

## About this series

History has shown that large-scale crises accelerate pre-existing trends and permanently change societies and civic life. While most of the nation’s attention is currently focused on the response to Covid-19, we must ensure that recovery efforts in the months and years ahead lead to a more just and equitable society. *Pandemic to Prosperity* offers a comprehensive overview of the Covid-related impacts on our lives and livelihoods, governments, civic institutions, and overall well being.

*Pandemic to Prosperity* is a trusted, relevant, and highly-vetted source of information crucial for steering society toward a fair and complete recovery and yielding a better union than before the pandemic. This report – the second in a monthly series – analyzes disparate data, adding top-level insights about the implications of each indicator, what each indicator reveals, and how the indicators are interrelated. Such a resource is essential in a world where there is almost too much data to process and verified facts are often overcome by disinformation.

Recovery from the pandemic will vary across communities, and different populations will face various barriers to achieving shared prosperity. *Pandemic to Prosperity’s* thoughtfully-curated data will illuminate the challenges facing the nation’s most vulnerable. In addition, this reliable, unbiased resource will be valuable in aligning public and private sector efforts and reflect progress made, or the lack thereof, over time.

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) developed the *Pandemic to Prosperity* series, building on NCoC’s data infrastructure and advocacy network developed for its national *Civic Health Index*, and leveraging the authors’ success with *The New Orleans Index*, which informed a myriad of public and private decisions and actions post-Katrina. This series will enable a solid understanding of the damage to lives and livelihoods as the pandemic continues to unfold; it will also examine aspirational goals around strong and accountable government, functioning institutions from child care to internet access to local news availability, and outcomes for people broken down by race in regard to employment, health, housing, etc. Initially, it will be published monthly, with indicators changing as the recovery transitions. It will highlight state-level metrics with breakdowns by race, gender, and age where available, relying on both public and private data sources.

**Aug 21, 2020**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the seven months since the first announcement of Covid-19 on U.S. soil, daily life looks dramatically different than it did prior to the pandemic. The nation has 11 million fewer jobs than one year ago, and initial unemployment claims rose again in the week ending August 15 suggesting a stalling economic recovery.<sup>1,2</sup> Demand is down in key high-contact sectors such as air travel, tourism, restaurants, and entertainment, indicating the economy will not completely recover until fears of contagion are addressed.<sup>3,4</sup>

In the near term, parents and guardians are faced with no-win decisions about whether to send their children and young adults to school or college in the middle of a pandemic or not.<sup>5,6</sup> Emerging research reveals that kids are not immune to the virus but is inconclusive about their role spreading the infection, leaving parents uncertain as to whether sending their children to school will be safe for children, families, or teachers.<sup>7</sup>

But remote learning is yielding measurable learning loss, even for students with access to the internet. The effects of closed schools this past spring, continued remote learning this fall, and greatly reduced quality childcare capacity could be long lasting—putting the U.S. at a future competitive disadvantage to other industrialized countries that more effectively controlled the virus.<sup>8,9</sup> In addition, with 1 in 5 adults unable to work because Covid disrupted their childcare arrangements, safe schools and childcare represent a near term hurdle to workforce recovery affecting nearly every economic sector.<sup>10</sup>

Many adults and children of color are experiencing the most severe health effects from Covid exposure and infection. At the same time, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous populations have less internet access and poorer employment opportunities. As the nation awakens to racial and income inequities that influence nearly every system, clear eyed understanding of these disparities will be essential to effectively move forward from this crisis.

*Pandemic to Prosperity* explores the impact of the Covid crisis, particularly on children and people of color, while establishing benchmarks to achieve a more prosperous future for all Americans. New analyses in this edition include assessment of low 2020 Census response rates and news deserts in areas with high rates of Covid.

## **Pandemic**

*Pandemic to Prosperity* examines how the Covid-19 crisis has damaged lives and livelihoods across the United States.

- States in the South and West Coast continue to have the highest Covid case rates, while cases are stabilized in the Northeast. Smaller hotspots continue to emerge across the rest of the nation.
- Native American, African American, and Hispanic/Latinx individuals are roughly 5 times more likely to have severe Covid impacts than white individuals
- The U.S. has 11 million fewer jobs than one year ago. And 10 states have lost more than 500,000 jobs.

# Prosperity

High functioning governments and civic institutions will be crucial as we aim to build a more perfect union with wellbeing for all after the pandemic.

## Government

- Only 5 states—all in the Northeast—are currently making progress towards the White House Opening Up America Guidelines, with the majority of states trending poorly.
- Roughly \$525 billion in forgivable Payroll Protection Program loans have been distributed with \$134 billion unclaimed when the program ended on August 8.
- At least 10 states are projecting fiscal year 2020 tax revenue reductions of 10% or more. In FY 2021, at least 32 states expect additional tax revenue reductions of 10% or more.
- With a looming deadline of September 30, more than half of households yet to be counted in the 2020 Census are in active Covid hotspots.
- As of August, 24 states and the District of Columbia are now mostly ready to vote from home in the pandemic.

## Institutions

- More than half of counties currently experiencing high rates of new cases of Covid are in news deserts, meaning a critical vehicle for trusted information during the pandemic is unavailable.
- Nearly 1 in 5 children of color lack internet and a computer or tablet in their homes, impacting their ability to learn during the pandemic.

## People

- 16 to 19-year olds continue to face historically low employment rates, which will impact their careers and earning potential for years to come
- Nearly 19 million children nationwide have experienced the trauma of hunger, potential homelessness, or both since the pandemic began.

With the impacts of Covid-19 increasing the challenges of daily life, the U.S. is feeling the strain now more than ever. Communities may continue to face a devastating wave of homelessness as eviction courts reopen. States vary greatly in their ability to protect lives and livelihoods, support their most vulnerable, and prepare for safe and fair upcoming elections.

In addition to the stressors of daily life, the nation continues to experience new shocks. Iowa recently experienced hurricane-force winds with a derecho that damaged crops and flattened thousands of homes.<sup>11</sup> Hundreds of thousands of Californians have been ordered to evacuate a record number of fires and hurricane season is just hitting its full stride.<sup>12,13</sup> While states in the south and west struggle to tamp down the highest Covid case rates in the country, the President has ordered \$44 billion in FEMA funding to be redirected to unemployment benefits because Congress has been unable to come to agreement on additional stimulus funding.<sup>14</sup>

*Pandemic to Prosperity* tracks changes to a number of indicators each month as a means for measuring progress as the nation endeavors to simultaneously manage Covid and build a more equitable future.

# Pandemic Lives and Livelihoods

To begin to recover from any disaster, an assessment of damages is a necessary first step. In the case of Covid, the damage is not related to a single event. Instead, pandemic-related damages will continue to unfold until an effective vaccine is developed and universally distributed. As such, tracking Covid-related damage will require tracking more than one metric over multiple months.

This section tracks a select number of highly-vetted indicators to examine the extent of Covid-related damage to lives and livelihoods. It examines how peoples' lives are faring, and how this impact differs across different sections of society. It also examines damage to livelihoods state by state.

Much of the current discussion about the pandemic is limited to these types of indicators on the health and economic impacts. In later sections of this report, they serve as a backdrop for a unique analysis of the complex interactions between the pandemic and our nation's civic health.

As more data becomes available, additional metrics will be added to this section to better assess how states are doing at protecting lives and livelihoods.

