

# Building Resilient Rural Communities: Skills, Entrepreneurship & Data-informed Strategies



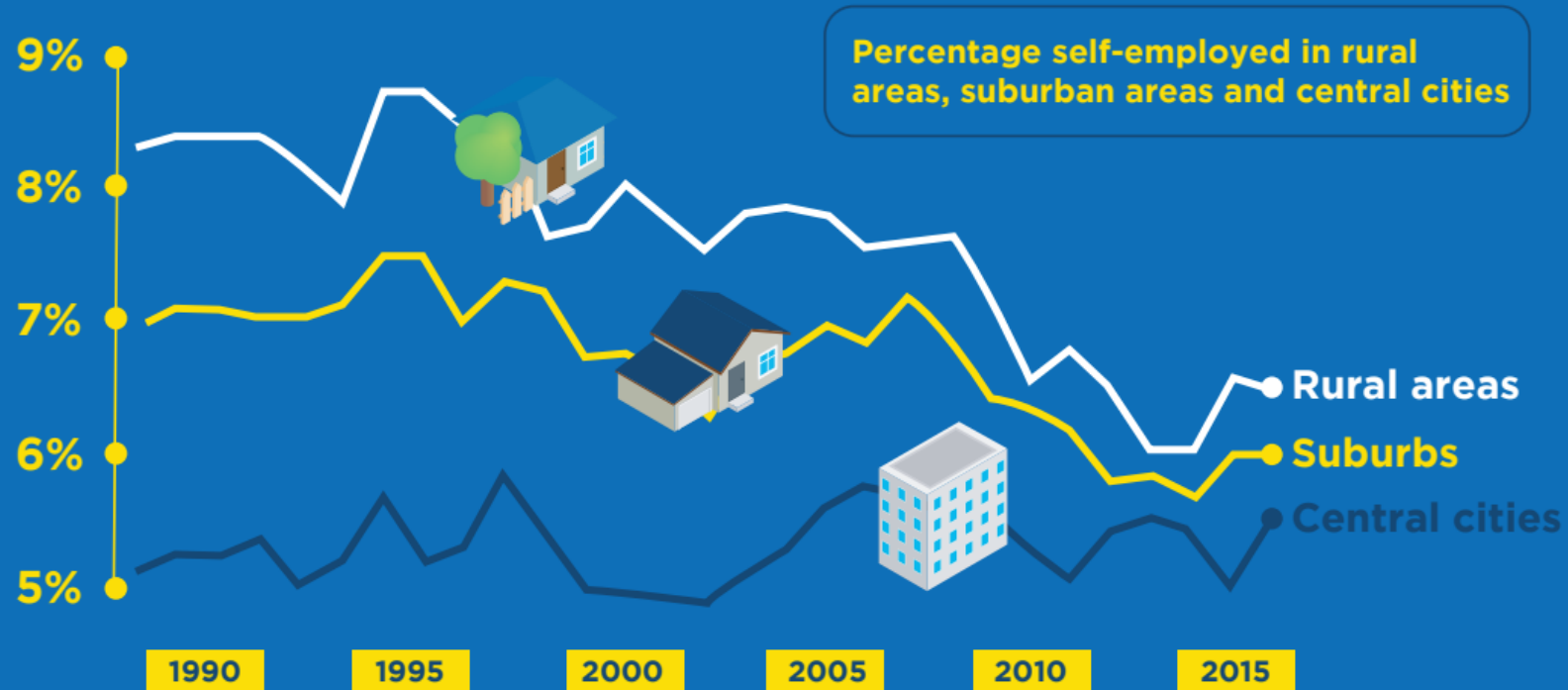
NATIONAL  
CENTER FOR  
INQUIRY &  
IMPROVEMENT

Alexandria M. Wright Ph.D., WestEd Center for Economic Mobility

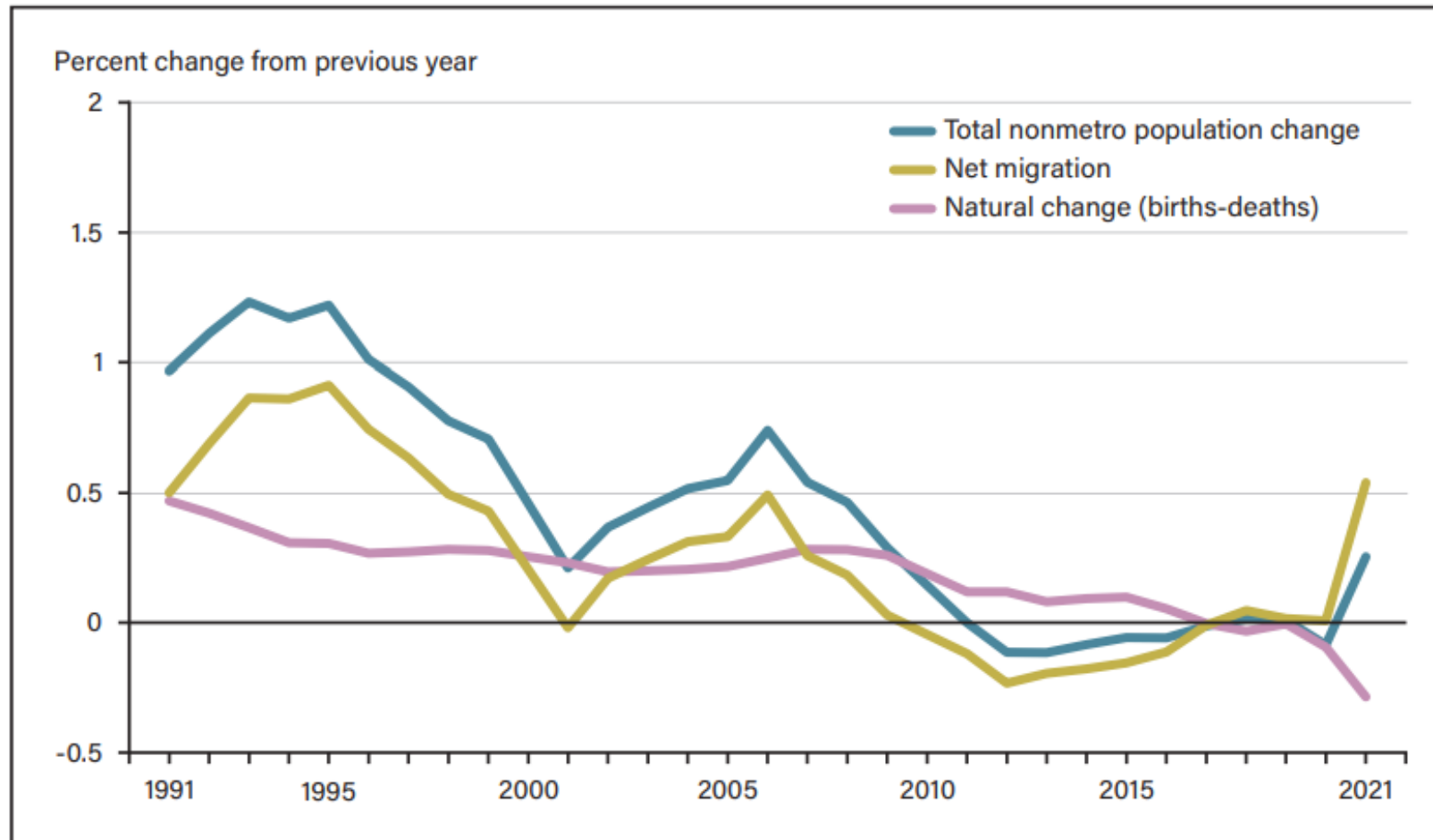
Megyn Rodriguez M.PA., U.S. Small Business Administration, Alabama District Office

# Why is small business development important in rural America?

Self-employment has dropped across the country since 1990 but has remained higher in rural areas than the suburbs and cities



