

Live Rural Survey



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Important insights for our rural communities

We asked our followers - whether they live rural or not - to take a short survey to help us gain some important insights on rural living.

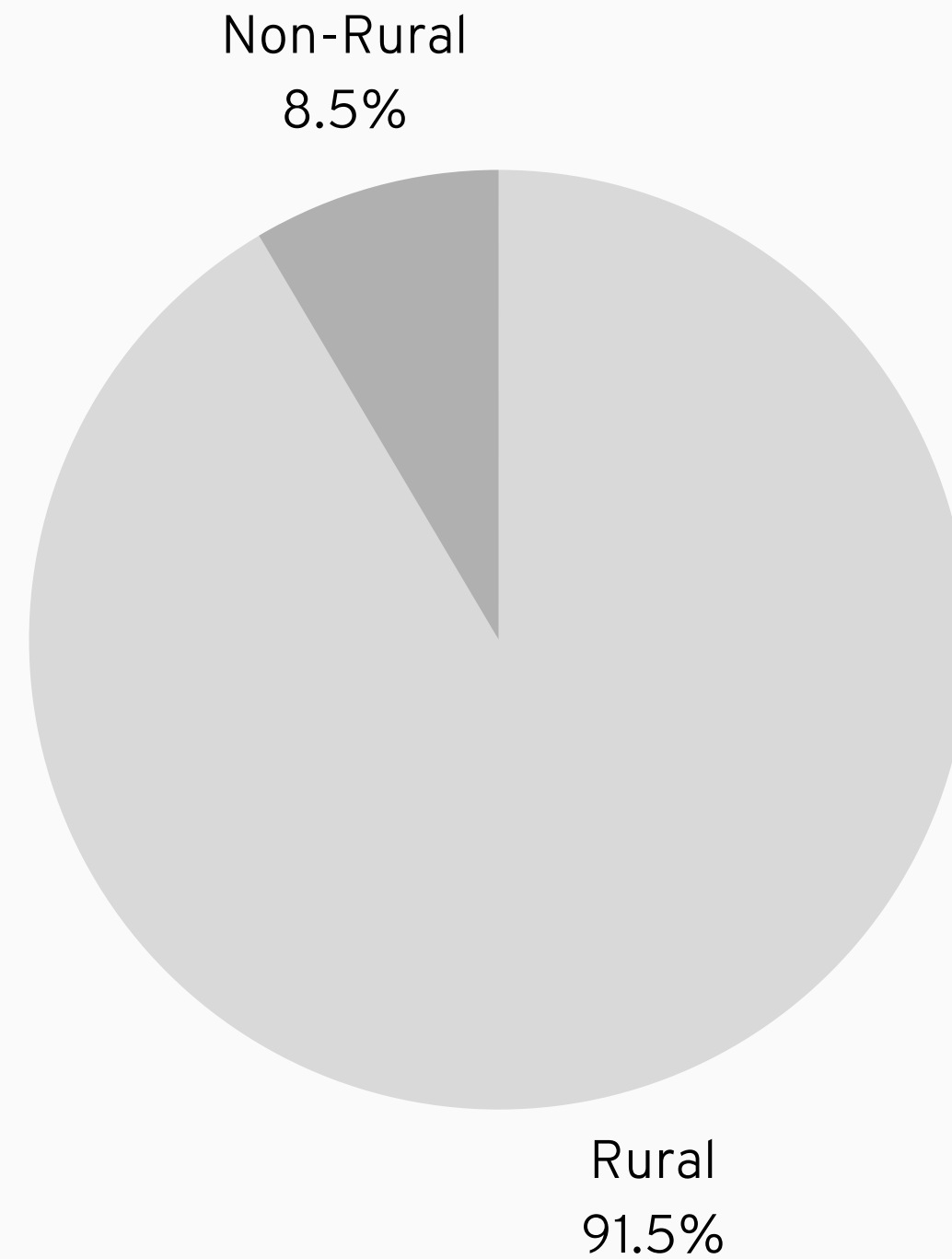


Here's who responded...



657 respondents

- 91.5% currently live rural
- 8.5% currently do not live rural
- Representing 38 states + Washington, DC

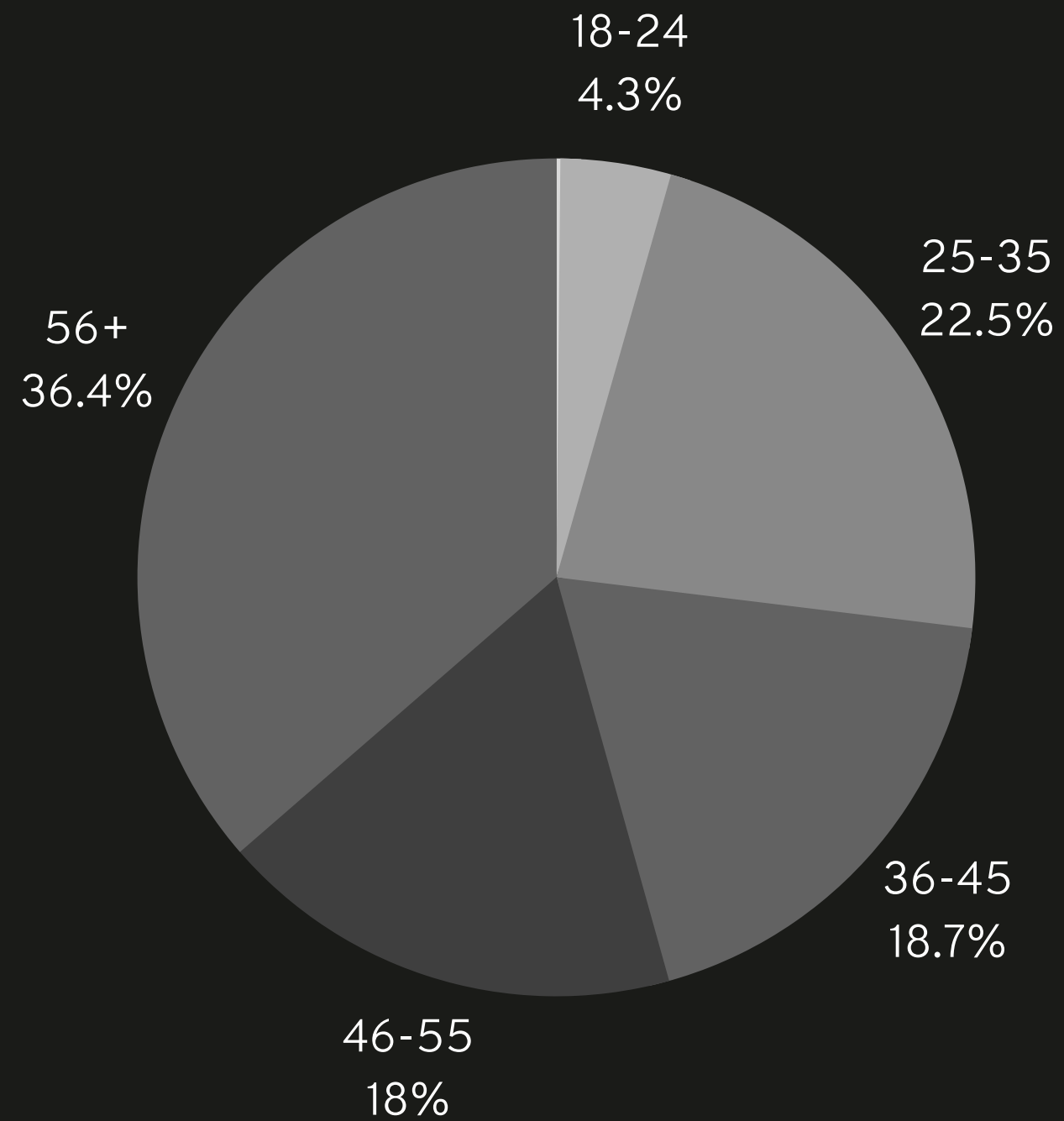


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Here's who responded...