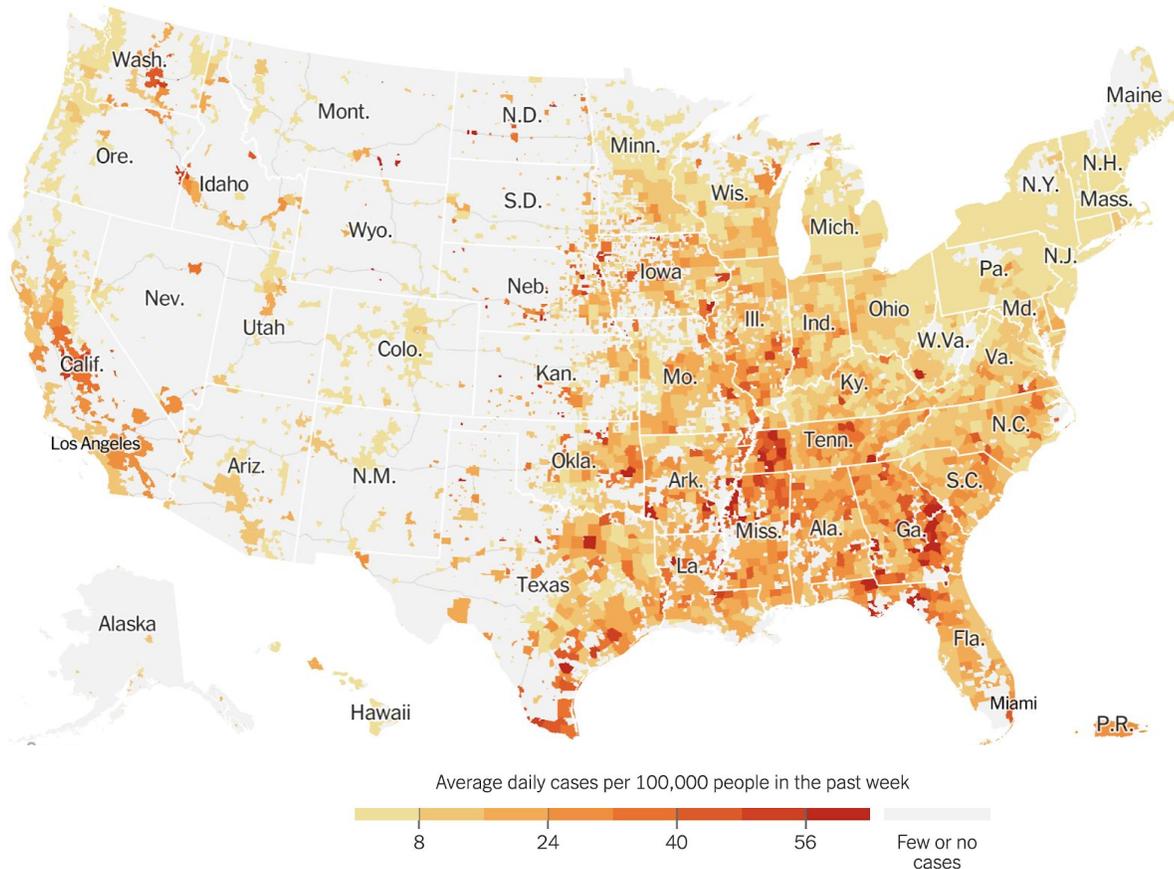
## Indicators in this section

- New Covid cases in past week
- Age-adjusted Covid-19-associated hospitalization rates by race/ethnicity
- Total jobs lost

**States in the South and West Coast continue to have the highest case rates, while cases are stabilized in the Northeast. Smaller hotspots continue to emerge across the rest of the nation.**

**Average daily cases per 100,000 people in past week, by county**

Analysis of state and local health agencies and hospitals data as of Aug 20, 2020



Source: From [The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com). © 2020 The New York Times Company. All rights reserved. Used under license.

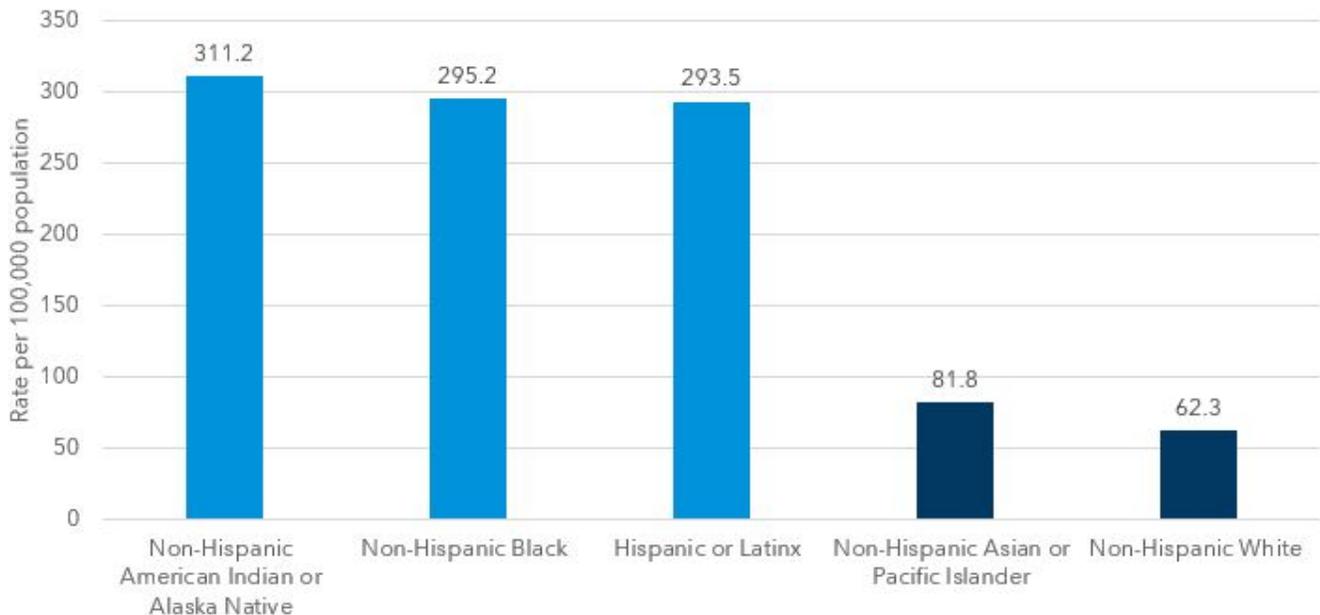
Despite concerns about turnaround time for diagnostic testing in recent weeks, the rate of new cases still represents the most valid and immediate indicator of Covid’s spread.<sup>1,2</sup> Both hospitalization and death rates – while important measures of impact – lag weeks or months after initial diagnosis and fail to capture the full magnitude of the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> However, epidemiologists warn that in the absence of widespread random sampling of the population, we will not know the true scale of the pandemic, and will not be able to optimally manage the crisis. The hotspots of new cases in the last week are troubling, and only represent perhaps 20% or less of the actual infection rate.<sup>4,5</sup>

Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, and other southern states as well as Nevada are experiencing extraordinarily high rates of infection (above 100 new cases in the last week per 100k population), while Arizona and New Mexico’s cases are decreasing to almost manageable levels (75 and 46 new cases in the last week per 100k population, respectively). At the same time, less-impacted states such as Montana, Kansas, and North Dakota, had counties with rates at a whopping 500+ new weekly cases per 100k population. Local leaders attribute those flare-ups to transmission in group quarters such as correctional facilities, and failure to social distance (bars, county fairs, weddings).<sup>6,7,8</sup>

## American Indian/Alaskan Native, African American, and Hispanic/Latinx individuals are around 5 times more likely to have severe Covid impacts than white individuals.

Age-adjusted Covid-19-associated hospitalization rates, March 1-August 8, 2020

By race and ethnicity



Source: [CDC](#)

Despite ongoing debates about the quality and completeness of data on Covid cases reported by hospitals,<sup>1</sup> available data on hospitalizations nonetheless illuminates stark disparities between racial groups. American Indian/Alaska Native, African American, and Hispanic/Latinx individuals are respectively around 5 times more likely to have severe Covid impacts than white people.

New CDC analyses of hospitalization data reveal that the disparity applies to children as well, with cumulative hospitalization rates 8 and 5 times higher respectively for Hispanic and Black children than white children.<sup>2</sup>

Racial disparities in health outcomes have existed long before Covid, but only partially explain the divide in this pandemic. Emerging research points to occupational exposure as a key driver of higher infection rates.<sup>3</sup> Populations of color most impacted by Covid are over-represented in front-line work such as agriculture, food processing, transportation, janitorial work, and caregiving, and thus are not granted the privilege of working from home.<sup>4,5,6</sup> Plus the cumulative health impacts of living in unsafe neighborhoods, breathing polluted air, having less access to healthy foods or quality medical care, and a lifetime of experiencing racial discrimination mean that these populations have higher rates of comorbidities such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity that are associated with greater morbidity and mortality in Covid cases.<sup>7,8,9,10</sup> For example, baseline rates of diabetes are nearly 15% among Native Americans, 13% for Hispanics, and 12% for Black Americans, compared to 8% for white Americans according to the CDC's 2020 National Diabetes Statistics Report.<sup>11</sup>

# The U.S. has 11 million fewer jobs than one year earlier. 2 states have lost more than 1 million jobs and 8 additional states have lost 500K+ jobs.

