

Urban, Rural and Suburban Lifestyles - US - 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the lives and decisions of urban, suburban and rural consumers.
- Demographics of these areas, and what new residents can tell us about the future of these places.
- How consumers of each area perceive themselves and the residents of different areas, so brands can more relatably market to them.
- The desires and shopping habits of consumers in each area, as they relate to what kinds of brands each would like to see and how they would like to interact with the brands and their employees.

Misconceptions about where Americans live abound. Cities aren't dying – 38% of people that moved from their area in the past three years relocated to an urban area. Suburbs aren't for families just starting out – only 37% of suburban adults are Millennials or Gen Z, and 20% make less than \$50K annually; these shares are lower than in urban and rural areas. Rural America isn't the Whitest part of the country – 61% of rural residents are White, but so are 66% of suburbanites.

Brands are trying to understand how consumer behaviors and attitudes differ and are impacted by their living area during a dynamic time. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to motivate people to move, and when they do, they bring new perspectives and ideas to these areas. One of the biggest sources of disruption is remote work, which has catalyzed a lot of relocation, and has the potential to make communities more inwardly focused as the need for commuting is reduced. At the same time, the Delta variant and the pandemic's economic ramifications have underscored how some areas, particularly rural areas, are struggling. Already strained healthcare facilities are at their breaking point in rural areas, and the sparse nature of those areas exacerbates factors like high gas prices.



"Urban, suburban and rural consumers already had different desires and challenges heading into the pandemic; COVID-19 has upended life in many ways for each group."

- Mike Gallinari, Travel & Leisure Analyst

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Increased connectivity can be a lifeline to rural areas. Not only would improved broadband aid in telehealth services and using ecommerce to satisfy the needs of rural consumers, but such infrastructure can increase in-migration to these areas and kickstart their economic development, making these areas better suited for meeting their residents' needs.



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