Age of respondents





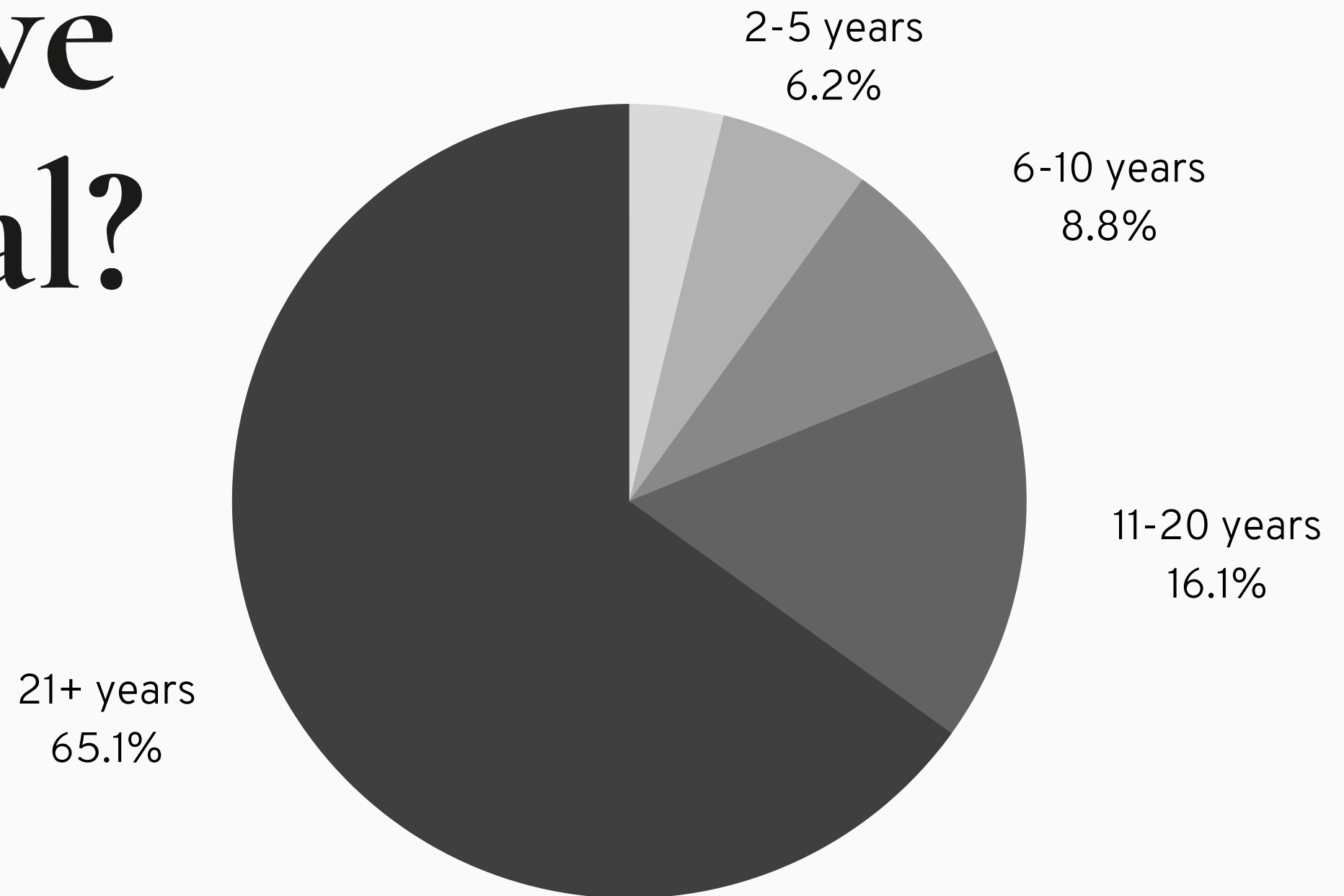
Rural Residents

We surveyed two groups:

Population of the town/city of your current home address is less than 15k (96%)

Population of the town/city of your current home address is 15k-50k (4%)

How long have you lived rural?



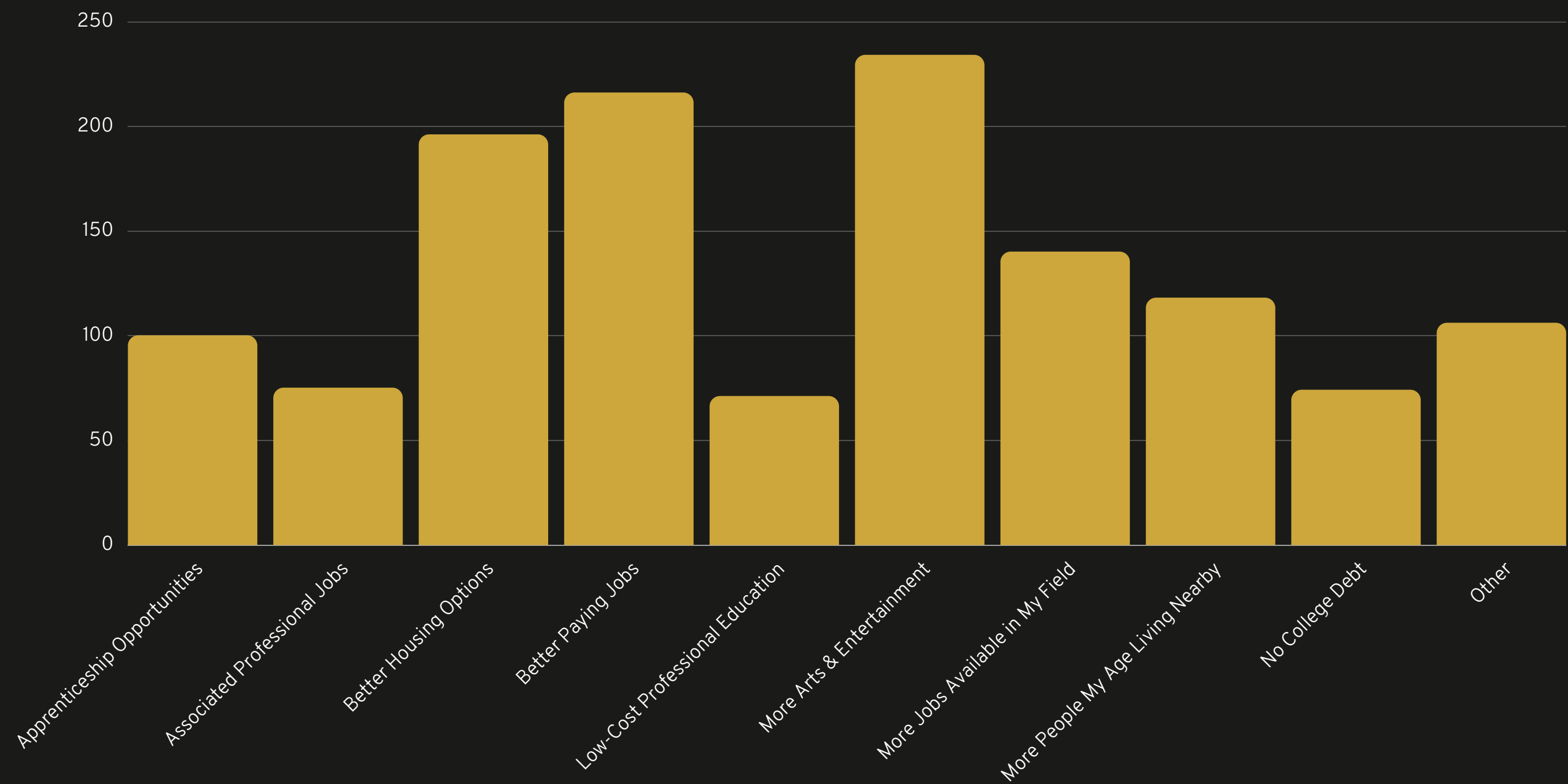
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Which of the following would help improve rural living for you? Check all that apply.

