



Definitions of “Rural” in Texas Statutes and the Texas Administrative Code as of April 2018

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Introduction

This publication compiles definitions of "rural" found in Texas statutes and state agency rules. The definitions were identified by searching the text of the Texas statutes and the Texas Administrative Code for each instance of the term "rural" that corresponds with a geographic area. The publication consists of a table listing each definition and, for some definitions, includes a map of the defined area. Each entry in the table contains a description of a "rural area," "rural community," "rural county," "rural hospital," or similar term, defined by population, location with regard to a census-delineated area, or other factors. A map is included if all elements of the definition can be mapped without ambiguity and if supporting data are accessible. The information provided is current as of April 30, 2018. It should be noted that while Texas statutes are updated following each legislative session, the Texas Administrative Code is updated on an ongoing basis. Additionally, we did not seek to determine whether the program to which a definition applies is currently active.

TABLE OF DEFINITIONS

The definitions in the table are organized by state agency. Columns include:

- Definition Number & Map - hyperlink to the relevant map; note that not all definitions are mapped
- Definition - text of the definition
- Source - hyperlinked citation of the Texas statute or Texas Administrative Code rule, or both, containing the definition
- Subject of Source Statutes/Rules - brief description of the program or issue covered by the definition

MAPS

Maps are included for 18 of the definitions of "rural." Definitions were mapped when the geographic boundaries of the area defined could be entered into the geographic information system (GIS) database. Data sources vary, and the sources used to create the map are noted on each map.

In some instances, the terms used in a definition may be different from, although presumed equivalent to, terms used in the maps' data sources. One notable example is the term "municipality." For purposes of these maps, the term "municipality" is interpreted to be the geographical equivalent of the Census Bureau's term "incorporated place," which is defined as a governmental unit incorporated under state law. "Census designated places" (CDPs), which are not incorporated, are not included as municipalities in these maps.

Several definitions refer to outdated geographic terminology. In 2000, the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released new statistical standards that changed the classification system for metropolitan areas. Prior to the adoption of these standards, the OMB defined three types of metropolitan areas: metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs), and consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs). The 2000 OMB standards changed the criteria for defining a "metropolitan statistical area," introduced the concept of a micropolitan statistical area, and made the concepts of PMSAs and CMSAs obsolete. Some definitions in this publication refer to areas located outside an MSA or PMSA, and in this publication, such an area is mapped as an area outside an MSA. The term "standard metropolitan statistical area" (SMSA) is used in several definitions, and for mapping purposes, an SMSA is interpreted to be equivalent to an MSA. The OMB occasionally revises its MSA delineations, and this publication uses data from the delineations released in 2017.

Table of Definitions

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
All State Agencies¹			
1 map	Rural community means a municipality with a population of less than 25,000.	Section 2006.001(1-a), Government Code	Requirements for the adoption of state agency rules that would have an adverse economic effect on small businesses, micro-businesses, or rural communities
A&M University System, Texas			
2 map	Rural county means a county with a population of less than 50,000.	Section 88.621(6), Education Code	Rural veterinarian incentive program
Agricultural Finance Authority, Texas			
3 map	Rural area means an area which is predominantly rural in character, being one which the board of directors of the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA) defines and declares to be a rural area. Rural means a municipality with a population of less than 50,000.	Section 44.001(6), Agriculture Code Section 58.002(9), Agriculture Code 4 T.A.C. § 28.2(23)	Agricultural diversification and microenterprise support programs TAFA programs in general TAFA programs in general
Agriculture, Department of			
4	Financial assistance under the rural economic development and investment program, which aims to encourage private economic development in rural areas , may be provided only to: (1) a county with a population of not more than 75,000; (2) a municipality with a population of not more than 50,000; or (3) an economic development corporation or community development financial institution that primarily represents a county or municipality described in (1) and (2). ²	Section 12.0271, Agriculture Code 4 T.A.C. § 29.73	Rural economic development and investment program

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Agriculture, Department of (cont'd)			
5	Rural community is a municipality with a population of less than 50,000 or a county with a population of less than 200,000.	Section 12.046(a)(2), Agriculture Code 4 T.A.C. § 29.62(6)	Texas rural investment fund program
6	Rural community means a municipality in a nonmetropolitan county as defined by the United States Census Bureau in its most recent census. ³	Section 487.101(5), Government Code 4 T.A.C. § 30.142(a)(2)	Outstanding rural scholar recognition and loan program for rural health care
7 map	Rural county means: (A) a county that has a population of 150,000 or less; or (B) with respect to a county that has a population of more than 150,000 and that contains a geographic area that is not delineated as urbanized by the federal census bureau, that part of the county that is not delineated as urbanized. ⁴	Section 487.301(2), Government Code 4 T.A.C. § 30.201(c)	Rural health facility capital improvement program
8	Rural community means a rural area as defined by the Department of Agriculture.	Section 487.501(1), Government Code	Rural physician recruitment program
9	Rural community is: (A) a community located in a county with a population not greater than 50,000; (B) an area designated under state or federal law as: (i) a health professional shortage area; or (ii) a medically underserved area; or (C) a medically underserved community designated by the Department of Agriculture.	Section 487.601(3), Government Code 4 T.A.C. § 30.261	Rural physician relief program
10 map	Rural county means a county that has a population of not more than 125,000.	Section 487.751, Government Code	Rural technology center grant program

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Agriculture, Department of (cont'd)			
11	<p>For purposes of determining eligibility for funding under the Texas community development block grant (TxCDBG) program, non-entitlement cities are cities located predominately in rural areas and are generally: (1) cities that have a population of less than 50,000; (2) cities that are not designated as a central city of a metropolitan statistical area;⁵ or (3) cities that are not participating in urban county CDBG programs.</p> <p>For the same purposes, non-entitlement counties are counties that are predominately rural in nature and generally have fewer than 200,000 persons in the non-entitlement cities and unincorporated areas located in the county.²</p>	4 T.A.C. § 30.20	Texas community development block grant program
12	To be considered for designation as a rural hospital , a hospital must be located in: (1) a county with a population density of less than 225 persons per square mile of land area; and (2) a municipality of 15,000 persons or less.	4 T.A.C. § 30.221	Designation of a hospital as a rural hospital for purposes of certain federal Medicare law
Economic Incentive Oversight Board			
13 map	Rural county means a county with a population of less than 60,000.	Section 490G.001(2-a), Government Code	Appointments to the Economic Incentive Oversight Board
Health and Human Services Commission			
14	Rural area means: (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; (B) an area that is not delineated as an urbanized area by the United States Bureau of the Census; ⁴ or (C) any other area designated as rural by a rule adopted by the commissioner of insurance, subject to Section 845.003, Insurance Code (<i>see Definition 30</i>).	Section 541.001(1), Government Code Section 845.002(9), Insurance Code	Pediatric tele-connectivity resource program for rural Texas

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Health and Human Services Commission (cont'd)			
15	<p>Rural hospital is a hospital enrolled as a Medicaid provider that: (A) is located in a county with 60,000 or fewer persons according to the 2010 U.S. Census; (B) is designated by Medicare as a Critical Access Hospital (CAH), a Sole Community Hospital (SCH), or a Rural Referral Center (RRC) that is not located in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget;⁵ or (C) meets all of the following: (i) has 100 or fewer beds; (ii) is designated by Medicare as a CAH, a SCH, or a RRC; and (iii) is located in an MSA.⁵</p> <p>Rural private hospital is a privately-operated hospital that is a rural hospital as defined in 1 T.A.C. § 355.8052.</p> <p>Rural public hospital is a hospital that is owned and operated by a governmental entity and is a rural hospital as defined in 1 T.A.C. § 355.8052.</p>	<p>1 T.A.C. § 355.8052(b)(29)</p> <p>1 T.A.C. § 355.8061(b) and (d)</p> <p>1 T.A.C. § 353.1305(b)(7)</p> <p>1 T.A.C. § 353.1305(b)(8)</p>	<p>Inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursement for Medicaid hospital services</p> <p>Uniform hospital rate increase program for providers in a Medicaid managed care organization's network</p>
16	<p>Rural public hospital is a hospital owned and operated by a governmental entity that is located in a county with 500,000 or fewer persons, based on the most recent decennial census.</p> <p>Rural public-financed hospital is a hospital operating under a lease from a governmental entity in which the hospital and governmental entity are both located in the same county with 500,000 or fewer persons, based on the most recent decennial census.</p>	<p>1 T.A.C. § 355.8065(b)(36)</p> <p>1 T.A.C. § 355.8065(b)(37)</p>	<p>Additional reimbursement to disproportionate share hospitals for Medicaid hospital services</p>
17 map	<p>For purposes of the requirement that a Medicare skilled nursing facility be in a rural area for consideration of a waiver of the requirement that the services of a registered nurse be provided in the facility for more than 40 hours a week, a rural area is any area outside the boundaries of a standard metropolitan statistical area.^{5,6}</p>	<p>40 T.A.C. § 19.1001(a)(9)</p>	<p>Nursing facility requirements for licensure and Medicaid certification</p>
18	<p>For purposes of obtaining a rural county waiver, which is designed to meet the needs of rural areas of the state that do not have reasonable access to acceptable nursing facility care, a rural county is one that has a population of 100,000 or less according to the most recent census and has no more than two Medicaid-certified nursing facilities.</p>	<p>40 T.A.C. § 19.2322(h)(7)</p>	<p>Requirements for Medicaid bed allocation in Medicaid-certified nursing facilities</p>
19	<p>For purposes of participation in the Medicaid swing bed program for rural hospitals, a rural hospital is a hospital located in a county with a population of 100,000 or less that meets the qualifying requirements of the Medicare swing bed program.²</p>	<p>40 T.A.C. § 19.2326(b)</p>	<p>Medicaid swing bed program for rural hospitals</p>

