



VOTER ENGAGEMENT IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWNS

Guest Panellists:

Duane Gurulé of STP

Marty Dombrowski of CILSPA



ABOUT NONPROFIT POWER 2022

- Uplift nonprofits doing voter engagement in niche spaces
 - Platform for them to tell their story
- Educate the necessity of voter engagement in those spaces
 - Show that every community deserves representation
- Provide tailored strategies that have been tested by nonprofits
 - Collective hub for tried and tested strategies in niche spaces

WHO ARE RURAL AND SMALL TOWNS

- Most overlooked areas by major parties
- Limited access to resources
 - Food
 - Healthcare
 - Transportation
- Often have some of the closest elections

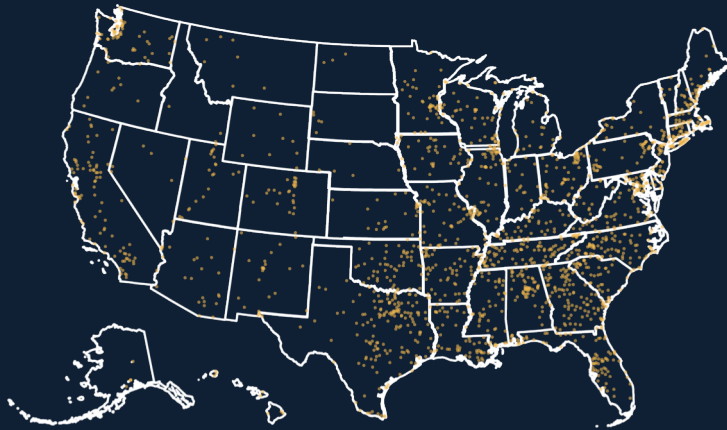
DEFINING RURAL AND SMALL TOWNS

- Difficult due to definitions varying between federal departments
 - **Census:** any place with a population of less than 5000 people is rural
 - **USDA:** any place with a population of
 - Around 2500 to 50000 with a density of 500 people per square mile – small town
 - Less than 2500 is rural
 - **OMB:** any county without a metropolitan core is rural
 - **And many other definitions**