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Rural Residents

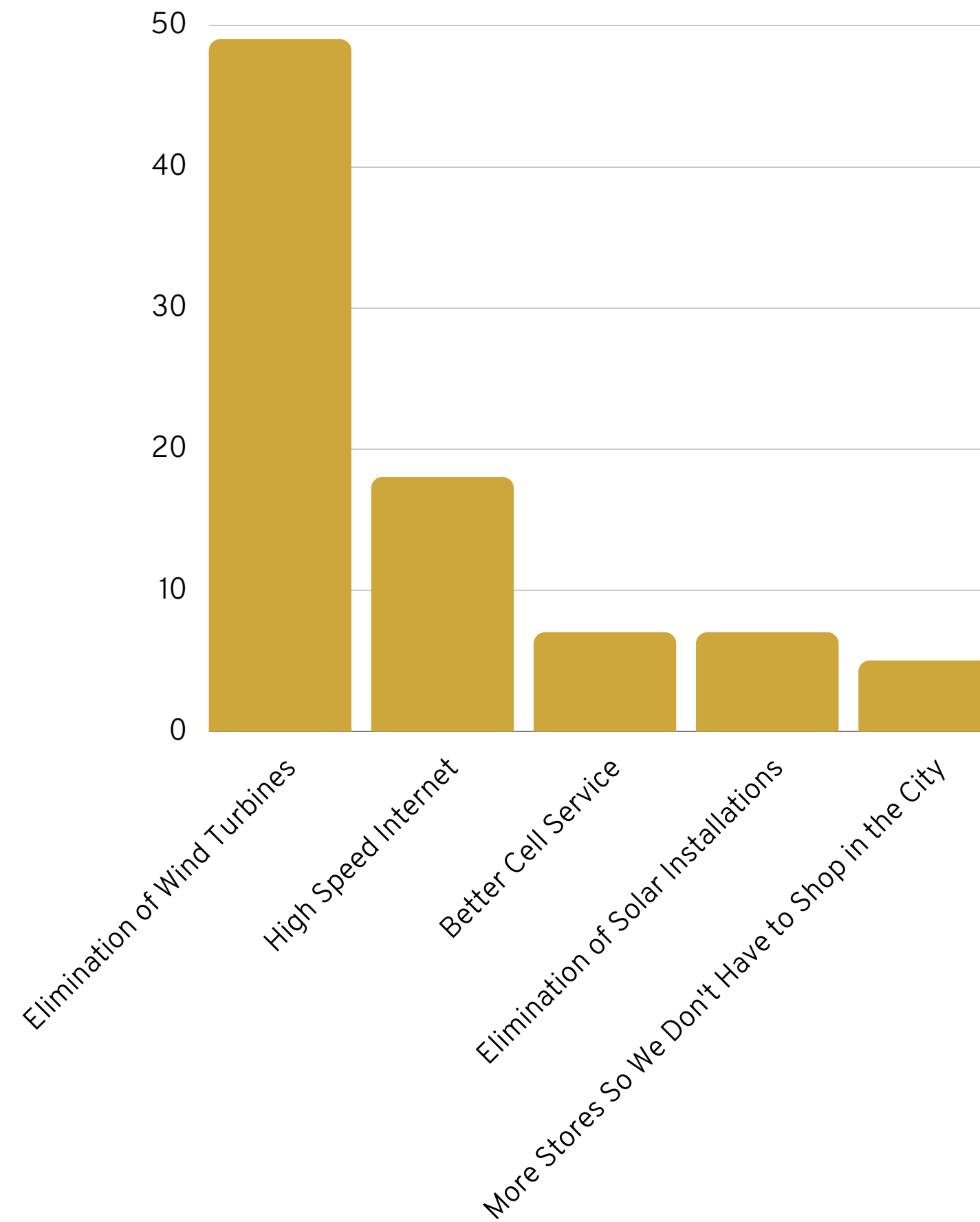


Rural Residents

Other...

(Based on written feedback from respondents)

- Elimination of wind turbines
- High speed internet
- Better cell service
- Elimination of solar installations
- More stores so we don't have to shop in the city
- Better access to doctors/hospitals/EMTs
- Better city and county leadership
- More young farm families
- Retail young people
- Better roads
- Better/healthier restaurant choices
- Keeping, at least, our K-6 schools in our small communities
- No hog confinements
- More trades people to fill needs of the community
- Fitness opportunities



Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)



Amenities

More places to work as an alternative to working at home. I miss the coffee shops in Chicago! Coffee shops in rural places look at me strange when I bring my laptop and stay for awhile.

Better grocery stores and more access to food and healthier options. I live seven miles from the closest grocery store which isn't a bad deal. However, for being a smaller grocery chain with locations around the Midwest it's pricey. I'm better off going a half hour north or south to larger communities that have better prices and more options for groceries.

Just having the basics like shopping, a decent coffee shop and/or bakery, better food resources and restaurants, fiber optics, plus better leadership in the community that has a plan for the future and is not afraid to take action on new ideas.

Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)



Local Shopping

Better opportunities locally to shop for items other than groceries. The focus should be how can you keep as much money IN the town/county as possible. Businesses that fail to be competitive miss out on lost sales and customers will look elsewhere.

More interest in securing new businesses here that provide what we don't have. We don't need more Dollar Stores, while on the other side of the coin, existing businesses need to be more competitive so that we spend less money in other towns and more here locally.

High Speed Internet

Better internet options for rural living so people can work from home. Internet speeds are slow in the country.

Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)



Jobs

For a small community (less than 10,000 in the whole county), we do have a lot of nice perks. We have many unique historical attractions, entertainment venues, community activities, youth activities, and a number of eating establishments. Jobs are available, but not many that are high-paying, high-skilled. So my young professional friends who graduated college in specialized fields don't have many, if any, job options to move home.

I am retired and work a part-time job as a county supervisor. I love everything about where I live. But in order to keep rural America alive we need to train and educate our young so they will choose to live in rural areas.

Job opportunities so my grown children will remain in the area.

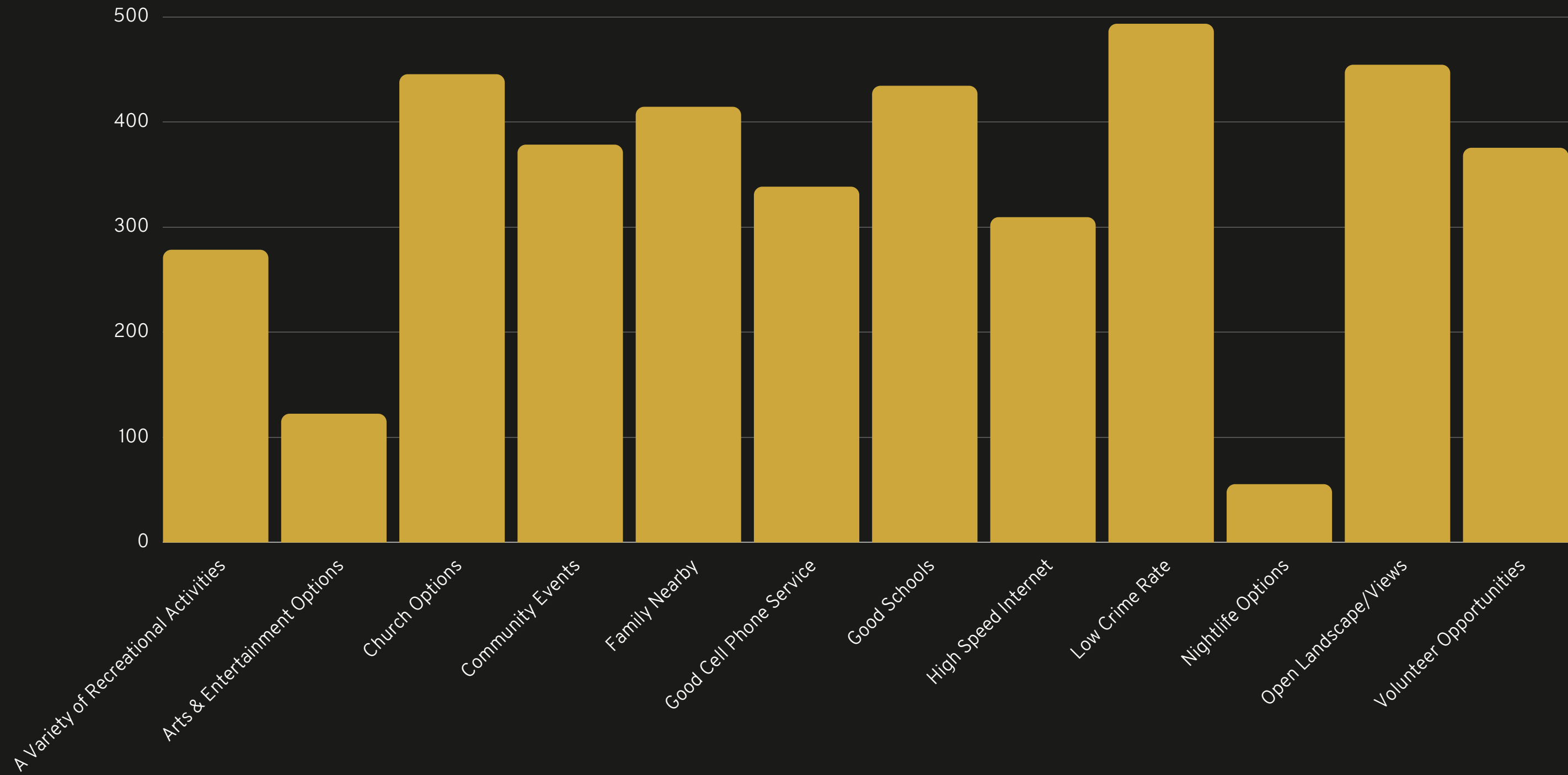
True rural economic development that grows rural areas and makes them better places for our youth to stay.