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Health Services, Department of State			
20	<p>To receive a temporary exemption from requirements for certain minimum standards for emergency care or for occupational certification, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel must practice primarily in a rural area, which means: (1) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; or (2) a relatively large, isolated, and sparsely populated area in a county with a population of more than 50,000.</p> <p>For purposes of requests by EMS personnel or applicants for EMS certification or licenses for an exemption to rules relating to emergency medical care, a rural area is: (1) a county of 50,000 or less; or (2) a sparsely populated area in a county with a population of more than 50,000, as determined by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy designation (of rural areas within metropolitan areas).</p>	<p>Section 773.0045(a), Health and Safety Code</p> <p>25 T.A.C. § 157.5(b)</p>	Emergency medical services
21	Rural area is a county with a population not greater than 50,000, or an area that has been designated under state or federal law as: (A) a health professional shortage area; (B) a medically underserved area; or (C) a medically underserved community.	25 T.A.C. § 37.532(10)	Maternal and infant health services; school-based health centers
22 map	Rural area is a county that had a population in the most recent decennial United States census of 150,000 or less, or that part of a county with a population of greater than 150,000 that is not delineated as urbanized by the United States Census Bureau. ⁴	25 T.A.C. § 83.2(7)	Public health improvement grants; permanent fund for children and public health
23 map	Rural county is a county with a population of less than 50,000 based on the latest official federal census population figures.	<p>25 T.A.C. § 157.130(a)(2)</p> <p>25 T.A.C. § 157.131(a)(2)</p>	<p>Emergency medical services and trauma care system account and emergency medical services, trauma facilities, and trauma care system fund</p> <p>Designated trauma facility and emergency medical services account</p>
24 map	Rural border is the area that extends 62 miles north of the Texas-Mexico border and encompasses 32 counties as described in the United States-Mexico La Paz agreement of 1983. ⁷	25 T.A.C. § 447.203(11)	Department-funded substance abuse intervention programs

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas			
25 map	Rural county means a county with a population of 50,000 or less.	Section 61.9601, Education Code	Assistance in the repayment of law school education loans for a person employed as an attorney by a district or county attorney's office that serves a rural area
26	For purposes of ranking program applications from physicians practicing in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), a rural HPSA is a HPSA-designated whole county whose population is less than 50,000 or a HPSA-designated facility or population group located in a county whose population is less than 50,000. ⁸	19 T.A.C. § 23.65(12)	Physician education loan repayment program
Housing and Community Affairs, Texas Department of			
27	Rural area means an area that is located: (A) outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area; or (B) within the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area, if the statistical area has a population of 25,000 or less and does not share a boundary with an urban area. ^{5,9} Rural area means an area that is: (A) described by Section 2306.004(28-a), Government Code; or (B) designated by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs as a rural area under Section 2306.6740, Government Code, which requires the department to adopt rules providing for the designation of an area located within the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area as a rural area for purposes of receiving housing tax credits under the program. ^{5,9}	Section 2306.004(28-a), Government Code Section 2306.6702(12), Government Code	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs economic development programs Low income housing tax credit program
28 map	Rural county means a county that is outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area. ^{5,9}	Section 2306.004(33), Government Code	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs economic development programs
29	Rural area is a place that is located: (i) outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area; (ii) within the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area, if the statistical area has a population of 25,000 or less and does not share a boundary with an urban area; or (iii) within the boundaries of a local political subdivision that is outside the boundaries of an urban area. For areas not meeting the definition of a place, the designation as a rural area or urban area is assigned in accordance with 10 T.A.C. § 10.204(5)(A) (relating to required documentation for application submission). ^{5,9,10}	10 T.A.C. § 10.3(a)(116)	Rules governing multifamily development funding or other assistance

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Insurance, Texas Department of			
30	<p>Rural area means: (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; (B) an area that is not delineated as an urbanized area by the United States Bureau of the Census;⁴ or (C) any other area designated as rural by a rule adopted by the commissioner of insurance, subject to Section 845.003, Insurance Code.</p> <p>An area eligible to be designated a rural area under agency rules is any area that is delineated as an urbanized area by the United States Census Bureau⁴ and: (1) is contiguous with and not more than 10 miles away from a rural area described by Section 845.002(9)(A) or (B), Insurance Code; (2) is sparsely populated, compared to areas within a 10-mile radius that are delineated as urbanized areas by the United States Census Bureau;⁴ (3) has not increased in population in any single calendar year in the seven years before the commissioner of insurance makes the designation; and (4) in which emergency or primary care services: (A) are limited or unavailable in accordance with network access standards imposed by the commissioner; and (B) would be made materially more accessible by allowing access to care in a contiguous area that is otherwise eligible to participate in the system.</p>	<p>Section 845.002(9), Insurance Code</p> <p>Section 845.003, Insurance Code</p>	Statewide rural health care system
31	<p>Rural area means: (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; (B) an area that is not designated as an urbanized area by the United States Census Bureau;⁴ or (C) any other area designated as rural under rules adopted by the commissioner of insurance.</p>	<p>Section 1305.004(a)(22), Insurance Code</p> <p>28 T.A.C. § 10.2(a)(27)</p>	Workers' compensation health care networks
32	<p>Rural area is: (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less as determined by the United States Census Bureau in the most recent decennial census report; (B) an area that is not designated as an urbanized area by the United States Census Bureau in the most recent decennial census report;⁴ or (C) any other area designated as rural under rules adopted by the commissioner of insurance, notwithstanding (A) and (B).</p>	<p>28 T.A.C. § 3.3702(b)(17)</p>	Health insurance provided through preferred provider or exclusive provider benefit plans
Medical Board, Texas			
33	<p>Rural area is an area in which there is no pharmacy within a 15-mile radius of the physician's office and which is within either a county with a total population of 5,000 or less according to the most recent federal census; or a city or town, incorporated or unincorporated, with a population of less than 2,500 according to the most recent federal census, but not including a city or town, incorporated or unincorporated, whose boundaries are adjacent to an incorporated city or town with an equal or greater population.</p>	<p>22 T.A.C. § 169.2(10)</p>	Authority of physicians to supply drugs

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Parks and Wildlife Department			
34 map	Rural area means any area not included in an urban area. ¹¹	Section 24.001(9), Parks and Wildlife Code	State assistance for local parks
35	For the purpose of scoring an applicant's project proposal based on criteria that the applicant's location has a primary constituency that is rural, rural means cities or counties of 20,000 or less population.	31 T.A.C. § 61.135(b)(5)(E)(ii)	Grants for community outreach outdoor programs
Pharmacy, Texas State Board of			
36	Rural hospital means a licensed hospital with 75 beds or fewer that: (A) is located in a county with a population of 50,000 or less; or (B) has been designated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a critical access hospital, rural referral center, or sole community hospital. Rural hospital is a licensed hospital with 75 beds or fewer that: (A) is located in a county with a population of 50,000 or less as defined by the United States Census Bureau in the most recent U.S. census; or (B) has been designated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a critical access hospital, rural referral center, or sole community hospital.	Section 562.1011(a)(2), Occupations Code 22 T.A.C. § 291.72(43)	Operation of a Class C pharmacy in certain rural hospitals
37 map	For the purpose of exempting a pharmacy technician who works in a rural county from certification requirements, a rural county is a county with a population of 50,000 or less.	22 T.A.C. § 297.7(c)	Exemption from pharmacy technician certification requirements for a pharmacy technician who works in a rural county and meets other requirements
Public Finance Authority, Texas			
38 map	Rural border county means a county that: (A) has a population of less than 55,000; and (B) is adjacent to an international border. ¹²	Section 1403.003(a)(2), Government Code	Set-aside of general obligation bond proceeds for roadway projects in colonias located in rural border counties

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Public Utility Commission of Texas			
39 map	Rural area means an area, including both farm and nonfarm population of the area, that is not located in: (A) a municipality having a population greater than 1,500; or (B) an unincorporated city, town, village, or borough having a population greater than 1,500.	Section 161.002(7), Utilities Code	Electric cooperative corporations
40	Rural area or rural service area is any community located in a county not included within any metropolitan statistical area (MSA) boundary, as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget, and any community within an MSA with a population of 20,000 or fewer not adjacent to the primary MSA city. ⁵	16 T.A.C. § 26.143(c)(6)	Advanced telecommunications and information services in rural areas
State Emergency Communications, Commission on			
41	Rural area means: (A) a county with a population of 50,000 or less; or (B) a large, isolated, and sparsely populated area of a county with a population of more than 50,000.	Section 771.151(6), Health and Safety Code	Next generation 9-1-1 telemedicine medical services pilot project
Transportation, Texas Department of			
42	Rural border county is an eligible county ¹³ that: (A) has a population of less than 55,000, as determined by the latest decennial census; and (B) is adjacent to an international border. ¹²	43 T.A.C. § 15.101(12)	Border colonia access program
43 map	Rural area is a nonurbanized area. ¹⁴	43 T.A.C. § 31.3(48)	State and federal public transportation funding programs

