

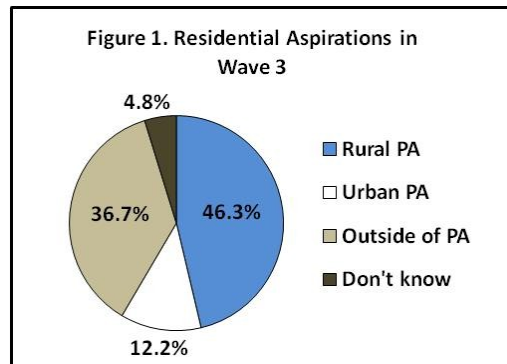


Stay or Go? Factors Associated with Rural Youth Residential Plans

Summer 2010

Throughout high school and young adulthood rural youth consider what jobs they want as adults and how much schooling they need. An equally important topic that receives much less attention, is where do rural youth want to live as adults? In some cases the assumption is made that rural youth will go away to school and not return to their home community. In other cases, rural youth balance their desire to stay in the community against the educational and occupational opportunities that are available there. This fact sheet describes how residential aspirations are associated with occupational and educational aspirations and youth attitudes about the area in which they wish to live as adults. These questions were asked of the older cohort of Pennsylvania rural youth who took part in Wave 1 through Wave 3 of the Rural Youth Education (RYE) Study. These students were three years past high school when they were surveyed for Wave 3 during 2008-2009.

Almost 50 percent of RYE students said they wanted to live in rural Pennsylvania as an adult (Figure 1). The second most frequent answer was that they wanted to live outside of Pennsylvania (36.7%), followed by urban Pennsylvania (12.2%) and they didn't know (4.8%). In Wave 3, half (51.0%) of the students were living in the same community where they lived in the 11th grade, and just under half (49.0 percent) had moved away.



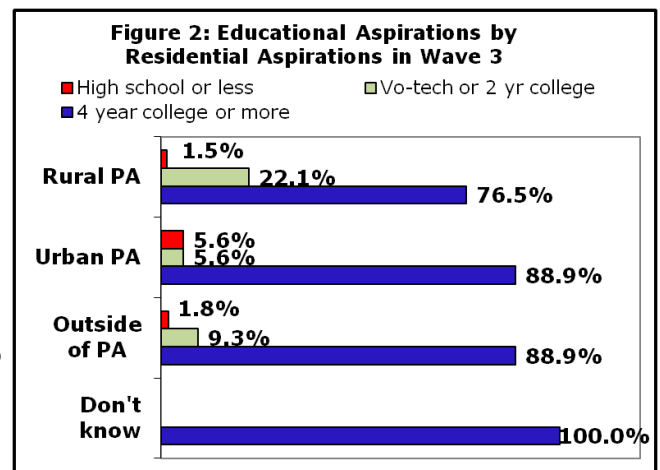
Residence at Wave 3 reported when the Older Cohort was 3 years past high school

- ◆ 51% still were living in the rural Pennsylvania community in which they had lived in 11th grade.
- ◆ 35.4% had moved to go to school
- ◆ 13.6% had moved for other reasons

This fact sheet examines attitudes associated with the residential aspirations of the Older Cohort.

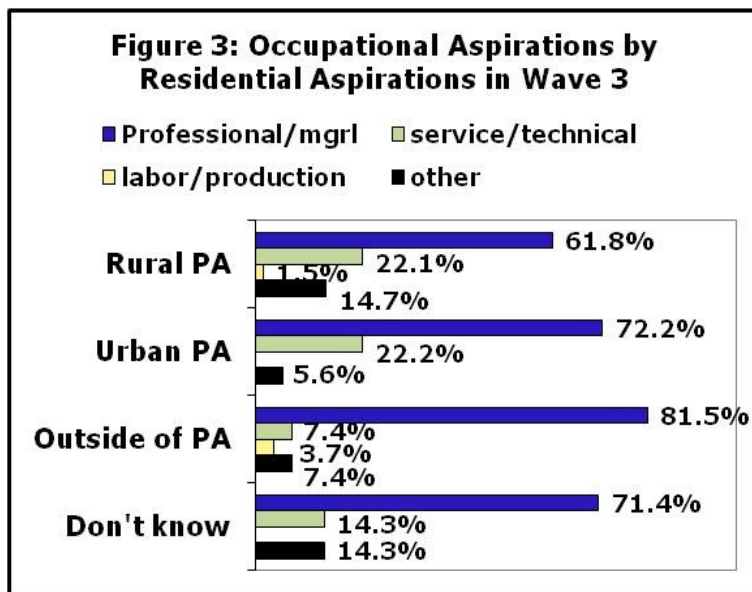
Do Educational Goals Vary by Residential Aspirations?

Prior studies suggest that youth who want to stay in rural areas may modify their educational and occupational plans to fit the jobs in rural areas. In each residential preference category, the majority of youth indicated aspirations for four years of college or more (Figure 2). Those who wanted to live in rural Pennsylvania were somewhat less likely than youth with other residential aspirations to want four years of college or more, but 76.5 percent still wanted four years of college or more. Among those who want to live in urban Pennsylvania or who want to live outside Pennsylvania as an adult, 88.9 percent wanted a 4-year college degree or more. The highest percentage (100%) was among those who don't know where they want to live. All but four of these youth aspired to four years of college or more education. For those who aspired to live in rural Pennsylvania, 22.1 percent wanted some post secondary education, but not a 4-year college degree, while only 1.5 percent wanted high school education or less.



Do Occupational Aspirations Vary with Residential Plans?