I really enjoy my community. I guess the one thing I worry about is my children having to move away to get better paying jobs or jobs in the fields they choose.

Which of the following are true of your rural community? Check all that apply.

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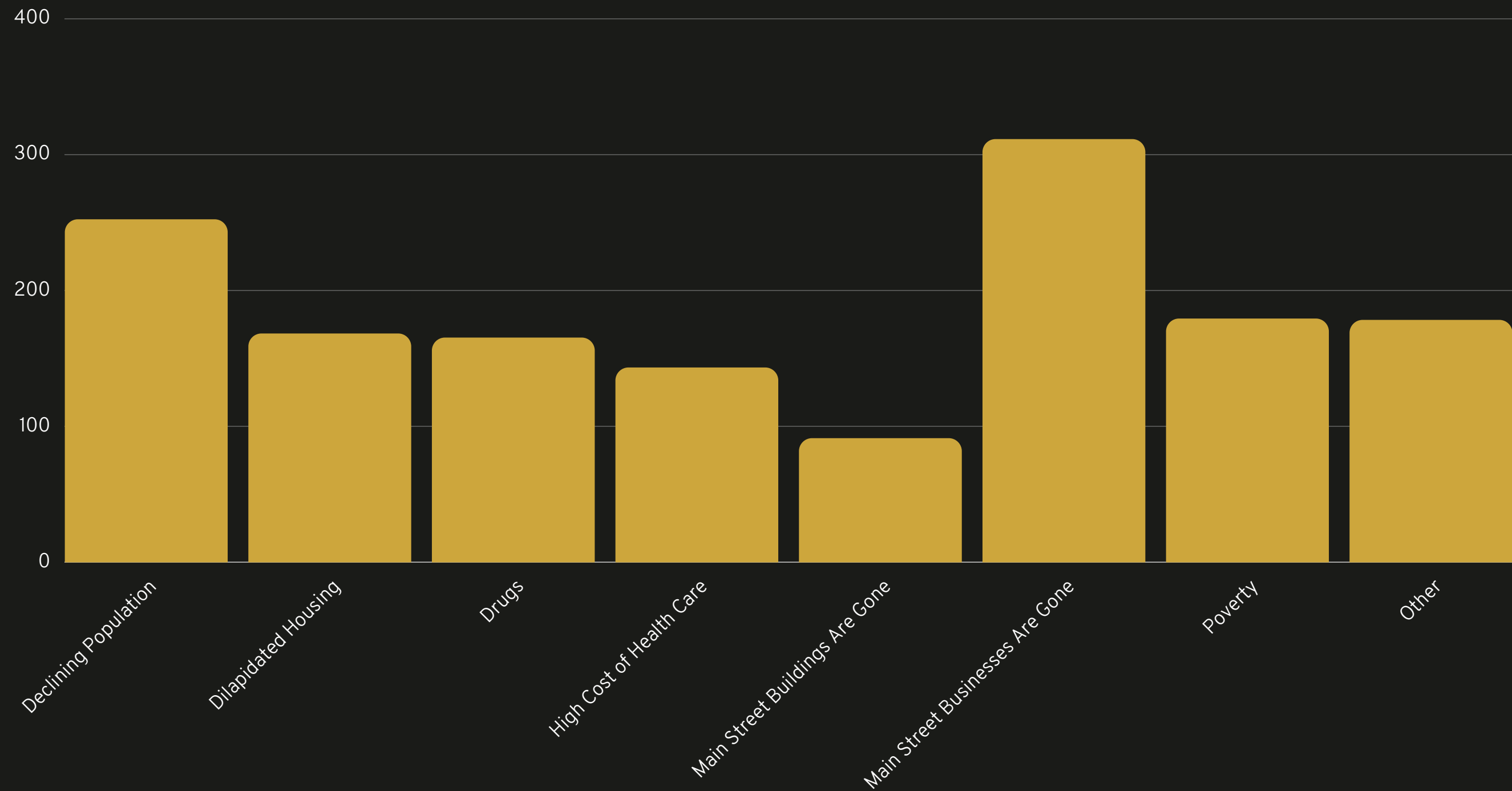
Rural Residents



What do you think is the biggest detriment to your rural community?