Definition Number & Map	Definition	Source	Subject of Source Statutes/Rules
Water Development Board, Texas			
44	<p>Rural community means: (A) a municipality or county with a population of less than 5,000; (B) any portion of a political subdivision with a service population of less than 5,000 that is located outside the boundaries or extraterritorial jurisdiction of a municipality; or (C) a predominately residential area with a population of less than 5,000 that is located outside the corporate boundaries of a municipality.</p> <p>Disadvantaged rural community means a rural community with a median household income that is not greater than 75 percent of the median state household income for the most recent year for which the applicable statistics are available.</p> <p>Rural community is a municipality or county with a population of less than 5,000 or a district or authority created under the Texas Constitution, § 52, Article III, or § 59, Article XVI,¹⁵ with a population of less than 5,000 that is located outside the boundaries or extraterritorial jurisdiction of a municipality.¹⁶</p>	<p>Section 15.901(3), Water Code</p> <p>Section 15.901(4), Water Code</p> <p>31 T.A.C. § 363.902(2)</p>	<p>Program for water and wastewater financial assistance for disadvantaged rural communities</p> <p>Pilot program for water and wastewater loans to rural communities</p>
45	<p>Rural political subdivision is: (A) a nonprofit water supply or sewer service corporation, district, or municipality with a service area of 10,000 or less in population or that otherwise qualifies for financing from a federal agency; or (B) a county in which no urban area exceeds 50,000 in population.</p>	<p>Section 15.992(4), Water Code</p> <p>31 T.A.C. § 384.2(6)</p> <p>Section 15.434(b)(1)(A), Water Code</p>	<p>Rural water assistance fund</p> <p>State water implementation fund for Texas</p>
Workforce Commission, Texas			
46 map	<p>For purposes of a reduction in the minimum number of weekly work search contacts by a local workforce development board in counties designated as rural by the Texas Workforce Commission in response to specific local labor market information and conditions, rural counties are defined as those counties having a population estimated by the Texas State Data Center¹⁷ to be not more than 10,000 as of July 1 of the most recent year for which county population estimates have been published.</p>	<p>40 T.A.C. § 815.28(e)</p>	<p>Work search requirements that must be met to receive unemployment compensation benefits</p>

Notes

¹ For purposes of statutory provisions relating to the adoption of state agency rules that would have an adverse economic effect on small businesses, micro-businesses, or rural communities, [Sec. 2006.001\(3\), Government Code](#), defines "state agency" as a department, board, bureau, commission, division, office, council, or other agency of the state. The term includes an officer who is authorized by law to determine contested cases. [Back to Table - Definition 1]

² Although the source statutes or rules do not define "rural," the definition of "rural" is implied in the program's eligibility requirements. [Back to Table - Definition 4, 11, or 19]

³ The term "nonmetropolitan" is obsolete for statistical use. A nonmetropolitan area is comparable to an area that is not delineated as a metropolitan statistical area (*see Note 5, below*). [Back to Table - Definition 6]

⁴ The U.S. Census Bureau, for purposes of Census 2010, defines "urbanized area" as an area that consists of densely developed territory with a population of 50,000 or more. Additional information on the Census Bureau's urban classification is available at <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/2010Urbanruralclass.html>. [Back to Table - Definition 7, 14, 22, 30, 31, or 32]

⁵ The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is responsible for developing the standards for delineating metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas and for applying those standards with decennial census data. According to the [2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas](#), a metropolitan statistical area must contain at least one core urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more. Each metropolitan statistical area includes the county or counties containing the core urbanized area, as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core as measured through commuting. [OMB Bulletin No. 17-01](#) (August 15, 2017) establishes the most recent delineations of metropolitan statistical areas. [Back to Table - Definition 11, 15, 17, 27, 28, 29, or 40]

⁶ For purposes of defining statistical areas, the term "standard metropolitan statistical area" was discontinued and replaced with "metropolitan statistical area" in 1983. [Back to Table - Definition 17]

⁷ The [United States-Mexico La Paz agreement of 1983](#) relates to the protection and improvement of the environment in the U.S.-Mexico border area, which is defined in the agreement as the area situated 100 kilometers (approximately 62 miles) on either side of the inland and maritime boundaries between the United States and Mexico. [Back to Table - Definition 24]

⁸ According to [19 T.A.C. § 23.65\(7\)](#), Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as having shortages of primary medical care, dental, or mental health providers and may be geographic (a county or service area), demographic (low-income population), or institutional (comprehensive health center, federally qualified health center, or other public facility). Designations meet the requirements of Section 332 of the Public Health Service Act, 90 Stat. 2270-2272 ([42 U.S.C. Section 254e](#)). Texas HPSAs are recommended for designation by HHS based on analysis of data by the Texas Department of State Health Services. [Back to Table - Definition 26]

⁹ The term "primary metropolitan statistical area" is obsolete for statistical use. In 2000, the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released the [2000 Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas](#), which changed the classification system for metropolitan areas. Prior to the adoption of these standards, the OMB defined three types of metropolitan areas: metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs), and consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs). The 2000 OMB standards changed the criteria for defining a "metropolitan statistical area," introduced the concept of a micropolitan statistical area, and made the concepts of PMSAs and CMSAs obsolete. For definitions that reference combined MSA/PMSA areas, such areas can be compared, but are not equivalent, to the areas currently delineated as metropolitan statistical areas (*see Note 5, above*). [Back to Table - Definition 27, 28, or 29]

¹⁰ [10 T.A.C. § 10.3\(a\)\(92\)](#) defines "place" as an area defined as such by the United States Census Bureau, which, in general, includes an incorporated city, town, or village, as well as unincorporated areas known as census designated places. [10 T.A.C. § 10.204\(5\)](#) requires the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to make available a list of places meeting the requirements of [Sections 2306.004\(28-a\)\(A\) and \(B\), Government Code](#), for designation as a rural area (*see Definition 27*) and those that are an urban area in the [Site Demographics Characteristic Report](#). For any development site located in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of a municipality and not in a place, the application shall have the rural area or urban area designation of the municipality whose ETJ within which the development site is located. For any development site not located within the boundaries of a place or the ETJ of a municipality, the applicable designation is that of the closest place. [Back to Table - Definition [29](#)]

¹¹ [Section 24.001\(2\), Parks and Wildlife Code](#), defines "urban area" as the area within a standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) in this state used in the last preceding federal census (*see Notes 5 and 6, above*). [Back to Table - Definition [34](#)]

¹² Definition 38 is similar to Definition 42, and both definitions relate to colonia access roadway project funding. Definition 38 is listed under the Texas Public Finance Authority category because it applies to the authority's set-aside and distribution, subject to the direction of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), of general obligation bond proceeds to provide financial assistance for such projects. Definition 42 is listed under the TxDOT category because it applies to the border colonia access program administered by TxDOT to govern how the bond proceeds are distributed. [Back to Table - Definition [38](#) or [42](#)]

¹³ [43 T.A.C. § 15.101\(8\)](#) defines "eligible county" as a county located in the El Paso, Laredo, or Pharr Texas Department of Transportation districts, and Terrell County, that has adopted the model rules promulgated by the Texas Water Development Board under [Section 16.343, Water Code](#), to assure that minimum standards for safe and sanitary water supply and sewer services in residential areas of political subdivisions, including rules of any state agency relating to septic tanks and other waste disposal systems, are met. [Back to Table - Definition [42](#)]

¹⁴ [43 T.A.C. § 31.3\(37\)](#) defines "nonurbanized area" as an area outside an urbanized area, and [43 T.A.C. § 31.3\(58\)](#) defines "urbanized area" as a core area and the surrounding densely populated area with a population of 50,000 or more, with boundaries fixed by the United States Census Bureau (*see Note 4, above*). [Back to Table - Definition [43](#)]

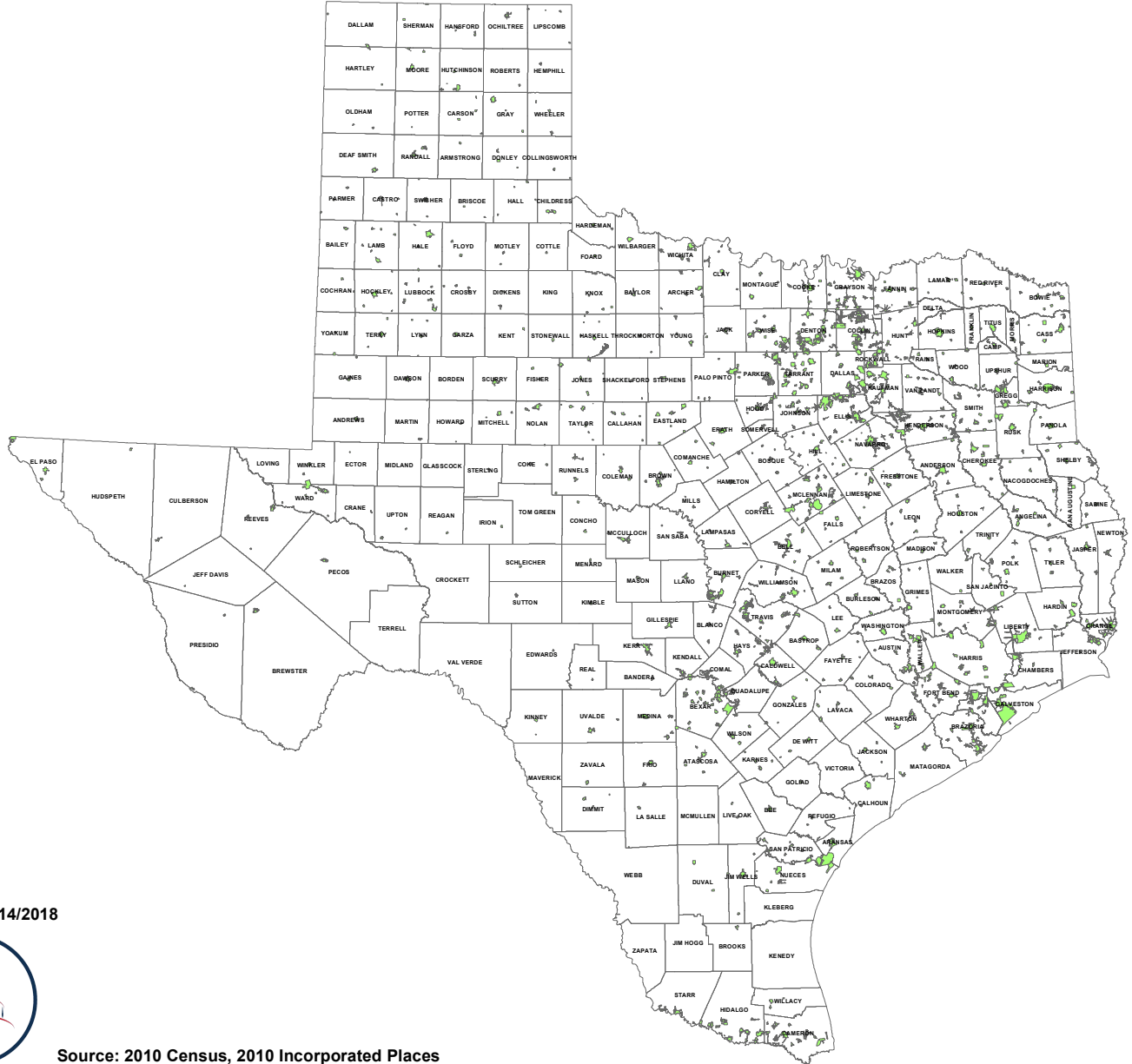
¹⁵ [Section 52, Article III, Texas Constitution](#), relates to the creation of navigation, irrigation, drainage, road, and turnpike districts. [Section 59, Article XVI](#), relates to the creation of conservation and reclamation districts. [Back to Table - Definition [44](#)]