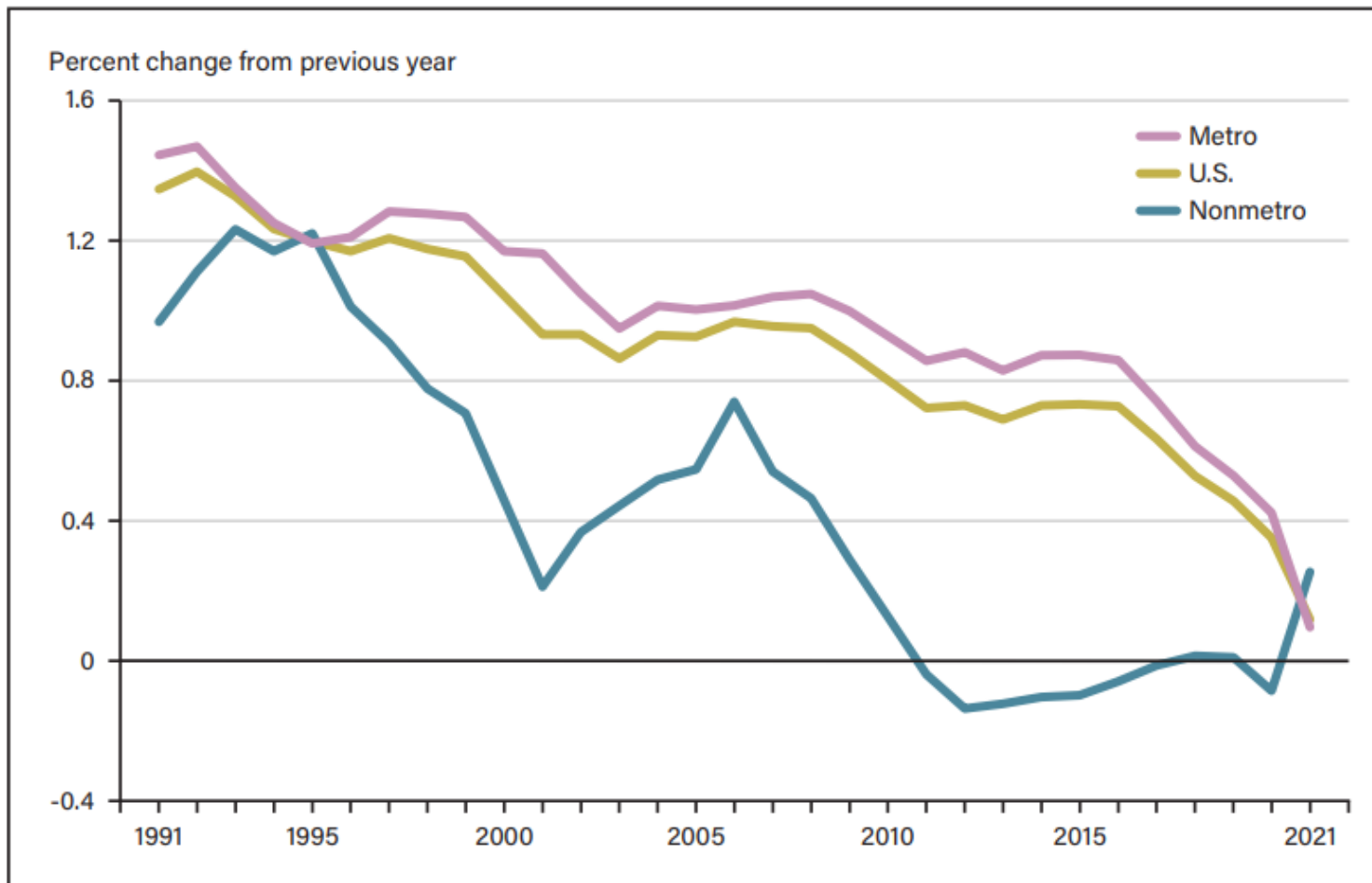
# Why is small business development important in rural America?



Note: The metropolitan status changes for some counties in 2000 and 2010.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census data.

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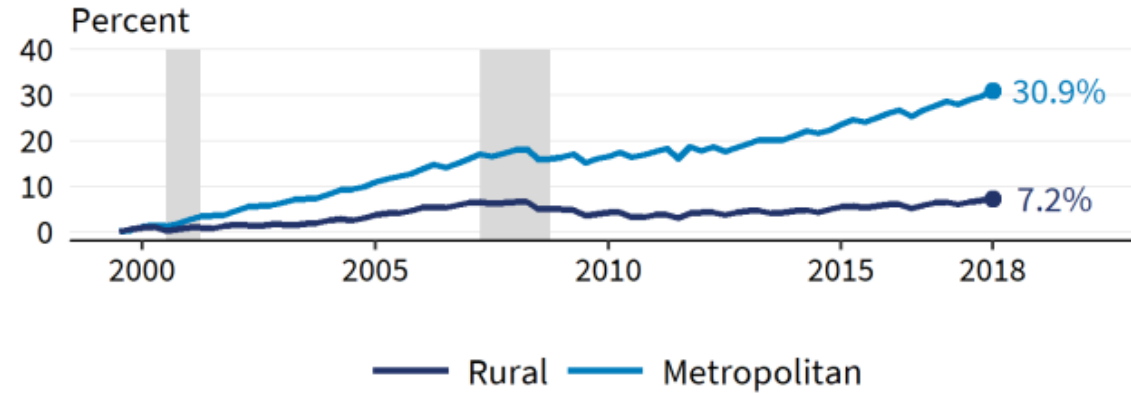