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Rural Residents

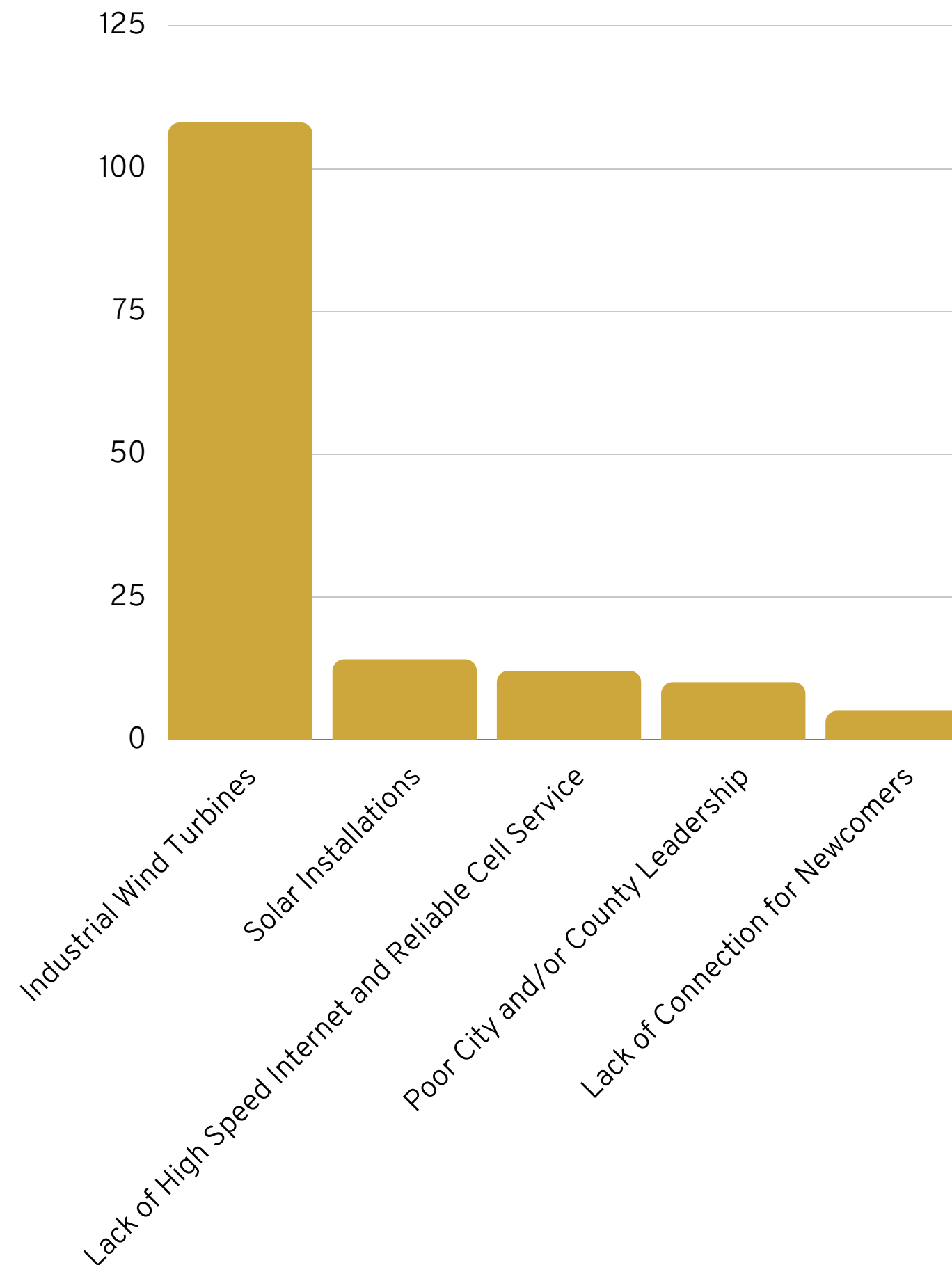


Rural Residents

Other...

(Based on written feedback from respondents)

- Industrial wind turbines
- Solar installations
- Lack of high speed internet and reliable cell service
- Poor city and/or county leadership
- Lack of connection for newcomers
- Lack of jobs for the younger generation
- High cost of products/services
- Hog confinements
- Nothing to do
- Lack of new families
- Lack of quality health care options
- Childcare options
- Lack of diversity
- Discouraging mindset
- Poor/unhealthy restaurant options
- Not enough young farmers
- Not many shopping local



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Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)

Industrial Wind

I think the many, many wind turbines that have gone up are a very big detriment to our rural community and to rural homeowners. Those of us who do not PROFIT from having a turbine(s) on our property, but are surrounded by them, are finding it hard to sell our beautiful rural homes because of the noise, light and flicker from the nearby turbines. Acreages are selling for HALF of what they would be selling for if they were not surrounded by wind turbines. What used to be a beautiful vista of trees and rolling hills have been destroyed by the unsightly wind turbines. Very sad, indeed.

By far the biggest detriment is industrial wind. In the last two years industrial wind has come into our community, used deceptive business practices, and divided our community to force their way into building an industrial wind plant (these are not farms!) that covers nearly 1/3 of our county. There are many rural areas that are starting to see a turning point of potential expansion and growth by bringing in new community members who desire to move away from metropolitan areas, because more and more people are starting to see the benefits of rural living that is not available in cities. This new wave of potential for rural communities is lost to those of us forced to live in the footprint of industrial wind. Those looking for the benefits of rural living will not look to areas that have industrial wind because what industrial wind brings are some of the very things they are trying to escape from in the city (flashing lights, noise, constant movement, lack of peace, etc.). Industrial wind drives people away from their homes rather than motivates people to move to the area.

We love where we live, but our community is being targeted by industrial wind development. This area is too densely populated to host industrial wind turbines without jeopardizing the health and safety of residents. We love our home, but will try to sell and move if the wind projects are built.



Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)



Jobs

Our small town has a great small downtown area but we need businesses and we are at a loss how to promote our open buildings for business occupancy! We need businesses otherwise this is just a declining bedroom community!

We have a ton of interest in our downtown and Main Street but the aging infrastructure in the buildings make it hard to justify cost.

We've retained a lot of our small family businesses...but we need new, younger people or early retirees wanting something new to finish out their working years to step in and buy/run the business. Jewelry, clothes, dentist, doctors, attorneys, restaurant/bowling alley, to name a few. Established businesses with good buildings in good locations. Perfect opportunities at very reasonable investments..with local financing available.

Businesses occupying our small town. We need guidance with our city council to help them build our rural town and attract businesses. Homes are affordable and sell as soon as they go on the market and we wish our business space would, too.

Not many are shopping local. Businesses have trouble existing. Some chain stores have pulled out. Lack of retail forces us to purchase items online.

Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)

Community

Young people aren't coming back to rural communities for a variety of reasons (jobs, marriage, lack of events). It's hard to keep a small rural town going without young people/families to help sustain it over time. It's also less appealing to young people to come back if there's not a lot of other people their age.

A lack of connection. People that have lived here their entire life don't want the town to dry up yet are not accepting of new people.

We live just far enough from a "larger" city that it is hard for us to draw people who have jobs in those towns to live here. Nice housing is few and far between that is affordable for all wage earners, high speed internet is hit and miss (although a new company has come to town recently), it is hard to get people to participate even when we do have community activities so the people who work hard to put them on get discouraged and discontinue having them.

I've been in this spot for two years and I wish I had my old friends nearby. It's hard to break in to a new community.

Mindset. People think rural is dying and why would someone want to move to a place that is dying. Yes, we have our issues but so do urban areas. Housing is an issue (needing more of it), broadband needs to be widely spread (this will help with jobs as well), but we have to talk about the good (like your podcast does) along with the problems. Problems can always be fixed, and people who live rural are often some of the most resourceful people I've ever met.



Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)

Housing/Jobs

Our rural community has a good job market that can attract people to town; however, the housing options lie on both ends of the spectrum. A lot of housing is older, cheaper, and smaller or really large and expensive. As the larger, nicer homes become available to the next generation the sellers base their selling price on what it cost them to build. There are few jobs that can justify buying a large house in our market. It is a struggle because it costs the same to build a large house here as the city but they job market doesn't justify those prices.

We don't really have a true Main Street, just a few older houses turned into businesses or just left alone for too long and not taken care of. But, the homes that are there could use some love, and would be great houses and/or business spots! My goal is to fix one up for my small business one day, but I just need to get there financially.

We are a bedroom community with much of the population working in the "big city" up the road. I wish I didn't commute to work, and could walk to work instead, but there are no jobs in our town that would pay me what I earn in the big city.

Housing has been a huge issue. I moved into a rental last June. I finally closed on a home in November but it needs a major remodel so it will probably be months before I can move in. There is limited availability of updated, move-in ready homes. Rental options are just as limited. I'm renting in a town 30 miles away from where I purchased a home near my extended family.