¹⁶ The statutes for this pilot program ([Subchapter O, Chapter 15, Water Code](#)) were amended in 2005 through the enactment of [House Bill 3029, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, 2005](#). Among other revisions, the bill renamed the program and amended the definition for "rural community," which originally was the same as the definition in the T.A.C. rule. [Back to Table - Definition [44](#)]

¹⁷ The Texas State Data Center is now known as the [Texas Demographic Center](#). [Back to Table - Definition [46](#)]

Rural Community Definition 1

Section 2006.001(1-a), Government Code
All State Agencies (see [Note 1](#) in table)
Requirements for the Adoption of Certain
Proposed State Agency Rules



Rural (municipality with population < 25,000)

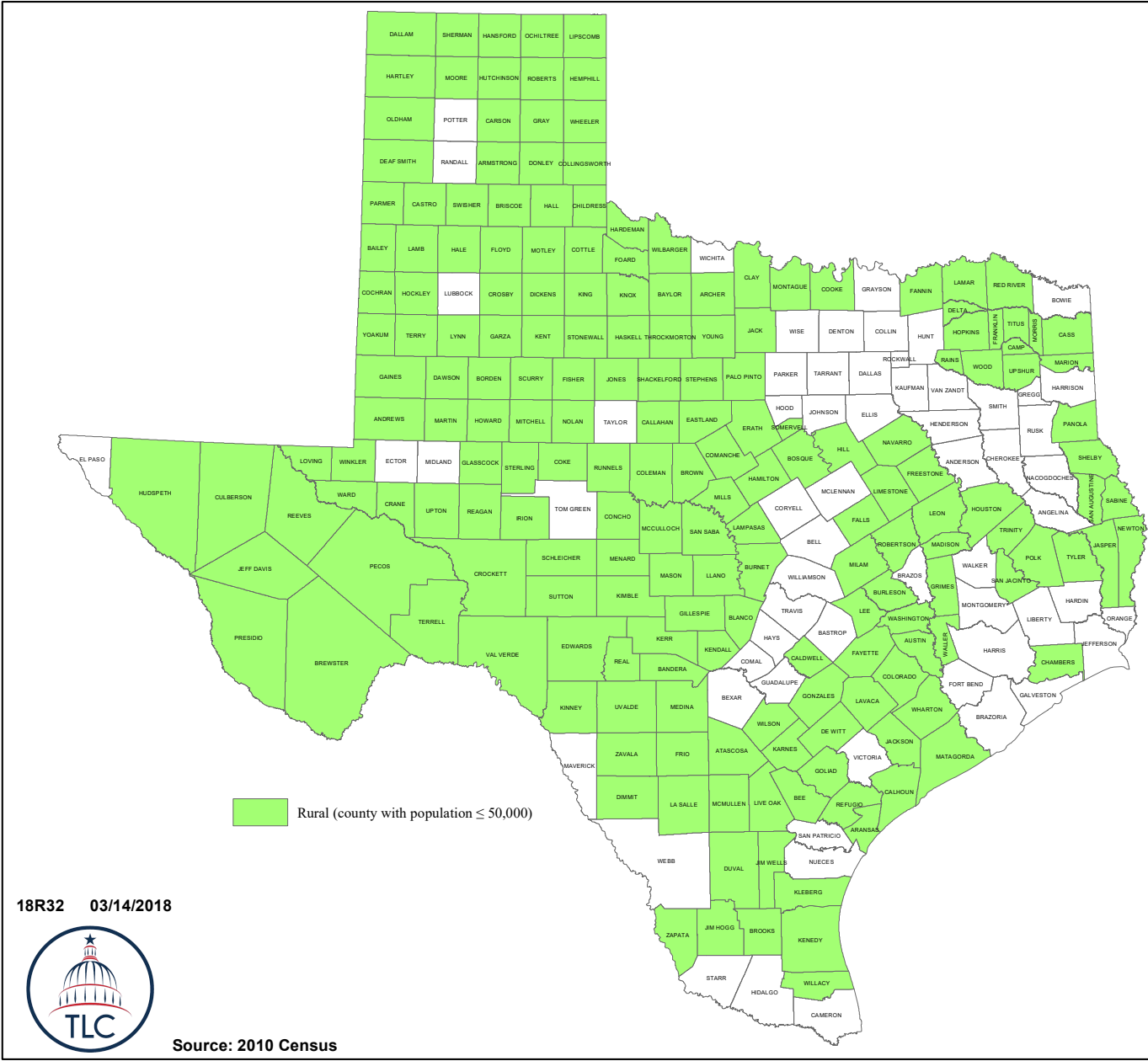
Section 2006.001(1-a), Government Code, defines "rural community" as a municipality with a population of less than 25,000.

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Source: 2010 Census, 2010 Incorporated Places

[Back to Table - Definition 1](#)



Rural County

Definitions 2, 23, 25, and 37

Def. 2: Section 88.621(6), Education Code
Texas A&M University System
Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program

Def. 23: 25 T.A.C. § 157.130(a)(2) and 25 T.A.C. § 157.131(a)(2)
Department of State Health Services
Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care System Account
and Emergency Medical Services, Trauma Facilities,
and Trauma Care System Fund
and
Designated Trauma Facility and
Emergency Medical Services Account

Def. 25: Section 61.9601, Education Code
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Certain Law School Education Loan Repayment Assistance

Def. 37: 22 T.A.C. § 297.7(c)
Texas State Board of Pharmacy
Certification Requirement Exemption for
Rural County Pharmacy Technicians

Section 88.621(6), Education Code, defines "rural county" as a county with a population of less than 50,000.

25 T.A.C. §§ 157.130(a)(2) and 157.131(a)(2) define "rural county" as a county with a population of less than 50,000 based on the latest official federal census population figures.

Section 61.9601, Education Code, defines "rural county" as a county with a population of 50,000 or less.

22 T.A.C. § 297.7(c) provides that, for the purpose of exempting a pharmacy technician who works in a rural county from certification requirements, a "rural county" is a county with a population of 50,000 or less.

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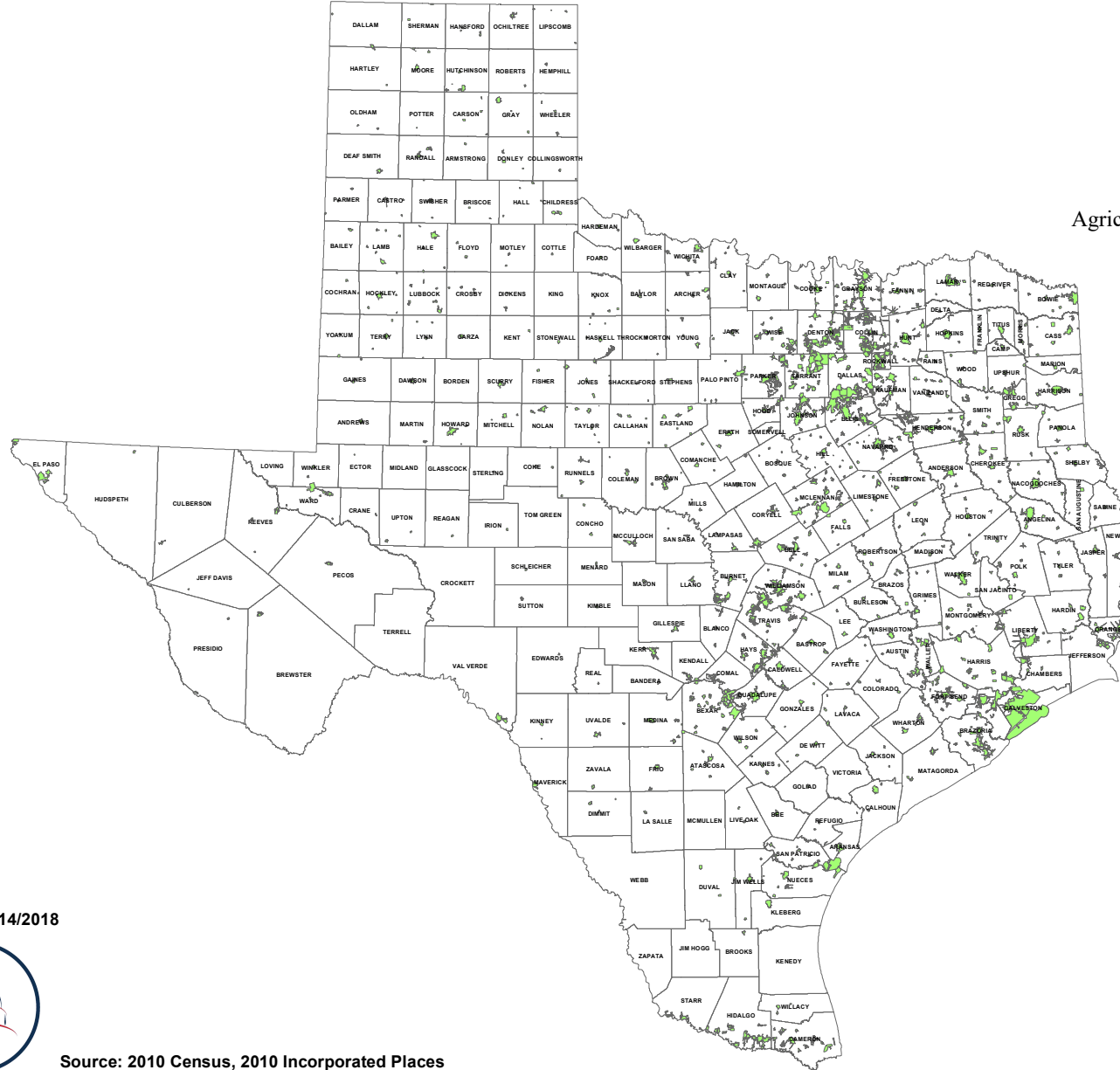
Source: 2010 Census