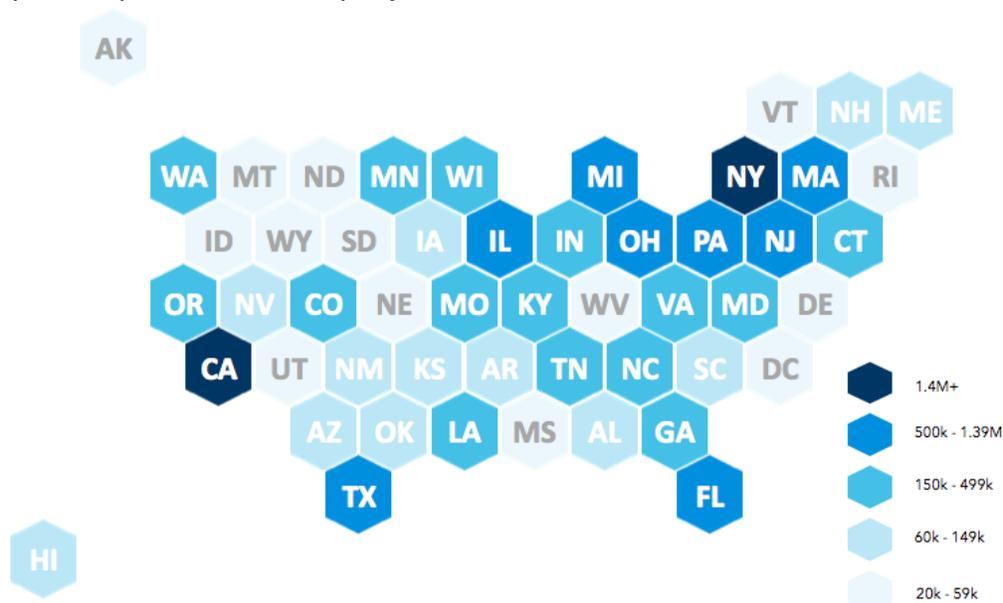
Total jobs by month in thousands, U.S.



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

## Loss of jobs by state, July 2019 to July 2020

Employment by state, seasonally adjusted



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) Note: Data for February 2020, June 2020, and July 2020 are preliminary

The total number of jobs in the U.S. fell from a high of 151 million in February 2020 to a low of 130 million by April 2020. Despite recent rebounds, the total number of jobs remains below 140 million as of July 2020, a level the U.S. hasn't experienced since September 2015. Nationwide, there are 11 million fewer jobs in July 2020 compared to July 2019. Both California and New York have at least 1.4 million fewer jobs compared to the prior summer. Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas each lost more than 500,000 jobs compared to a year ago.

# Prosperity

The previous section examined how the pandemic has affected the lives and livelihoods of people across the country. The next section moves on from the “damage assessment” to track measures that will be important for recovery from the Covid crisis.

This Prosperity section examines measures of high functioning governments and civic institutions that are essential for community well being and prosperity. Importantly, this section ends with metrics that assess how people are doing during the pandemic.

# Government

Governments—local, state, and federal—are being asked to do a lot during the Covid crisis. We start with metrics that assess how states are performing relative to White House reopening guidelines, available data on Covid-related funding to states, the projected tax revenues states will need for their myriad public functions, challenges the pandemic presents for counting all residents for the 2020 Census, and preparedness for the upcoming presidential election. For each indicator, we provide a brief, evidence-based set of findings and implications to help readers quickly grasp a top-level overview of how each state is doing.

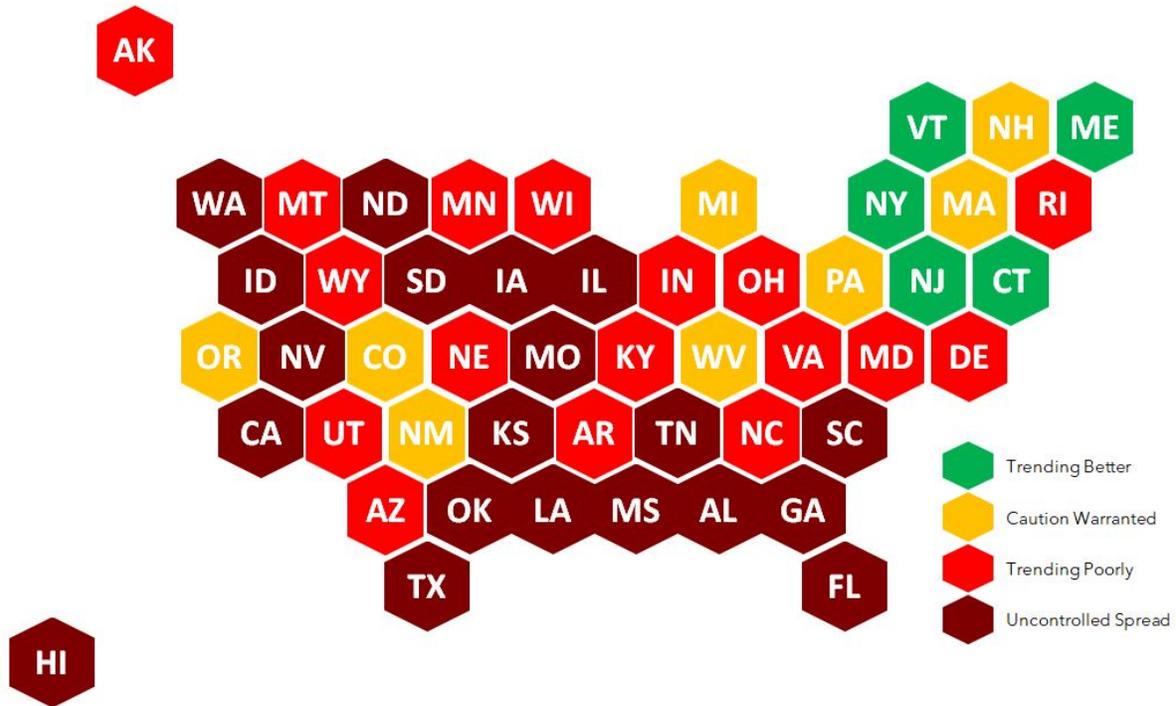
## Indicators in this section

- Progress toward White House *Opening Up America Again* Guidelines
- Paycheck Protection Program loans per capita
- FY 2020 and 2021 preliminary estimates of decline in tax revenues
- Households to be reached by census door-to-door operations in Covid hotspots
- Non-voters who cited structural reasons for not voting in the 2016 election
- Readiness to vote in a pandemic

## Only 5 states are making progress toward White House *Opening Up America Again* guidelines, with former Northeast hotspots faring best.

### Progress toward White House *Opening Up America Again* Guidelines

As of August 20, 2020



Source: [Covidexitstrategy.org](https://covidexitstrategy.org)

Note: WA is reporting no data because of data reporting issues dating back to Aug 1.<sup>1</sup>

The White House *Opening Up America Guidelines* set criteria for reopening based on trajectory of new cases, hospital capacity, and degree of testing.<sup>2</sup> Challenges with quality and availability of data on deaths, number of people in ICUs, tests conducted, contact tracers hired, and more continue to be a theme in the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> The problem exists at all levels (national, state, and local) and is making it harder to assess how states are doing relative to the White House gating criteria. As of August 20, 5 states (all in the northeast) are meeting these minimal criteria. Meanwhile 20 are categorized as having “uncontrolled spread” – up 1 from last month.

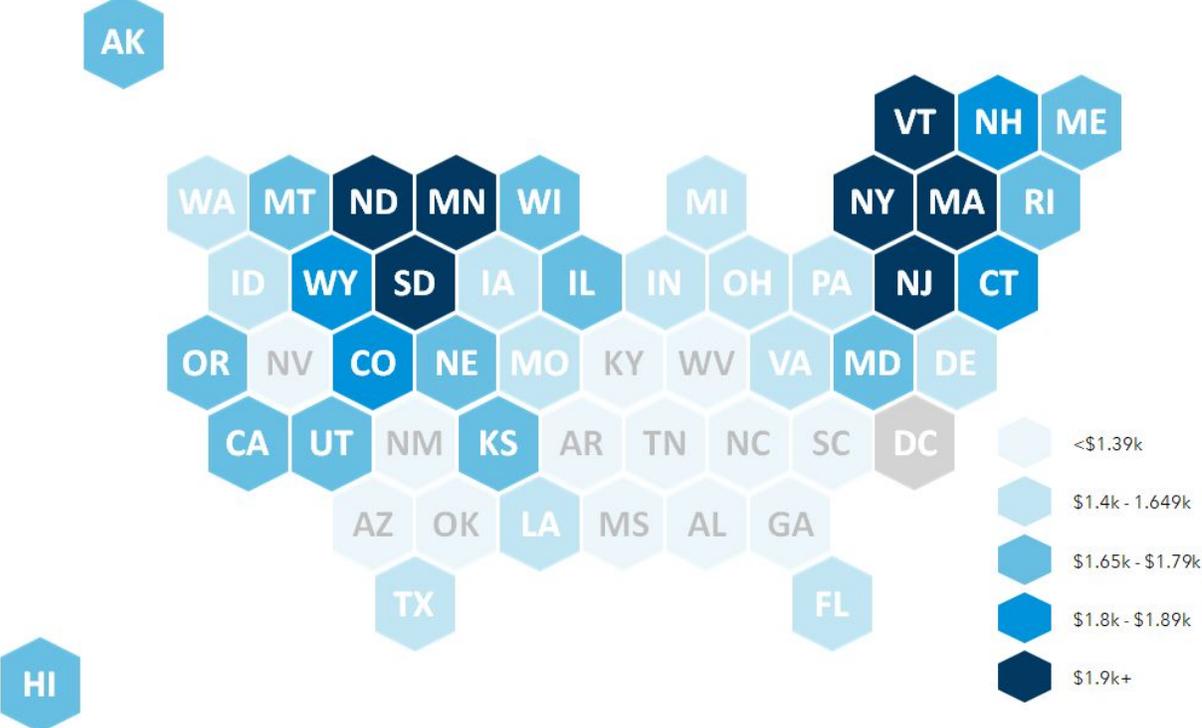
Though the guidelines are federal, the responsibility for public health programs and policies to support safe reopening falls to state and local governments. Policy tracking initiatives from the National Governors Association and National League of Cities reveal a wide range of policies on masks, gatherings, business reopenings, and reopenings of public services such as libraries, schools, and childcare centers.<sup>4,5</sup> Ultimately, though, much of the power to contain the spread lies with individual choices. In the absence of a vaccine or effective treatment, public health measures such as social distancing, wearing masks, and widespread testing are essential for managing the pandemic.