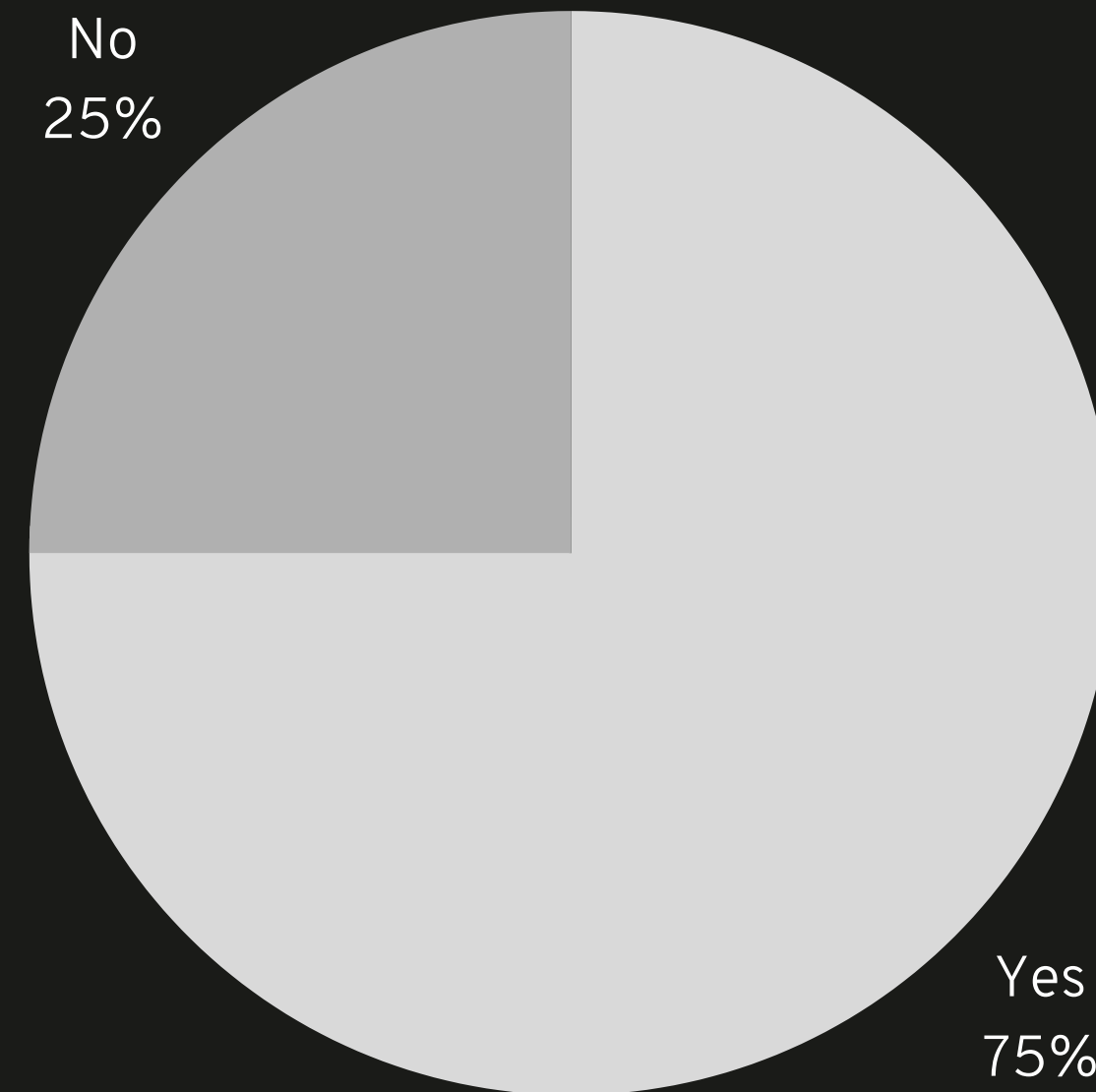
Non-Rural Residents

We surveyed two groups:

Population of the city of your current home address is 15k-50k (32%)

Population of the city of your current home address is over 50k (68%)

Do you want to live rural?



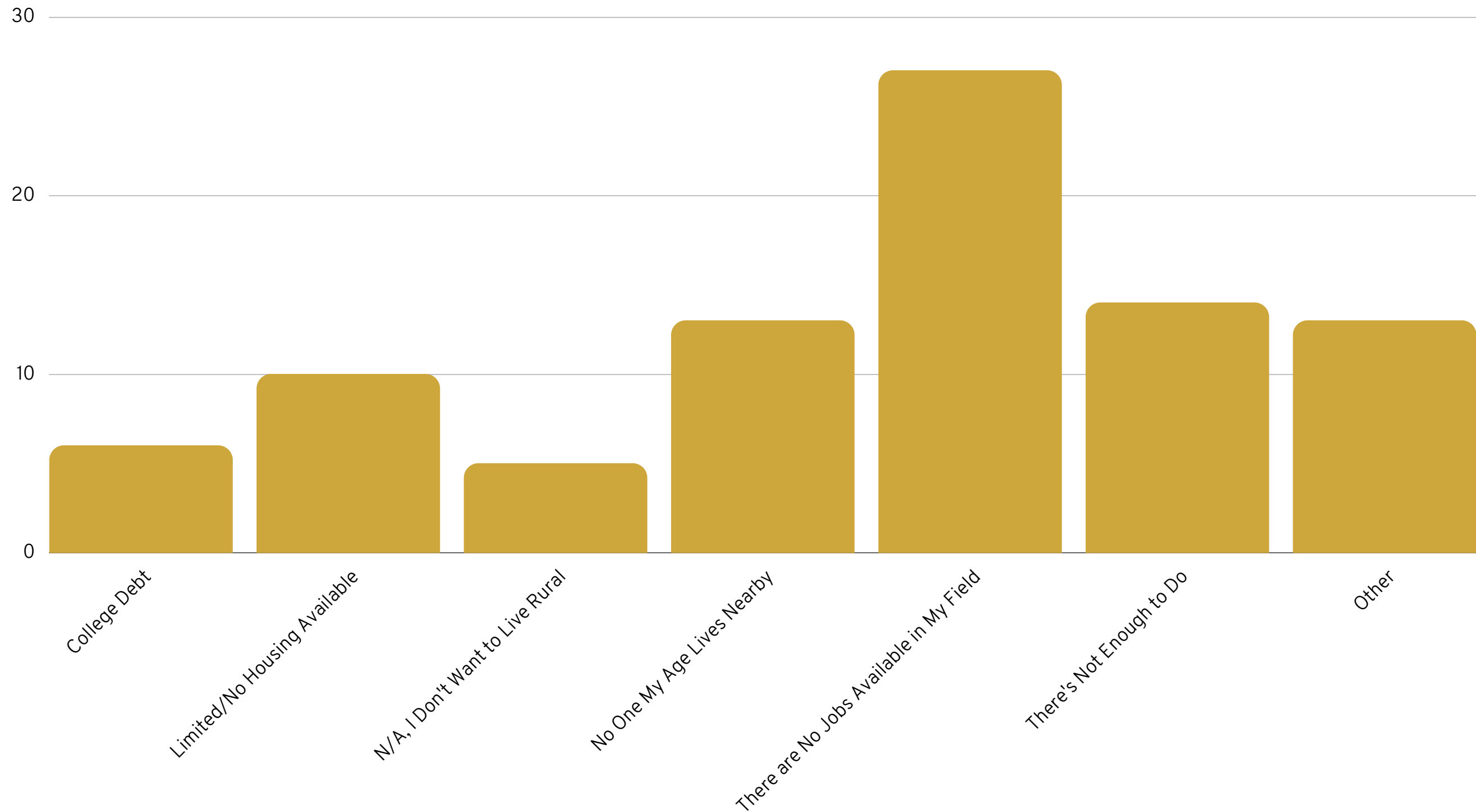
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What are some of the barriers or things keeping you from living rural?

