

Louisiana's Rural Poverty

Facts

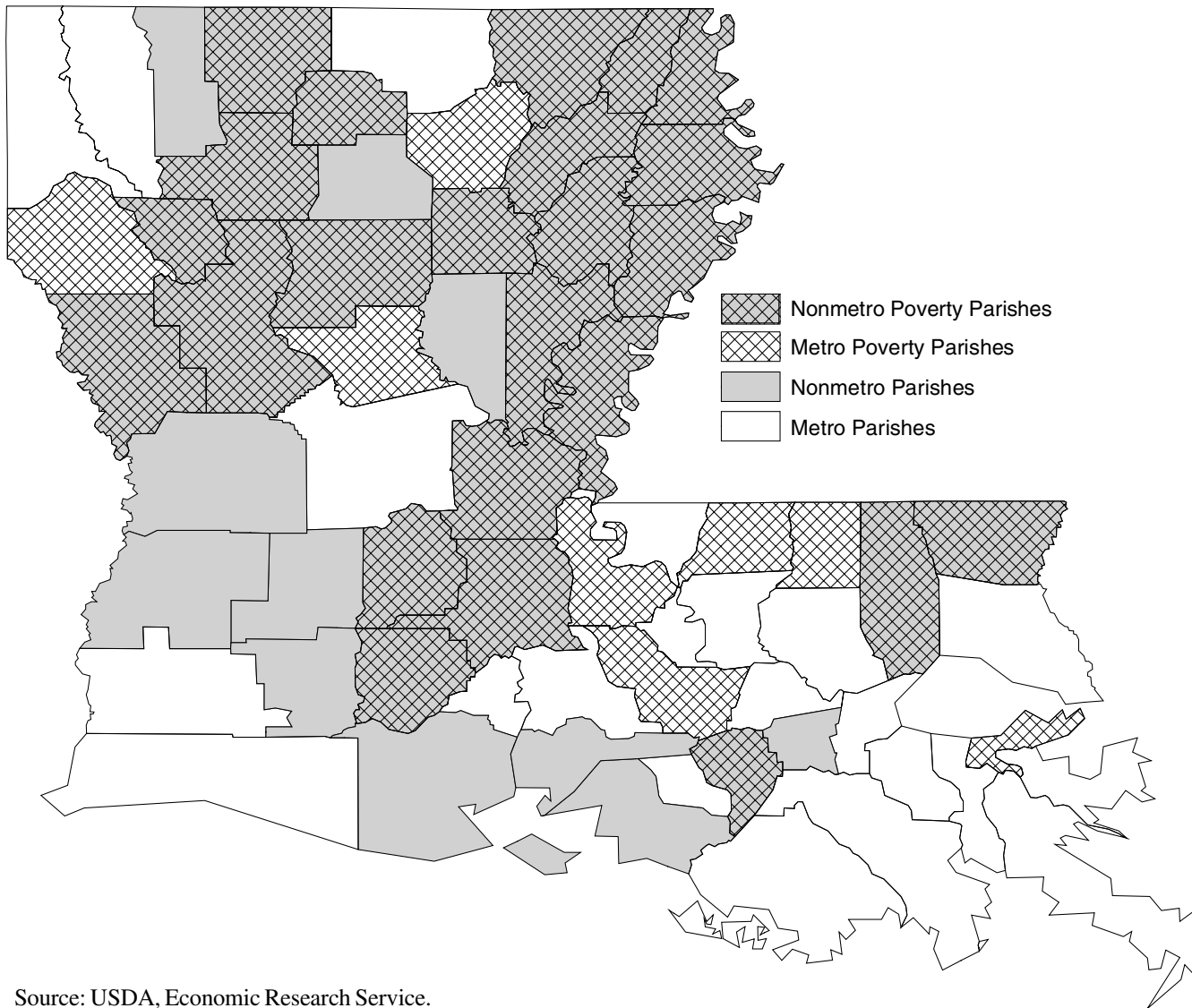
- ▶ The poverty rate in Louisiana is 19.6 percent. In the United States, the poverty rate is 12.4 percent.
- ▶ The poverty rate in metro or urban Louisiana is 18.1 percent. Rural poverty is always more severe than urban poverty. The poverty rate in nonmetro or rural Louisiana is 24.2 percent.
- ▶ More than one-half (35 of 64) of the parishes in Louisiana are nonmetro. Of these, 24 are defined by USDA as *persistent poverty parishes*. This means that in those 24 parishes (Acadia, Assumption, Avoyelles, Bienville, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, East Carroll, Evangeline, Franklin, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Landry, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Washington, West Carroll and Winn) 20 percent or more of the population fell below the poverty line in 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 (as measured by the Census of Population and Housing).
- ▶ Almost all (32 of 35) of the nonmetro parishes in Louisiana are defined by USDA as *Black high poverty parishes*. Black high poverty areas are identified in two ways: (a) over half of the poor population in the county is Black, or (b) over half of the poor population is non-Hispanic White, but the high poverty rate of the Black population pushes the parish's poverty rate over 20 percent. The Black high poverty parishes in Louisiana are Assumption, Avoyelles, Bienville, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Pointe Coupee, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Helena, St. Mary, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Vermilion, Washington, West Carroll and Winn.
- ▶ USDA describes eight parishes in Louisiana as *housing stress parishes*: East Carroll, Madison, Tensas, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Evangeline, St. Landry and Orleans. A housing stress parish is defined by USDA as having housing that is (a) lacking complete plumbing, (b) lacking complete kitchen facilities, (c) rent or owner costs over 30 percent of household income, or (d) more than one person per room. Seven of these eight parishes are nonmetro.
- ▶ Poverty is a complex phenomenon with a number of causes. In general, community development strategies that are comprehensive and address the complexity of poverty are more successful than those that focus on one approach. Causes of poverty and the effectiveness of poverty policy vary by location. Policies that address poverty must be locationally specific to be effective.

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Persistent Poverty Parishes in Louisiana



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service.

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