Back to Table - Definition 2, 23, 25, or 37

Rural Area Definition 3

Section 44.001(6), Agriculture Code
Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA)
Agricultural Diversification and Microenterprise Support Programs

Section 58.002(9), Agriculture Code, and
4 T.A.C. § 28.2(23)
TAFA Programs in General



Rural (municipality with population < 50,000)

Sections 44.001(6) and 58.002(9), Agriculture Code, define "rural area" as an area which is predominantly rural in character, being one which the board of directors of the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA) defines and declares to be a rural area.

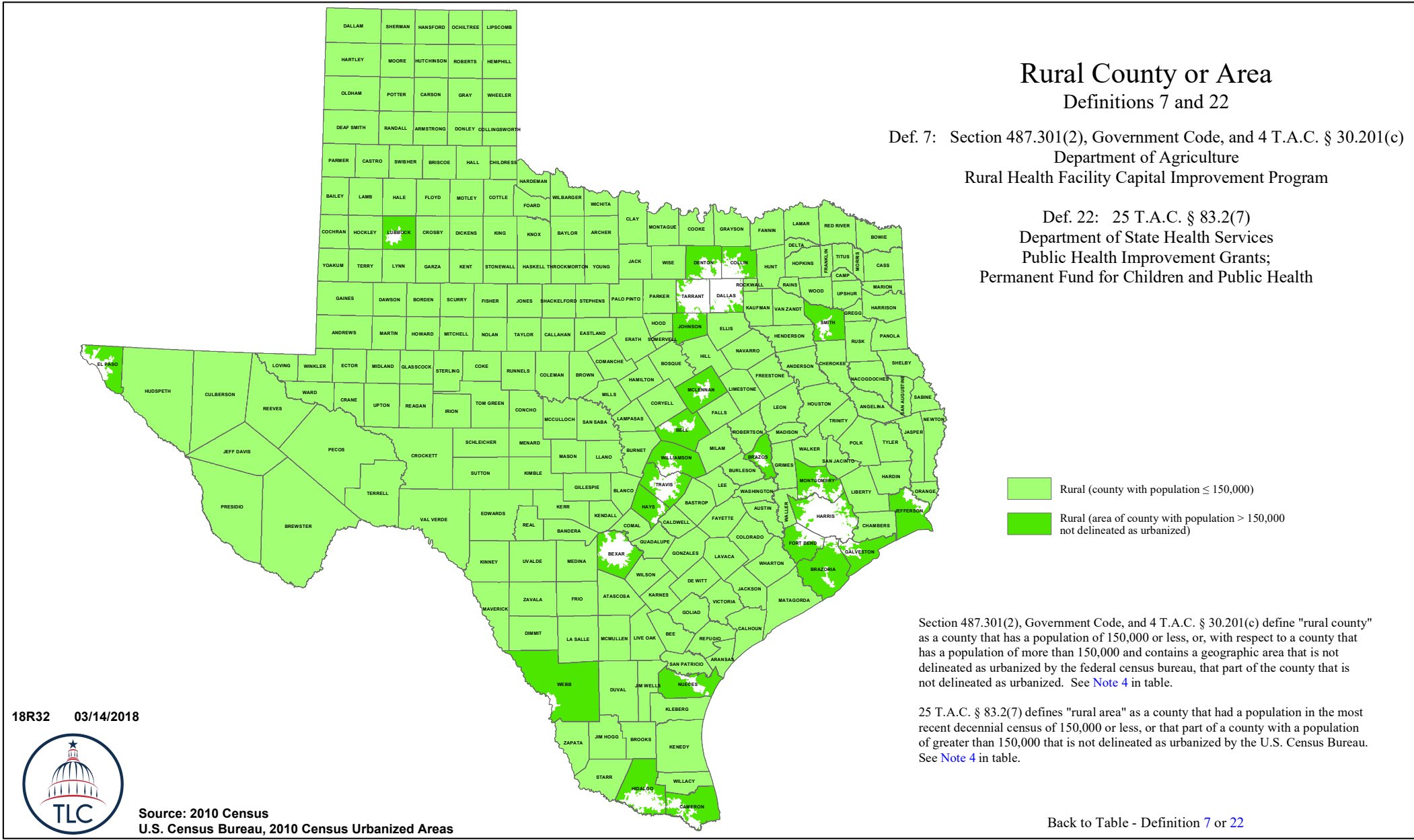
4 T.A.C. § 28.2(23) defines "rural" as a municipality with a population of less than 50,000.

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Source: 2010 Census, 2010 Incorporated Places

[Back to Table - Definition 3](#)



Rural County or Area Definitions 7 and 22

Def. 7: Section 487.301(2), Government Code, and 4 T.A.C. § 30.201(c)
Department of Agriculture
Rural Health Facility Capital Improvement Program

Def. 22: 25 T.A.C. § 83.2(7)
Department of State Health Services
Public Health Improvement Grants;
Permanent Fund for Children and Public Health

- Rural (county with population ≤ 150,000)
- Rural (area of county with population > 150,000 not delineated as urbanized)

Section 487.301(2), Government Code, and 4 T.A.C. § 30.201(c) define "rural county" as a county that has a population of 150,000 or less, or, with respect to a county that has a population of more than 150,000 and contains a geographic area that is not delineated as urbanized by the federal census bureau, that part of the county that is not delineated as urbanized. See [Note 4](#) in table.

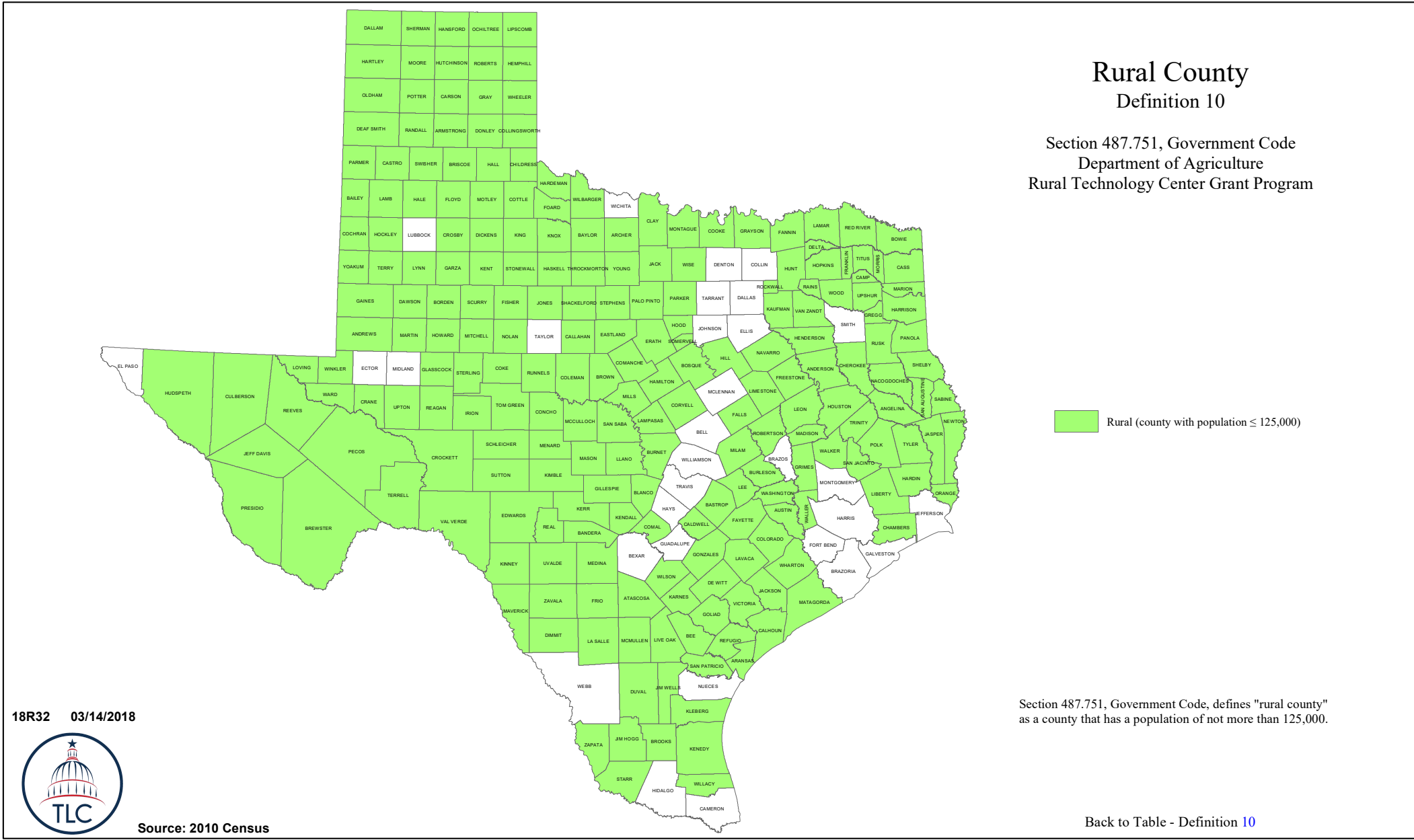
25 T.A.C. § 83.2(7) defines "rural area" as a county that had a population in the most recent decennial census of 150,000 or less, or that part of a county with a population of greater than 150,000 that is not delineated as urbanized by the U.S. Census Bureau. See [Note 4](#) in table.

