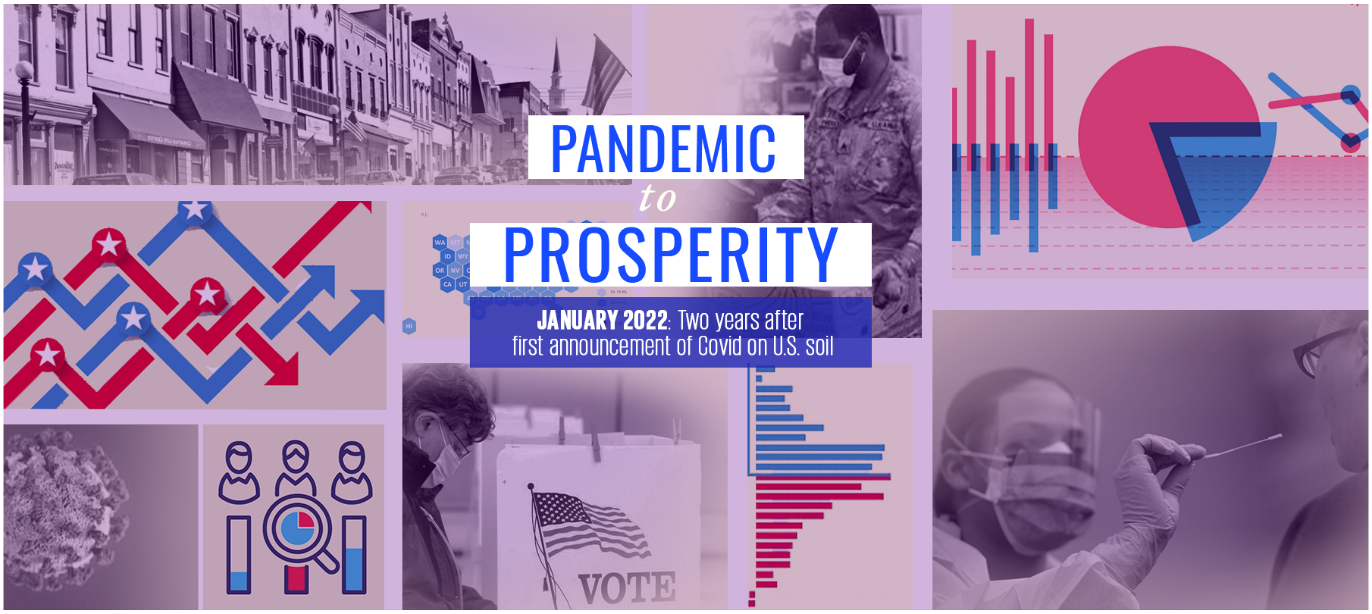


JANUARY 18, 2022

Executive Summary

Large-scale crises accelerate pre-existing trends, exacerbate inequities, and permanently change societies and civic life. 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's thoughtfully-curated data serves to illuminate the challenges facing the nation's most vulnerable. In addition, this reliable source of wide-ranging, impartial information will be valuable in aligning public and private sector efforts and reflect progress made, or the lack thereof, over time.

January 21 will mark two years since Covid-19 was first announced on U.S. soil. Since then, over 65 million Americans have had Covid, and more than 850,000 Americans have died from Covid, leaving behind millions of bereaved loved ones.

In addition to the impact on health, the pandemic delivered a shock to the U.S. economy and immediately destroyed 22 million jobs, but the economy did not fall into a depression. The federal government provided more than $4 trillion in emergency assistance to individuals, small and large business owners, and state and local governments. Support to families lifted 3 million children out of poverty. The stimulus funding also spurred the development of safe and effective Covid vaccines in record time and supported distribution, and 63% of Americans are now fully vaccinated. But challenges remain. Our review of 30 indicators related to the Covid crisis and the nation's civic health revealed these additional findings:

Covid impacts Vaccination rates vary across the nation — more than half of all counties have vaccinated less than 50% of their population and only 60 counties have vaccinated more than 75%. As the new

Omicron variant sweeps the nation, hospitalizations are now higher than their peak last winter, and intensive care units in 19 states and Washington, D.C. are near full capacity. Hospitalizations among younger adults are spiking in areas with low vaccination rates and more than doubled in December for children under 5, for whom vaccination is not yet an option.

Economic impacts The economy is churning as swings in consumer demand and an inflexible supply chain drive inflation.[1,2] The labor market has shrunk with more than 1 million women unable to find childcare and some 1.6 million adults debilitated by long-Covid symptoms and unable to work. Many families have been late making rent or housing payments and 1 in 3 fear they'll lose their home in the next two months. 1 in 10 adults was unable to put enough food on the table in December.

Climate disasters The majority of Americans live in a county that has had at least one climate disaster declaration since March 2020. There were 20 disasters in 2021 that caused more than $1 billion in damages each – up from an average of only 7 such climate disasters from 1980 to 2020.

Mental health and health care Anxiety and depression levels have nearly tripled from 11% in 2019 to 31% in December 2021. Mental health providers are in short supply, particularly in Southern and Midwestern states. Many of these same states have refused to expand Medicaid, leaving 24% of working-age Texans without health insurance, along with 18% of the working-age population in FL, GA, and MS. Many rural hospitals in these states have closed and, in 2021, 60% of rural counties had no pediatricians, forcing rural residents to travel long distances to get care or simply go without.

Employment and learning loss People of color and LGBTQIA+ adults disproportionately bore the brunt of the nation's pandemic-related hardships. As of December, overall employment rates are down 1.7 percentage points compared to February 2020. But rates for Black and Hispanic workers are down 2.9 and 2.3 percentage points, respectively. LGBT adults were 6 percentage points more likely to report a loss of employment income than non-LGBT adults. And third-grade reading scores in fall 2021 were lower than in fall 2019 by 7 percentile points on average, with the most severe declines for Black third graders who experienced a 10 percentile point drop and Hispanic third-graders who experienced a 9 percentile point drop.

Information access More than 1 in 10 households lacked internet access in 2020, with over 18% of residents in AK, MS, NM, and WV lacking broadband — essential for staying connected in our increasingly digital society. Half of all U.S. counties are "news deserts," meaning they lack the local news Americans count on for local Covid and community updates.

Data quality The 2020 Census, like previous decades, disproportionately undercounted people of color and renters —affecting states' political representation as well as the federal funding they'll receive for the next 10 years. Similarly, the Census Bureau's American Community Survey saw a dramatic decline in response, particularly among low-income households. Meanwhile half of all states fail to report metrics key to combatting the pandemic, including hospitalizations by age and death rates by vaccination status. Bolstering state and federal data infrastructure will be essential for correctly informing trillions of dollars of future public and private investments.

Democracy The widely shared determination to hold a free and fair election in 2020 despite the pandemic resulted in 67% voter turnout — the highest on record, with both Republican and Democrat voters increasing in number. But these gains may soon be curtailed as 19 states have since passed laws that will make voting more difficult. Also key to our democracy is the balance of power between executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, which 35 states are trying to upset as legislators introduce bills to limit the power of state courts.

The effects of the pandemic have been deep and long — with no end in sight. While some have hoped that the Omicron variant would be mild and might bring immunity to most Americans, in contrast, hospitalizations are at record levels. In addition, so many workers have been infected or exposed, that thousands of flights were suddenly canceled, mail delivery has been disrupted, businesses nationwide have temporarily closed, and hospitals are suffering severe staffing shortages.[3,4] Scientists are concerned that the continued emergence of new variants could mean multiple outbreaks per year — outbreaks that are just as disruptive as Omicron has been.[5,6] As the nation considers how to survive and thrive in this “new normal,” strategic investments in health care, child care, workforce upskilling, and resilient infrastructure will be critical for smoothing out the bumps in the road ahead.

Table of Contents

Pandemic
Lives and Livelihoods

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 as new variants emerge and take their toll. As such, tracking Covid-related damage requires monitoring more than one metric, which may change as conditions change. Additionally, shocks and stressors such as extreme weather, crime, racial injustices, and civil unrest continue to compound the impact of the pandemic.

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

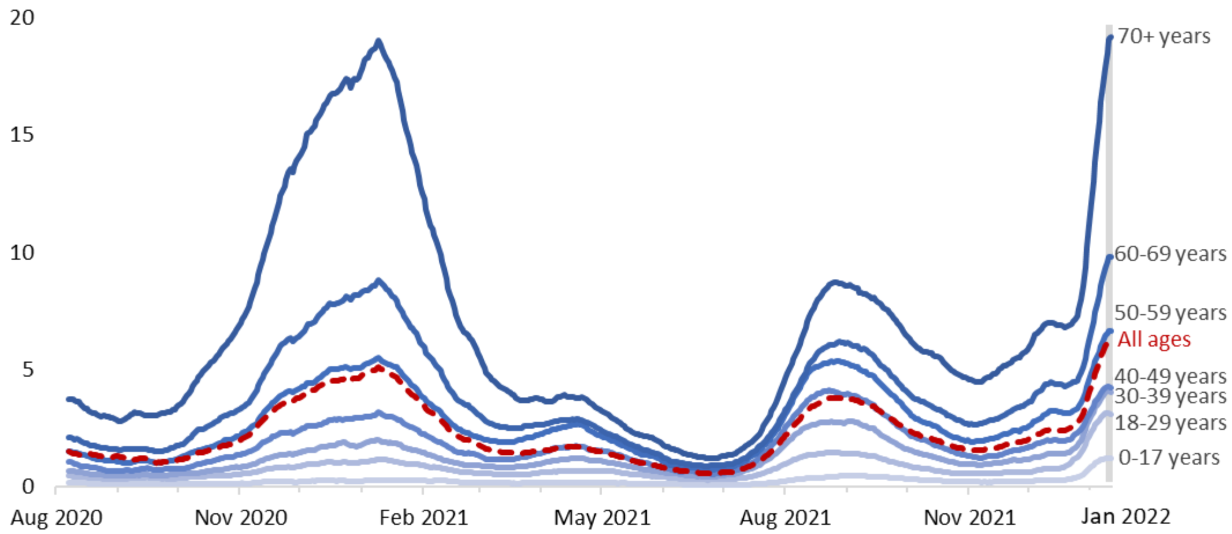
Much of the discussion about the pandemic is focused on health and economic impacts. In later sections of this report, these indicators serve as a backdrop for a unique analysis of the complex interactions between the pandemic and the nation's civic health.

Indicators in this section

- Covid-associated hospitalization rates, by age
- ICU capacity, by state
- Vaccination rates, by county
- Change in jobs, by state and nationally
- Quits rate, by industry
- Disaster declarations, by county

Covid-associated hospitalizations have spiked for all age groups, as the Omicron variant exploits gaps in vaccination coverage across the U.S.

Covid-associated hospitalizations per 100,000 population by age, U.S.
Aug 1, 2020 - Jan 11, 2022



Source:[HHS Covid-19 datasets](#) and [Census Bureau Vintage 2020 PEP](#). Notes: 7-day average of new admissions for confirmed Covid cases. Based on reporting from all hospitals (n=5,263). Due to potential reporting delays, data reported in the most recent 7 days (as represented by shaded bar) should be interpreted with caution.

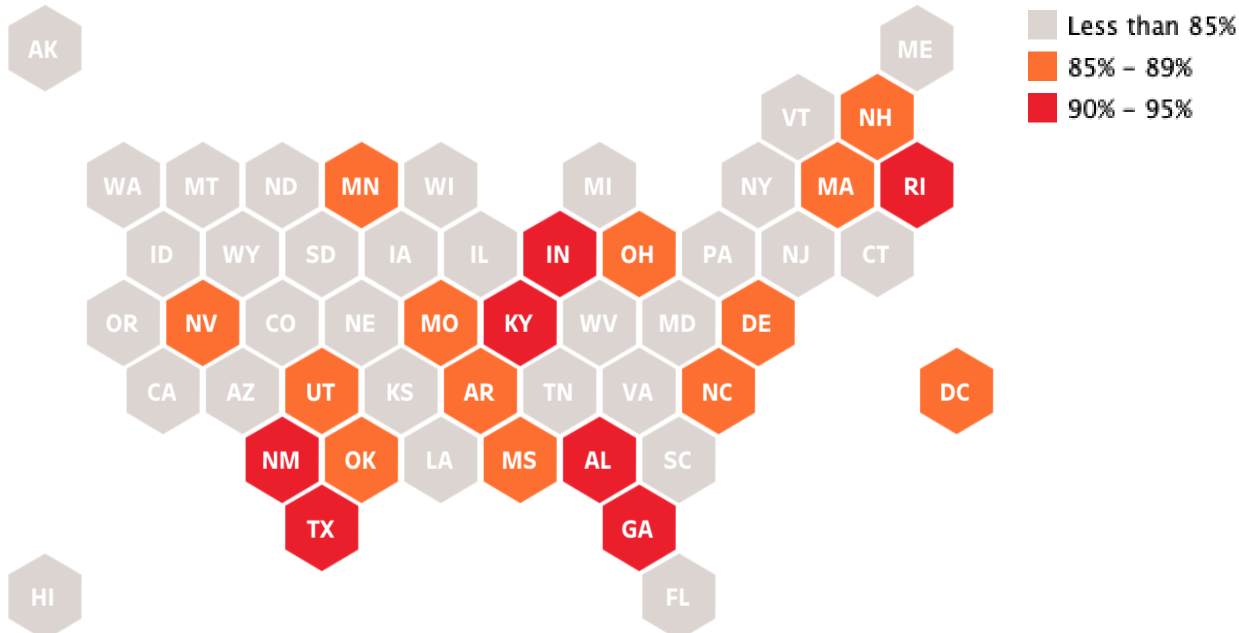
Although the Omicron variant appears to cause milder disease than previous variants among the vaccinated, the combination of high infection rates and low vaccination rates has caused Covid hospitalizations to surpass last year's winter peak and reach a new one-day record of 145,982.[1,2] Hospitalization rates in all age groups have spiked since December 2021, straining health care systems across the nation (ICU capacity, by state). For the elderly, hospitalization rates remain the highest and are increasing nationwide. CDC data also shows a smaller, yet sharp increase in hospitalizations for younger adults (between 18-29 years and 30-39 years), specifically in areas with lower vaccination rates.[3] (Vaccination rates, by county) In Arkansas, for example, hospitalizations for adults 18-29 years old increased by 70% from January 5 to January 12.[3]

Child hospitalizations associated with Covid have reached a new high, particularly for children under 5, for whom vaccination is not yet an option. As of January 1, 2022, CDC data showed hospitalizations for children 0-4 years old have more than doubled since early December, with 10 children hospitalized for every 100,000 children.[4] Hospitalizations for children 5-17 years old also ticked up, with 3 hospitalizations per 100,000 children. Despite the pediatric surge, some experts find this trend unsurprising due to the sheer increase in cases.[5] Even so, experts agree that child hospitalization rates should be closely monitored as the Omicron variant continues to surge across the nation.

Hospitals already stretched thin from the ongoing pandemic face new hurdles with the Omicron variant, as intensive care units across 19 states and D.C. near capacity.

Intensive care units near full capacity by state

Percent of staffed adult ICU beds that are being utilized for the week ending Jan 14, 2022



Source: HHS Covid-19 datasets.

