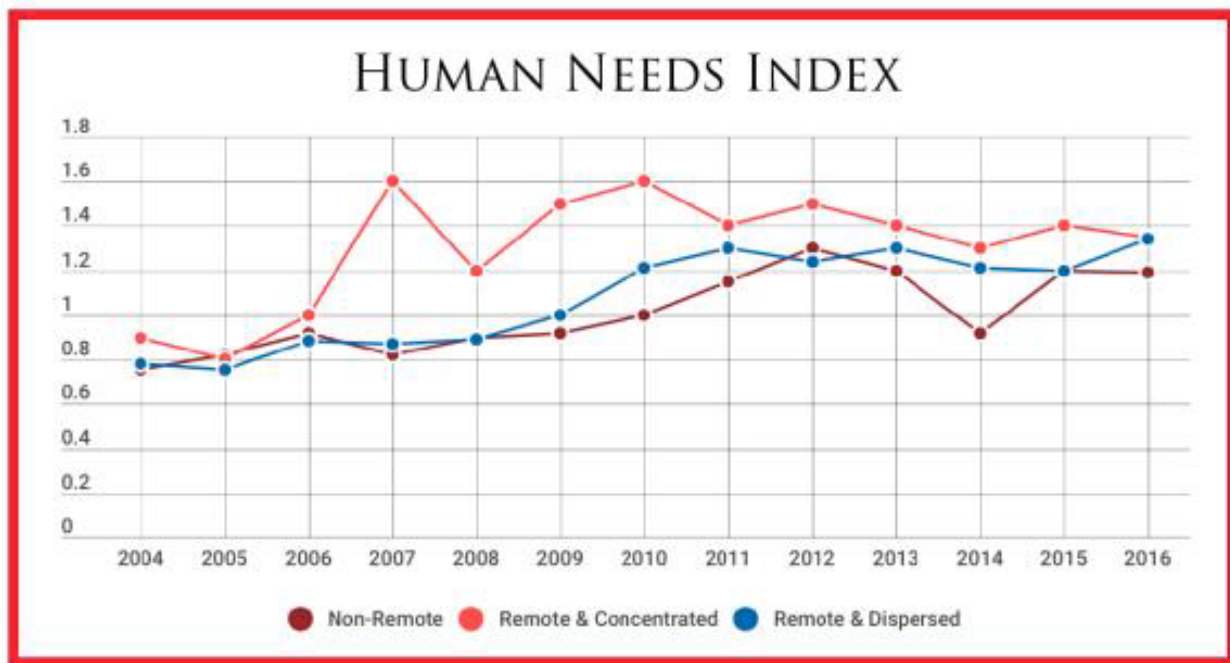**The Human Needs Index**
A new analysis from The Salvation Army and
Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
September, 2017

Key Findings

A recent analysis of The Human Needs Index (HNI) through the HNI's time series of 2004 – 2016 shows persistent pockets of poverty in rural areas of the U.S. that may not be apparent in other measures of poverty.

Researchers at the Lilly Family School compared HNI values in states within three classifications of remoteness and population concentrations and found that government measures like unemployment data, SNAP usage and the U.S. Census Bureau's Poverty Report do not always reflect these pockets of high human need.

Methodology

Researchers used two distinct measures to classify states: The U. S. Census Bureau's metropolitan population percentage, and the USDA's measure of landmass remoteness, defined as the percent of the state's landmass that is essentially an hour's drive or more from a city of 50,000 or more people. The scale of the HNI begins at 0, indicating the lowest recorded level of need. In the past decade, the HNI reached its highest level in 2012 (1.33) and began to trend downward in 2013 (1.25) and 2014 (1.05) before need increased in 2015 (1.25) and 2016 (1.24).

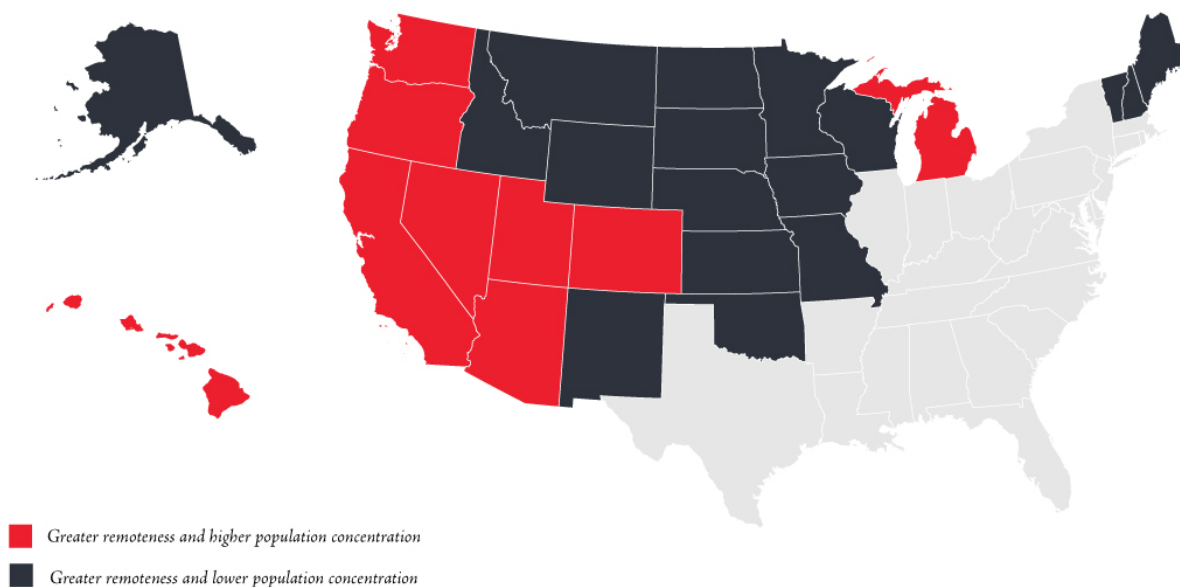**States with rural pockets of poverty**

States with greater remoteness and higher population concentrations (red) show the most elevated HNI values through the Index's time series. States with greater remoteness and lower population concentrations also show elevated levels of need.

STATES WITH RURAL POCKETS OF POVERTY

■ *Greater remoteness and higher population concentration*
■ *Greater remoteness and lower population concentration*

About the Human Needs Index

A joint project between the Salvation Army and Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, the Human Needs Index was introduced in 2015 to track changing levels of need across geographies and over time based on the provision of direct social services. It is the first multidimensional measure of human need based on objective data from a nonprofit on the front lines of providing social services. Indicators range from meals and groceries provided, to furniture and clothing provided to housing assistance, medical assistance and assistance with energy bills. The Salvation Army operates more than 7500 centers in communities across the U.S., serving approximately 25 million people a year.