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Source: 2010 Census
U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Urbanized Areas

[Back to Table - Definition 7 or 22](#)



Rural County Definition 10

Section 487.751, Government Code
Department of Agriculture
Rural Technology Center Grant Program

Rural (county with population ≤ 125,000)

Section 487.751, Government Code, defines "rural county" as a county that has a population of not more than 125,000.

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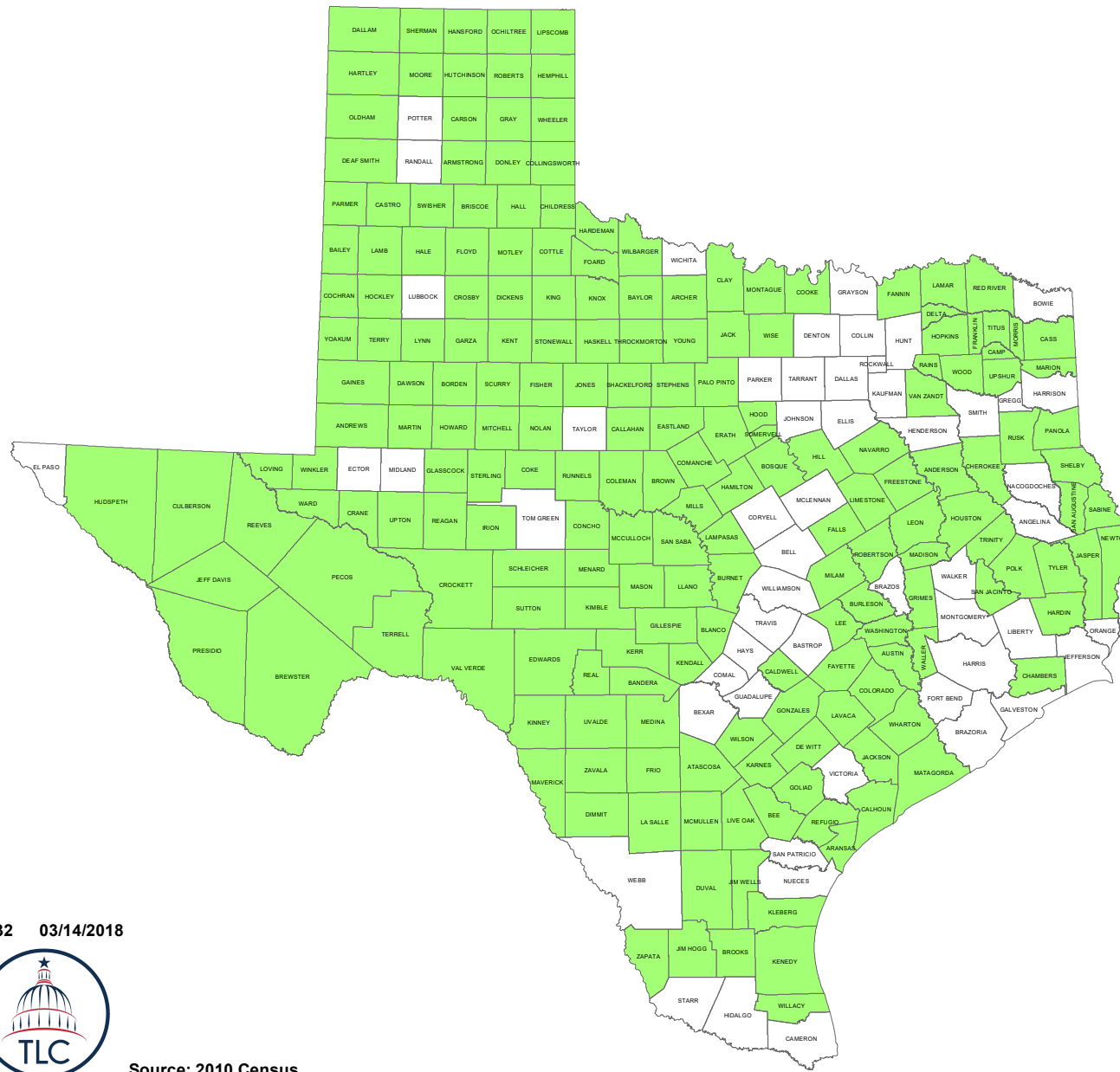



Source: 2010 Census

[Back to Table - Definition 10](#)

Rural County Definition 13

Section 490G.001(2-a), Government Code
Economic Incentive Oversight Board
Appointments to the Economic Incentive Oversight Board



 Rural (county with population < 60,000)

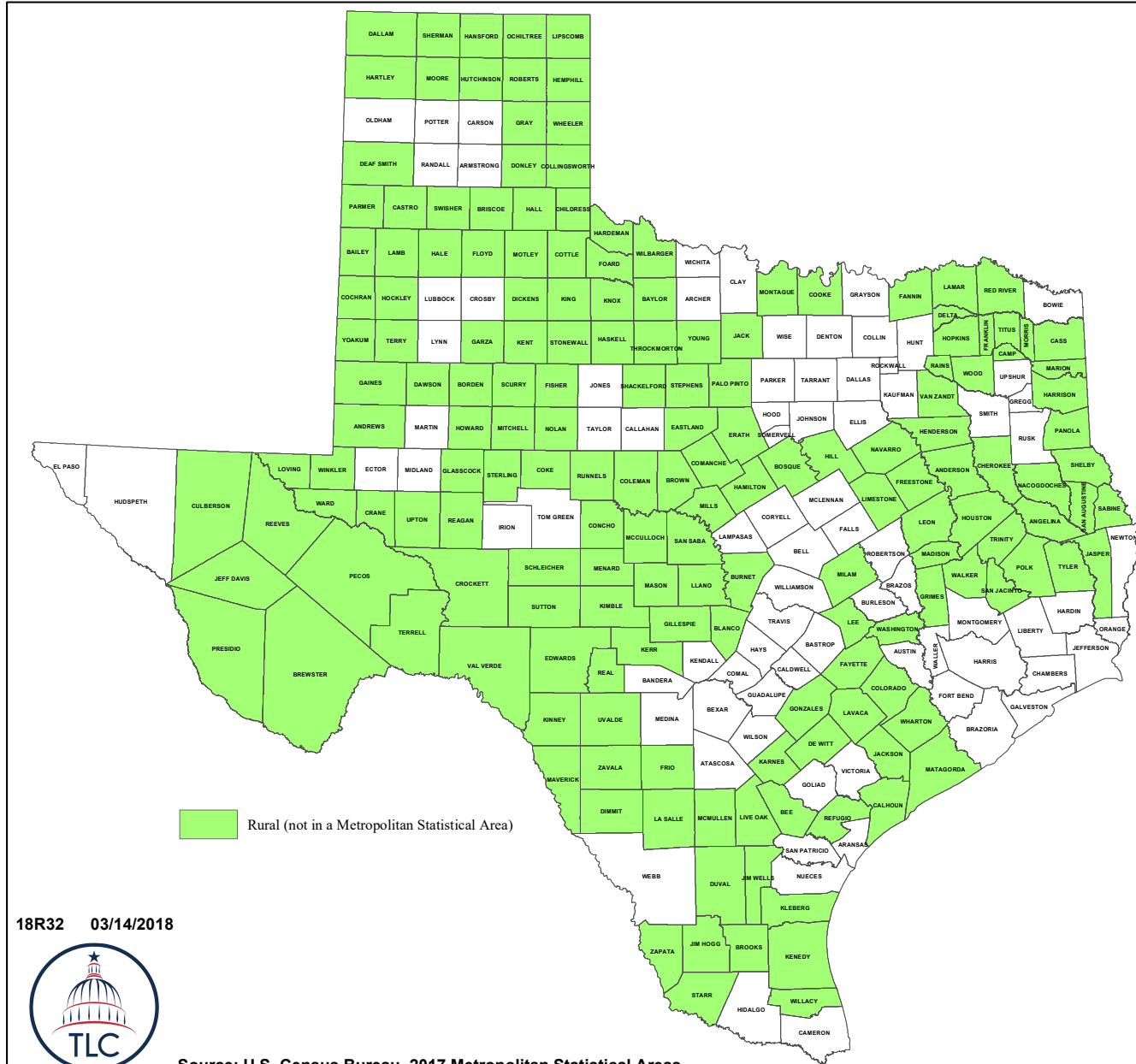
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Source: 2010 Census

Section 490G.001(2-a), Government Code, defines "rural county" as a county with a population of less than 60,000.