As case rates from the Omicron variant begin to peak, hospitalizations remain high, stressing health care systems and health care workers. Intensive care units (ICU) across 19 states and the District of Columbia were at 85% capacity or more as of January 14, 2022. This is especially concerning as hospitalization rates are expected to rise through the end of the month. In states like Texas, where only 315 ICU beds were available across the state as of January 12, wearing masks, quarantining, and getting vaccinated are critical in preserving an already overwhelmed health care system.[1]

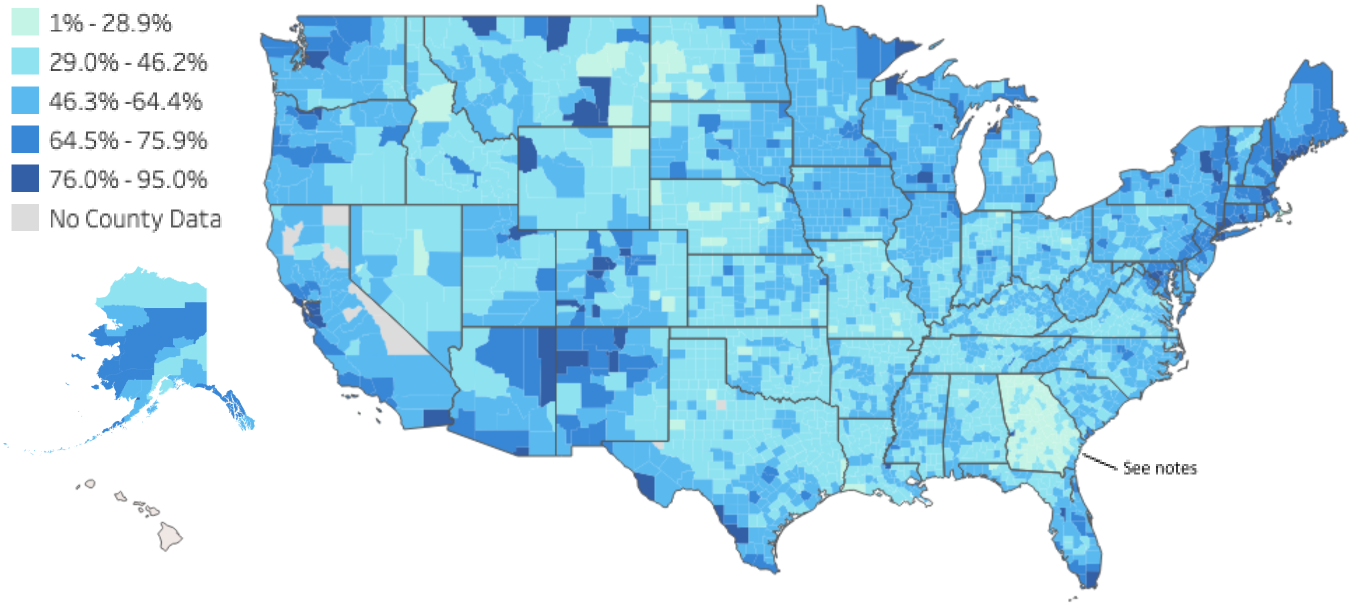
Staff shortages in hospitals have further compounded this crisis, as health care workers themselves test positive and must follow isolation protocols. Even with newly shortened CDC isolation and quarantine guidelines, roughly 1,200 hospitals across the nation reported critical staffing shortages as of January 10. Another 120 anticipate shortages in the following week.[2]

Several states have enacted statewide measures that require health care workers to focus on patients in critical need, putting workers in the difficult position of determining who receives care and who does not.[2] For example, a patient suffering from sepsis needed urgent surgery but was forced to wait 2 weeks before a hospital bed became available, dying shortly afterward due to worsened conditions.[3] As hospitals approach maximum capacity, communities should implement policies to reduce transmission and minimize the need for rationing care.

Though Covid vaccines continue to offer protection against severe Covid symptoms, only 63% of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated, with varying rates across the country.

Percent of total population fully vaccinated by county

Analysis of CDC vaccine partner data as of January 12, 2022



Source: CDC. Notes: GA, VT, and VA may appear to have a lower percentage of vaccination coverage when viewed by county because 40%, 26%, and 20% of vaccination reports are missing county of residence in these states, respectively. Data is not available at county level for Hawaii. Data for Idaho is for the population 18+.

While 63% of the population in the U.S. is fully vaccinated, vaccination rates vary widely across counties.[1] There are only 60 counties with 76% or more of their total population vaccinated. These counties are disproportionately coastal and metropolitan areas. By contrast, in roughly half of counties in the U.S., less than 50% of the population is vaccinated. These counties are disproportionately rural. Across the nation, just 24% of the population has received the additional booster shot.[1]

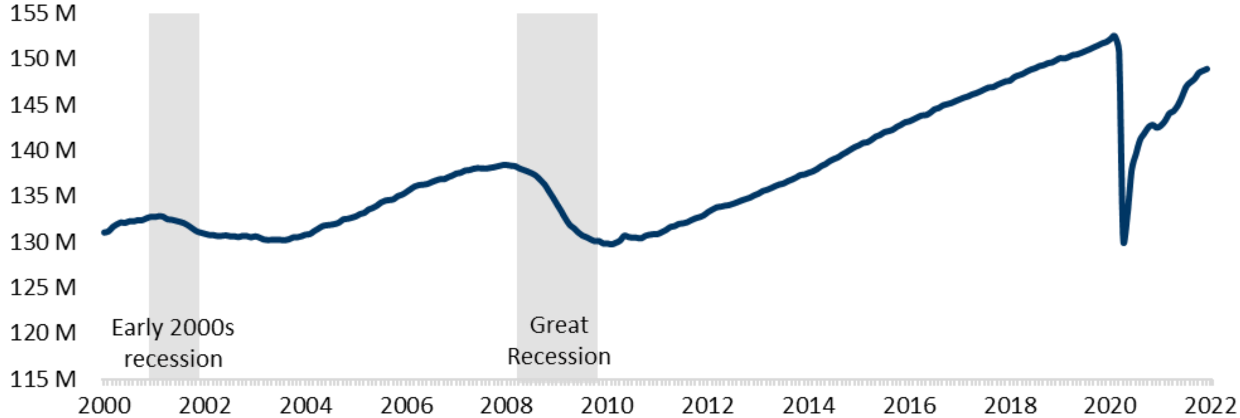
Post-holiday season, schools across the nation now grapple with how to safely return to in-person learning, looking to vaccines to provide important protections. Uptake in the recently approved Pfizer vaccine for children 5-11 years old varies broadly between states, mirroring trends in adult vaccination rates. As of January 12, 27% of children 5-11 years old had received their first dose of vaccination. However, rates by state range from just 10% in Mississippi to 59% in Vermont.[2]

Although the Omicron variant has resulted in many breakthrough infections causing some to question vaccine effectiveness, data shows that the vaccine helped protect individuals from severe Covid symptoms, especially those with the additional booster shot.[3] In November, unvaccinated adults were 13 times more likely to be hospitalized, and unvaccinated adolescents were 10 times more likely to be hospitalized than peers who were vaccinated.[4] Still, even with the rapid spread of Omicron, those who are unvaccinated remain firm in their decision. By mid-December, only 1 in 8 unvaccinated individuals reported they were likely to get vaccinated.[5]

Job growth was tepid in December. The nation still has 3.5 million fewer jobs than in Feb 2020.

Total jobs by month, U.S.

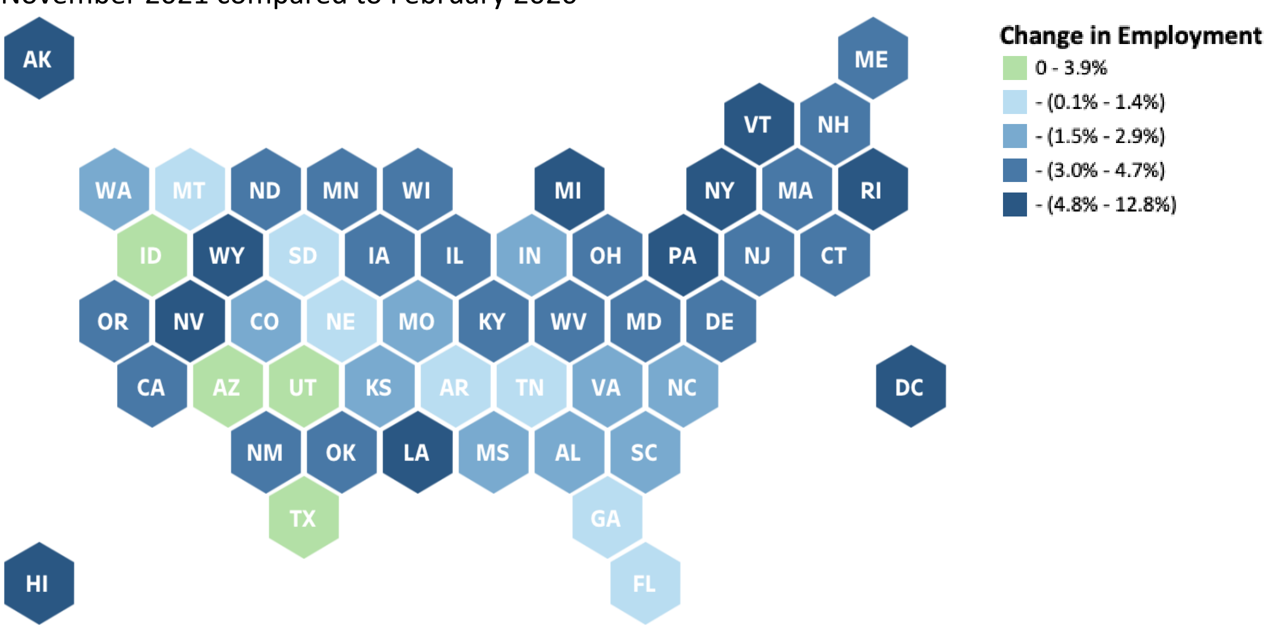
Jan 2000 - Dec 2021



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](). Note: Seasonally adjusted. Data for Nov 2021 and Dec 2021 are preliminary.

Change in jobs by state

November 2021 compared to February 2020



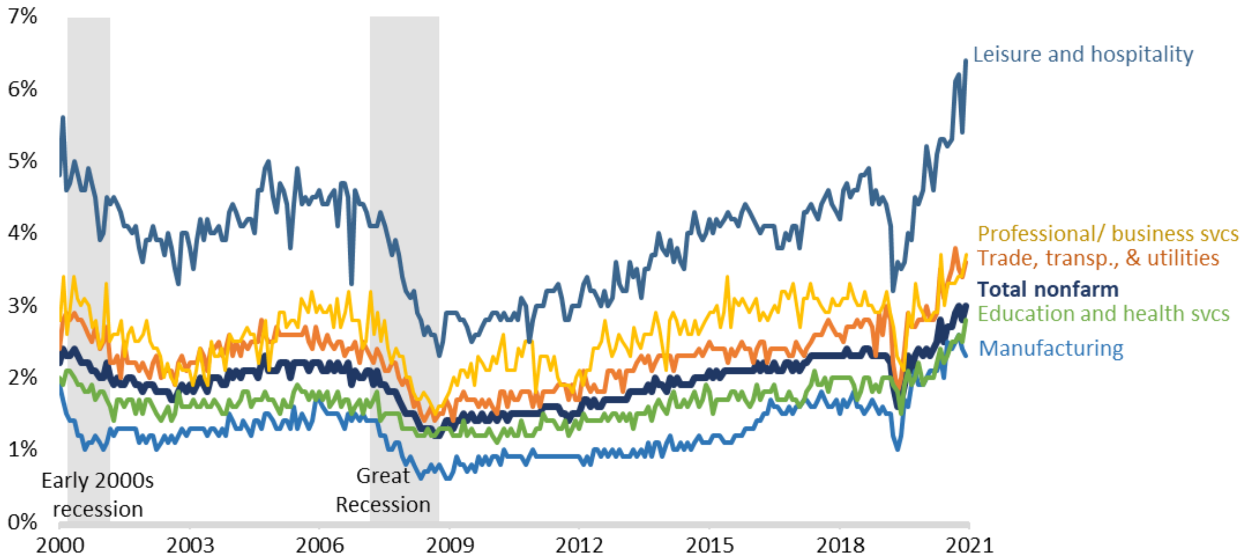
Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](). Note: Seasonally adjusted. Data for Nov 2021 are preliminary.

The nation gained 199,000 jobs in December — the weakest employment gain all year — as the labor market tightened ([Quits Rates, by industry]()). The vast majority of states have not recovered their pre-pandemic level of jobs. States with large tourism sectors have experienced the worst job loss, led by Hawaii (-12.8%), New York (-8%), and Louisiana (-6.4%).

The rate at which workers quit their jobs reached a new high in November. Since January 2021, 43 million workers have quit jobs.

Quits rate by industry

Dec 2000 - Nov 2021



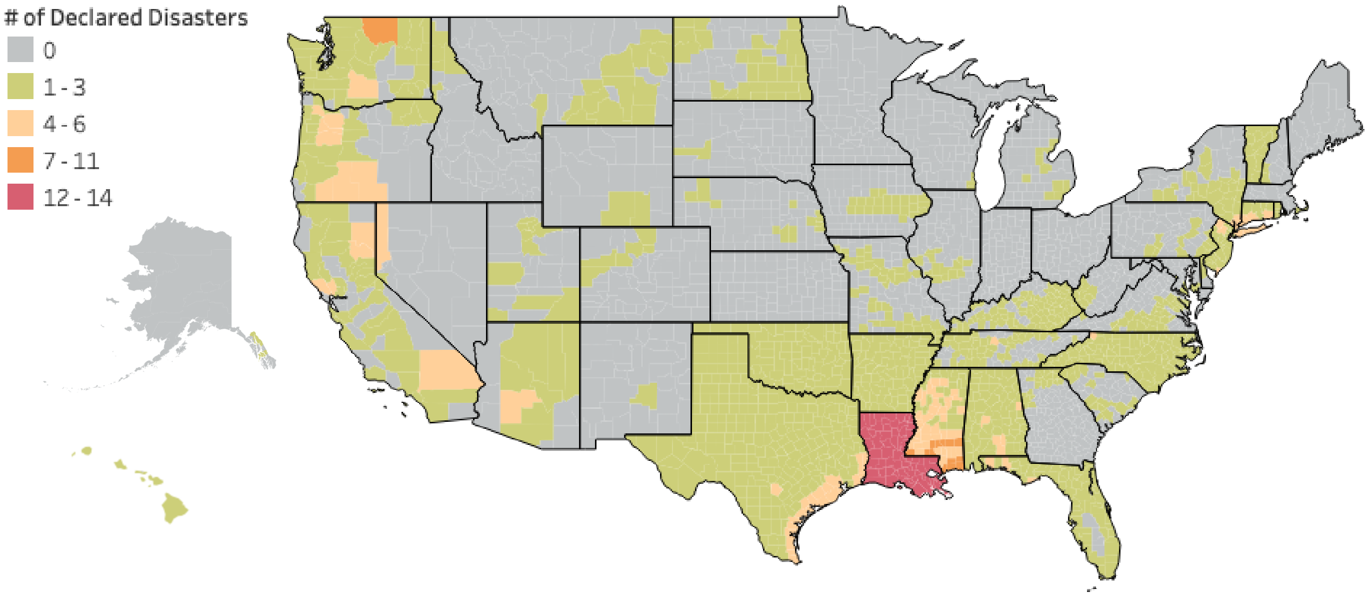
Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](). Notes: The quits rate is the number of quits during the entire month as a percent of total employment. Quits include employees who left voluntarily with the exception of retirements or transfers to other locations. Data is seasonally adjusted. Nov 2021 data is preliminary.

