



July 21, 2022

Foreword

A civic ecosystem has been burgeoning for decades in the South and it offers a path to turn the tragedy of the pandemic into an opportunity to build prosperity and progress for all. Data and civic engagement will be critical for this to occur. Together, the Southern Economic Advancement Project (SEAP) — which works to lift up policies that address particular vulnerabilities in the South — and Fair Count — whose work focuses on strengthening pathways to continued civic participation — partnered with the National Conference on Citizenship to document the state of the South during the pandemic. State and local governments prioritizing projects for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act can use these findings to target disparities that ultimately undermine community resilience.

The U.S. has gained over 2.7 million jobs in 2022, and most Americans have resumed pre-pandemic activities.¹ But over 1 million Americans have died of Covid, and an estimated 1.6 million adults can't work each month because of Long Covid. As more people become infected, the numbers experiencing Long Covid may swell. Many other impacts of the pandemic are just now becoming clear — including an ongoing mental health crisis and increasing threats to our democracy. Our review of 26 indicators related to the Covid crisis and the nation's civic health revealed:

Covid impacts New variants BA.4 and BA.5 are spreading rapidly, and local officials in many cities are encouraging greater vaccine uptake.² Of the more than 1 million Americans who have died of Covid, 1 in 4 could have been saved if 90% of the population had been vaccinated. 5 Southern states (AL, AR, KY, TN, WV) were among those that could have saved the most lives per population size. In addition, 1 in 3 Southerners who survived Covid had prolonged symptoms known as Long Covid.

Economic impacts Jobs have recovered in record time and could reach pre-pandemic levels this summer. 6 Southern states (AR, GA, FL, NC, SC, TN) have more jobs as of May 2022, than they did at their pre-pandemic peak. Employment rates have increased slightly with the labor force remaining smaller than it was pre-pandemic.³ In this tight labor market, Black adults experienced the greatest gains with employment rates increasing 2.1 points to 58.6% from December 2021 to June 2022. Inflation and rising interest rates may dampen growth, causing companies to shed jobs in the coming months and an estimated 1 million women may have to leave the workforce this summer for lack of child care while schools are out. Employers will likely continue to struggle to find employees, with Long Covid hobbling a sizable number of workers, and childcare insufficiently available.

Housing and utilities costs Home prices have increased 20%, and rents have gone up 15% over the last 12 months. Home utility costs are an added concern—especially in the South. Even before the pandemic, low-income households in AL, LA, and MS spent 10% or more of their income on home energy. Fears of foreclosure or eviction are rising such that 43% of Southerners who were late on rent or mortgage in June feared losing their homes. But AL, GA, TN, and WV have distributed only 35% or less of their federal Emergency Rental Assistance dollars. To make matters worse, 95% of the population of AL, AR, FL, LA, MS, and NC live in a county that has had at least one climate disaster since March 2020, and housing prices tend to increase after disasters.

Financial stability The share of Americans with medical debt fell from March 2018 to April 2021 when stimulus bills boosted enrollments in public health insurance plans. As the official health emergency ends, many adults will lose their insurance, and medical debt will likely increase, particularly in Southern states that have not expanded Medicaid (AL, GA, FL, MS, NC, SC, and TN). The Child Tax Credit payments distributed from July through December 2021 stabilized family finances, measurably reduced food insecurity, and lifted children out of poverty — lowering the child poverty rate to 12%. Child poverty — considered the greatest threat to children’s healthy brain development — has now spiked again to 17%.

Mental health Levels of anxiety and depression have tripled since the pandemic hit. 9 of the 11 states with the highest adult rates of anxiety and depression were in the South. Among LGBTQ+ high school-age youth nationwide, 12% of girls and 26% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual youth actually attempted suicide during the pandemic. Firearm suicides (among adults and children) increased from 23,941 in 2019 to 26,316 in 2021. Across Southern states, mental health providers are in short supply and the majority of rural counties have no pediatricians — an important source of mental health care for children.

Democracy 6 southern states have enacted new laws that make it harder to vote, and research reveals that restrictive voting laws are associated with poorer health.⁴ AL, AR, LA, MS, and WV have the worst infant mortality rates in the country and restrictive electoral climates. Moreover, AL, GA, FL, LA, MS, and WV lack constitutional protections for fair and equal elections. Meanwhile, local news sources have been rapidly disappearing and 75% of Southern counties now lack this important source of reliable news. 8 of the 10 states with the worst internet access rates are in the South.⁵ American Indian people are about 2.5 times more likely to lack internet than white people, and Black people are about 2 times more likely to lack internet.

