person self-identified as from Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;
- [Person of color or non-white race](#): a person self-identified as Black, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; and/or
- [Foreign-born](#): a person self-identified as not being a U.S. citizen at birth.

These categories are not mutually exclusive; an individual can identify as any combination of ethnicity, race, and nativity.

## POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

This analysis uses population, race, and ethnicity data from the U.S. Census Bureau. We used the 1980 Decennial Census and 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. The 2015 ACS 5-year estimates represent the average characteristics from 2011 to 2015. Data were not available for La Paz County, Arizona and Cibola County, New Mexico for 1980. Trends for those two counties trends are defined from 1990- 2015.

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## **ABOUT HEADWATERS ECONOMICS**

Headwaters Economics is an independent, nonprofit research group whose mission is to improve community development and land management decisions in the West, <https://headwaterseconomics.org/>.