Since July 2021, more than 4 million employees quit their jobs every month. November reached a new all-time high of 4.5 million quits. The quits rate was highest in leisure and hospitality at 6.4% and in retail (part of trade, transportation & utilities) at 4.4% where wages are low and churn is typically high. But quits were also high in professional & business services at 3.7%[1] The pandemic appears to have caused some workers to rethink their options. Workers are retiring early in larger numbers.[2,3,4] Demands to return to the office are being successfully resisted by some higher-skilled workers,[5] while other office workers have been required to return to the office.[6] This is prompting employees to quit, concerned about poor workplace Covid precautions.[7] In addition, more than 1 million parents of young children quit jobs in December due to lack of childcare (Child Care Disruptions) and an estimated 1.6 million workers are sidelined each month because of long-Covid symptoms.[8] With fewer people in the labor market, workers are increasingly demanding higher wages and better working conditions.[9]

More frequent climate-related disasters means most Americans have experienced such a disaster since March 2020.

Number of FEMA county disaster declarations

Mar 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2021



Source: [FEMA](). Notes: Excludes COVID declarations.

Climate disasters have compounded the nation's misery since the pandemic struck. 59% of Americans live in a county that has had a disaster since March 2020. Disasters have been particularly frequent in the South and many Southern counties have experienced more than one disaster. Louisiana has experienced the most disasters, with every county (parish) in the state having more than 12 FEMA disaster declarations since March 2020.

The map above depicts the number of county-level disaster declarations, which includes hurricanes, fires, floods, tornadoes, levee breaks, landslides, earthquakes, severe ice storms, and other severe storms. (Although Covid was a declared FEMA disaster, it is excluded from this analysis.)

Although the U.S. experienced an average of 7 climate disasters causing at least a billion dollars in damages annually from 1980 to 2020,[1] in 2021, there were 20 such large-scale disasters.[2] Disasters have been shown to increase inequity: low-income housing is more likely to be located in vulnerable areas and may be less well constructed; people in low-income jobs often don't have the savings needed to evacuate or rebuild; and the time- and document-intensive FEMA application process can be too burdensome for smaller/rural municipalities and people with low-incomes.[3] At the same time, federal disaster bailouts disincentivize financial markets from investing in resilient infrastructure and housing.[4] Strategic investments in climate resilience will be needed to keep state economies moving forward.

Prosperity

The previous section examined how the pandemic has affected the lives and livelihoods of Americans. The next section moves from “damage assessment” to tracking measures that will be important as we shift to 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 across geography, race, and gender.

Government

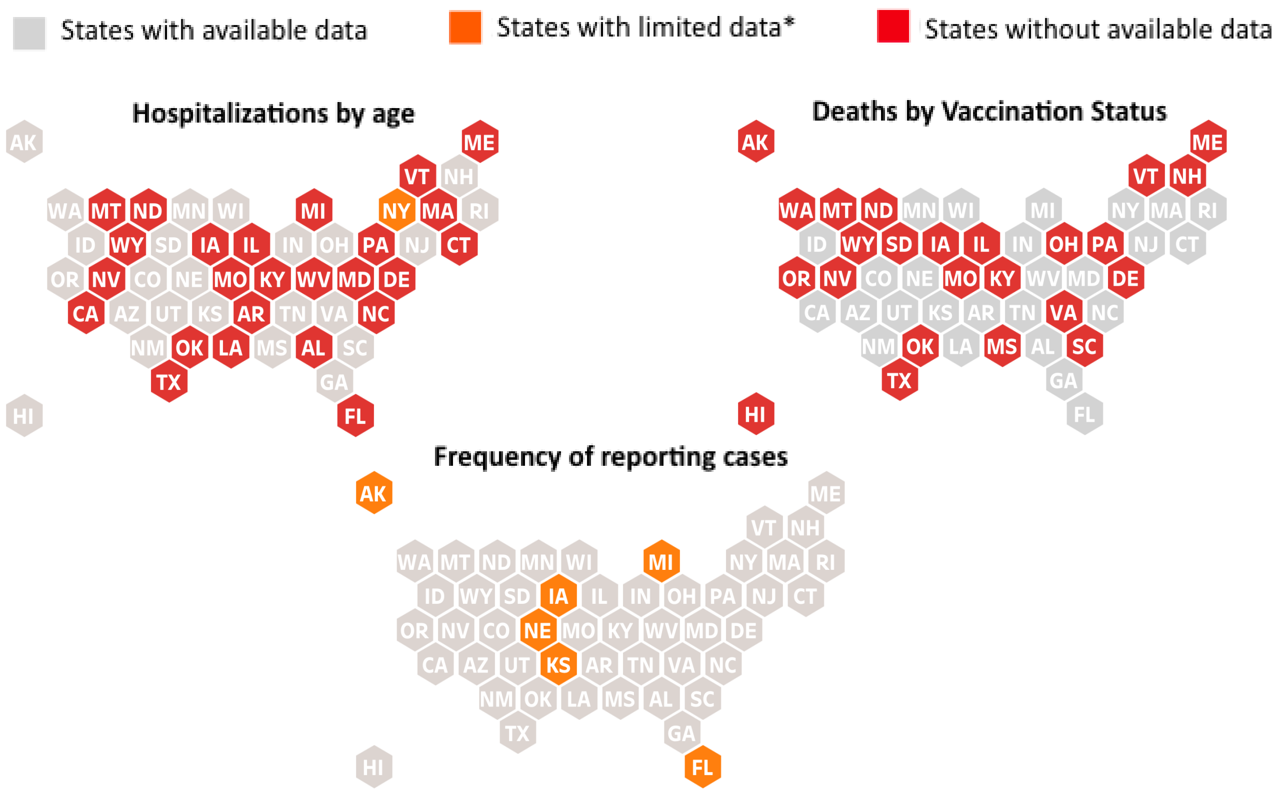
With substantial new federal funding being disseminated to local and state governments and families, tracking these funding streams and their impact will be essential going forward. This section examines the comprehensiveness of Covid data collection, and key assessments of the accuracy of demographic data used to disseminate funding. We include measures of the distribution of rental aid and tax credits to families with children. Key to our democracy are the ability of Americans to vote, along with a balance of power between executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. This section ends with indicators on new voting laws passed by states, and legislative attempts to curtail the authority of state courts.

Indicators in this section

- Missing Covid metrics
- 2020 Census undercounts, by state
- American Community Survey response rates
- Emergency Rental Assistance distribution
- Monthly Child Tax Credit payments, by state
- New voting laws
- Legislative efforts that weaken state courts

Two years into the Covid pandemic, many states still fail to provide timely, consistent, and complete Covid-related data.

States reporting limited or no public-facing data for key Covid-associated metrics
As of Jan 13, 2022



Sources: [American Academy of Pediatrics Weekly Report], [CDC: Rates of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Vaccination Status, Footnotes "Participating Jurisdictions"], [Johns Hopkins: State Reporting Frequencies, Cases]. Notes: Only NYC reported age distribution of hospitalizations. States with limited data report cases less than 4 times a week.

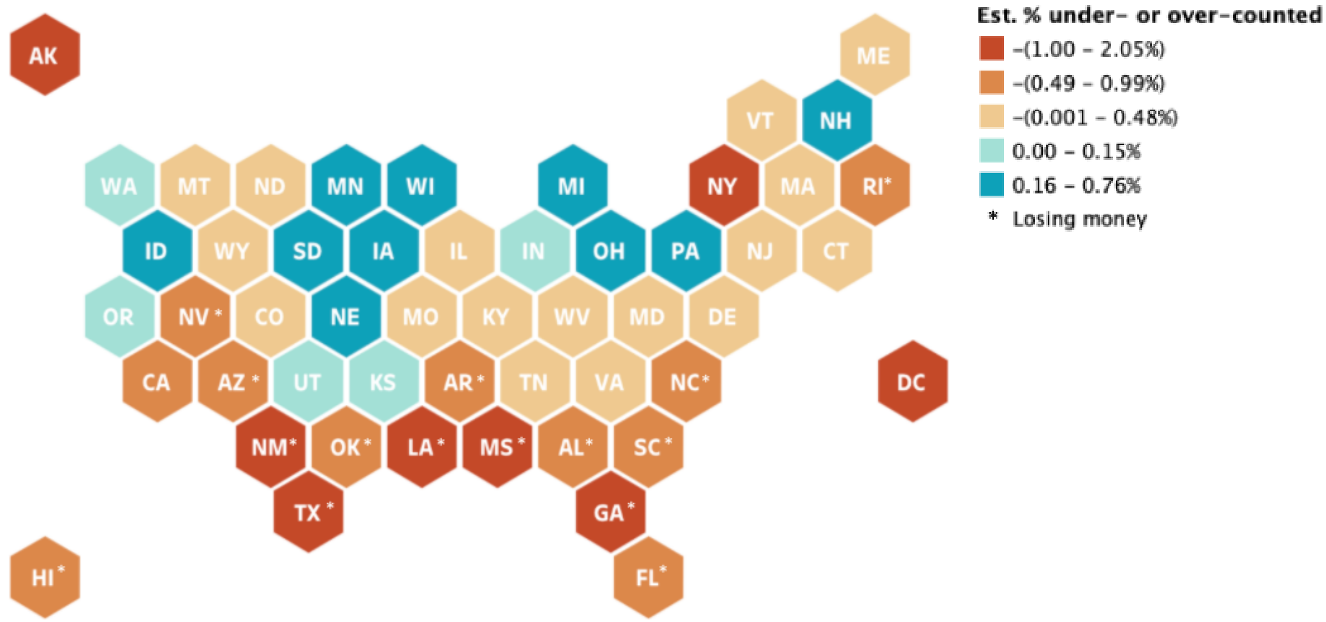
Consistent and complete data are crucial to full and equitable recovery from the pandemic. Yet states across the U.S. struggle to provide timely and dependable data nearly 2 years after its start. In some states, data reporting has slowed dramatically or even stopped completely. 5 states report Covid case data less than 4 times a week, a shift from daily reporting in the early stages of the pandemic.[1] Nearly half of states do not report hospitalizations by age, and just as many lack data on death rates by vaccination status.

Reasons for missing data vary broadly but states have historically faced challenges due to decentralized systems coupled with underfunding for public health.[2] Many cities and counties have independent tracking systems that do not connect to the state systems that channel data to federal agencies like the CDC.[2] As Covid case rates once again soar nationwide, experts express an urgent need for more and complete data to better assess the severity of new variants and the long-term effects of the virus.[3]

Many states with high census undercounts will not receive their fair share of Medicaid funding. But states can still inform federal funding distribution by actively engaging in new census review programs.

Estimated miscounts in total population by state, 2020 Census

States losing out on rightful share of Medicaid funding over the next decade



Source: [Urban Institute Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population](#).

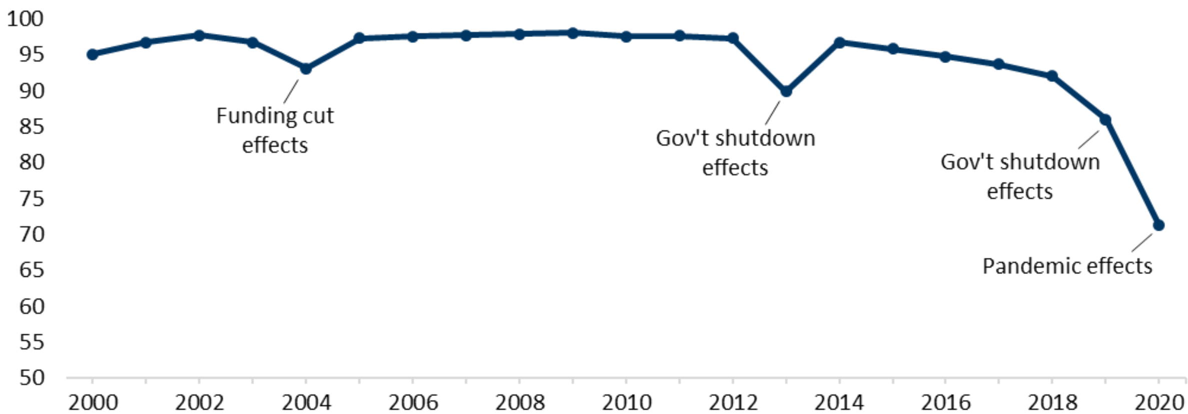
While there were concerns around the collection and accuracy of the 2020 Census data, recent reports and an innovative quality check by the Urban Institute show that the overall data was better than many had anticipated. Within the preliminary data, however, there was variation in the communities that were undercounted and overcounted. A longstanding problem in census data has been the undercounting of people of color, and Urban's study found that to be the case in 2020: Black and Hispanic/Latino persons, young children, renters, and households with a noncitizen had the highest estimated net undercounts in the 2020 Census, ranging from -2.13% to -4.86%. Undercounts (and overcounts) affect state and federal political representation and funding for necessities such as infrastructure, children's programs, and health care. Texas, for example, has one of the highest estimated undercounts, causing Texans to potentially lose out on over $247 million of Medicaid funding annually.[1]

States and localities have an opportunity to improve this data, which will inform federal funding distribution for the next 10 years, by actively engaging in the Count Question Resolution program, the new Post Census Group Quarters Review, and the Population Estimates Challenge Program. These programs allow tribal, state, and local governments to identify and submit evidence of omissions or mistakes in the 2020 Census, and correct the count for federal funds.[2,3]

Covid and government shutdowns have decreased survey response rates, affecting the quality of data on American households and communities.

American Community Survey response rates

Housing units



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Survey research and, most glaringly, political polls have become less reliable and predictive in recent years due to declining response rates, and the fact those who do respond may be different than those who do not.[1,2,3] One survey of such size and mandate that it should not suffer from these issues is the American Community Survey (ACS), aptly described by new Census Bureau Director Robert Santos as "a national treasure." However, the response rate was so low in 2020, that the Census Bureau concluded the results did not meet statistical quality standards, and published the data only at the state level, marking it "experimental."

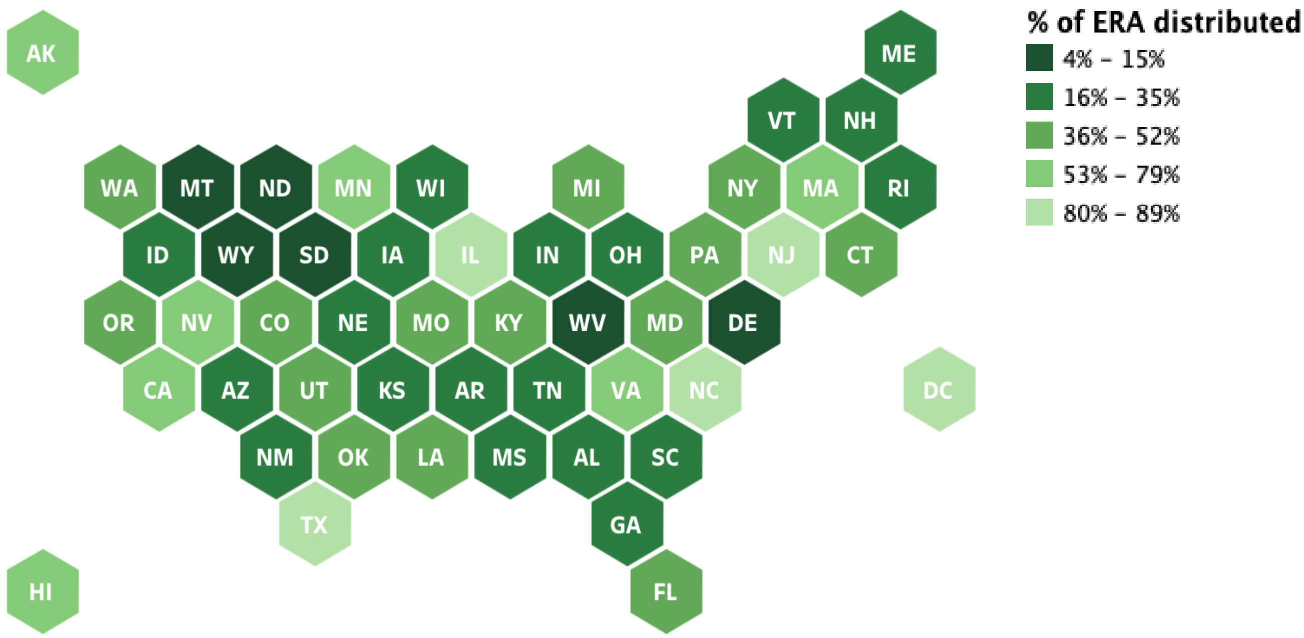
The ACS is the source of the most accurate, up-to-date and detailed information about U.S. communities of any size. The nation's largest household survey, with more than 2 million households responding per year, should be well-positioned to consistently collect reliable data. Indeed, its response rate has typically been well over 90 percent. But the unique challenge of the coronavirus pandemic (and to a lesser degree the 2013 and 2019 government shutdowns) pushed ACS response rates lower, particularly among lower-income households.[4,5]

Because disasters accelerate pre-existing trends, overall survey response rates may continue to drop and the likelihood of lower-income households and other consistently-missed populations responding may remain diminished, requiring weighting and sample enlargement, as well as overdue investment in data infrastructure.