As of early August, half of Americans now know somebody who has been infected by the virus – and that number holds steady across all geographic regions, so it is becoming harder to view Covid as another community’s problem.<sup>6</sup>

**Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Dakota, New Jersey, New York, South Dakota, and Vermont received the largest amount of CARES Act forgivable small business loans per capita.**

**Paycheck Protection Program loans per capita**

CARES Act small business loan dollars per capita, loan approvals through July 24



Source: [USA Facts compilation of SBA Loan Data](#)

Nearly \$350 billion in loans were approved before April 19th. An additional \$172 billion in loans were approved between late April and June 30th. Between July 1st and August 8th roughly only \$3 billion in additional loans were approved. When the program deadline was reached on August 8th, \$134 billion remained unclaimed.<sup>1</sup>

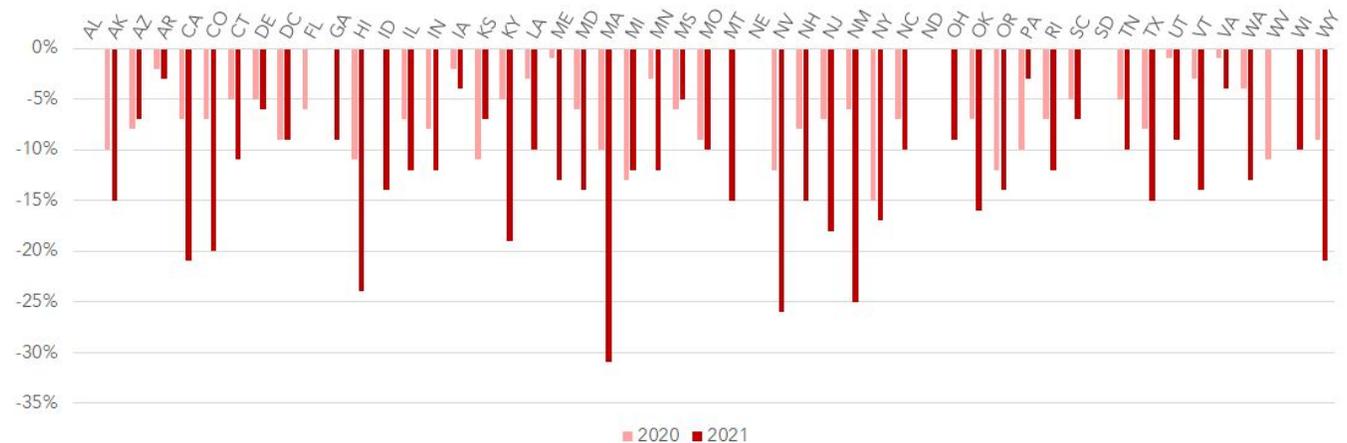
In early July, the SBA released the names of all companies and organizations that had received loans of \$150,000 or more. News reports highlighted those larger recipients that are already well-capitalized and therefore not the intended target of the program.<sup>2,3</sup> The public backlash following these news reports may have dampened demand for the loans. Concerns about repayment terms may also have contributed to reduced demand in the final weeks of the program.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, USAFacts’ analysis of PPP dollars per capita compared with job losses from January to June per capita revealed that states with greater economic hardship *did* receive a greater share of the PPP dollars relative to their population size.<sup>5</sup> Regardless, as of August 1, the U.S. had 16% fewer small businesses open than in January 2020 according to the Opportunity Insights Economic Tracker at Harvard.<sup>6</sup>

## At least 10 states are projecting tax revenue reductions of 10% or greater for the fiscal year 2020, increasing to at least 32 states for FY 2021.

FY 2020 and 2021 preliminary estimates of decline in tax revenues by state, as of August 12

Percent decline in tax revenues



Note: Some states do not have published projections for both or either years

Source: [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

The economic crisis spurred by Covid hits states directly, in terms of reduced income and sales tax revenues. The disparate impacts of the pandemic on industries such as tourism and oil & gas hit states' finances as well. Hardest hit in fiscal year 2020 were New York and Michigan, with an 15% and 13% reduction respectively, due in large part to unemployment and reduced production.<sup>1,2</sup>

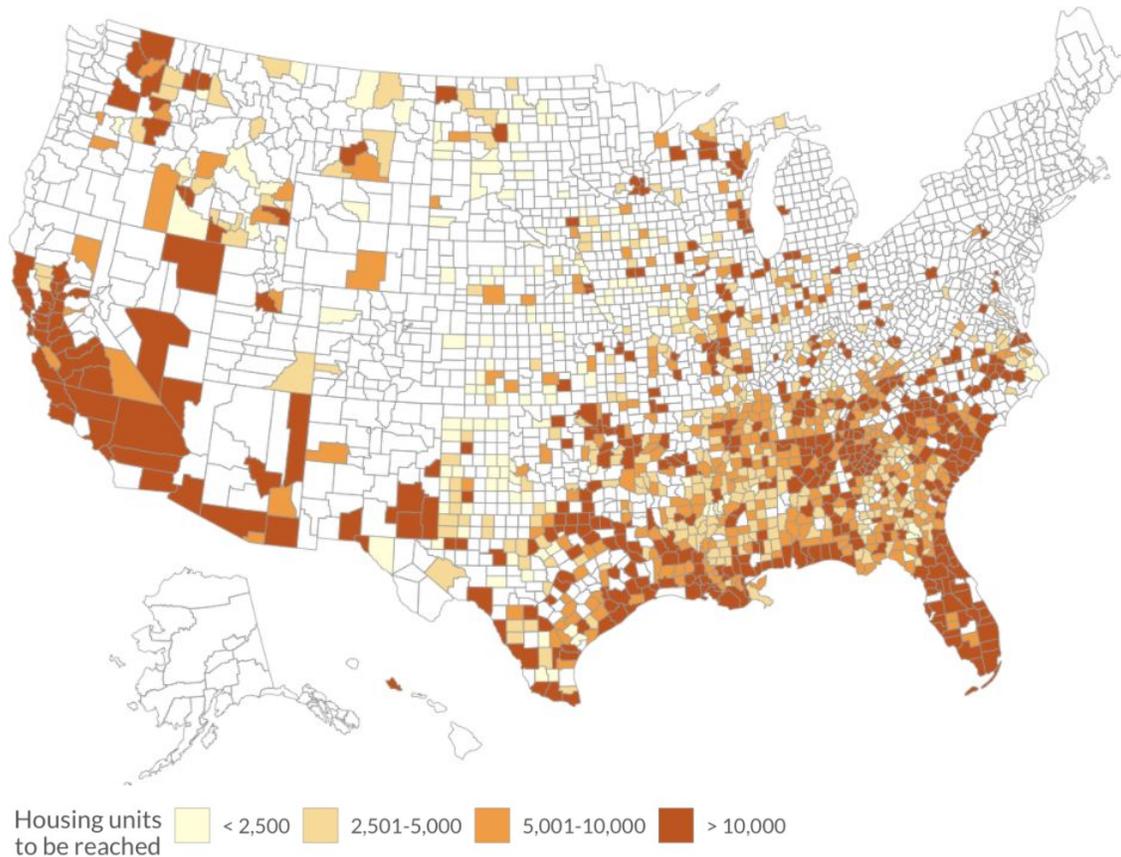
For fiscal year 2021, 32 states are projecting a tax revenue reduction of 10% or greater. Loss of jobs in service industries and travel specifically will have a major impact on the tax revenues of states such as Massachusetts and Nevada, projecting losses of 31% and 26% respectively.<sup>3,4</sup> Hawaii will also be affected by the loss of tourism, projecting a 24% loss in tax revenues.<sup>5</sup> Energy-producing states such as Wyoming and New Mexico are projecting declines of 21-25% driven by losses in oil & gas.<sup>6</sup>

This revenue loss will have an impact on the essential services states provide such as education, disaster preparedness and response, public spaces, and transportation.<sup>7</sup> More troubling is the impact these reductions could have on the state's ability to mount a robust public health response to Covid.<sup>8</sup> For example, recent NPR survey of states found that only 3 states plus D.C. are appropriately staffed for contact tracing.<sup>9</sup>

## With a looming deadline of September 30, more than half of households yet to be counted in the 2020 Census are in active Covid hotspots.