[Back to Table - Definition 13](#)



Rural Area or County Definitions 17, 28, and 34

Def. 17: 40 T.A.C. § 19.1001(a)(9)
Health and Human Services Commission
Nursing Facility Requirements for Licensure
and Medicaid Certification

Def. 28: Section 2306.004(33), Government Code
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)
TDHCA Economic Development Programs

Def. 34: Section 24.001(9), Parks and Wildlife Code
Parks and Wildlife Department
State Assistance for Local Parks

40 T.A.C. § 19.1001(a)(9) provides that, for purposes of the requirement that a Medicare skilled nursing facility be in a rural area for consideration of a waiver of the requirement that the services of a registered nurse be provided in the facility for more than 40 hours a week, a "rural area" is any area outside the boundaries of a standard metropolitan statistical area. See [Note 5](#) and [Note 6](#) in table.

Section 2306.004(33), Government Code, defines "rural county" as a county that is outside the boundaries of a primary metropolitan statistical area or a metropolitan statistical area. See [Note 5](#) and [Note 9](#) in table.

Section 24.001(9), Parks and Wildlife Code, defines "rural area" as any area not included in an urban area. An urban area is defined in Section 24.001(2) of that code as the area within a standard metropolitan statistical area in this state used in the last preceding federal census. See [Note 5](#) and [Note 6](#) in table.

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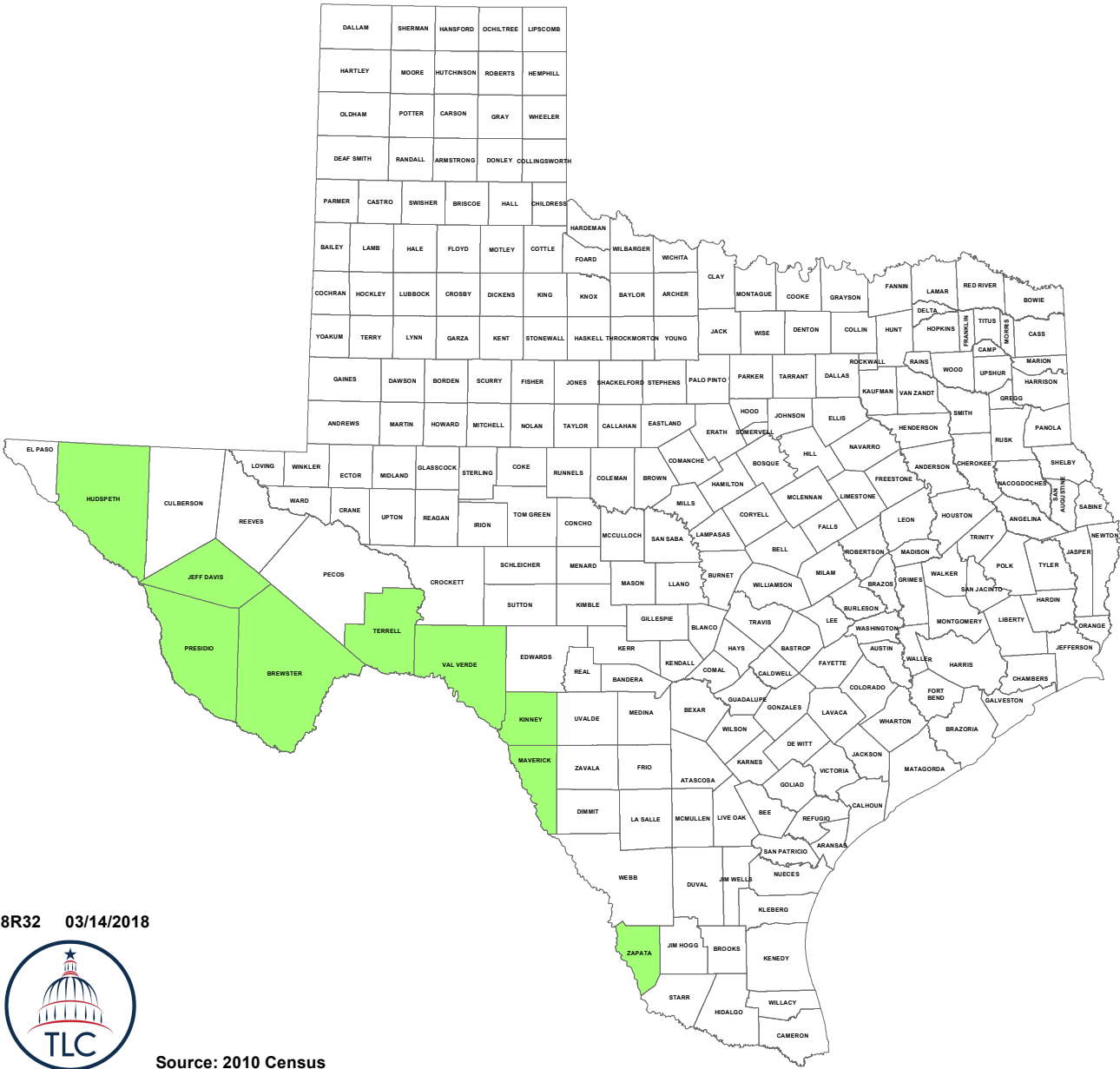


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Metropolitan Statistical Areas

Back to Table - Definition 17, 28, or 34

Rural Border County Definition 38

Section 1403.003(a)(2), Government Code
Texas Public Finance Authority
Set-aside of General Obligation Bond Proceeds for
Roadway Projects in Colonias Located in Rural Border Counties



Rural (county with international border and population < 55,000)

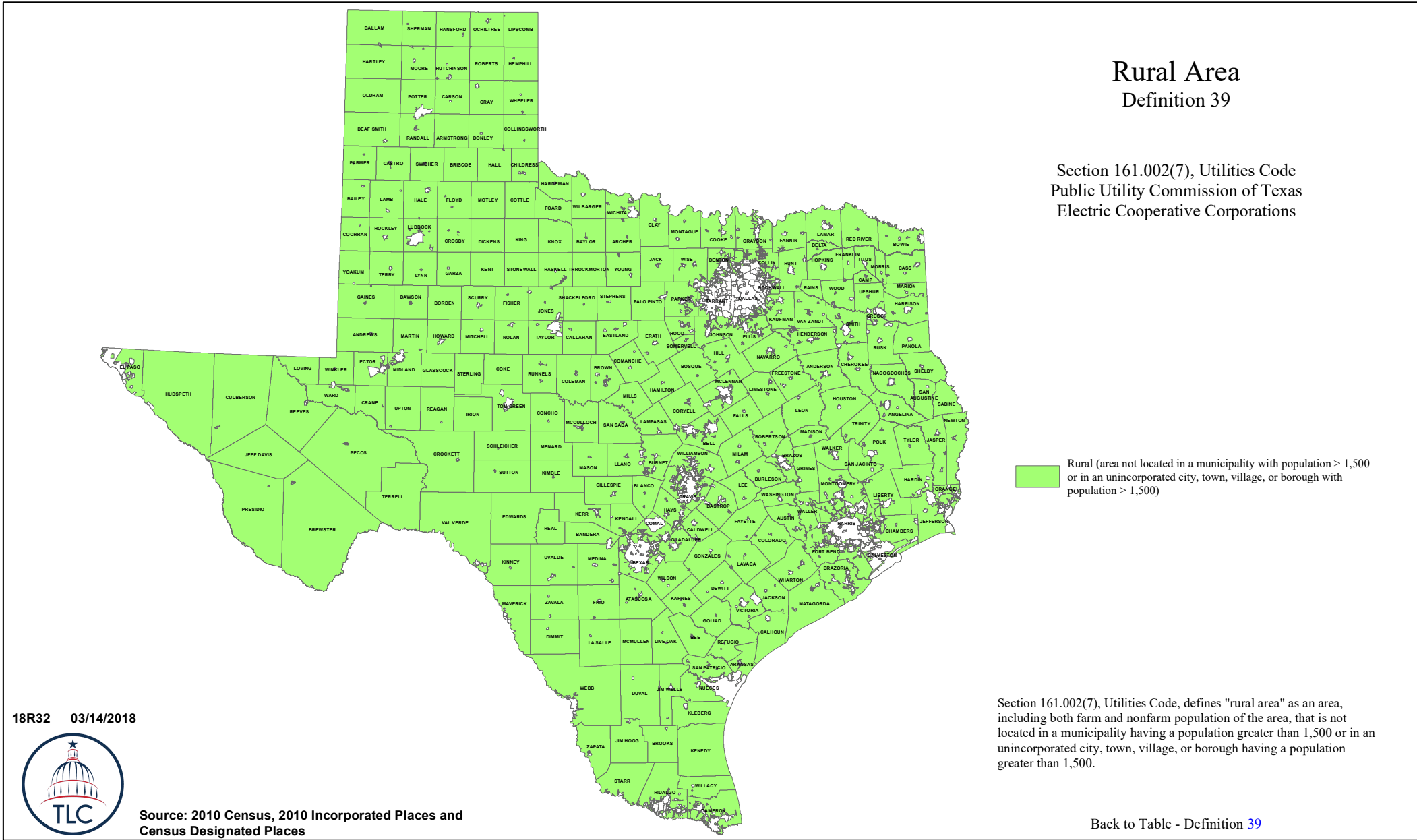
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Source: 2010 Census

Section 1403.003(a)(2), Government Code, defines "rural border county" as a county that has a population of less than 55,000 and is adjacent to an international border. See [Note 12](#) in table.