51% of Emergency Rental Assistance funds have been distributed to renters across the U.S. While some states have been quicker to distribute (NJ, DC, TX), others are lagging far behind (SD, ND, WY).

Percent of Emergency Rental Assistance funds distributed

Jan 1 - Nov 30, 2021



Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury. Notes: Assistance to households is the total dollar amount of ERA1 and ERA2 award funds paid to or for households, including payments for rent, rental arrears, utility/home energy costs, utility/home energy arrears, and other eligible expenses. This does not include funds paid for Housing Stability Services. "Percent distributed" is calculated as the sum of assistance to households divided by 90% of the ERA1 and ERA2 allocation amount.

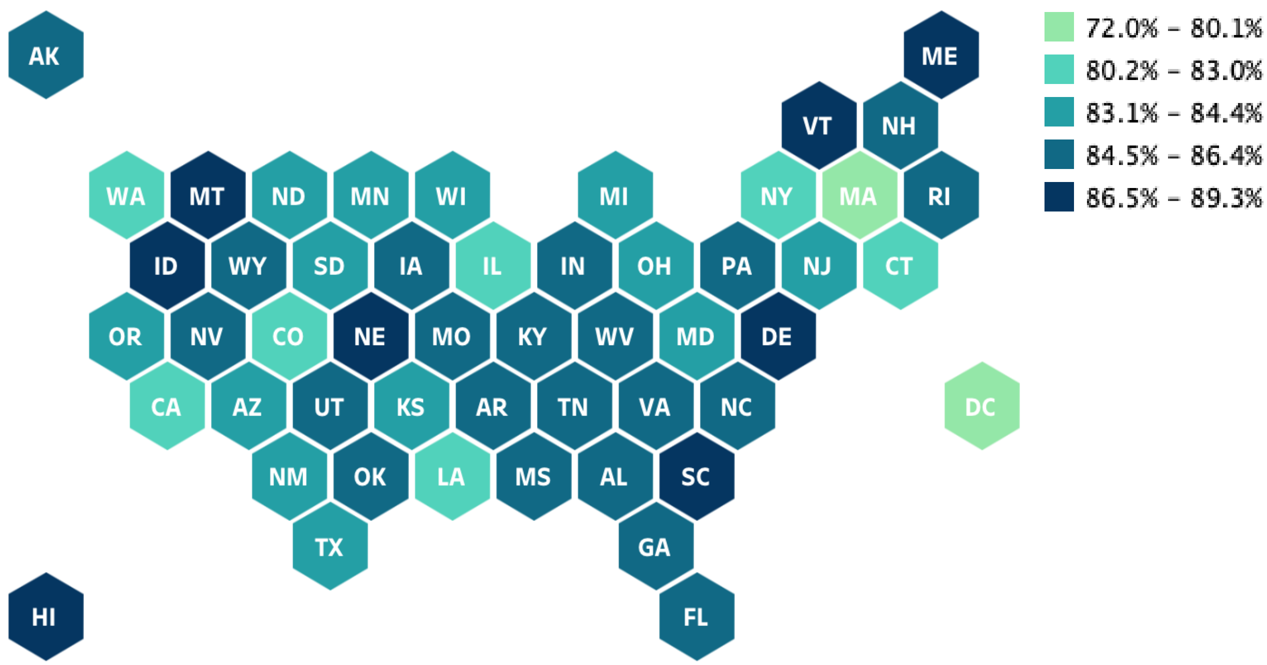
The December 2020 stimulus bill and the March 2021 American Rescue Plan include a combined $45 billion in Emergency Rental Assistance funds. But this assistance is being unevenly doled out through hundreds of state and local emergency rental assistance programs that vary greatly. Many places have been slow to distribute this critical aid.

About two-thirds of states and localities increased their distribution rate by reducing documentation burdens for accessing this aid, and one-third allowed aid to be provided directly to the tenant.[1] Meanwhile, across the U.S., about one in three adults who are late on their rent or mortgage fear they are likely to be evicted or foreclosed upon in the next two months. (Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure, by state). In Wyoming and North Dakota, where only 5% of rental assistance funds have been distributed, 44% and 61%, respectively, of adults late on their rent or mortgage are concerned they'll soon lose their housing.

The child tax credits advanced to families in 2021 have benefited 61 million kids or 84% of U.S. children. Some 4 million eligible children may still be missing out.

Percent of children who received Child Tax Credit benefits, by state

Dec 2021



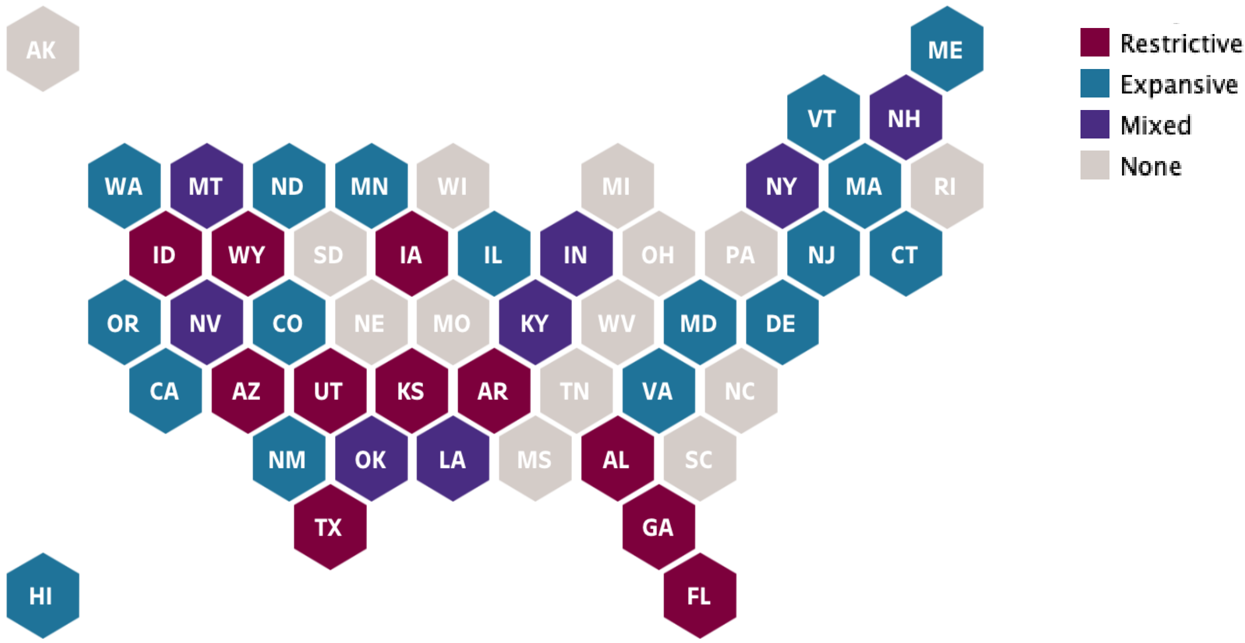
Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury and Census Bureau Vintage 2020 PEP. Notes: Calculated as total children qualifying for child tax credit (CTC) payments divided by total children in the state.

Several studies of the impact of the Child Tax Credit since its inception in 1998 have found that this financial support for children helped increase student test scores, reduce teen birth rates, and yield higher earnings in adulthood.[1] For 20 years, the CTC received strong bipartisan support and was increased several times, most recently in 2018 when the credit was increased to $2,000.[2] In July 2021, the federal government began paying up to $3,600 in annual tax credits per child. For the first time, these payments were available to families with no earnings at all. The credits were sent to all households that filed a tax return in 2019 or 2020 or claimed their "stimulus" payments via a special IRS portal.

By December, 61 million children had received the benefit. But an estimated 4 million eligible low-income children did not receive the benefit (nor their stimulus payments).[3] Because higher-income families are not eligible for the credit, some high-income states have smaller shares of eligible children. But Louisiana stands out as a state with a high poverty rate (18%) but only 82% of the child population receiving CTC benefits. Eligible families can claim the full benefit by filing a tax return in early 2022.[3] State and local outreach efforts must be ramped up, and organizations that provide no-cost tax filing services will need additional capacity to ensure they can assist more eligible families in accessing this benefit.

Despite gains made in voter turnout during the pandemic, 19 states have passed laws restricting voter access.

Voting laws passed
Jan 1 - Dec 7, 2021



Source: Brennan Center for Justice.

In anticipation of the 2020 election and in response to the pandemic, nearly every state did something to make voting easier, such as temporarily expanding access to mail-in voting, establishing ballot drop-boxes, or increasing the availability of early voting.[1] Despite concerns that the pandemic might depress voting rates, voter turnout was at a record high in the 2020 election with national voter participation jumping to about 67% amid an increase in new voters from both parties.[2,3]

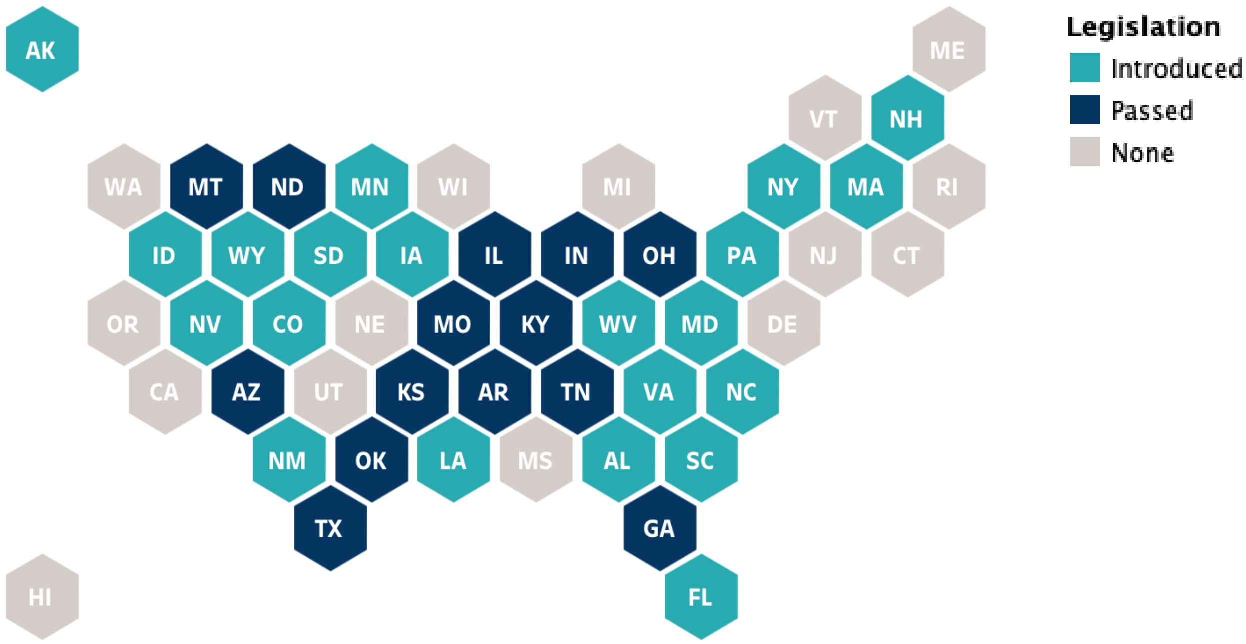
Since the 2020 election, there have been a series of voting laws passed in states across the nation. In 2021, 11 states enacted voting laws that only make it harder for Americans to vote.[4] 17 states passed only expansive voting laws in 2021, and 8 states passed a combination of both expansive and restrictive voting laws.

In states where expansions made during the pandemic were curtailed, lawmakers often cited fraud as a reason despite expert consensus that there was no evidence of widespread fraud and that the 2020 election was "the most secure in American history."[5]

This trend appears poised to continue in 2022, and at least 152 restrictive voter bills in 18 states are slated to carry over into the 2022 legislative session. Among the one-third of voters who did not participate in the 2020 election, the Current Population Survey found that 8% did not vote because of structural barriers. Rather than building on the progress made in 2020, states' efforts to further restrict voting access could have a significant impact on participation in future elections.

Legislators in 35 states introduced bills that would weaken the power and independence of state courts.

Legislative efforts to weaken state courts
Jan 1 - Dec 10, 2021



Source: Brennan Center for Justice.

State judiciaries constitute a critically important institution within American democracy, handling more than 90% of all cases in the United States.[1] Like many public services, state courts have been impacted greatly by the pandemic, and in many cases have had to rapidly change operations including adopting new technologies like teleconferencing and e-filings at unprecedented speed and scale.[2] At the same time, legislators have targeted state courts across the country.

In 2021, legislators introduced more than 150 bills in 35 states that would weaken the power and independence of state courts, more than any year in recent decades.[3] These bills included legislative efforts such as limiting judicial review of state election laws, gerrymandering or creating new courts, and limiting the enforcement of court rulings on particular issues. Of these, legislators successfully passed laws weakening state judiciaries in 14 states.

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 offer support to families and workers to be healthy, educated, and productive. This section examines civic institutions and whether they are fair, effective, and sufficiently available.