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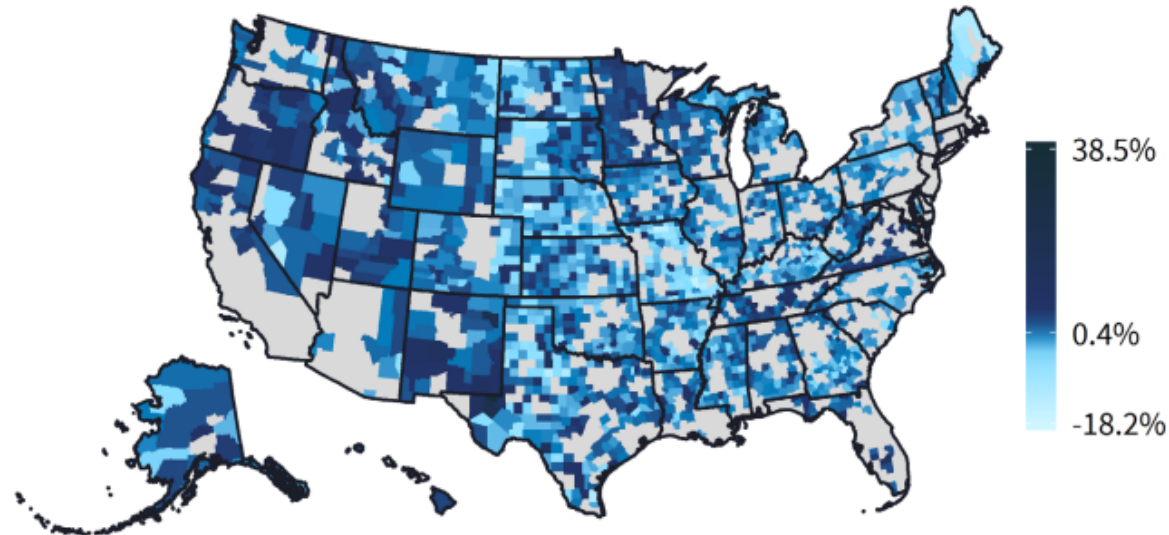
## Growth in number of establishments since 2000