Households to be reached by census door-to-door operations that are in Covid hotspots

Based on self-response data as of August 20, 2020



Source: [2020 Census Self-Response Rates](#); [Center for Urban Research at the Graduate Center, CUNY](#); [NYT Covid-19 data](#);  
Note: Counties with  $\geq 100$  cases/100k people in the past week are classified as “hotspots” for this analysis. Blank counties on map have Covid rates below threshold.

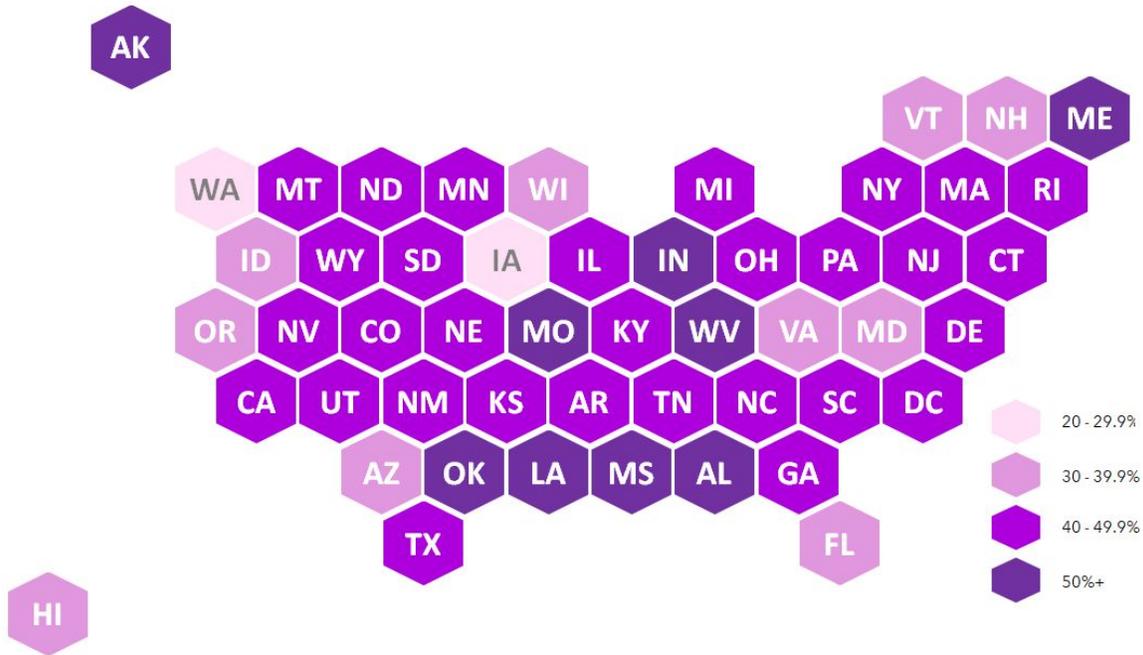
The timing of this pandemic was unfortunate for the constitutionally-mandated census of all persons every ten years. The census asks about all persons living in each household in the U.S. on April 1, 2020—a date that fell just as Covid consumed the nation’s news cycles. This census was already expected to be a difficult one, with record-high levels of distrust in government, digital divide issues, and concerns that misinformation might depress response rates.<sup>1</sup> But, a Bureau staffer recently described the pandemic as the “most significant challenge to the quality of 2020 Census data.”<sup>2</sup>

With a 20 percentage point spread between the highest (ID) and lowest (NM) state total response rates, closing the gap through door-to-door operations will be essential.<sup>3</sup> But door-knocking in pandemic hotspots raises many concerns, such as people not opening their doors, census-takers feeling unsafe, and fears of “travel teams” spreading the virus between communities. Using the Bureau’s latest state-level data on total response rates (including self-response *and* field operations), 20M+ households remain to be counted in states that are classified as active pandemic hotspots (case rates above 100 weekly new cases per 100k people).<sup>3</sup> In the less than 6 weeks remaining, state and local governments and community organizations can still reduce the number of needed in-person visits by encouraging residents to respond by phone, mail, or online.

**In 9 states, more than 50% of registered voters who didn't vote in 2016 cited structural reasons for not voting. The pandemic is likely to exacerbate those structural barriers.**

**Non-voters who cited structural reasons for not voting in the 2016 election**

Percent of registered voters who did not vote



Source: [Current Population Survey \(Voting and Registration Supplement 2016\)](#)

The 2016 presidential election had a turnout rate of 60% for eligible voters.<sup>1</sup> More than than 50% of registered voters in 9 states who didn't vote in 2016 cited structural reasons such as polling place hours, accessibility challenges, registration problems, or not being near polls on voting day. With the 2020 presidential election likely to be taking place under pandemic conditions, it is instructive to consider recent structural barriers for not voting and how those might be exacerbated by Covid.

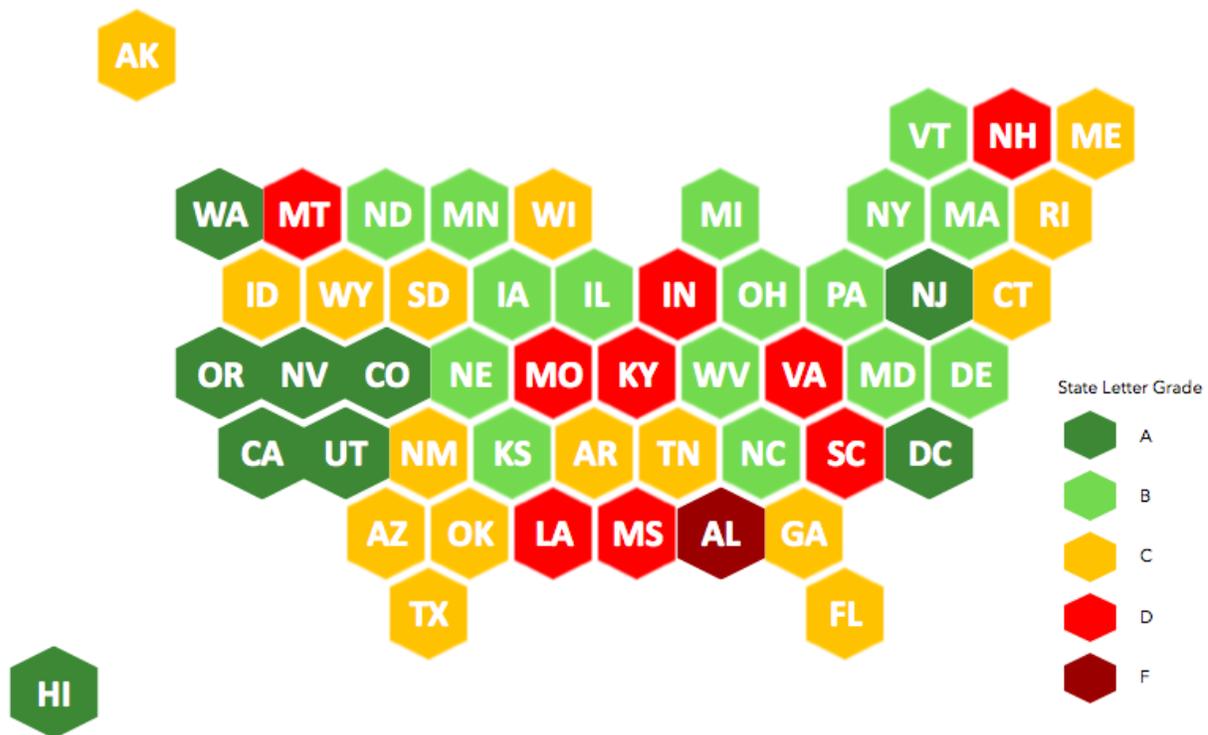
The most recent Current Population Survey asked why registered voters did not vote in that election. Their answers include a range of barriers that could dramatically reduce voter turnout during the pandemic, especially for states that have an extraordinarily high rate of infection (above 100 new cases in the last week per 100k population). For example, Mississippi, Missouri, Alabama, Louisiana, and Oklahoma are current hotspots for Covid-19 and have historically high structural barriers to voting. In 9 states, more than 50% of registered voters who didn't vote in 2016 cited structural reasons.