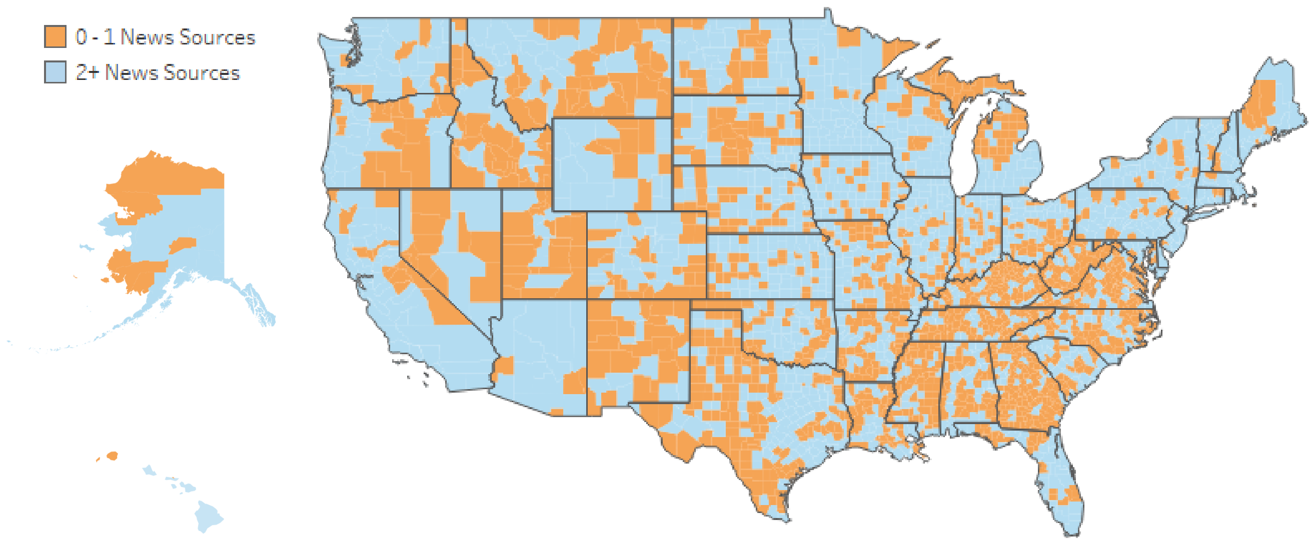
This issue of *Pandemic to Prosperity* examines local news and internet access to assess communities' ability to receive critical information and remain connected in a world that is dramatically more digital than just two years ago. We also examine child care disruptions and learning loss among third graders to understand our institutions' ability to educate and care for our children during the pandemic. Finally, we look at the availability of health insurance, mental health providers, and pediatricians and identify gaps in these resources critical for helping Americans be healthy and productive.

Indicators in this section

- News deserts, by county
- Lack of internet access, by state
- Child care disruptions
- Third-grade learning loss
- Health insurance coverage, by state
- Mental health providers, by state
- Pediatricians, by county

Small communities across the nation are most likely to be news deserts, with 1 or no local newspaper, meaning a critical vehicle for trusted information is absent.

Counties with no or only one newspaper ("news deserts")
News deserts as of 2020



Source: UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media, inspired by Brookings research.

With rapidly-changing Covid information and guidance, ranging from safe return to in-person school protocols, to community testing, local news sources are an essential platform for both transparency and community input. However, half of counties nationwide are what experts describe as "local news deserts" that have either no newspaper or only one (often a weekly or a thinly staffed daily).[1] The steady decline of local newsrooms since 2004 has accelerated since the beginning of the pandemic, with over 100 local newsrooms closing entirely since the start of 2020.[2]

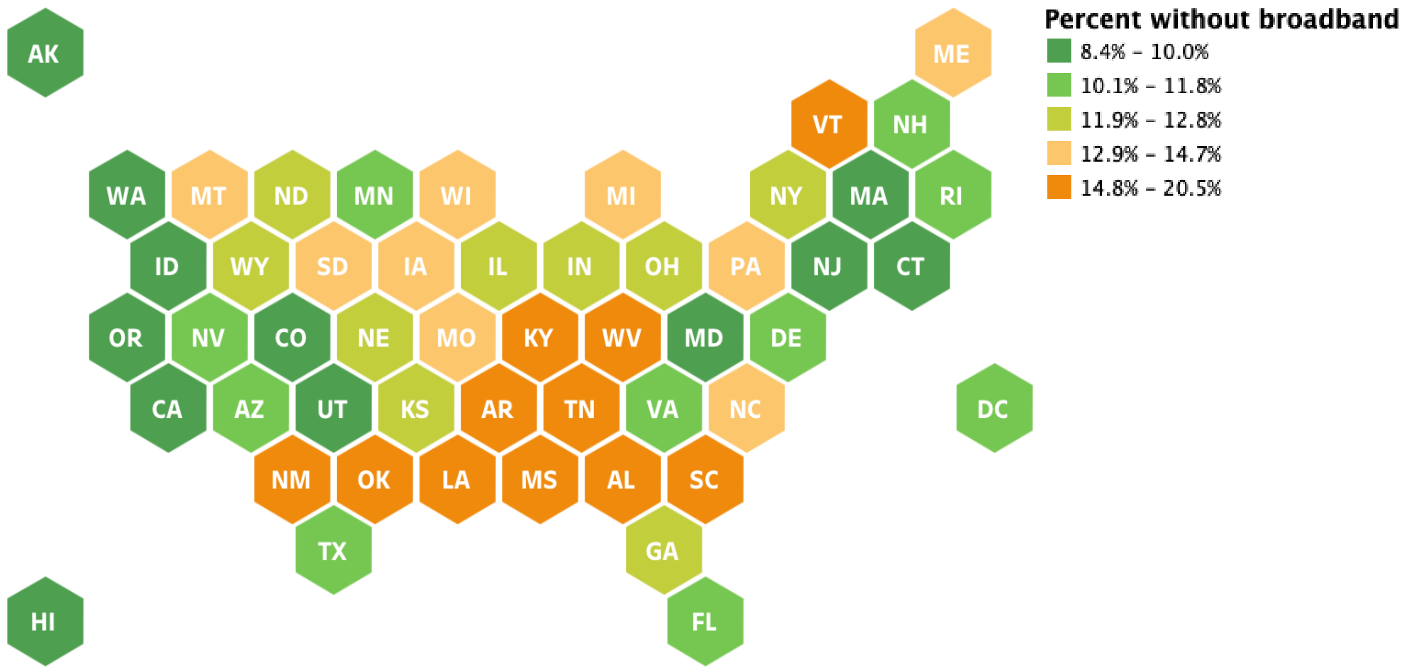
There is a growing concern among journalism editors around affordability and access, as local metro papers publish articles behind paywalls and have been reported to charge readers up to $800 a year for subscriptions.[3] This has the potential to further exacerbate disparities if vital information only goes to those who can afford it.

Amidst the bleak trends, however, there are some bright spots. Poynter research has identified more than 70 new local newsrooms that have launched since 2020, many supported by philanthropic dollars.[4] Most notable is a rise in local news publications by and for Black, Latino, LGBTQIA+, and other historically underserved communities.[5] The Buckeye Flame is one such news source based in Ohio and focused on uplifting LGBTQIA+ voices across the state.[6] Revitalized and accessible local news sources are essential for regaining public trust and increasing public participation.

In 2020, as Americans isolated at home, more than 1 in 5 people in Mississippi lacked a computer or broadband.

Lack of broadband internet by state, 2020

Percent of individuals without a computer, or without a broadband internet subscription



Source: [Census Bureau's 2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental Data](#).

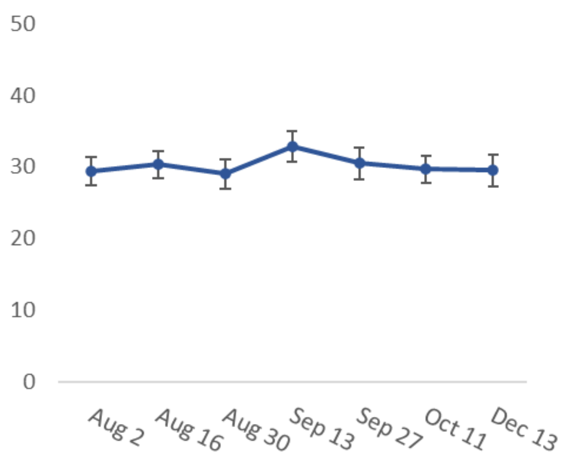
In 2020, as the nation suddenly shifted to widespread remote learning and work, the fact that more than 1 in 10 Americans lacked broadband greatly hampered many families' ability to remain productive and connected. In 4 states, over 18% of the population lacked a broadband subscription or computer: Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, and West Virginia.

Broadband internet is particularly important for school-age children to support homework and education. A majority of eighth graders reported using the internet to do homework in 2018 but this was most common among suburban students (65%) and least common among rural students (44%)[1] likely because of sparse broadband coverage in rural areas.[2] The $14.2 billion federal Affordable Connectivity Program, which launched in early 2022 as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, will provide subsidies to low-income households for internet service and devices.[3,4] The Infrastructure bill also includes $42.5 billion to bring high-speed internet to areas (primarily rural) that currently lack it.[5]

3 in 10 households with children under 5 continue to experience child care disruptions, forcing them to make difficult choices.

Child care disruptions, December 1-13, 2021

Percent of households where children < 5 years were unable to attend child care in last 4 weeks



How families responded to childcare disruption:	Number of families impacted:
Took unpaid leave to care for children	1,855,390
Used vacation or sick days, or other paid leave to care for children	2,088,460
Cut work hours to care for children	2,019,382
Left a job in order to care for children	1,046,804
Lost a job because of time away to care for children	338,803
Did not look for a job in order to care for children	1,353,735
Supervised one or more children while working	1,912,186

Source: Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey. Note: Universe is adults in households with children under 5 years of age.

As parents pivot back into the workforce, families with children under 5 still face difficult child care decisions. Affordable, quality options continue to dwindle – leaving families in the lurch. 3 in 10 adults experienced a child care disruption in the 4 weeks ending December 13, 2021.

The impact on both careers and workplaces is not trivial. More than 2 million parents cut their work hours to care for children, and 1.8 million parents took unpaid leave to care for children. More than 1 million left a job, another 338,000 lost a job, and 1.3 million didn't look for a job because of child care disruptions — all of which mean reduced income that can cause a family to skip a rent or mortgage payment, delay seeking needed health care, and struggle to put food on the table. Not surprisingly, this all coincides with a drop in women in the workforce (Employment Rate, by gender).

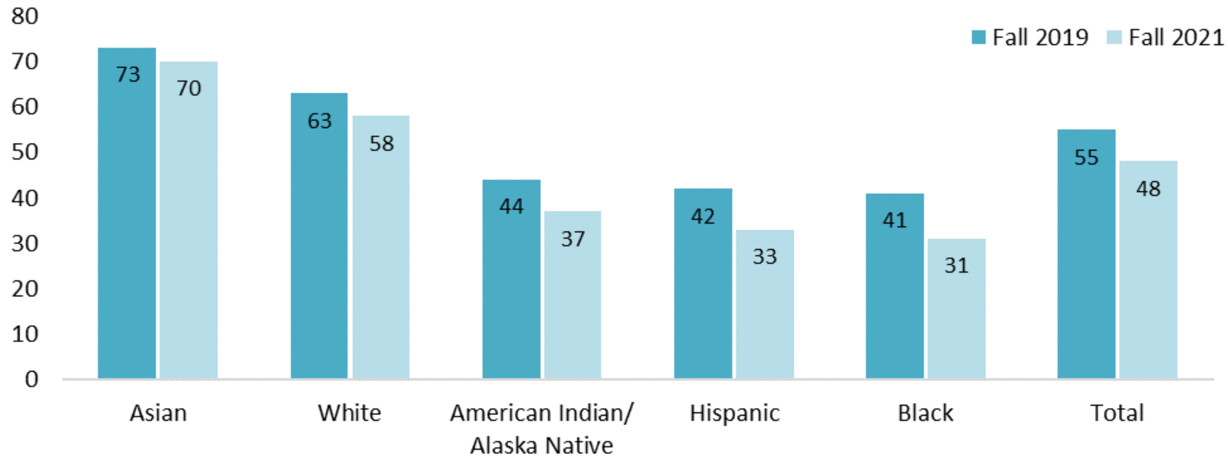
Child care workers have suffered the effects of the pandemic alongside families. Nearly two-thirds of child care centers and other home care providers experienced recent staff shortages, compared to 36% pre-pandemic, resulting in workers who are more anxious, stressed, and burned out.[1] Roughly a quarter struggle to pay for food.[2] Centers across the country have struggled with high turnover and difficulties hiring. 35% of centers across Louisiana reported that more than a quarter of their positions are vacant and remained unfilled.[3] With a national average pay of only $12 per hour, many workers are looking for careers outside of child care that offer higher pay and reduced stress.[2] Those who remain are further burdened with the pressures of being overworked, understaffed, and underpaid.

With American Rescue Plan dollars available to shore up the sector, the challenge will be how to leverage these one-time investments to expand financial supports and stabilize the workforce.

Third-grade reading scores in fall 2021 were lower than pre-pandemic levels, especially for Black students and Hispanic students.

Third-grade reading achievement by race/ethnicity, U.S.

Median percentile rank, fall 2019 and fall 2021



Source: NWEA Center for School and Student Progress. Notes: Based on data from over 1 million students who took MAP® Growth™ assessments in third grade during fall 2021 and fall 2019.

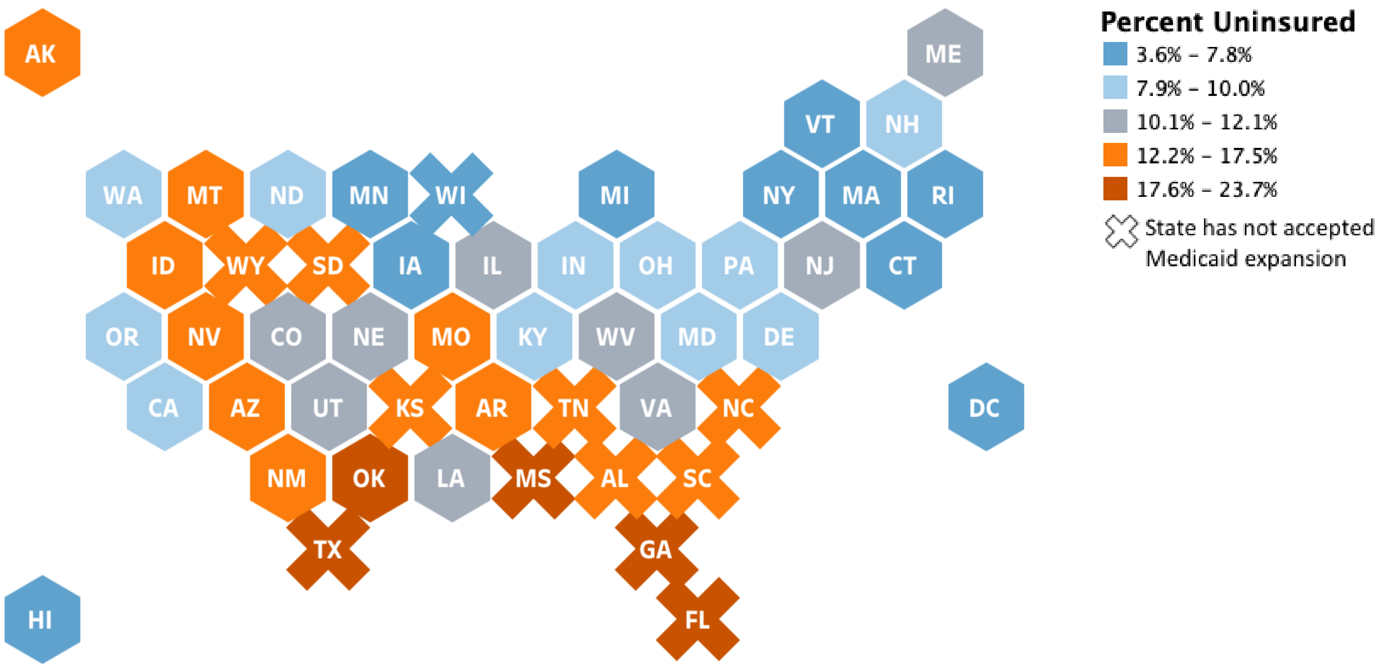
Substantial research points to the importance of learning to read by third grade, after which students primarily learn other subjects through reading about them. When students don't achieve reading proficiency by third grade, they struggle thereafter to keep up and are more likely to drop out of high school, have lower earnings as an adult, and may be more likely to depend on social safety nets.[1,2,3,4]

When K-12 schools abruptly closed in March 2020, teachers and students alike struggled with the sudden transition to remote learning. While federally mandated standardized tests were canceled, making it difficult to measure nationwide impact, we do know that many students lacked the computers and internet needed to keep up at home.[5,6] Although many schools have reopened for in-person instruction, some of the most vulnerable students were not able to return to school nor take standardized tests.[7,8,9] Of third graders who did take reading assessments, learning loss is evident. Third-grade reading scores in fall 2021 were lower than in fall 2019 by 7 percentile points on average. Declines were most severe for Black third graders who experienced a 10 percentile point drop and Hispanic third graders who experienced a 9 percentile point drop. Declines in math achievement were even more severe.[10] With substantial federal resources available to address learning needs, experts recommend that local leaders examine their own data to understand the needs of their students, and select evidence-based interventions that meet those needs. But there are no silver bullets, and pilot programs that address this moment's unique circumstances may be needed. Data collection systems that assess the effectiveness of these efforts will be essential. Spent thoughtfully, the $190 billion going to K-12 education from the three Covid stimulus packages could help to address long-standing disparities in educational achievement.[10,11,12,13]

States refusing Medicaid expansion had large uninsured populations in 2020 when Covid hit, leading hospitals to close under financial strain and saddling individuals with medical debt.

