Lack of specialized personnel such as IT staff; one person often fills several roles

Declining volunteerism

Personnel

Rural areas have difficulty recruiting, hiring & keeping staff

Lack of specialized personnel such as IT staff; one person often fills several roles
Declining volunteerism

Resources

Financial

Rural areas often suffer from limited budgets

Often missing basic gear and technology; responders buy own tools or used equipment
Reliance on fundraisers & community support

Infrastructure

Rural areas have problems with communication & coverage

Problems with radios, cellphones, and GPS
Lack of department and community resources and facilities

Based on nationwide (US) interviews with first responders, NIST analyzed data identifying the contexts and challenges specifically faced by rural first responders. While there are many similarities between rural first responders and their urban and suburban counterparts, this report (https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.IR.8277) focuses on the unique nature of rural emergency response and its implications for technology needs and development. While some places are wealthier than others, the characteristics and challenges shown are often experienced in rural areas. This work is part of a larger dataset of approximately 200 first responder interviews (https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.IR.8216, https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.IR.8245)