OUR FINDINGS

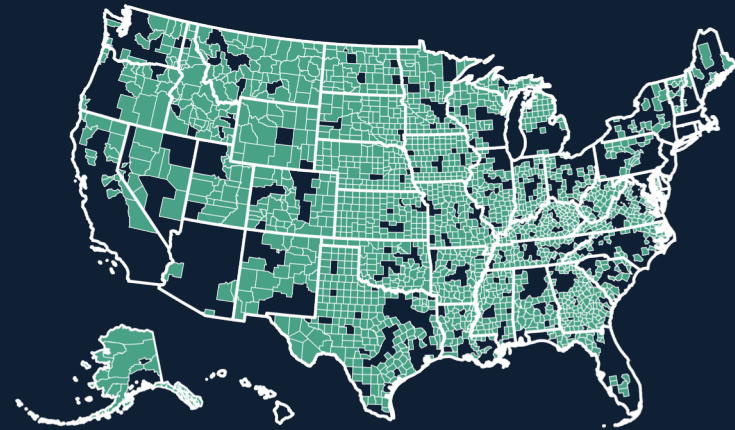
Used a mix of USDA and OMB definitions

Encompassed the greatest number of regions



Between 2000-9000 small towns

* depending on the definition use



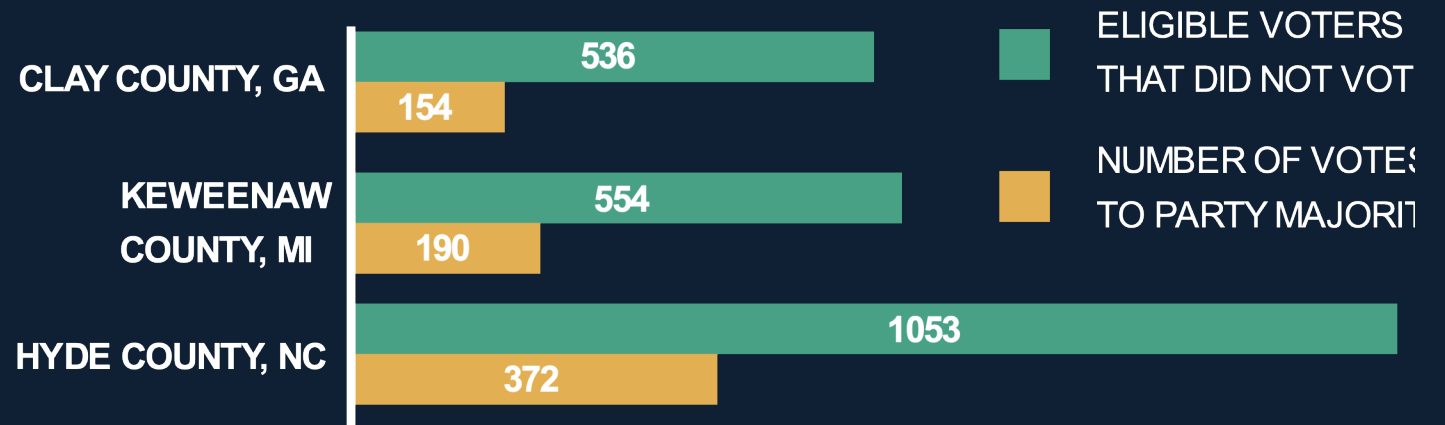
Around 2000 rural counties

* about 65-70 percent of the United States

WHY ENGAGE?

- Lower participation local vs. federal elections
- Leads between candidates are smaller

Some rural counties need only **a few hundred votes** to change party majority



VOTER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Make space for One-on-One Conversations
 - Helps meet more holistic needs and connect them to other resources
- Use Physical Materials to Distribute Information
 - Internet access is often harder to access in rural areas
- Increase Tech Literacy in Your Community
 - Teach them how to access information on voting



VOTER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Host a Meet and Greet with Local Candidates and Officials
 - Might be neighbors you already know and work with
- Utilize the Trust in the Community
 - Link voting to something safe and familiar
 - Organize your voter engagement around local events or businesses