Lack of health insurance coverage by state, 2020

Population age 19-64



Source: Census Bureau's 2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental Data. Note: WI has partially expanded Medicaid (under a Medicaid waiver) to include all adults under 100 percent federal poverty level.

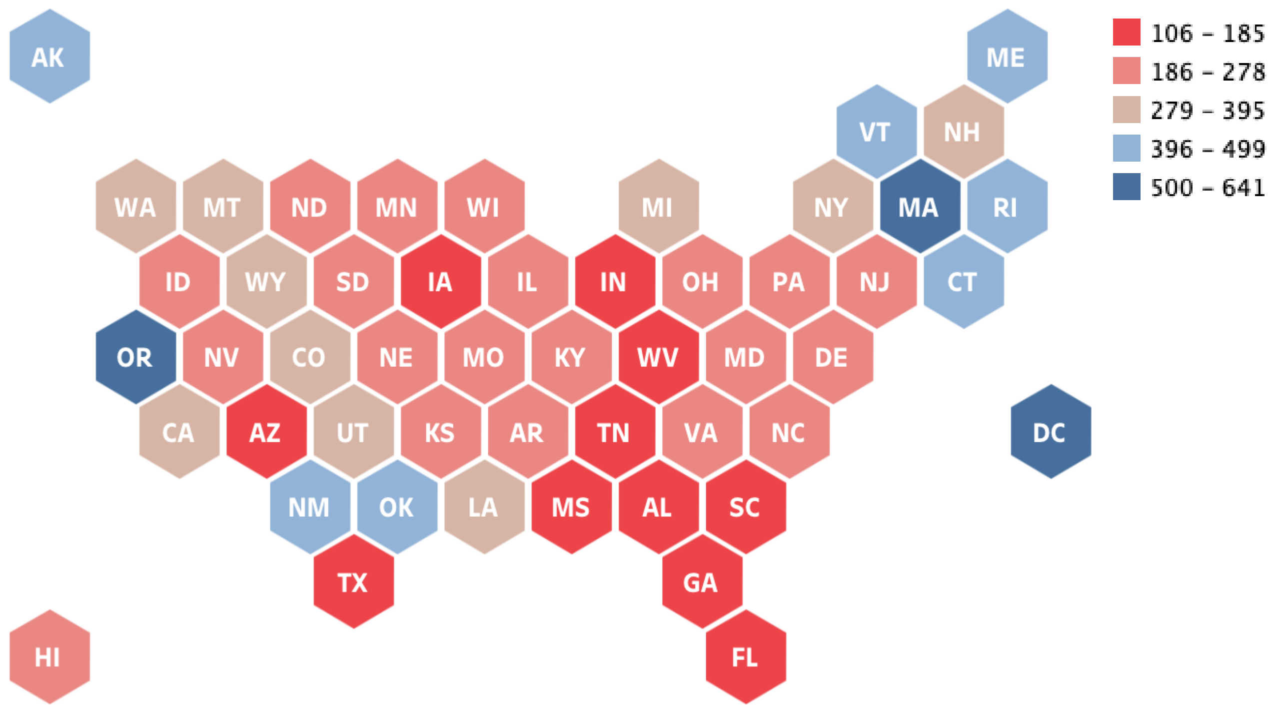
12 states (most located in the Southeastern U.S.), have not adopted Medicaid expansion, which has contributed to disparities in health insurance coverage between states. In Texas, 24% of the working-age population lacked coverage, as did 18% in Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. In comparison, only 4% in MA were without coverage. The implications of not expanding Medicaid are particularly hard on rural communities. Without Medicaid expansion, hospitals don't receive sufficient reimbursement for the care they provide to an increased number of uninsured patients and, as a result, oftentimes must close for financial reasons. During Covid, without a hospital, many rural residents were unable to get tested and then delayed getting care. One study found that in rural counties where a hospital closed in 2020, Covid death rates were 39% higher than in their state overall.[1] Moreover, when rural hospitals close, a key job center is lost, making it hard to attract new residents and thus new businesses.

Lack of health insurance also means many people incur medical debt. Nearly 1 in 5 American households have medical debt. Black households are more likely to have medical debt (27%) than non-Black households (17%).[2,3] In states that expanded Medicaid in 2014, medical debt declined by 34 percentage points more than in states that did not expand Medicaid.[4]

Mental health providers are in short supply in many Southern and Midwestern states. Alabama, Texas, and West Virginia have fewer than 140 providers per 100,000 people.

Mental health providers per 100,000 population, 2021

Registered mental health providers



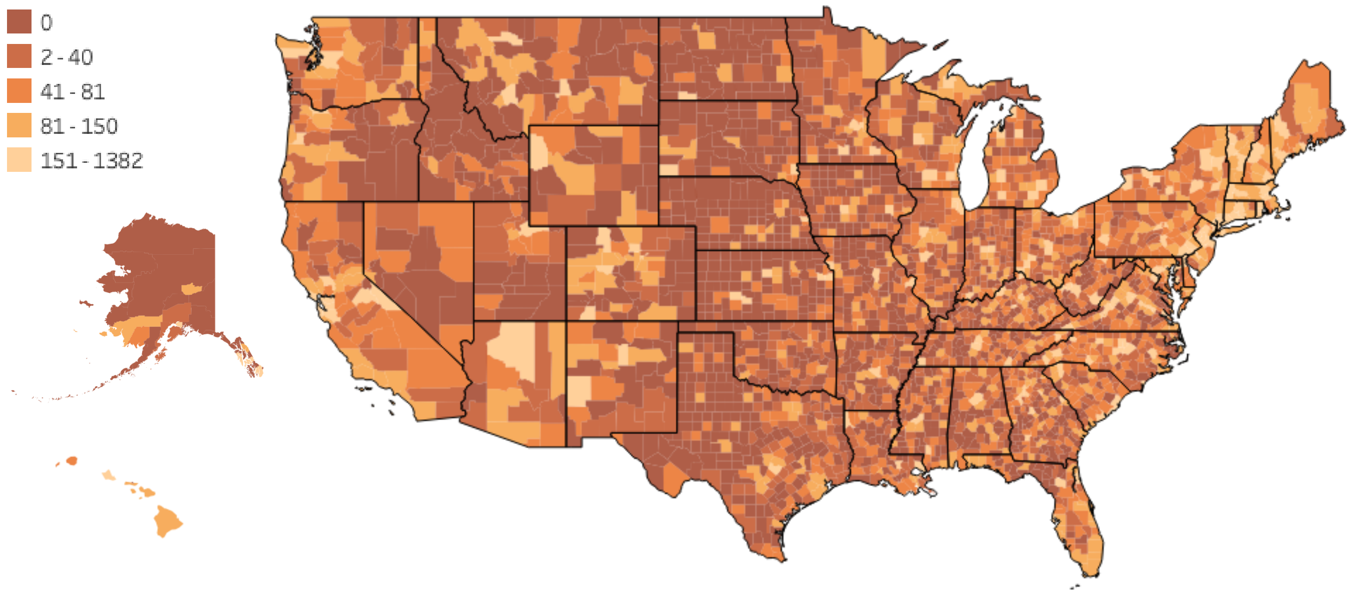
Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps and Census Bureau Vintage 2020 PEP. Notes: Mental health providers include psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapists, advanced practice nurses specializing in mental health care as well as those treating alcohol and other drug abuse.

In December 2021, nearly 2 years after the Covid crisis began, Americans continue to experience anxiety and depression at rates nearly triple what they were in 2019 (Symptoms of anxiety or depression) but aren't able to find the care they need. The majority of psychologists have seen their waiting lists grow since the pandemic hit.[1] And many Americans are turning to crisis hotlines, which are also seeing ballooning demand.[2]

Too often, police are called upon to intervene when Americans experience mental health crises. But police are rarely well-equipped to respond to these challenges and, although many incidents are non-violent, too many individuals experiencing mental health crises are incarcerated.[3] Some communities are adopting innovative approaches, such as mobile crisis response services, funded by American Rescue Plan and Medicaid dollars, to reduce reliance on law enforcement.[3] Still, many Americans need ongoing care, and most states have few plans for expanding the supply of mental health providers.[3]

60% of rural U.S. counties have 0 general pediatricians. States in the West and South have the fewest pediatricians per 100,000 children.

General pediatricians per 100,000 children age 0-14, 2021
General pediatricians ever certified, age 70 and under



Source: The American Board of Pediatrics and Census Bureau Vintage 2020 PEP. Notes: Includes all general pediatricians age 70 and younger who have become board certified at some time in their career. Pediatric subspecialists are excluded. For more notes, see the Pediatric Physicians Workforce Data Book at link provided.

Pediatricians are an important source of behavioral and mental health care for children and recent polls reveal they are parents' most trusted source of information on the Covid vaccine for children.[1,2] But the majority of completely or mostly rural counties in the U.S. have no pediatricians at all. 88% of completely rural counties and 43% of mostly rural counties have no general pediatricians, compared to 10% of urban counties and 14% of mostly urban counties. Rural counties across the U.S. have only 36 pediatricians per 100,000 children (0-14 years old) compared to 119 pediatricians per 100,000 children in urban counties. States in the Northeast have the most pediatricians per 100,000 children, while states in the West and South have the fewest.

In many rural areas, children lack both insurance coverage and providers, making it unlikely they will receive the health care they need. Children are more prone to illness and injury than adults and, without access to care, illnesses can go untreated and have lifetime effects.[3,4] Without health care, children's physical health, emotional health, and development can be compromised, undermining their ability to become fully productive adults.[5]

Prosperity
People

At the end of the day, governments and institutions are responsible for ensuring the well-being of the communities they serve. This section examines key metrics of economic well being including child poverty, and employment rates by race and gender. It includes measures of food and housing insecurity, as well as anxiety and depression symptoms from the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey. And it ends with an analysis of the effects of stimulus payment and safety nets on monthly poverty rates by age. For each indicator, we provide a brief explanation of findings to weave together an overview of how Americans are faring during this crisis.

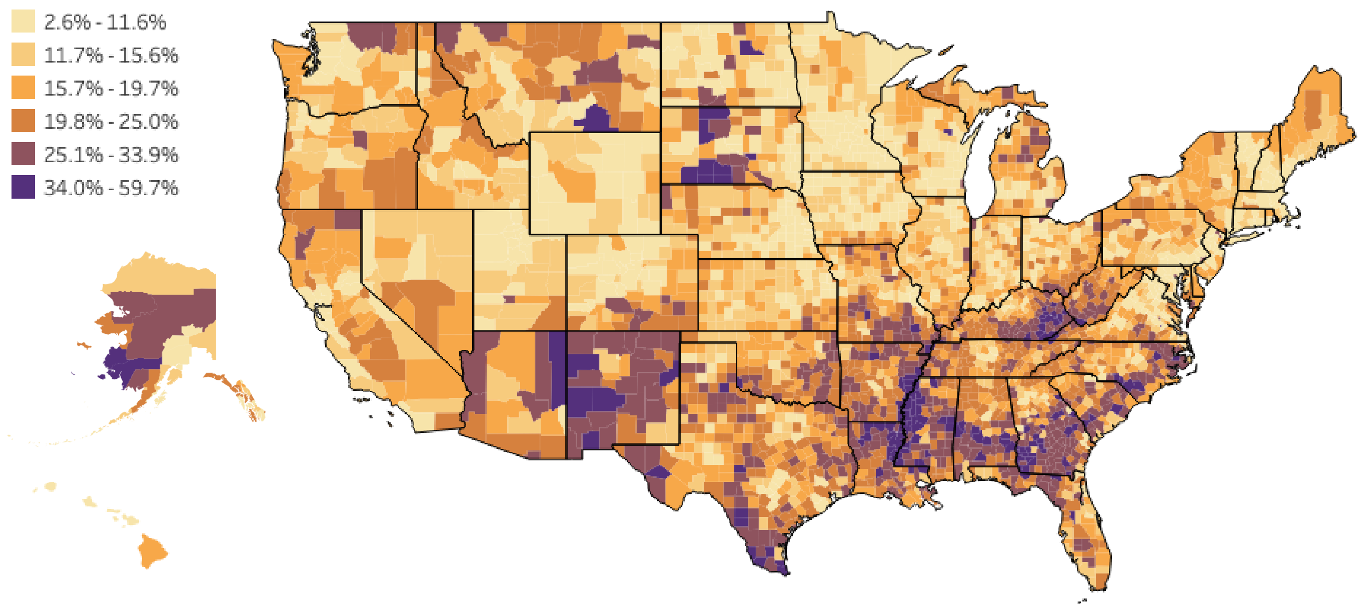
Indicators in this section

- Child poverty rate, by county
- Employment rate, by race/ethnicity
- Employment rate, by gender
- Food insecurity, by state
- Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure, by state
- Symptoms of anxiety or depression, by state
- Well-being of LGBT population
- Monthly poverty rate, by age

In 2020 — before the American Rescue Plan tax cuts for families with children — about 1 in 6 children were impoverished in the U.S. In many Southern counties, poverty affected more than 1 in 3 children.

Child poverty rate by county

2020



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau SAIPE](#).