The largest share of the older cohort panel in Wave 3 aspired to professional or managerial occupations (Figure 3). This was true for all residential aspirations, although there were some differences. Of those with rural Pennsylvania residential aspirations, 61.8 percent aspired to professional or managerial occupations. This is lower than the 72.2 percent of the older cohort with urban Pennsylvania residential plans who aspired to professional or managerial occupations, and the 81.5 percent of those who want to live outside of Pennsylvania wanting these occupations. Over 20 percent of those with rural and urban Pennsylvania residential aspirations reported wanting occupations in the services and trades. Relatively few or no respondents in each residential category reported wanting labor or production occupations.



Do Rural Youth View Their Rural Home Area as a Place They Can Achieve their Aspirations?

Rural youth in the Older Cohort in Wave 3 were asked their views about whether their goals could be met in the rural area in which they live. Respondents indicated if they ‘strongly agreed’ ‘agreed’ ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with several statements. Table 1 shows the responses for youth who want to live in rural Pennsylvania, not in rural Pennsylvania or who didn’t know where they wanted to live at age thirty.

JOBS: About 72% of the older cohort who want to live in rural Pennsylvania agreed or strongly agreed that they could get a ‘good’ job in this area, while among those that wanted to live in urban Pennsylvania, 83.3% agreed, and Outside of PA just over half (56.6%) agreed. When asked about whether they would have to

Table 1. Percentage of Wave 3 Older Cohort who ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that they would....., by residential aspirations in Wave 3.

	Rural Pa	Urban PA	Outside of PA	Don't know
Get a good job in this area as an adult	72.1	83.3	56.6	71.4
I need to move to get the job that I want	30.9	22.2	63.0	85.7
I need to move to get the education I want	35.3	38.9	37.0	71.3
I would stay in this area if I could get the job I want	88.2	77.8	44.4	57.1
I would like to move away for a while but move back as an adult with my own family	45.6	50.0	29.6	57.1

Do Rural Youth View Their Rural Home Area....(continued)

move to get the job they wanted, a different way of asking about whether rural Pennsylvania provides adequate employment opportunities, about 31% of youth who wanted to live in rural Pennsylvania agreed or strongly agreed they would have to move. This compares with 22.2% of those who wanted to live in urban Pennsylvania, and 63% of those wanting to live outside of Pennsylvania. Of those who don't yet know where they want to live at age 30, over four-fifths (85.7%) agree that they would have to move to get the job that they wanted.

EDUCATION: Just over one-third (35.3%) of youth wanting to stay in rural Pennsylvania agreed or strongly agreed that they would have to move for the education they wanted, while about 40 percent of those wanting to live in urban Pennsylvania and 37 percent of those wanting to live outside Pennsylvania indicated they would need to move to get the education they wanted. Obtaining the job the older cohort students wanted was more strongly associated with residential aspirations than were educational aspirations.

What Might Make Rural Youth Want to Stay in or Return to Their Rural Home Area?

Youth were asked if they would stay in their rural home area if they could get the job they wanted. As shown in Table 1, 88.2% of those who wanted to live in rural Pennsylvania say they would stay if they could get the job they wanted. Almost four-fifths, 77.8% of those who want to live in urban Pennsylvania, and about 44 percent of those wanting to live outside of Pennsylvania say they would stay if they could get the job they wanted. About 57 percent of youth who don't know where they want to live would stay if they could get the job they wanted. Clearly, the ability to find the job or career desired influences youth residential aspirations.

The rural youth in the older cohort in Wave 3 were asked if they wanted to move away from their rural home area for a while but then move back when they have a family. Almost half, 45.6%, of youth who wanted to live in rural Pennsylvania and 50% of those wanting to live in urban Pennsylvania said they wanted to move back as an adult with a family. This suggests that even though rural youth may see the need to move away to achieve educational and career goals, a fairly substantial share would like to return to rural Pennsylvania as an adult. Among those who want to live outside of Pennsylvania, only 29.6% agree or strongly agree that they would like to return when they have a family. These findings do suggest that uncertainty about jobs available and the perceived or actual mismatch between youth career goals and the careers available in rural Pennsylvania are driving some of the preferences of youth to move away. They also suggest that if jobs were available youth who prefer to live in Pennsylvania as adults are more likely than those not wanting to stay in Pennsylvania to return to rural Pennsylvania when they have a family.

How Different are the Respondents in the Wave 1 to Wave 3 Panel from the Original Older Cohort Sample in Wave 1?

The Wave 1 to Wave 3 sample of the Older Cohort includes 147 of the 692 youth in the Older Cohort sample at Wave 1. This is only 21 percent of those in the original sample in 2005-2006. One way to see just how different these youth are is to look at the characteristics of both sets of youth at Wave 1. The students who stayed in the study for all three waves had higher educational aspirations (85 percent wanted college education or more) compared to all of those in the sample in wave 1 where 67.9 percent aspired to college or more. A larger percentage of the older cohort panel in wave 3 wanted a professional occupation when asked in wave 1 (62.6%), but just over half of the full older cohort in Wave 1 wanted professional occupations (56.3%). The Wave 3 panel sample was quite similar to the full sample on residential aspirations in Wave 1, with one-third of each wanting to live in rural Pennsylvania at age thirty. This means that the experiences of the older cohort panel reported in this fact sheet more likely reflect the experiences of youth who had higher educational aspirations and who wanted professional occupations in Wave 1.

**If there are topics you would like to see covered in future Fact Sheets,
please send an email to Diane McLaughlin
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Rural Youth Education Study

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More information about the RYE Study can be found at the following website:

<http://rye.aers.psu.edu>

Funding and support for this project have been provided by:

USDA National Research Initiative
The Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Penn State's Children, Youth and Families Consortium
Penn State's Population Research Institute



Rural Youth Education Study

See Inside for Information Regarding:

The RYE Study

**Residential Aspirations of the Older Cohort when three
years past high school graduation age**

**Factors associated with aspirations to live
in rural PA at age thirty**

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