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN URBAN LEAGUE

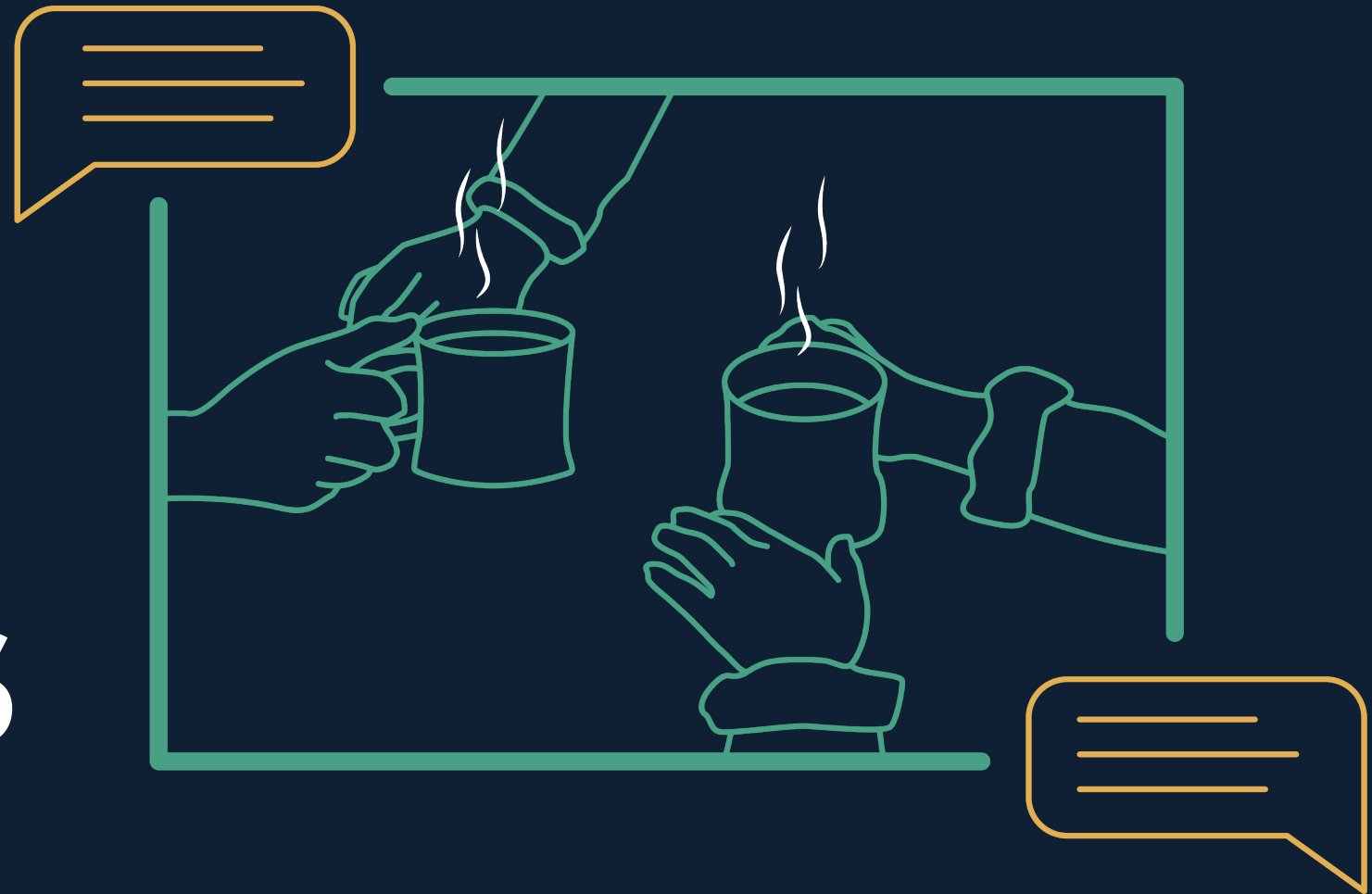
- Kyra Wallace
 - President/CEO of the Southwest Michigan Urban League
- Southwest Michigan Urban League
 - Assists African Americans and other disadvantaged Americans in achieving socio-economic equality
- Battle Creek, Michigan
 - Population of 52,000 people
 - Headquarters of Kellogg's
 - "...Large enough to have some major issues, but small enough to be able to tackle those issues..."



**Southwestern
Michigan
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

OUR PANELISTS





DUANE GURULÉ

Duane Gurulé is the Sr Database Administrator for Hunger Free Colorado and brings a unique lens to food security, health equity, and technology.

Duane is a formerly incarcerated person who has navigated state and private prisons, community corrections, and re-entry. As a first-gen college graduate, he holds a B.S. in Computer Information Systems from Metro State University of Denver. He is a co-founder of Small Town Project which works to improve health equity in southeast Colorado by increasing access to healthy foods and empowering the community.

Duane also serves his community as Mayor Pro-Tem for the City of Rocky Ford, as an Advisory Board member for Valley-Wide Health Systems, and on the Advisory Council for Otero College.



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MARTY DOMBROWSKI

Marty Dombrowski is the Assistant Director of the Center for Independent Living of South-Central PA. It is her passion and privilege to assist individuals with disabilities gain and maintain skills that open opportunities to living full lives in the community, including learning and practicing self-advocacy skills. She is a graduate of Arcadia University, Philadelphia and the University of Pittsburgh. She enjoys an active life in rural Pennsylvania.



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Q&A

- What challenges are unique to your community that makes voter engagement challenging?
- How are you planning to boost local election engagement this year?

THANK YOU

Please lookout for the first of our **Nonprofit Power** mini-reports
this year!