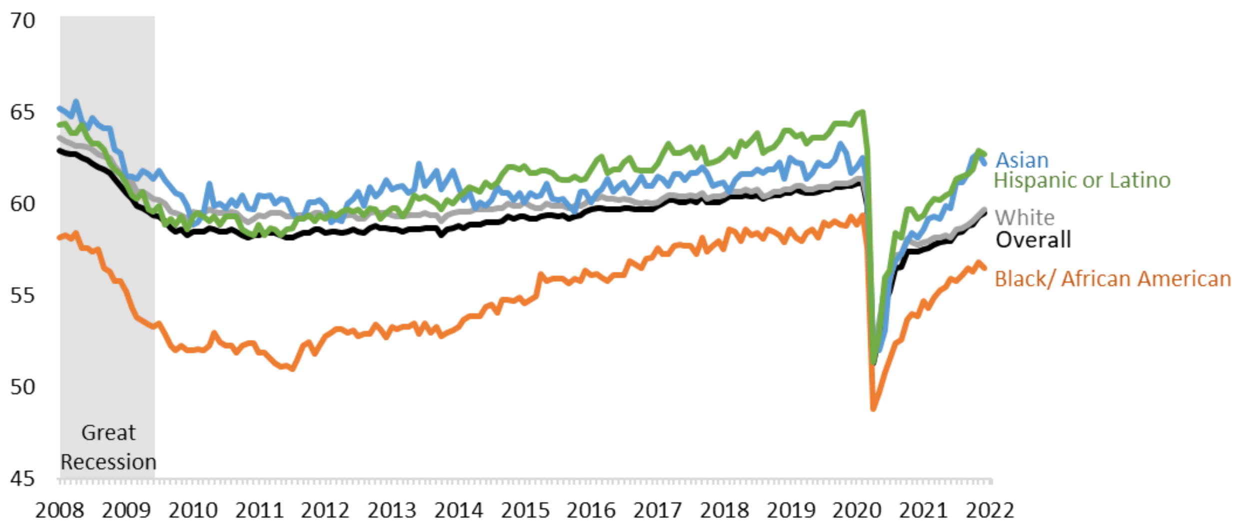
Scientists argue that poverty may be the single greatest threat to children's healthy brain development.[1] Poverty in childhood, and food and housing insecurity which often comes along with it, create a prolonged activation of the stress response system that disrupts the development of children's brains. This chronic, toxic stress can lead to lifelong learning difficulties and behavioral health challenges.[2,3,4,5] In 2020, roughly 1 in 4 children in Mississippi and Louisiana lived in poverty. In New Mexico, Alabama, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Washington D.C., more than 1 in 5 children lived in poverty. Child poverty was highest in completely or mostly rural counties at 19%.

Several studies have concluded that when low-income parents receive increased wages or benefits, their spending on clothing and books for their children increases and their children's mental health and brain development improves.[6,7,8] Similarly, the vast majority of low-income parents who received Child Tax Credit payments in 2021 spent the funds on food, clothing, rent, and utilities (Children who received Child Tax Credit benefits).[9]

The nationwide employment rate of 59.5% is 1.7 percentage points lower than Feb 2020. Hispanic and Black workers were hit hard, with employment rates down 2.3 and 2.9 points, respectively.

Employment rate by race/ethnicity, U.S.

Jan 2008 - Dec 2021



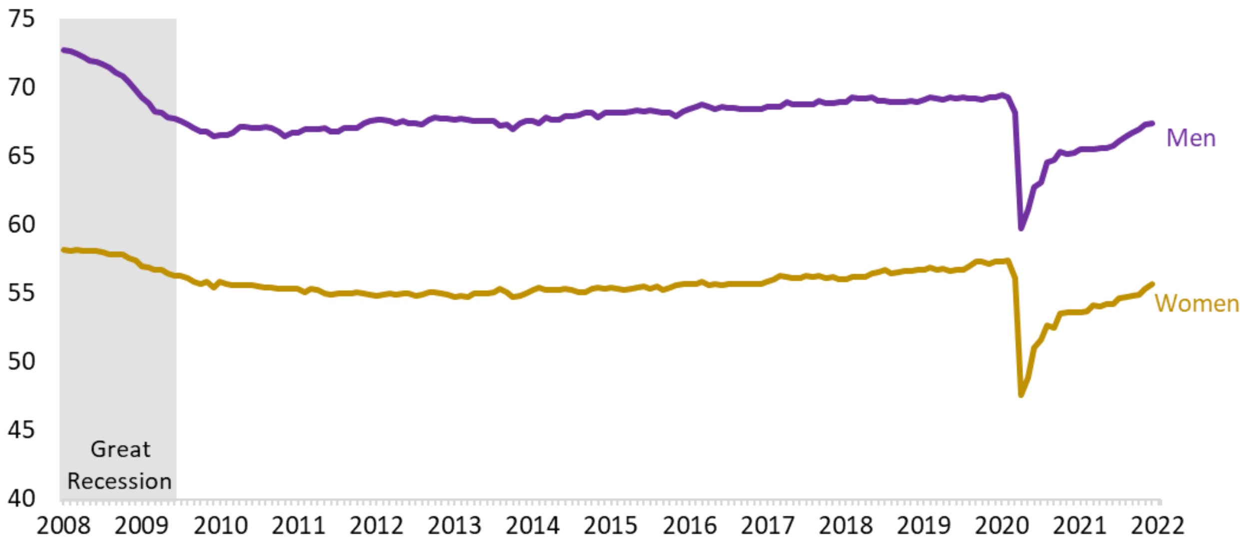
Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](). Note: The employment rate is officially known as the "employment-population ratio." Here it is calculated for the population 16 years and older. Data is seasonally adjusted.

The nation gained only 199,000 jobs in December and the employment rate inched up to 59.5% but remained below its February 2020 level before the pandemic hit. In December 2021, only 57% of Black people aged 16+ nationwide were employed. White, Hispanic, and Asian persons aged 16+ had employment rates of 60%, 63%, and 62%, respectively. Employment among Black teens was particularly low, which is concerning as early work experience can have lifetime earning implications.[1,2]

While many employers report difficulty finding workers, the number of total jobs has still not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. Instead, workers are quitting at record levels. Many potential hirees are demanding higher wages and better working conditions — including livable wages and work schedules, flexibility, and remote work.[3,4,5] Additionally, long-Covid may be taking a significant bite out of the workforce. New research indicates that, of the 100 million working-age Americans who have contracted Covid, about one-fourth to one-third experience symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, fatigue, and "brain fog" for months after infection — including many who had mild symptoms when infected.[6,7] With some of these adults out of work and others reducing work hours, an estimated 1.6 million full-time equivalent workers may be out of the workforce any given month due to long-Covid. This would account for 15% of the 10.6 million unfilled jobs in December.[8]

Employment rates for men and women are 1.9 and 1.7 percentage points below February 2020 and are now similar to levels following the Great Recession.

Employment rate by gender, U.S.
Jan 2008 - Dec 2021



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Note: The employment rate is officially known as the "employment-population ratio." Here it is calculated for the population 20 years and older. Data is seasonally adjusted.

Nationally, in December 2021, the employment rate for men inched up to 67.4%, while the employment rate for women increased to 55.7%. Overall, women have been significantly more likely to leave the labor force than men since the pandemic hit.[1]

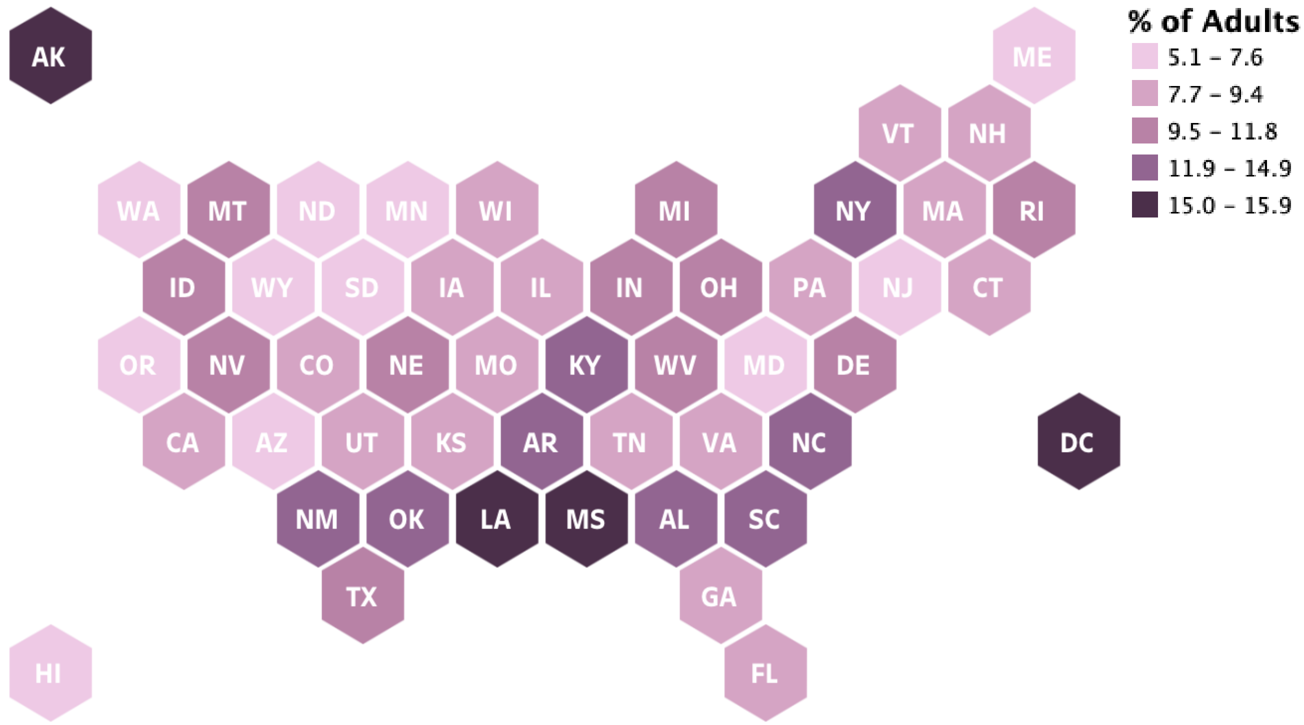
Child care and elder care remain significant impediments to women's ability to return to work. In December, nearly 1.2 million parents reported being unable to look for a job due to disruption in child care (Child Care Disruptions). And mothers of children under 6 have been most likely to consider leaving their job or cutting back on hours.[2] Demand for home health aides hit a high point in 2020 as families aimed to keep elderly and disabled family members out of nursing homes where the virus circulated widely.[3] But many women had to provide elder care themselves, making a return to work more difficult.

Women are also more affected by long-Covid (shortness of breath, fatigue, brain fog months after infection), and long-Covid accounts for an estimated 1.6 million adults out of the workforce each month. Long-Covid affects a significant portion (up to ⅓) of everyone infected by Covid–including those with milder symptoms when first infected.[4,5] With the new Omicron variant of Covid sweeping the nation, an increasing number of workers, especially women, may be sidelined in 2022 due to long-Covid.[6]

10% of adults in the U.S. – 16% in DC, LA, MS, and AK – reported their households went hungry in December.

Food insecurity, Dec 1-13, 2021

Percent of adults who report their household sometimes or often went hungry in last 7 days



Source: Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey.

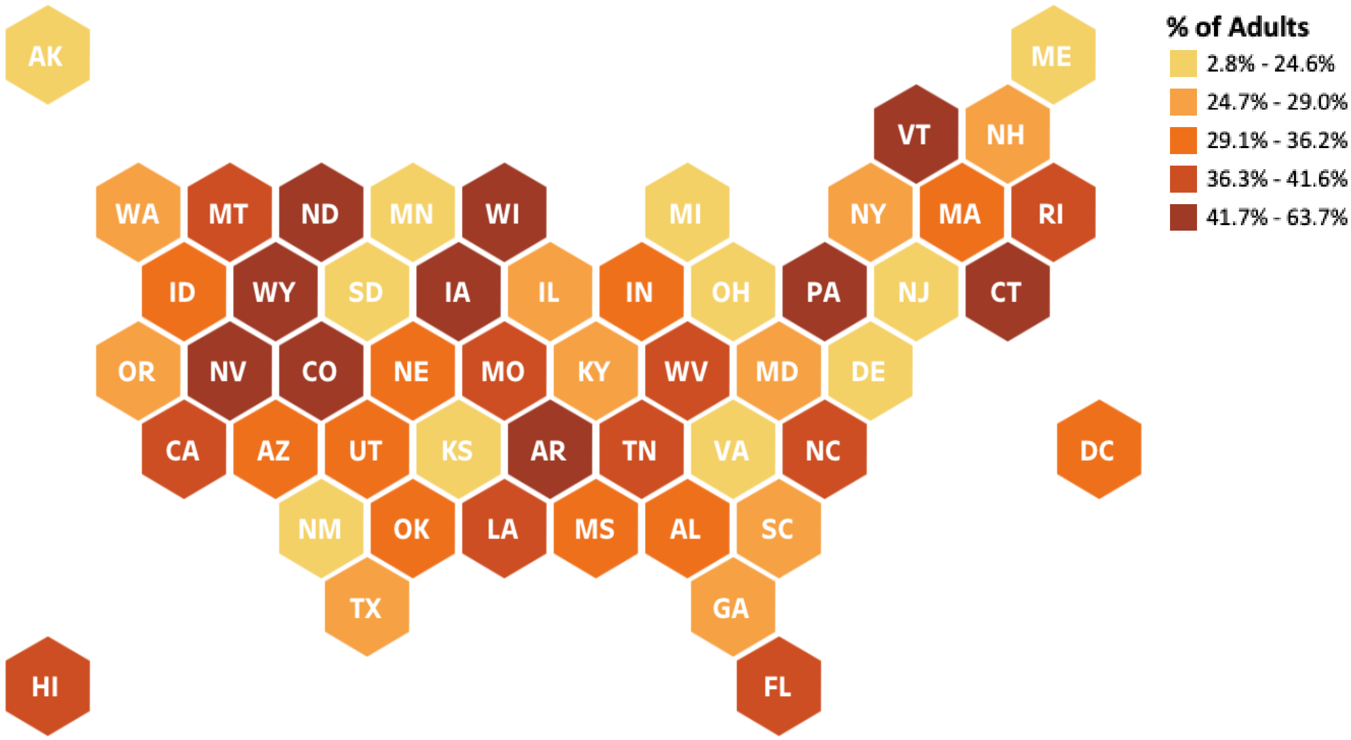
Putting food on the table became an even more acute problem in 2020 as low-wage workers suffered heavy job losses.[1] In December, 1 in 10 adults reported their household didn't have enough to eat. Food insecurity was even more severe in AK, LA, MS, and D.C. where more than 15% of adults reported not being able to put food on the table.

Job losses were particularly severe for Black and Hispanic households, and families with children.[2] In addition, Black and Hispanic families struggled to access food due to lack of access to grocery stores, and lack of access to vehicles needed to reach the drive-thru pantries established to safely distribute food.[2,3] In 2021, inflation became an increasing concern, with grocery prices rising 6.5% between December 2020 and December 2021.[4] Food prices are expected to continue to rise in 2022, albeit at a slower rate than in 2021.[5]

About 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. who are late on rent or mortgage payments expect to lose their home in the next two months.

Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure, Dec 1-13, 2021

Percent of adults living in households not current on rent or mortgage where eviction or foreclosure in the next two months is "very likely" or "somewhat likely,"



Source: Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey.

Across the U.S., about one in three adults who are late on their rent or mortgage payments fear they are likely to be evicted or foreclosed upon in the next two months. In VT, CO, and ND, nearly two in three adults late on home payments are concerned they'll lose their housing in the coming months.