Note: Shading indicates recessionary periods

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Bureau of Labor Statistics

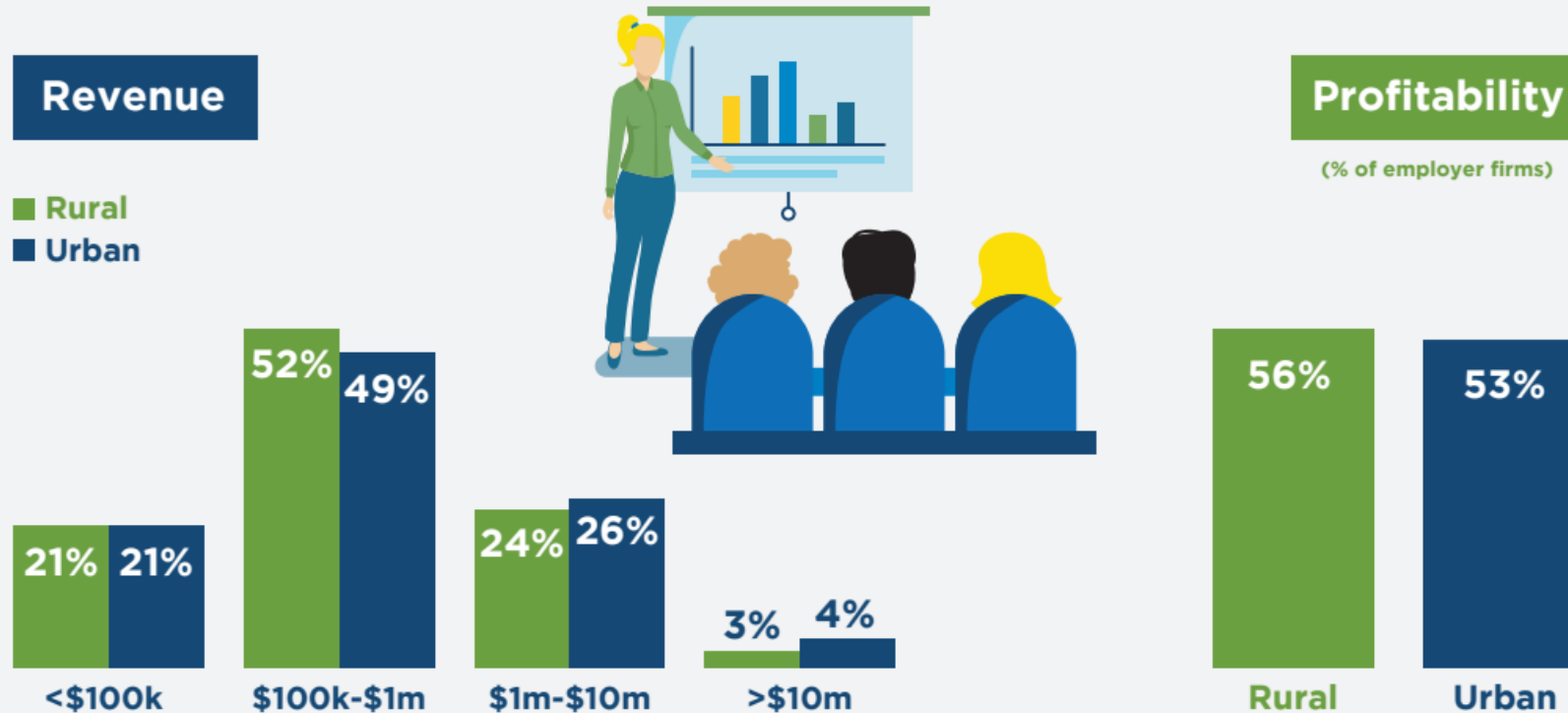
## Rural change in number of establishments in 2018



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Why is small business development important in rural America?

## Rural small businesses are comparable in revenue and profit to urban companies



# What are the barriers to entrepreneurship in rural communities?

## Challenge #1 Access to Workforce



# What are the barriers to entrepreneurship in rural communities?

## Challenge #2 Access to Connectivity

Digital technology increased gross sales for rural small businesses by 17.2% during the past three years. 20% of rural small businesses generate at least 80% of their revenue by selling online.