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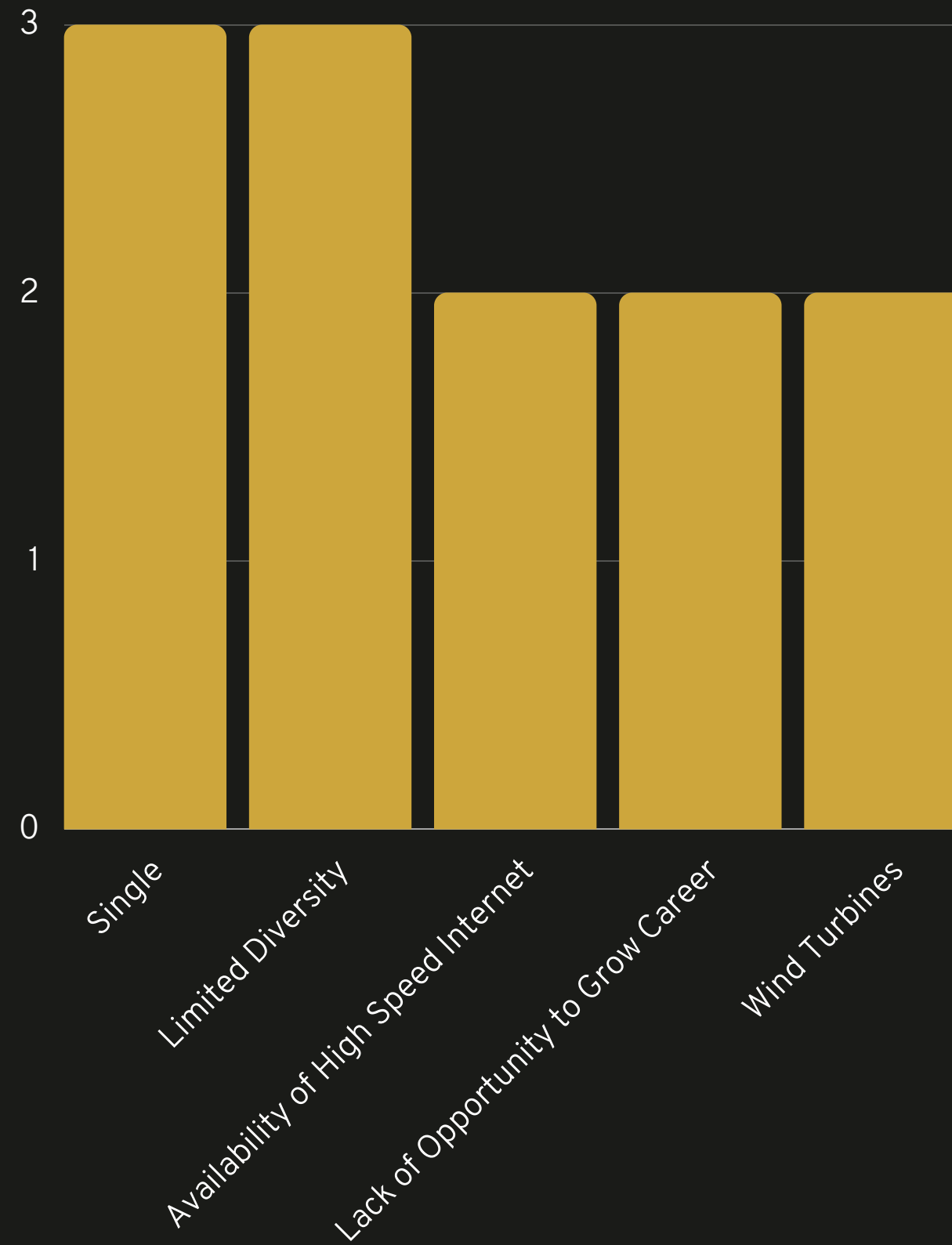
Non-Rural Residents



Rural Residents

Other...

(Based on written feedback from respondents)



- Single
- Limited diversity
- Availability of high speed internet
- Lack of opportunity to grow career
- Wind turbines
- Can't move away from aging parents



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Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)



Singleness

I am single and think it would be easier to move rural once I have a spouse or family.

Wanting to wait until married/ready for a family.

Lack of available significant others to choose from.

Amenities

I love the concept of living rural but I am a city girl, Baltimore born and raised. From my understanding there isn't too much to do out in the country when it comes to the art scene, museums, and historical sites (although I could be wrong!) However, I really enjoy traveling the US and getting to know rural America since it's a whole world I'm not familiar with. It is my goal to make enough money from my business so that I can buy a home in Central Oregon to use as a retreat from city life.

Farther away from an airport to travel.

Jobs

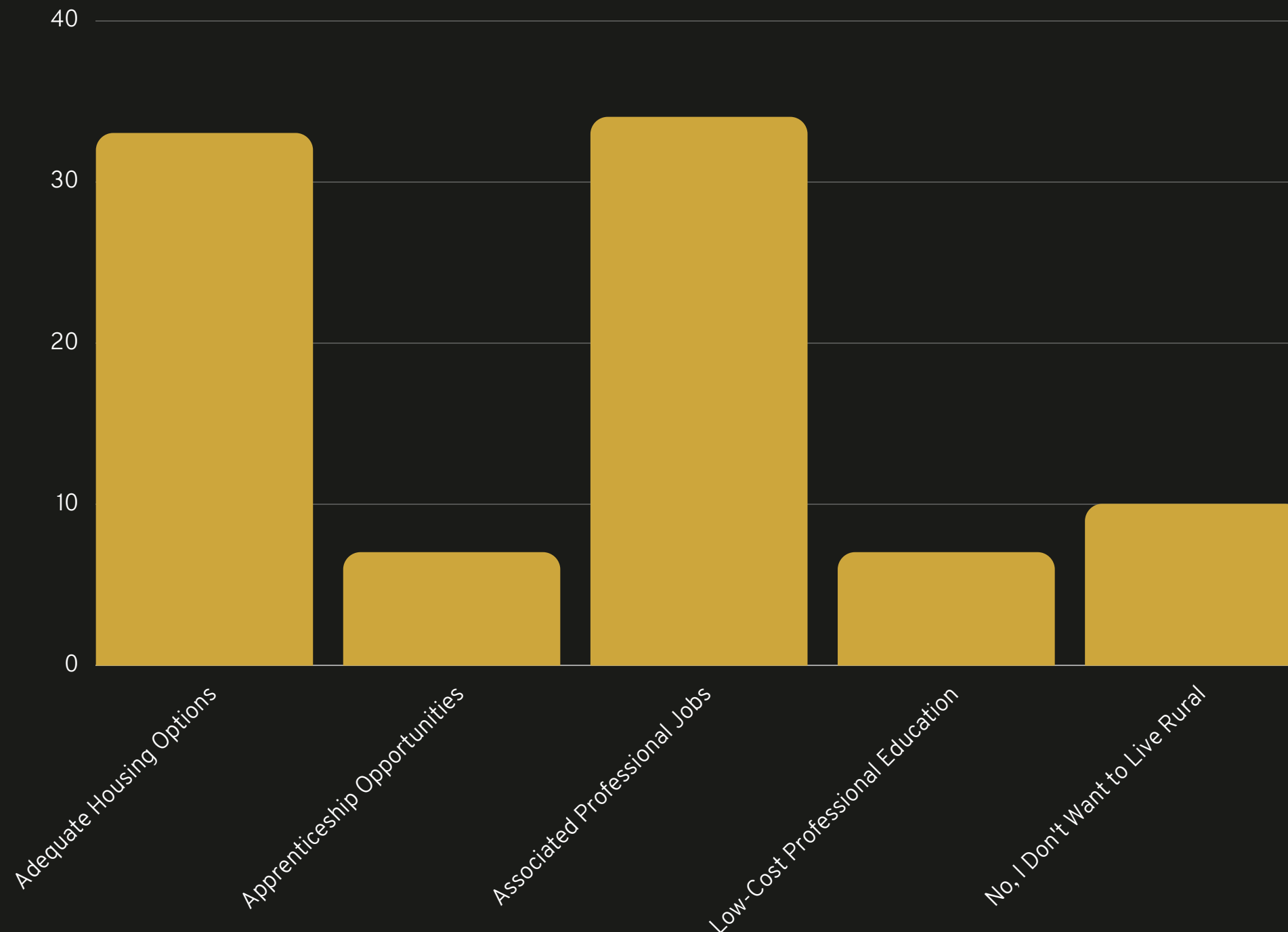
Until recently, there were no decent paying jobs for my husband. He was a journalist, and when we did live rural, he made \$12 an hour. This won't pay off student loans for us millennials. :(

Lack of opportunity to grow in a career as there's more limited high paying jobs.

Would you choose to live rural if some of the following were available?