For example, in 19 states, 10%+ of would-be voters indicated they did not go to the polls because they were 'out of town or away from home,' a reason likely to be exacerbated by Covid-related displacement. In 24 states, 15% or more of eligible voters did not go to polls because they were 'too busy' and had "conflicting work or school schedules." This November, with many families juggling work and children being at home due to school and childcare closures, finding time to leave the house to vote may be even more difficult. Concerns about using public transportation, long lines, and safety of polling places could cause large numbers of people not to turn out. Already, nearly half of registered voters believe it will be difficult to vote in November's election (compared to only 15% in 2018).<sup>2</sup>

## 24 states and the District of Columbia are mostly ready for voting in a pandemic.

### Readiness to vote by mail in a pandemic

As of August 21, 2020



Source: [Voting by mail in a pandemic: A state-by-state scorecard](#), Brookings Institution

Primary and other elections this spring were marred by pandemic-related complications such as poll workers pulling out due to health concerns.<sup>1,2,3</sup> In addition to safe and adequately staffed in-person voting, the CDC recommends that election officials “consider offering alternatives to in-person voting if allowed in the jurisdiction.”<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, many jurisdictions already have experience providing alternatives to in-person voting, with mail-in ballots accounting for nearly 1 in 4 votes in the 2016 elections.<sup>5</sup> Some jurisdictions had robust options for voting by mail in place before the pandemic, and some are making special accommodations.<sup>6</sup>

Brookings researchers designed a rubric for grading a state’s readiness for voting by mail in the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> The rubric spans 14 criteria on requesting, completing, and submitting a mail-in ballot, with the focus on preparedness for the November election rather than permanent policies.<sup>8</sup> Voting by mail reduces barriers to voting exacerbated by the pandemic such as transportation challenges, not being at usual place of residence, caregiving responsibilities, and difficulty getting to the polls during open hours. In the indicator on the previous page, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Indiana have among the largest shares of registered voters who cited structural barriers such as these for not voting in 2016. These states are also insufficiently prepared for voting from home.

# Prosperity

## Institutions

Beyond governments, American society has always depended on a wide array of civic institutions to provide critical information to constituents, hold governments accountable, and support families and workers to be healthy, educated, and productive. This section examines civic institutions—and whether they are fair, effective, and healthy.

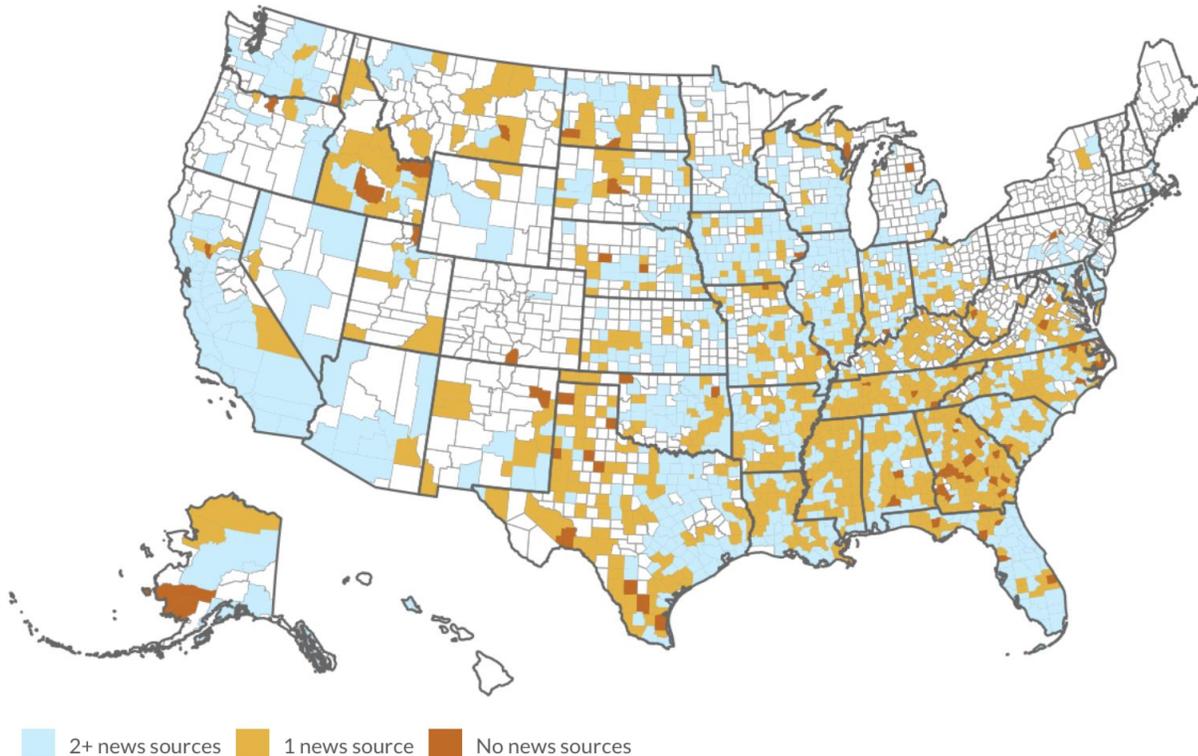
This second issue of *Pandemic to Prosperity* focuses on the ability of people to access information they need to make informed decisions during a pandemic. We examine local news and internet access to assess the ability of communities to receive critical information and remain connected in a world that is dramatically more digital than just a few months ago. Children have been especially affected by the shift to digital, so this month we introduce an indicator specifically about them.

### Indicators in this section

- Counties with no or only one newspaper in Covid hotspots
- Children without internet access or computers by race/ethnicity

## More than half of counties experiencing high rates of new cases of Covid are in news deserts, meaning a critical vehicle for trusted information during the pandemic is absent.

Counties with no or only one newspaper (often only a weekly) that also have high Covid rates  
News deserts as of 2020, Covid cases as of Aug 19, 2020



Source: [UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media](#); [New York Times Covid-19 data](#); inspired by [Brookings research](#)  
Note: Counties with  $\geq 50$  cases/100k people in the past week are classified as “high rate” of new cases for this analysis. Blank counties on the map have Covid rates below threshold.

Trusted local news sources are key to the success of public health campaigns, holding local governments accountable, and for getting word out about Covid outbreaks attributed to contact at local bars, workplaces, group quarters, and weddings. In July, local newsroom ChicoSol published an article on the high rates of local infections of Latinos—information they acquired through a public records request with Sacramento county. That article, in turn, mobilized the Hispanic Resource Council of Northern California to address the unmet needs of the local Latinx population by distributing PPE and bilingual Covid information.<sup>2</sup>

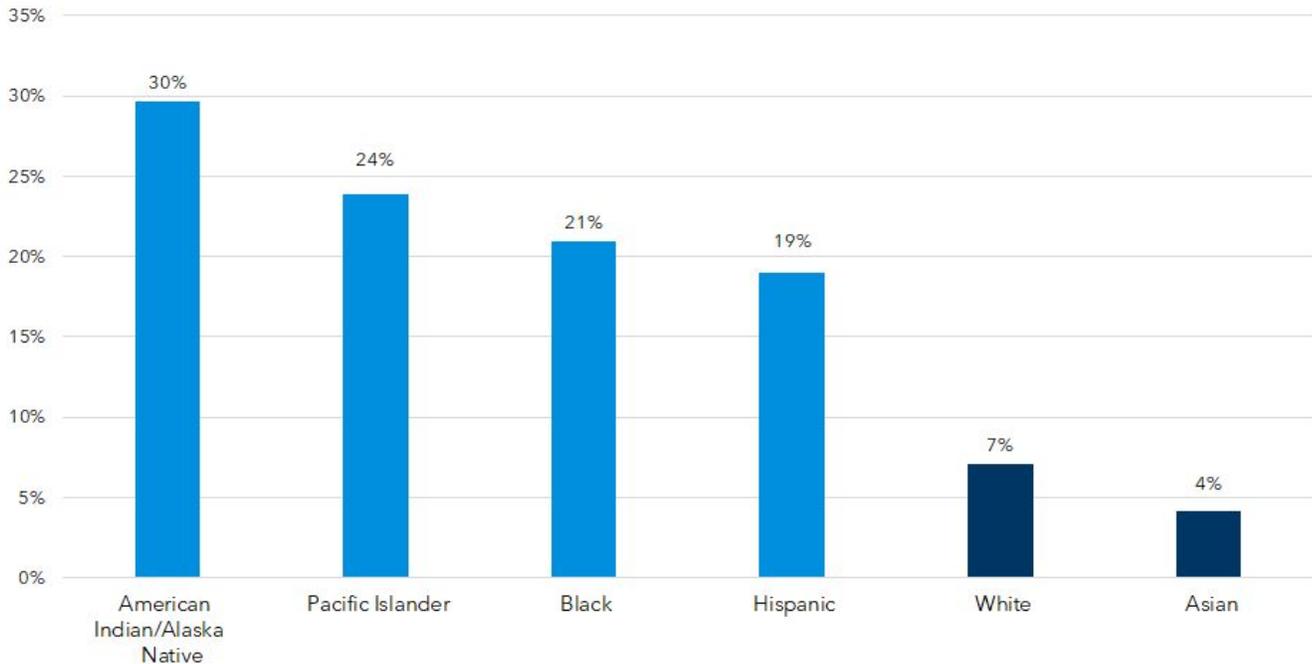
When the Covid rate passes 50 new cases per 100k a week, communities are on the brink of runaway infection rates if public health measures are not rapidly implemented and followed.<sup>3</sup> More than half of counties above that pandemic threshold are also in what experts describe as “local news deserts” that have either no newspaper or only one (often a weekly or a thinly staffed daily).<sup>4</sup>

