

Community differences: urban/rural and social vulnerability

Communities influence the rates at which dogs and cats enter and leave shelters in the U.S. The level at which a community is rural and socially vulnerable correlates to higher intake volumes and lifesaving gaps.

- ▶ **Intake per capita is lowest among the most urban counties** (10.7 per 1,000 population) and highest among the most rural counties (25.0 per 1,000 population).
- ▶ **Lifesaving gap per capita is lowest among the most urban counties** (0.6 per 1,000 population) and highest among all ranges of rural counties (between 1.7 and 2.6).
- ▶ **Cat intake is highest relative to dogs in urban counties, but lifesaving gap is lowest.**
In the most urban counties: Cat intake is 50.8% and lifesaving gap is 61.8%.
In the most rural counties: Cat intake is 42.9% and lifesaving gap is 84.5%.
- ▶ **Urban counties rely more heavily on adoptions** for live outcomes (62.3% urban vs. 52.3% rural). **Rural counties rely more heavily on transferring** out pets (33.1% rural vs. 18.5% urban).
- ▶ **Social vulnerability is a significant factor in rates of intake and lifesaving gap**, impacting both rural and urban counties. Rural counties that are the most socially vulnerable have the highest per capita rates of intake and lifesaving gap by a wide margin.

| Intake per 1,000 | High SVI | Moderate SVI | Low SVI |
|------------------|----------|--------------|---------|
| Rural | 27.4 | 19.6 | 16.1 |
| Urban | 17.4 | 12.4 | 9.1 |
| Total | 18.6 | 13.1 | 9.9 |

| Lifesaving gap per 1,000 | High SVI | Moderate SVI | Low SVI |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------|---------|
| Rural | 3.3 | 1.9 | 0.8 |
| Urban | 1.7 | 0.6 | 0.4 |
| Total | 1.9 | 0.7 | 0.5 |

SVI = Social Vulnerability Index



Sources: U.S. Census for rural scoring analyzed by decile; CDC for Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) analyzed by categories of high (70 or higher), moderate (30-69) and low (below 30).