Inflation is exacerbating the challenges that many Americans have struggled with since the pandemic struck. State and local governments can mitigate some of the harshest effects by expediting the distribution of Emergency Rental Assistance funding and investing ARP dollars in human needs such as utility assistance, food assistance, child care, and mental health programs. As Americans grapple with the rapid changes in our world, threats to our democracy are mounting. Without protections for free and fair elections, states could find their election results undermined. Improving and expanding civic engagement and voting enfranchisement will be essential for improving Americans' health outcomes and overall well being.



Dr. Jeanine Abrams McLean
President, Fair Count



Dr. Sarah Beth Gehl
Executive Director, The Southern Economic Advancement Project

Table of Contents

DEFINING THE SOUTH: [Racial/ethnic group representation](#)

PANDEMIC: LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

[Vaccine-preventable deaths, by state](#)

[Long Covid symptoms, by state](#)

[Firearm suicide rates, by race/ethnicity](#)

[Total jobs by month](#)

[Quits rates, by industry](#)

[Disaster declarations, by county](#)

PROSPERITY: GOVERNMENT

[2020 Census net coverage error by race/ethnicity](#)

[Emergency Rental Assistance distribution, by state](#)

[Free and equal election protections, by state](#)

[Voting access and infant mortality, by state](#)

[State supreme court diversity gaps, by state](#)

PROSPERITY: INSTITUTIONS

[News deserts, by county](#)

[Lack of internet, by race/ethnicity](#)

[Child care disruptions](#)

[Lack of health insurance coverage, by race/ethnicity](#)

[Mental health providers, by state](#)

[Pediatricians, by county](#)

PROSPERITY: PEOPLE

[Student loan debt, by race/ethnicity](#)

[Home energy burdens, by state](#)

[Medical debt, by race/ethnicity](#)

Employment rates, [by race/ethnicity](#) | [by sex](#)

[Food insecurity, by state](#)

[Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure, by state](#)

[Symptoms of anxiety or depression, by state](#)

[Youth mental health, by sex and sexual identity](#)

[Monthly poverty rates, by age](#)

REFERENCES

ABOUT, AUTHORS, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

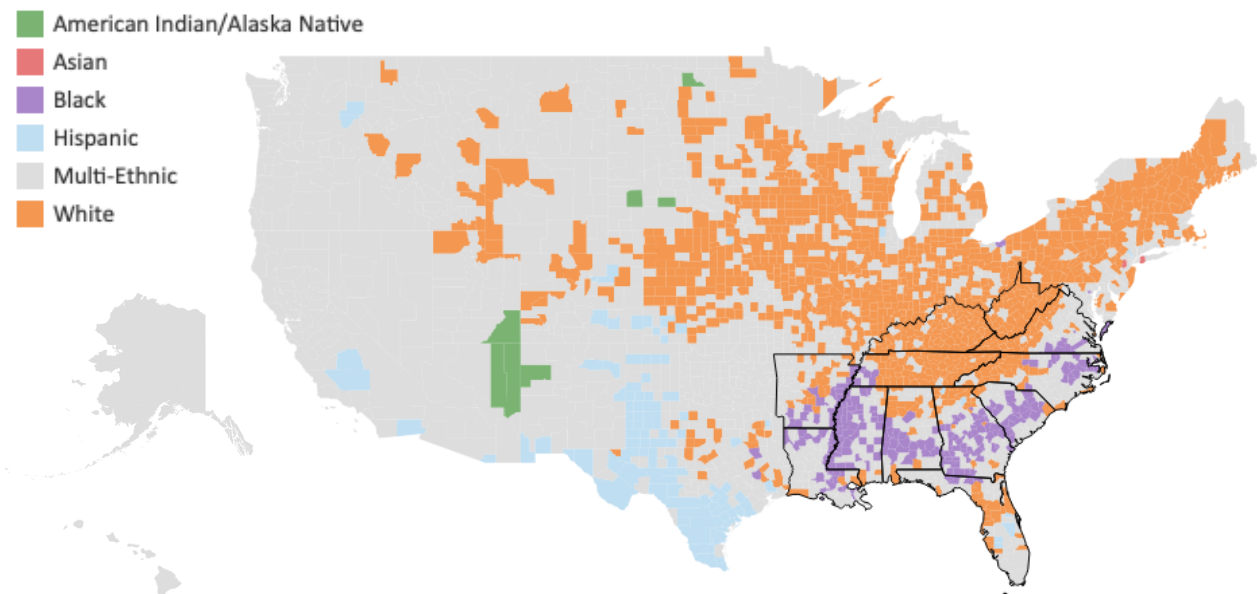
Defining the South

In this report, the South is defined as the 12 states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Southern states include 225 of the 229 U.S. counties where the Black population is uniquely greater than the national average.

Disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic group by county

Population by race/ethnicity, 2019



Source: [Census Bureau](#). Note: Color indicates the race/ethnicity that is higher than the national average in each county. Multi-Ethnic indicates the county has more than one race/ethnicity greater than the national average.

The Black Belt stretches from Virginia to Louisiana and has a unique demographic makeup — vestiges of a violent history of enslaving millions on cotton and tobacco plantations located there. The Appalachian region from northern Alabama to West Virginia has been long dominated by extractive industries such as coal mining. As a whole, these 12 states have struggled from a history of underinvestment in transportation, infrastructure, education, and job training, and still have among the highest poverty rates in the United States today.

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, the pandemic has caused multidimensional health and economic hardships. As such, tracking Covid-related damage requires monitoring a number of metrics, each of which may change as conditions change. Additionally, shocks and stressors such as extreme weather 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. It also tracks key dynamics in the national economy.

In later sections of this report, these indicators serve as a backdrop for a unique analysis of the complex interactions between the pandemic, the nation's civic health, and Americans' well being, with deeper dives into mental health, food insecurity, and more.

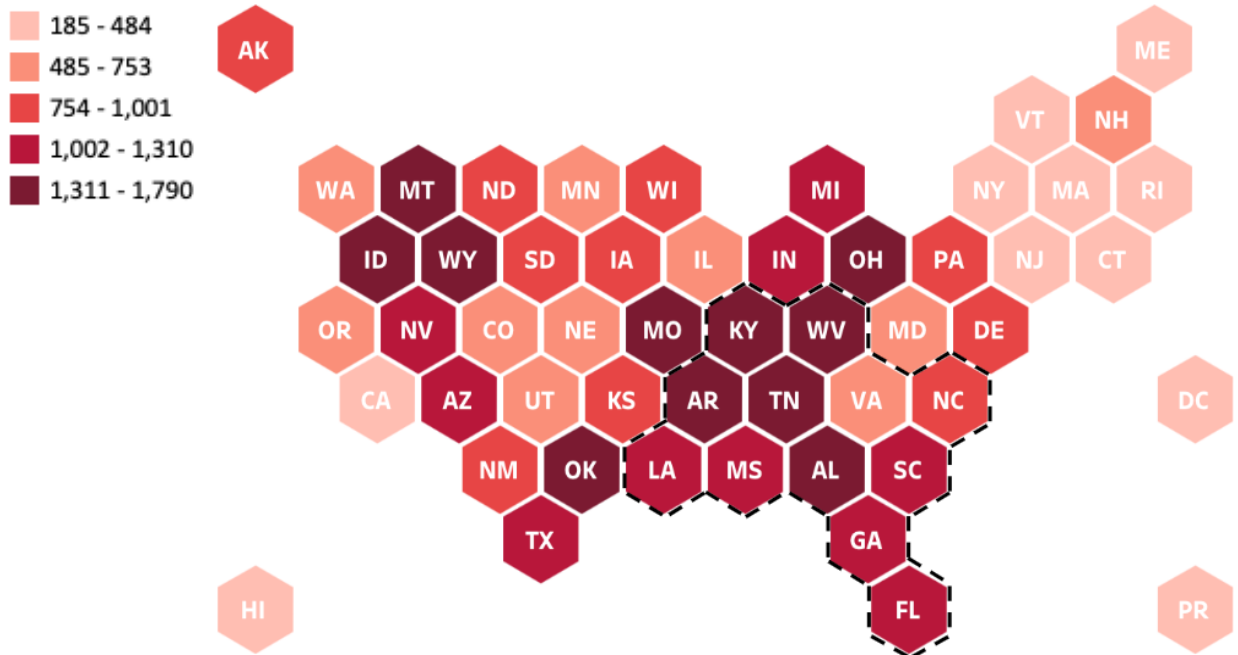
Indicators in this section

- Vaccine-preventable deaths, by state
- Long Covid estimates, by state
- Firearm suicide rates, by race/ethnicity
- Total jobs by month
- Quits rate, by industry
- Disaster declarations, by county

At least 225,000 American lives could have been saved (79,000 in Southern states) if every state had vaccinated 90% of adults.