The news desert situation is getting worse with the pandemic, with Poynter research identifying 50 closures of local newsrooms due to the Covid crisis.<sup>5</sup>

## Nearly 1 in 5 children of color lack internet and a computer or tablet and may be at risk of significant learning loss in school districts utilizing online learning during the pandemic.

### Children in households without internet and computer, 2018

Percent of children in households that lack internet access and lack a desktop, laptop, tablet or other type of computer



Source: [National Center of Education Statistics compilation of American Community Survey data](#)

Many rural areas and tribal communities in particular were not prepared for the sudden transition to online learning due to school shut-downs last spring.<sup>1,2</sup> For example, before Covid, students in rural areas (50%) and small towns (44%) were much less likely than suburban students (65%) to use the internet for homework on a regular basis.<sup>3</sup> A Brookings study that quantified the impact of the spring 2020 transition to online learning on learning loss concluded that students in grades 3 through 8 would begin fall 2020 with only 70% of the learning gains in reading from the prior year.<sup>4</sup> Looking ahead at the potential learning loss if remote learning continues through the fall of 2020, a McKinsey study estimated that students could lose 3 to 4 months of learning if they received average online instruction and 7 to 11 months if their online instruction was lower quality. McKinsey points out that such learning loss could reduce the United States' competitiveness relative to other countries that are able to reopen schools. By 2040, the U.S. could experience a 1 percent loss in GDP due to these learning losses.<sup>5</sup>

Notably each of these studies assumes that students will have access to online learning of some quality. But 30% of Native American children, 24% of Pacific Islander children, 21% of Black children, 19% of Hispanic children, 7% of white children and 4% of Asian children did not have internet access and a computer or tablet that would be needed to fully participate in the online learning that might be offered.

# Prosperity

## People

At the end of the day, governments and institutions are intended to ensure the well being of the communities they represent. This section examines outcomes for people since the onset of the Covid crisis.

While much of the most meaningful data on how people are faring will not be available until months after the date it reflects, this section examines key economic metrics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as well as a timely survey from the U.S. Census Bureau (the Household Pulse Survey) that assesses the human impact of the Covid crisis across America. For each indicator, we provide a brief explanation of findings and implications to weave together an overview of how Americans are faring during the pandemic.

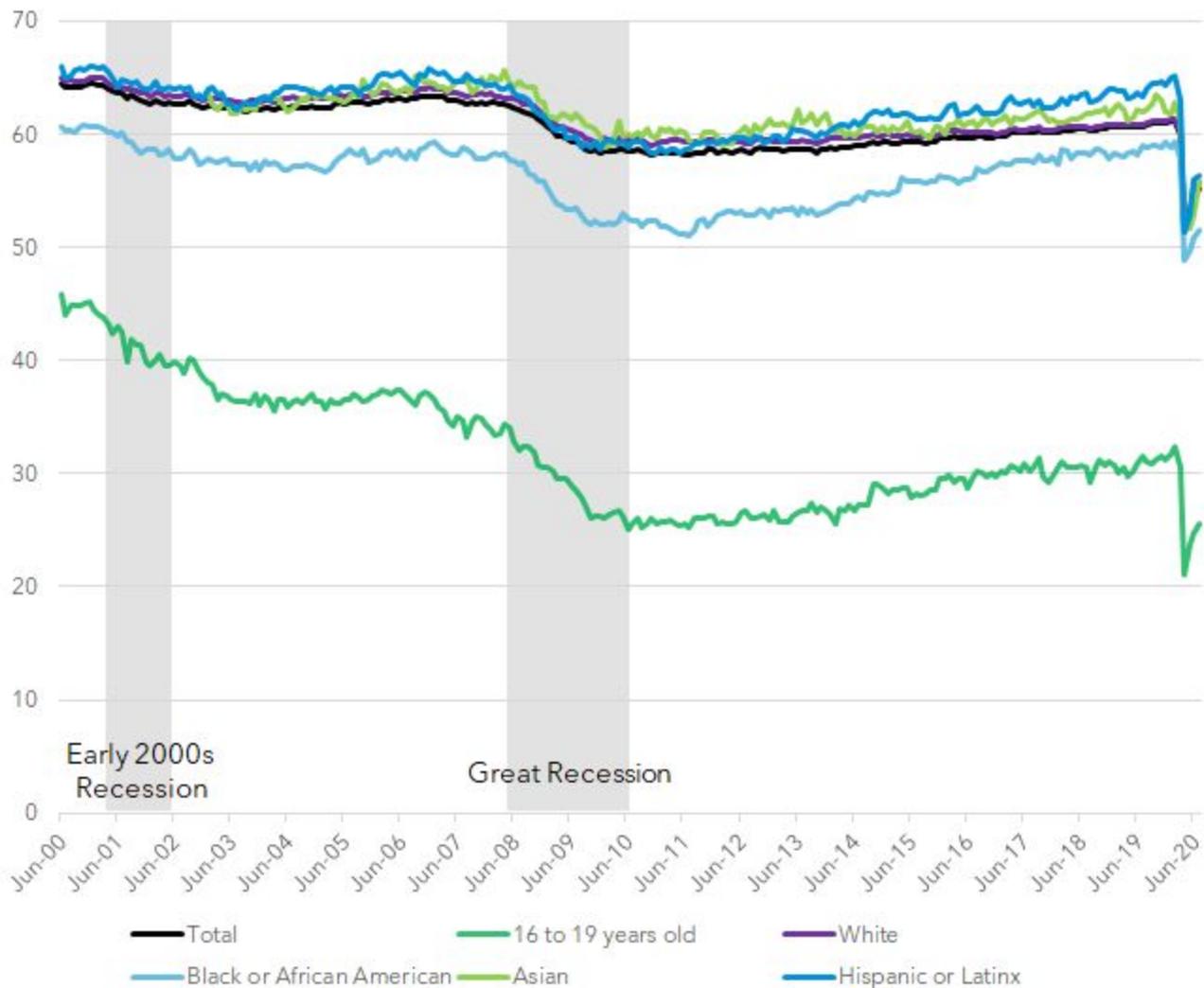
### Indicators in this section

- Employment rate by race/ethnicity
- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity
- Housing and food insecurity among children

**July employment rates at 55% remain lower than in the depths of the great recession when only 59% of adults had employment. Young people ages 16 to 19 are particularly hard hit with only 26% employed in July.**

**Employment rate, by race and age**

Employment-Population Ratio of civilian, non-institutionalized workforce age 16+, seasonally adjusted



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

In July 2020, the employment rate for adults was only 55% up from a low of 51% in April. Although employment rates have grown month by month since April 2020, employment remains below the low point of the great recession (59% in July 2010) and well below February 2020 when 61% of all adults had employment.