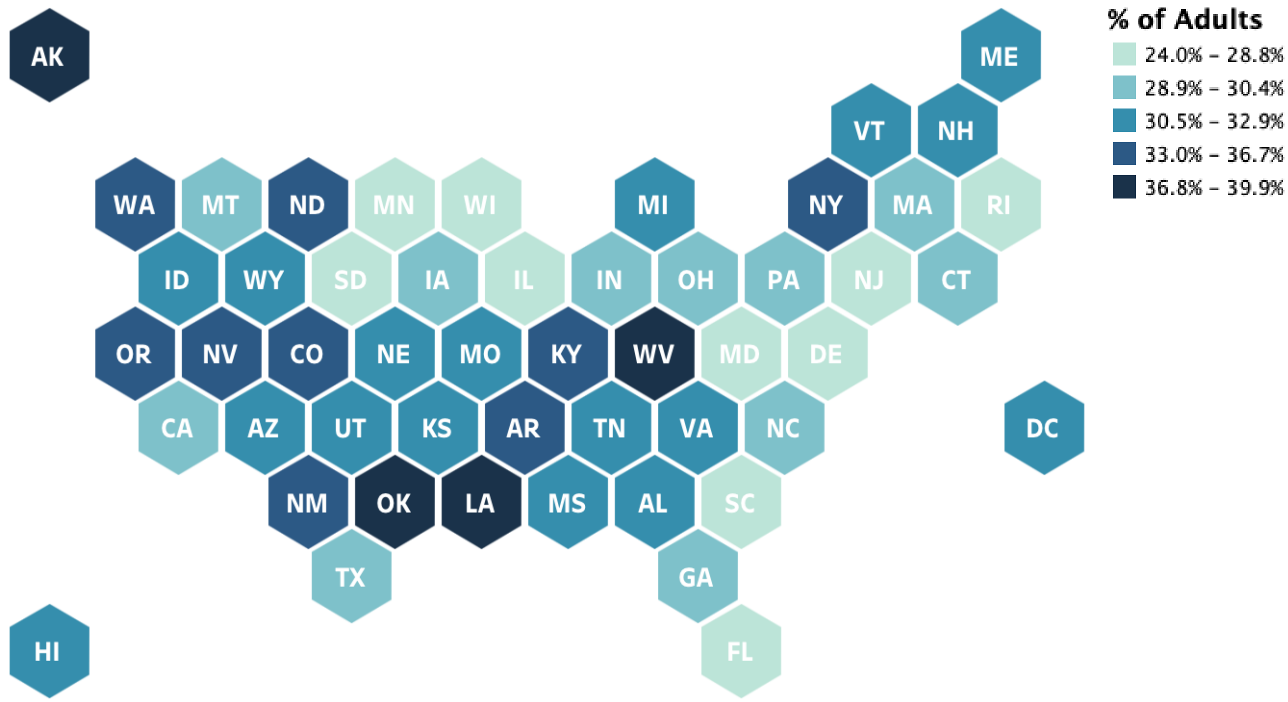
More rapid dissemination of federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds can benefit renters and landlords alike and might be executed if states provide aid directly to tenants or require landlords to apply for aid before filing for eviction (Emergency Rental Assistance distribution).[1,2] At the end of the day, landlords' interests would more likely be served by applying for aid rather than evicting people from their homes — the latter of which is less likely to result in payment of back rent.

Cities and counties can mitigate a wave of homelessness and instability by enacting one or more ordinances that hold landlords accountable for unjust evictions, and that stop eviction processes when past due rent is paid with reasonable late fees.[3]

The share of adults with symptoms of anxiety or depression has spiked to 31% nationwide (up from 11% in 2019). In West Virginia, 40% of adults report symptoms.

Symptoms of anxiety or depression, Dec 1 - 13, 2021

Percent of adults who experienced symptoms of anxiety or depression in the last two weeks



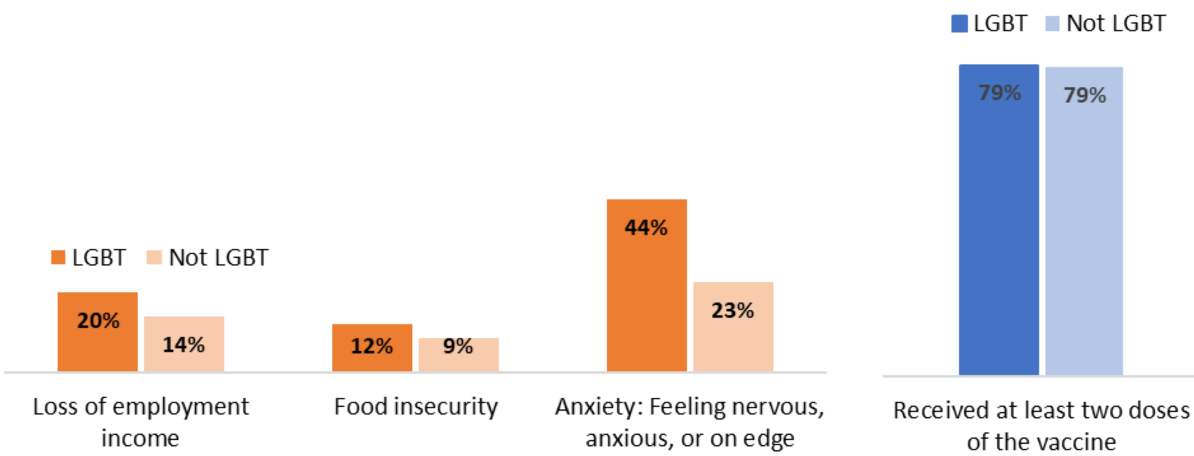
Source: CDC and Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey. Notes: This indicator is based on self-report of the frequency of anxiety and depression symptoms, derived from responses to the first two questions of the eight-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and the seven-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale.

Anxiety and depression are often associated with economic worries and social isolation. Although growing GDP and low unemployment rates implied the U.S. economy was strong before Covid, these indicators were deceptive because a large share of adults had simply given up looking for work. As good-paying manufacturing jobs disappeared, white men with only a high school degree were particularly affected and suddenly found it difficult to earn family-sustaining wages. An increasing number died of suicide, drug overdose, and alcohol poisoning.[1]

When Covid struck, social isolation hit nearly every sector of society, and economic woes deepened, particularly for low-wage workers. It is not surprising then that the share of adults experiencing anxiety or depression roughly tripled when the pandemic hit. Since the Covid crisis began, Americans' blood pressure has measurably risen,[2] drug overdoses have jumped 30%,[2] and attempted suicides among adolescents jumped 31%.[3] In December, 31% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder, up from 11% in 2019.[4] In West Virginia 40% of adults report symptoms, yet the state has the 3rd lowest number of mental health providers per capita (Mental health providers, by state).

During the pandemic, LGBT adults have been more likely to experience anxiety and lost income than non-LGBT adults, but are on par for vaccination rates.

Indicators of well-being for adult LGBT population, U.S.
Dec 1 - Dec 13, 2021



Source: Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey. Notes: Loss of employment income is % reporting a loss of employment income in the last 4 weeks for self or household member. Food insecurity is % of persons reporting "sometimes not enough to eat" or "often not enough to eat" in the last 7 days. Anxiety is % reporting frequency of symptoms is "more than half the days" or "nearly every day" in the last 2 weeks.

While LGBTQIA+ people remain unseen in many official statistics, the Census Bureau, through its Household Pulse Survey, is providing needed visibility on the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in America during the pandemic.

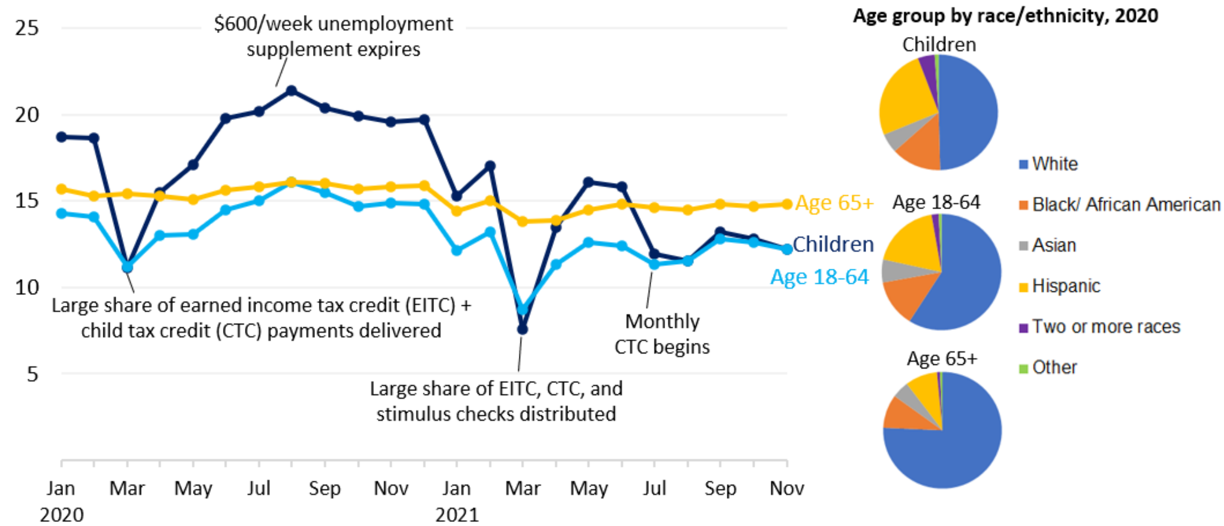
LGBT adults were more likely to have lost employment income and more likely to experience food insecurity in December 2021 than non-LGBT adults. And nearly half of LGBT adults experienced anxiety compared to less than a quarter of non-LGBT adults.

While pre-pandemic research shows that LGBTQ people are more likely than non-LGBTQ people to delay seeking medical care because of out-of-pocket costs,[1] the recent Census Pulse Survey found that LGBT adults chose vaccination at a nearly identical rate as non-LGBT people. Several factors may have influenced this, including previous experience organizing community care as a response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic,[2] as well as government efforts to make Covid vaccination free and accessible.

Child poverty fell to 12% in November, down from 20% one year earlier, thanks to monthly child tax credit payments.

Estimated monthly poverty rates by age group, U.S.

Supplemental poverty rate (all taxes and transfers included)



Source: Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University and Census Bureau, PEP. Notes: These monthly estimates are based on the supplemental poverty rate, which includes after-tax income and in-kind benefits. These estimates include the impact of child tax credits, economic impact payments (stimulus checks), as well as unemployment, SNAP, and other benefits.

Estimates of monthly poverty rates during the pandemic highlight the benefit of annual Child Tax Credit (CTC), Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and stimulus payments for children and working-age adults. In 2020, these payments were sporadic, such that the child poverty rate increased to above pre-pandemic levels throughout the latter half of 2020. In 2021, the American Rescue Plan provided monthly CTC payments from July through December (Children who received Child Tax Credit benefits). By November 2021, child poverty was reduced to 12%, down from 20% one year prior.

Social Security, by far the largest American safety net program, was enacted after the Great Depression to stabilize the financial well-being of the elderly.[1] Unemployment insurance and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (commonly called "welfare") programs were also enacted in 1935. Head Start, food assistance programs, and theEITC were instituted in the 1960s and 70s.[2] Welfare was reformed in 1996 to include work requirements but, starting in 1998, CTC provided some support to families with children regardless of work status.[3] In 2019, only $360 billion was spent on safety net programs such as the EITC, CTC, unemployment insurance, food assistance and child care. In contrast, $1 trillion was spent on Social Security.[6]

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About this series

History has shown that large-scale crises accelerate pre-existing trends, exacerbate inequities, and permanently change societies and civic life. Large-scale disasters produce an enormous break in the status quo followed by continuous change. Recovery from the pandemic and deep economic crisis will vary across communities, and different populations will face various barriers to achieving shared prosperity.

Pandemic to Prosperity offers a comprehensive overview of the Covid-related impacts on our lives and livelihoods, governments, civic institutions, and overall well-being. This report series analyzes disparate data, adding top-level insights about the implications of each indicator, what each indicator reveals, and how the indicators are interrelated. It highlights mostly state-level metrics with breakdowns by race, gender, age, and income where available, relying on both public and private data sources.

Pandemic to Prosperity's thoughtfully-curated data serves to illuminate the challenges facing the nation's most vulnerable. In addition, this reliable source of wide-ranging, impartial information will be valuable in aligning public and private sector efforts and reflect progress made, or the lack thereof, over time. The report will be updated quarterly throughout 2022.

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) launched the *Pandemic to Prosperity* series in July 2020. It builds 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 many public and private decisions and actions post-Katrina. The *Pandemic to Prosperity* series is designed to enable a solid understanding of the damage to lives and livelihoods as the pandemic continues to unfold — especially as we enter the era of genetic variants and the plateau of vaccinations, and as the nation grapples with new shocks and stressors such as disasters and civil unrest. It examines aspirational goals around strong and accountable government, functioning institutions from child care to internet access to local news availability, effective civic participation, and outcomes for people by race and income regarding employment, health, housing, and more. With each new report in the series, indicators change as the recovery transitions.

About the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC.org) The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a congressionally chartered nonprofit dedicated to advancing civic life in America. NCoC was chartered by Congress in 1953 to harness the patriotic energy and civic involvement surrounding World War II. NCoC is committed to strengthening democracy by supporting local leaders and nonpartisan projects dedicated to citizen engagement and public service. Our vision is one of full participation in our democracy, and that in doing so our democracy equitably and inclusively reflects the combined voices, dreams, and actions of all who call our country home.

Authors

Allison Plyer is the Chief Demographer for The Data Center of Southeast Louisiana and a co-author of *The New Orleans Prosperity Index* which examines the extent to which economic outcomes have improved for black New Orleanians since the end of the Civil Rights era. She is also author of *The New Orleans Index* series, developed in collaboration with Brookings to analyze the state of the recovery post-Katrina and later to track the region's progress toward prosperity. She served as an editor for the Brookings Institution Press volume entitled *Resilience and Opportunity: Lessons from the U.S. Gulf Coast after Katrina and Rita*. Allison is an international expert in post–Katrina demographics and disaster recovery trends and frequently provides commentary on recovery and development to media such as NPR, the Associated Press, the New York Times, and USA Today. Allison received her Doctorate in Science from Tulane University and has an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University.

Alysha Rashid is a policy and data consultant with a focus on building a more equitable society. She recently received her MPP with a certificate in Data Analytics from the University of Chicago. Prior to graduate school, Alysha's focus was on increasing college access and success for under-represented populations as the Director of Program and Operations for America Achieves and Bloomberg Philanthropies' CollegePoint initiative. In that capacity, she oversaw day-to-day programming and led the data operations, working closely with the research and evaluation team. She started her career as a college admissions counselor and subsequently developed a strong interest in supporting underrepresented students and populations. Alysha also currently leads an Anti-Racism Discussion Series that she co-developed for Outer Coast, a postsecondary institution in Sitka, Alaska.

Elaine Ortiz is the Lead Data Analyst for Pandemic to Prosperity. Elaine is an expert in economic and demographic data for applied research to support informed decision-making and more resilient communities. She has nearly 20 years experience in research design, implementation, data analysis, statistical methods, and writing on complex and technical topics for a lay audience. Elaine's work in data dissemination is grounded in the importance of user-centered design and strategic communications for reaching targeted audiences. She is an expert in federal statistics (e.g. ACS, Census) and private sources of data (e.g. EMSI, Moody's). Elaine has an MS in urban and regional planning from University of Iowa and a BA in economics from Hanover College.

Taylor Savell is a Policy and Research Analyst at the National Conference on Citizenship, where she focuses on 2020 Census issues such as data quality, and the use of census data for redistricting and federal funding. Prior to NCoC, Taylor worked at the Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation and co-authored the website USApportionment.org, which was the go-to resource for census watchers and journalists in the lead up to the release of the 2020 Census data for congressional apportionment. Taylor is a graduate of the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University where she received her BS in International Politics.

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For More Information

Allison Plyer, Chief Demographer, The Data Center, allisonp@datacenterresearch.org

This report is dedicated to all of the data heroes — in state, local, federal government, institutions, nonprofits, and volunteer organizations — who make these types of analyses possible.

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