

## RTF Federal Distribution – Change in County Area Values Used in Distribution Formula

### Introduction:

The Rural Task Force (RTF) federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) allocations are distributed to individual RTFs and Urban Counties using Rural Act 51 certified miles (Primary and Local minus Urban Primary and Urban Local) as a factor equal in weight to rural population, and county area (sq. miles).

Following a recent review of the county area values used in the calculations, it has been determined that the source of this data was the 1980 census. It was also confirmed that these numbers have remained unchanged since 1980.

The values for each county area are updated in each decennial Census. Generally, these are minor and are due to changes in coastlines, water features, or improvements in GIS technology. There were a few significant changes between 1980 and 1990 census due to a change in methodology. This is when the Census adopted the use of Tiger line files as the base geographic files that are still in use. This document outlines the changes between 1980 and 1990 census regarding the county area values, [Ch15GARM.pdf \(census.gov\)](#). Moving forward the changes in county area between decennial Census's should be relatively insignificant.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the RTF Program Advisory Board approved MDOT's recommendation to move to using the most recent census figures for the county land areas. To keep the program stable MDOT will start using the 2020 census values for county area in the FY 2026 estimates as part of the 2026-2029 STIP call for projects.