Employment rates for Hispanic or Latinx adults is highest at 56% as many remain employed in essential positions in agriculture, food processing, and janitorial services that simultaneously expose them to significant Covid risks.<sup>1,2,3</sup> While, 56% of white and Asian adults had employment, only 52% of black adults and only 25.6% of youth had employment in July. A slow start into the job market for young people can have lifetime earning implications.<sup>4</sup>

**More than 1 in 10 adults report their households have gone hungry during the pandemic. Mississippi ranks highest with 19%. New York and Texas are next at ~17% and New Hampshire and Maine are lowest at 5%.**

**Food insecurity by state, July 16-July 21**

Percentage of adults who report their household sometimes or often going hungry in the pandemic



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey](#)

Early on in the pandemic, nutritional lifelines for communities already experiencing food insecurity unraveled. School closures made it more complicated to access food through school lunch programs, and shortages of staff and food at food pantries led to long lines and empty shelves.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Plus, new populations found themselves going hungry – including people who lost their jobs, or who were unable to leave the house because they were at high risk. In May, Feeding America, a nationwide network of 200 food pantries, estimated that 2 in 5 of food pantry clients were new.<sup>5</sup>

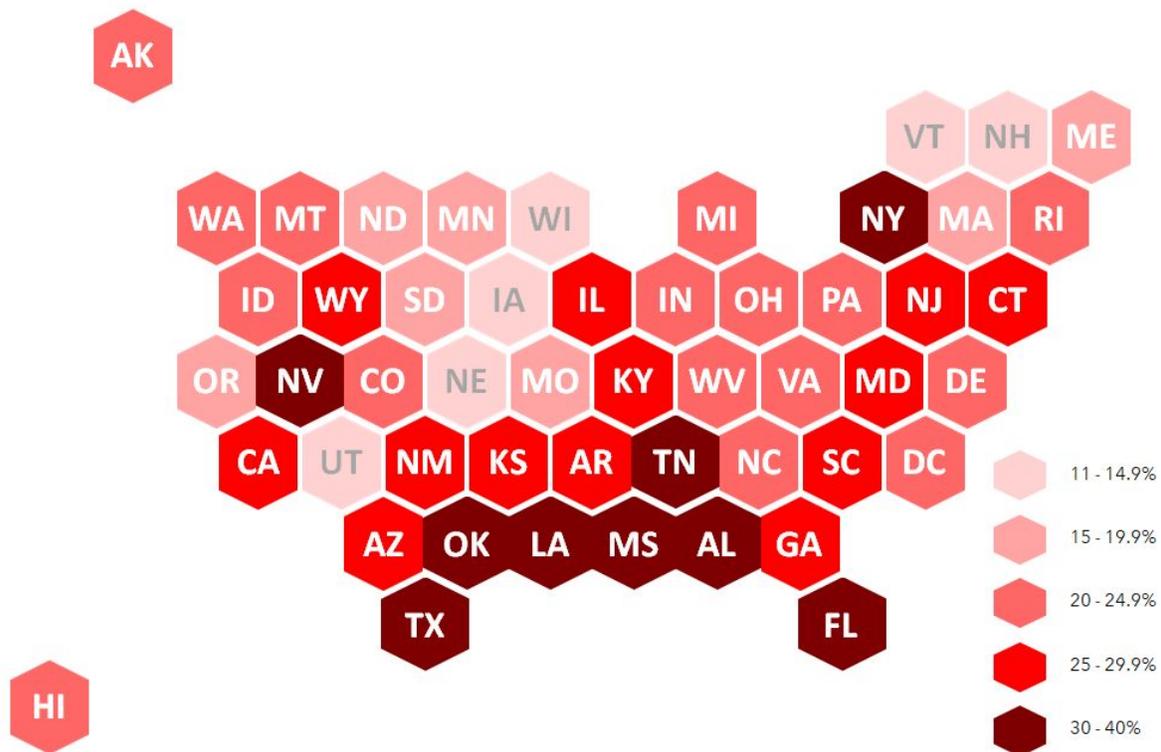
Though difficult to quantify, the role of food pantries, community volunteers, local emergency food programs, and increased flexibility for federal food programs are most certainly buffering the full impact of the pandemic on hunger.<sup>6,7,8</sup> Even so, an estimated 29 million adults in the U.S. report their families are sometimes or often going hungry.<sup>9</sup> Over the 12 weeks of Census Household Pulse Surveys so far during the pandemic, southern states are consistently among the most food-insecure.

Not only are there differences in food security across states during the current crisis, but historical data shows a persistent disparity, with Black and Hispanic households going hungry at rates twice that of white households.<sup>10</sup> For those living in food deserts, a cruel twist of biology comes into play; food insecurity is linked to conditions such as diabetes and obesity, and those comorbidities are also among the most common risk factors for worse Covid outcomes.<sup>11,12</sup>

## Across Texas, Florida, Nevada, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and New York 1 in 3 adults likely were unable to make their mortgage or rent payment in August.

### Housing insecurity by state, July 16-July 21

Percent of adults who missed last month's rent or mortgage payment, or who have slight or no confidence that their household can pay next month's rent or mortgage on time



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey](#)

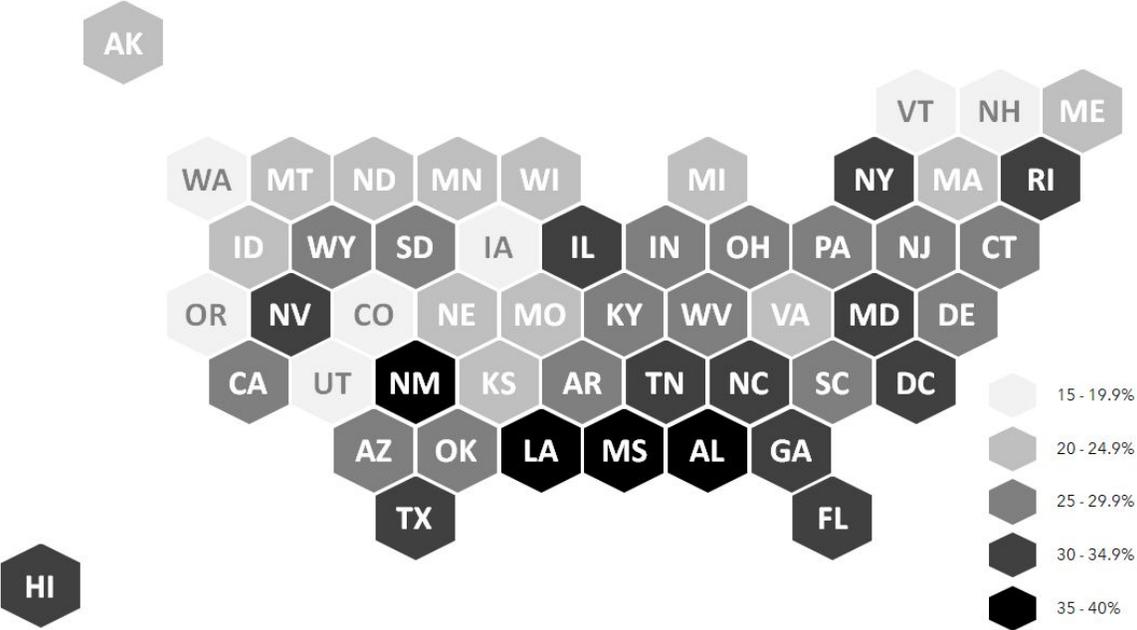
In Texas, nearly 5 million adults indicated they had already missed a rent or mortgage payment or expected they would not be able to pay for housing in August (in other words they were “housing insecure”). In both Florida and New York, roughly 3.4 million adults indicated they had missed a payment or had little confidence they could make their rent or mortgage payment in August. Nationwide 25% of all adults reported being “housing insecure.” Renter households with children were particularly at risk.<sup>1</sup>

The CARES act provided a temporary moratorium on evictions, but only for properties receiving federal subsidies or federally backed loans and only until July 24, 2020.<sup>2</sup> On August 8, President Trump issued an Executive Order instructing several federal agencies to look at the need for further eviction and foreclosure moratoriums.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, federal protections for renters and homeowners were extended until the end of 2020, but only on single-family homes and only those insured by the FHA, *not* those backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.<sup>4</sup> Many communities are worried about an impending wave of homelessness as eviction filings spike in August.<sup>5, 6, 7</sup> But also troubling is the effect on landlords of nonpayment of rent, and the ultimate effect on banks as mortgages go unpaid.<sup>8</sup> The Mortgage Bankers Association reported that mortgage delinquency rates have hit their highest point in 9 years since the pandemic began.<sup>9</sup>

**In Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Mexico, 1 out of every 3 children has experienced hunger, potential homelessness or both. Nearly 19 million children nationwide have experienced these traumas since the pandemic began.**

**Housing and food insecurity among children by state, June 18-July 21**

Percent of children in households that are behind on rent or mortgage payments and/or are sometimes or often going hungry during the pandemic



Source: [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey](#)

This summer, hunger and housing insecurity has affected more than 35% of all children in the Deep South states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama as well as New Mexico—home to a large share of the nation’s Native American children. But these challenges are not isolated to these four states. More than 30% of children in Texas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Maryland, Rhode Island, New York, Illinois, Nevada, and Hawaii have experienced these hardships in the past two months.

The effects of food and housing insecurity on children are dramatic. When adults are behind on rent or mortgage payments, eviction or foreclosure may force families to suddenly move, begin couch surfing, or even become homeless.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly this can lead to frequent school moves, absenteeism, and lower test scores for children.<sup>2</sup> Children without stable housing are also susceptible to mental health issues, developmental delays, and trauma that can affect children’s future health, education, and employment outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Food insecurity also affects health and development of children and often leads to anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorder.<sup>4,5</sup>

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