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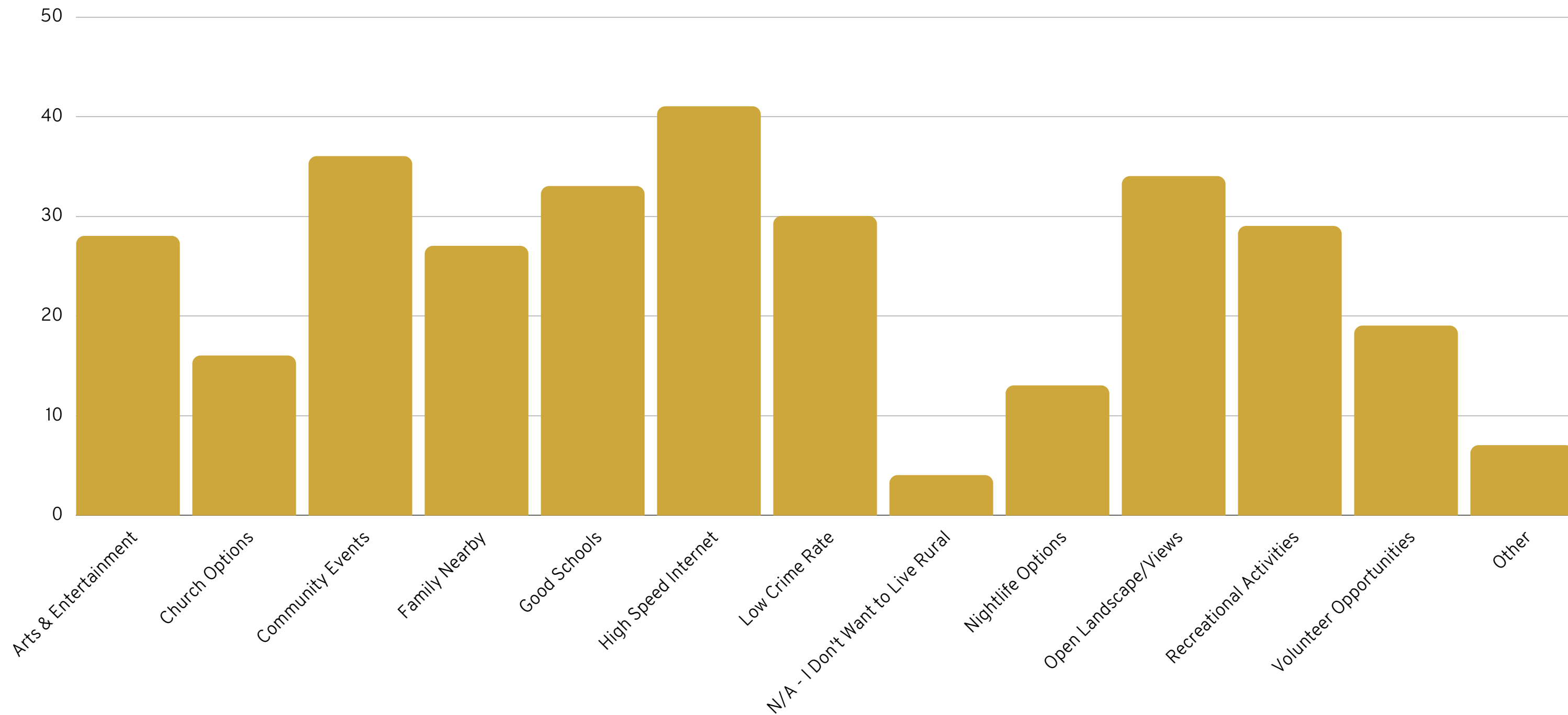
Non-Rural Residents



What factors are important to you in choosing a rural location to live in?



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Non-Rural Residents



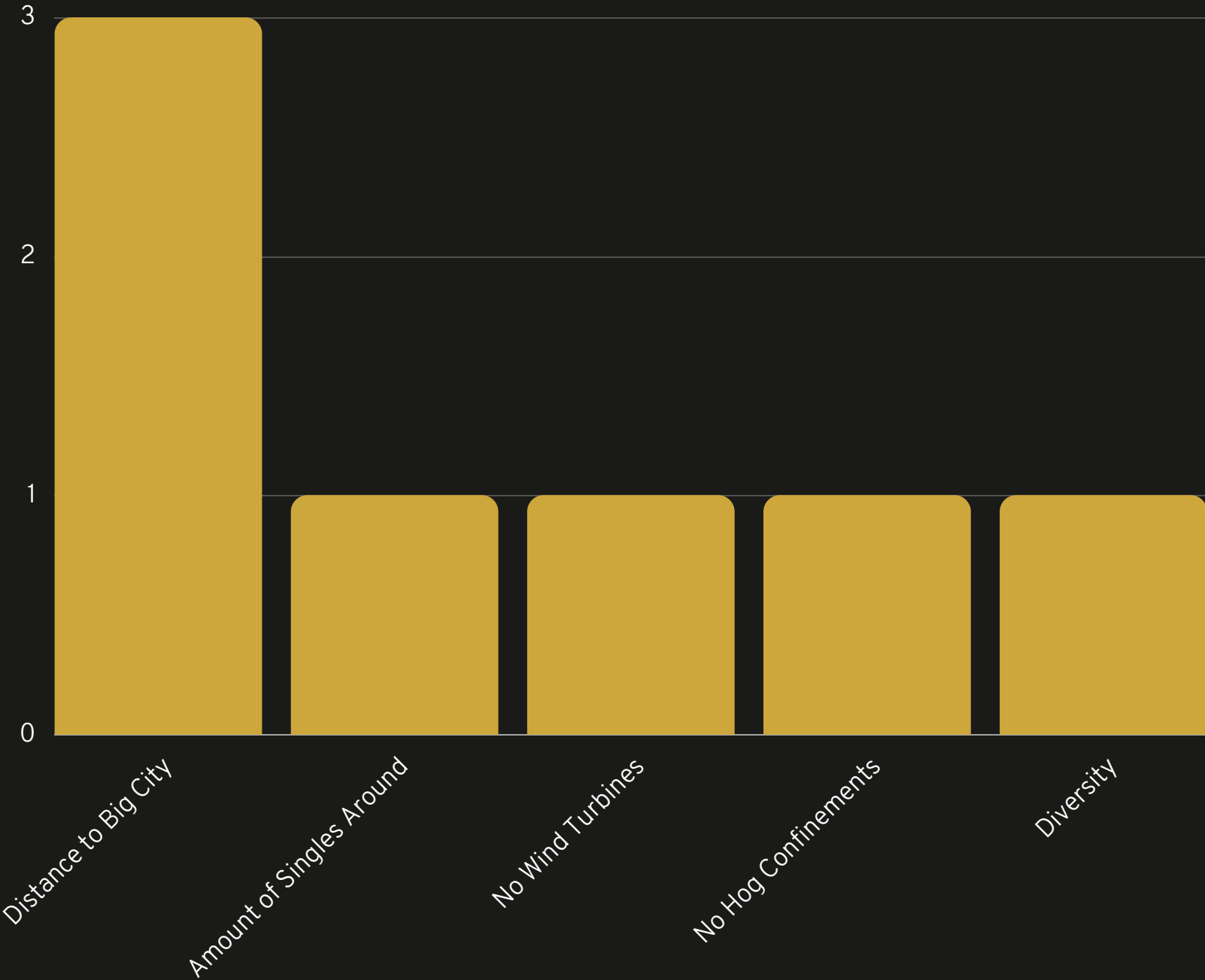
Other...

(Based on written feedback from respondents)

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Non-Rural Residents

- Distance to big city
- Amount of single people around
- No wind turbines
- No hog confinements
- Diversity



Insights

(Based on written feedback from respondents)



Amenities

Within three hours of a major airport for family visits and personal vacations.

Live somewhere there is no wind turbines and not near hog confinements.

Community

If I felt like I could find a strong community or build relationships with people who I could feel close to.



Is there a rural community you think is a model example of where you could imagine yourself living?

Black Hills
Council, Idaho
Ellensburg, Washington
Nebraska Sandhills
Palouse, Washington
Spring Green, Wisconsin
Bayfield, Wisconsin
Stamford, Texas
Seward, Nebraska
Wahoo, Nebraska

Edwards County, Texas
Frankfort, Kansas
Graham, Texas
Lewiston, Montana
Hudson Valley, New York
North Central Nebraska
Osage, Iowa
Winterset, Iowa
Perry, New York
Hooper, Nebraska

Glenwood, Iowa
Blair, Nebraska
Red Oak, Iowa
Rolla, Missouri
Sisters, Oregon
David City, Nebraska
West Point, Nebraska
Decorah, Iowa



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Do you have any questions?

Please feel free to reach out!

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