**BUT**



**56%**

of rural small businesses do NOT have good access to digital technology



**20.6%**

of rural small businesses do NOT have high-speed broadband



**5.4%**

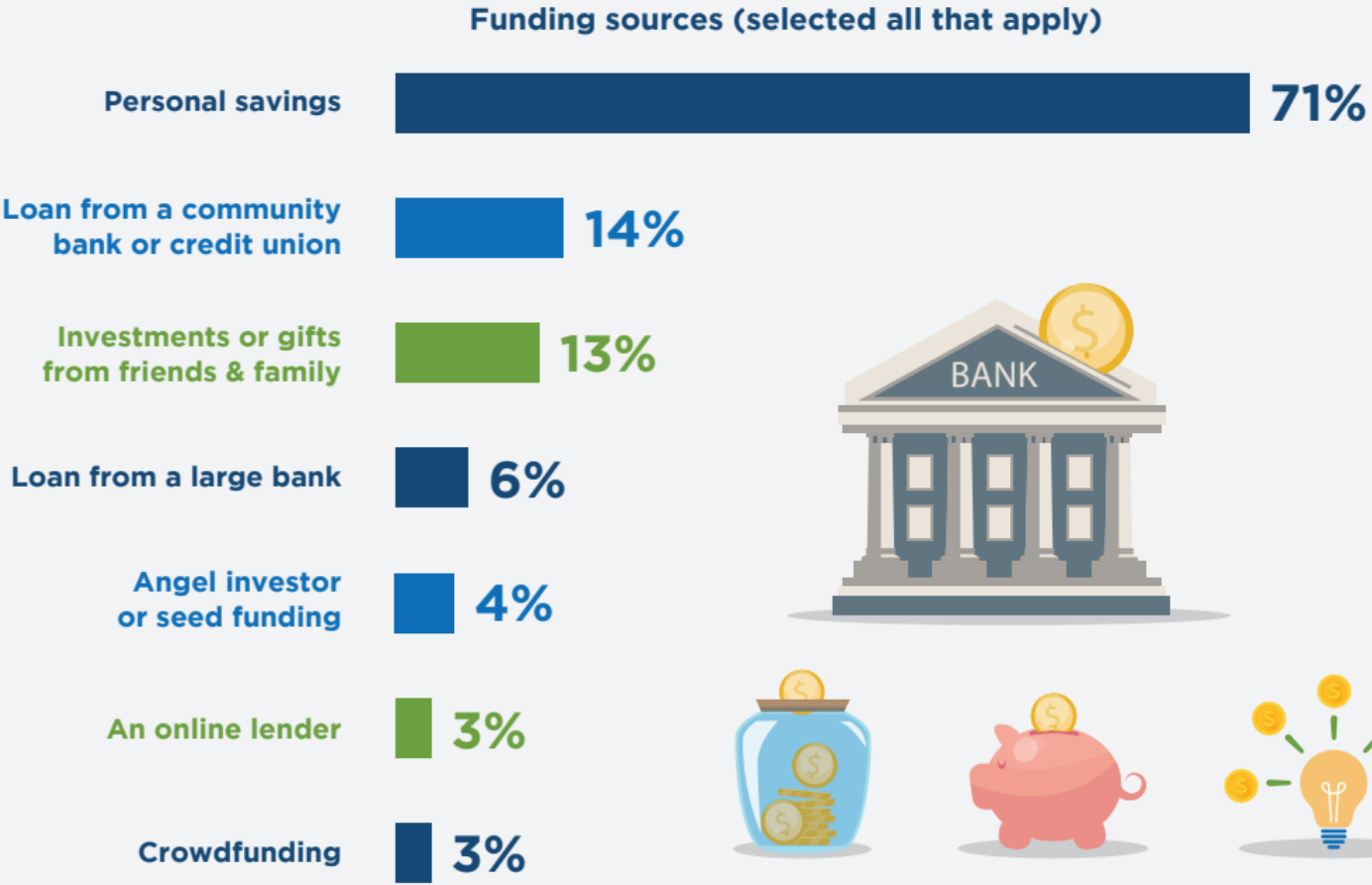
still use dial-up access



# What are the barriers to entrepreneurship in rural communities?

## Challenge #3 Access to Capital

40% of rural small business owners have trouble accessing capital so most use personal savings



The SBA works to ignite change and spark action, so that small businesses can confidently:

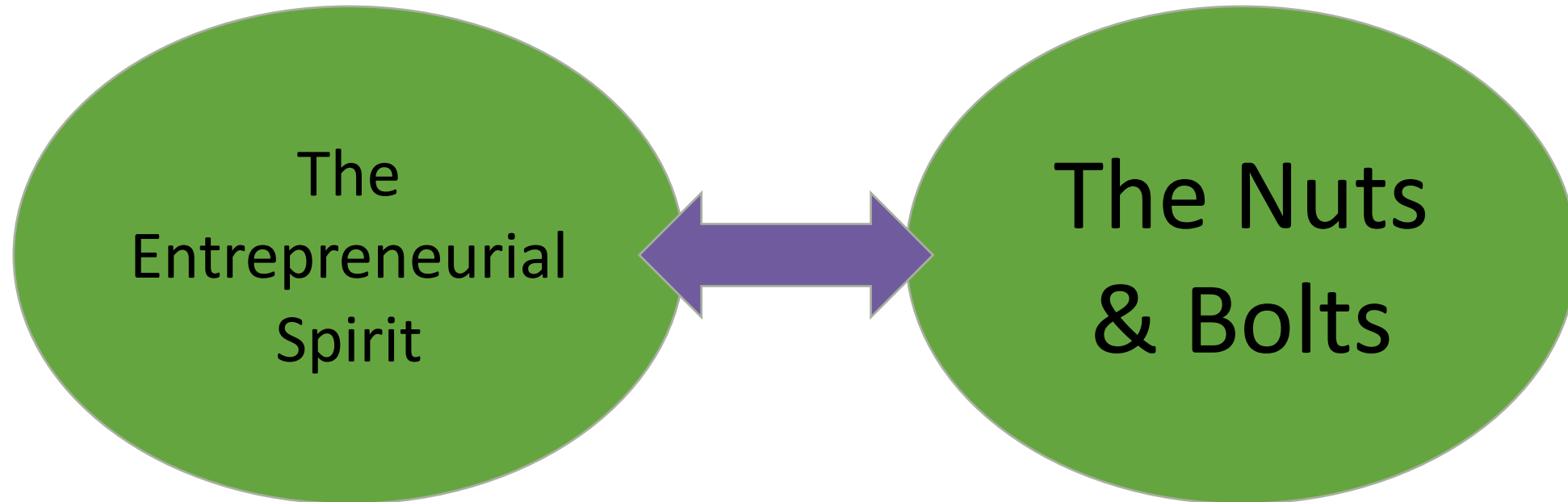
**START • GROW • EXPAND • RECOVER**

## Elevating Rural

Creating a stronger economic environment for rural America



# What are the skills needed for entrepreneurship?



# The SBA Resource Partner Network

Access the right tools at the right time—wherever you are.



Approved and funded by the SBA



1,400+ partner offices nationwide



Find local resource partners near you at [www.SBA.gov/local-assistance](http://www.SBA.gov/local-assistance)



# Women's Business Center



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS



## Strategic Partners with Local District Offices

For additional information, please contact Megyn Rodriguez at [Megyn.Rodriguez@sba.gov](mailto:Megyn.Rodriguez@sba.gov)



SBA LEARNING CENTER

# Free Online Business Courses



U.S. Small Business  
Administration



# Online learning



## Learning Center

Start, pivot, or grow your small business with courses from SBA's Learning Center. >

[View Learning Center courses](#)

**Visit:** [SBA Learning Platform](https://learning.sba.gov/)



## Ascent for Women

A free online learning platform for women interested in starting or growing their small businesses. >

[View Ascent](#)

**Visit:** <https://ascent.sba.gov/>



### Plan

Research, plan, and document your ideas.



1 out of 70 objectives completed!



### Launch

Turn your business plan into a reality.



0 out of 49 objectives completed!



### Manage

Master day-to-day operations to run your business.



0 out of 50 objectives completed!



### Market

Understand your competition and strategies to win customers.



### Grow

Expand by finding new funding, customers, and locations.



### SBA Mentor-Protégé Program Tutorial





# ASCENT

elevate your business

**Ascent** is an online learning platform that utilizes a modern, e-learning approach specifically targeted for women business owners who want to grow their existing businesses. It's packed with the resources women need to set, and achieve, their business goals. All content is backed by research on the needs of women business owners.



# Why Ascent?

# Journeys



## **Journey 1: Disaster & Economic Recovery**

Prepare for a disaster by understanding the potential impacts and forming a plan for your business.



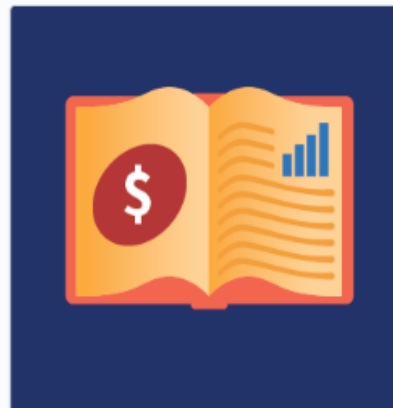
## **Journey 2: Strategic Marketing**

Explore specific planning techniques, strategies and tactics to make your business stand out in a sea of competition.



## **Journey 3: Your People**

Recruit, hire, and retain the right people with these smart strategies.



## **Journey 4: Your Business Financial Strategy**

Sharpen your financial skills with data-driven decisions and projections using these tools.



## **Journey 5: Access to Capital**

Understand how to secure the appropriate funding for your business, including forms of debt and equity.



## **Journey 6: Government Contracting**

Identify government contracting opportunities suited to your business and prepare to pursue those opportunities.



**T·H·R·I·V·E**  
*Emerging Leaders Reimagined*



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

# Be Intentional \*

- ✓ Recognize untapped opportunities for partnerships that support pathways
- ✓ Be persistent in your pursuit
- ✓ Do you Due Diligence by using data to inform your decisions



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