[Back to Table - Definition 38](#)



Rural Area Definition 39

Section 161.002(7), Utilities Code
Public Utility Commission of Texas
Electric Cooperative Corporations

Rural (area not located in a municipality with population > 1,500 or in an unincorporated city, town, village, or borough with population > 1,500)

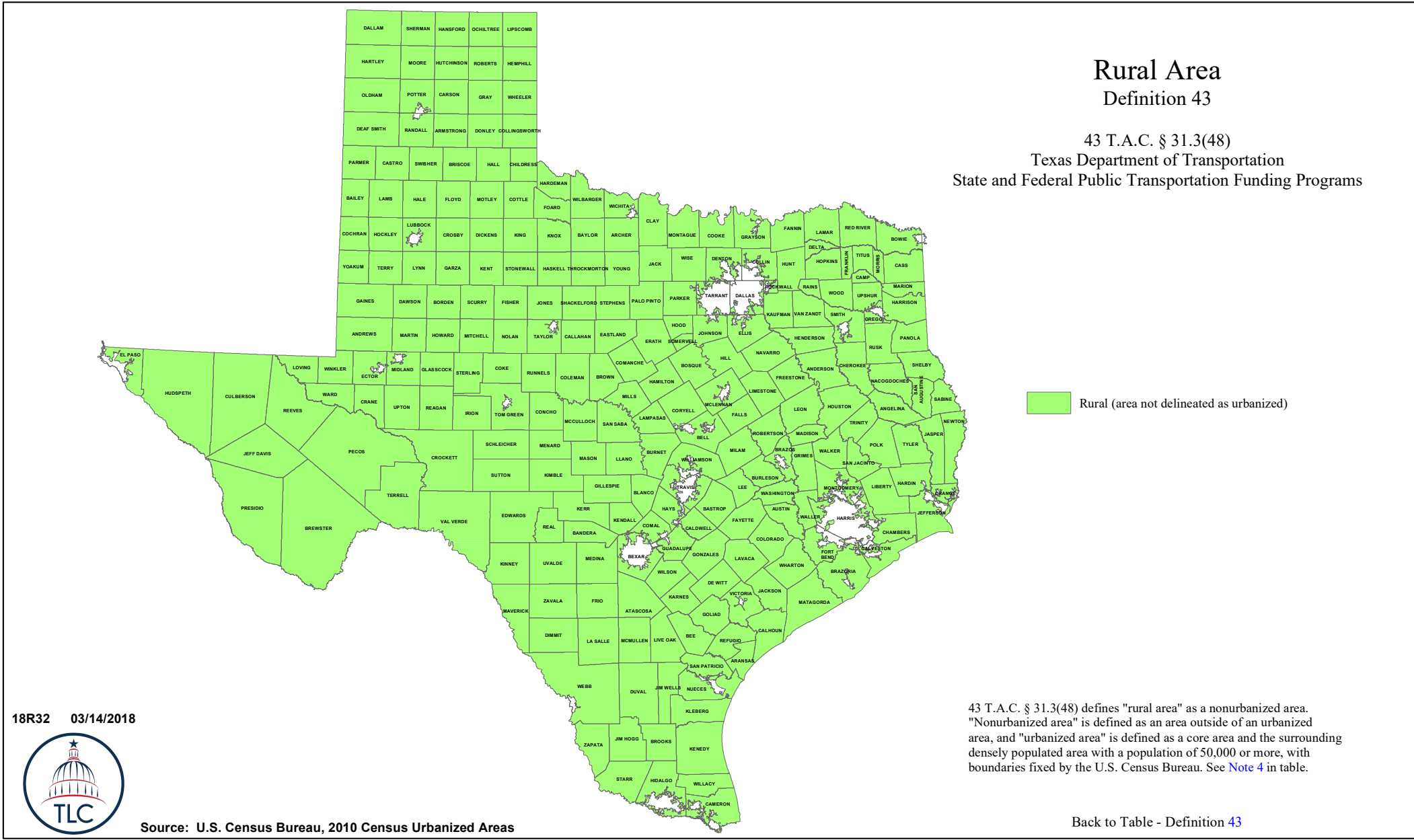
Section 161.002(7), Utilities Code, defines "rural area" as an area, including both farm and nonfarm population of the area, that is not located in a municipality having a population greater than 1,500 or in an unincorporated city, town, village, or borough having a population greater than 1,500.

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Source: 2010 Census, 2010 Incorporated Places and
Census Designated Places

[Back to Table - Definition 39](#)



Rural Area Definition 43

43 T.A.C. § 31.3(48)
Texas Department of Transportation
State and Federal Public Transportation Funding Programs

Rural (area not delineated as urbanized)

43 T.A.C. § 31.3(48) defines "rural area" as a nonurbanized area. "Nonurbanized area" is defined as an area outside of an urbanized area, and "urbanized area" is defined as a core area and the surrounding densely populated area with a population of 50,000 or more, with boundaries fixed by the U.S. Census Bureau. See [Note 4](#) in table.

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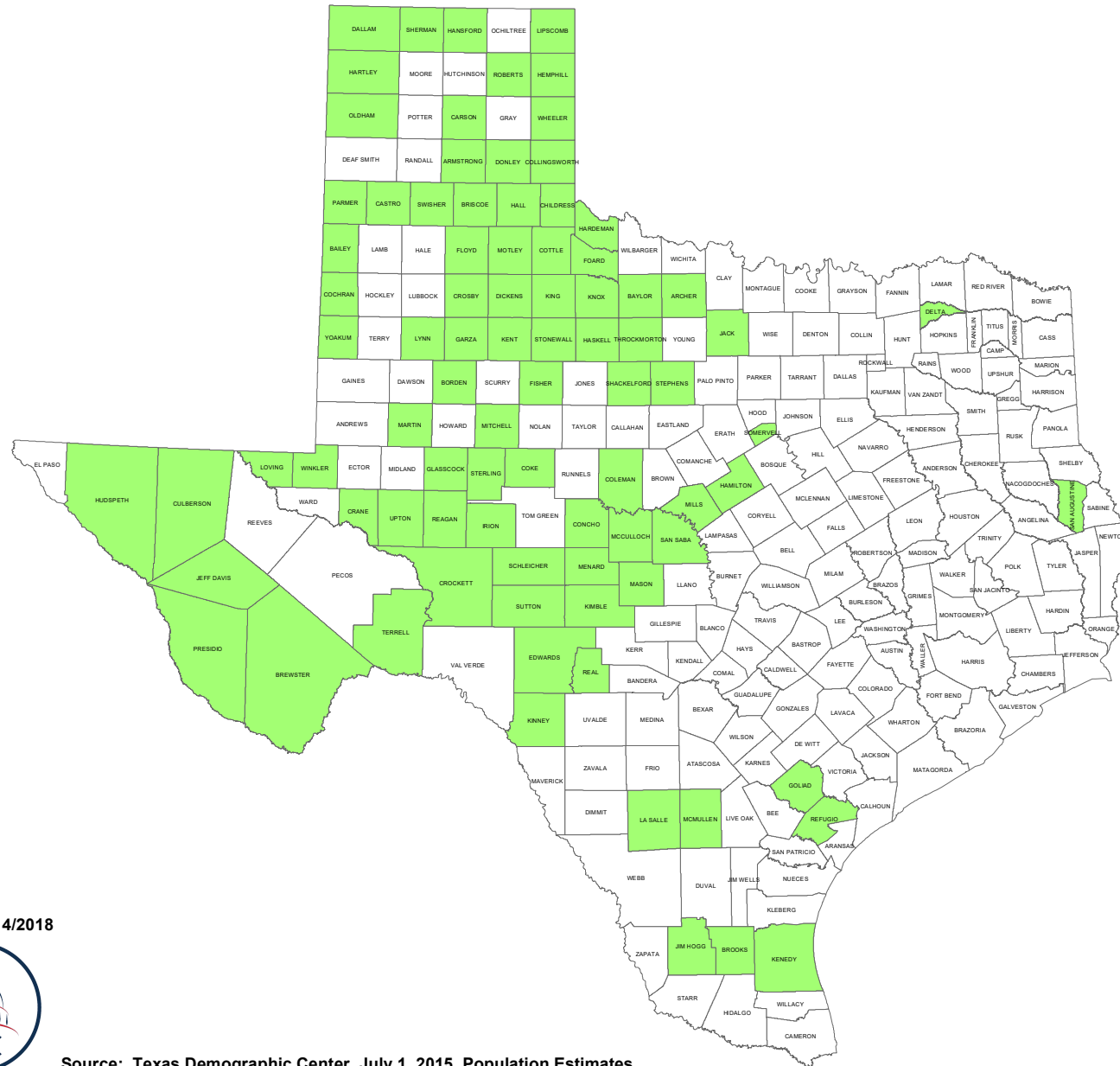


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Urbanized Areas

[Back to Table - Definition 43](#)

Rural County Definition 46

40 T.A.C. § 815.28(e)
Texas Workforce Commission
Work Search Requirements Relating to
Unemployment Compensation Benefits



Rural (county with population ≤ 10,000)

For purposes of a reduction in the minimum number of weekly work search contacts by a local workforce development board in counties designated as rural by the Texas Workforce Commission in response to specific local labor market information and conditions, 40 T.A.C. § 815.28(e) defines "rural counties" as those counties having a population estimated by the Texas State Data Center (now known as the Texas Demographic Center) to be not more than 10,000 as of July 1 of the most recent year for which county population estimates have been published.

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Source: Texas Demographic Center, July 1, 2015, Population Estimates

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