Vaccine-preventable deaths per 1 million adults

April 18, 2021- April 30, 2022



Source: [Brown University, School of Public Health](#). Notes: These are lower-bound (minimum) estimates of the number of deaths that would have been averted, for every 1 million adults, if each state had reached 90% vaccination coverage for adults.

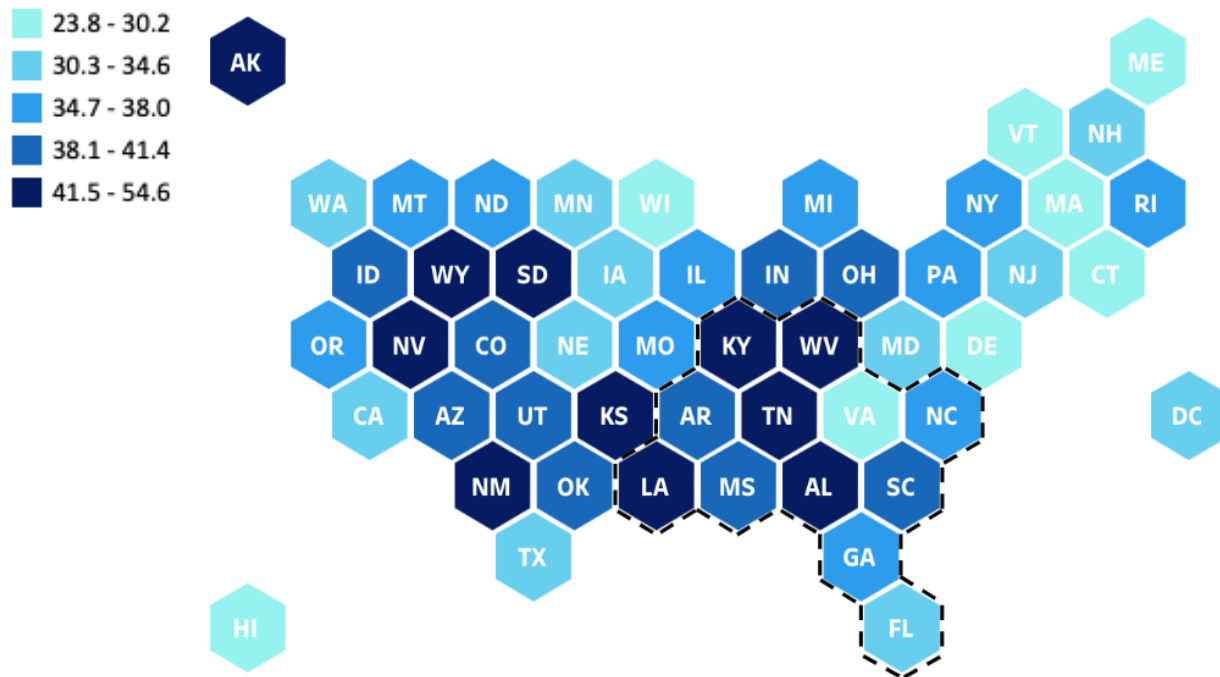
The U.S. Covid death toll officially reached 1 million in May 2022. A new study shows that about one-quarter of those lives — at least 225,000 — could have been saved if each state had vaccinated 90% of adults.¹ Relative to the size of their population, 5 Southern states were among the states that could have saved the most lives. With 90% vaccination coverage, WV would have saved at least 2,566 lives; TN at least 8,507; KY at least 5,373; AR at least 3,562; and AL at least 5,358. In terms of the sheer number of lives that could have been saved with 90% vaccination coverage, two states stick out from the rest. Texas and Florida could have saved at least 21,741 lives and 20,405 lives, respectively. The next closest state, with a much larger population, is California, which could have saved at least 13,944 lives.

The demand for Covid vaccines peaked 6 months after becoming available in early 2021, with slight increases during the Delta and Omicron surges. Though new Covid variants are likely to infect the vaccinated and unvaccinated at similar rates, vaccination remains the most effective form of protection against severe illness and death. Unvaccinated individuals are 3.4 times more likely to be hospitalized with Covid and 6 times more likely to die.^{2,3} Public health experts point to misinformation, mistrust, and lack of resources as causes for low vaccination rates. With a non-mRNA Covid vaccine poised to join the market, and vaccines available for young children, experts urge continued federal funding for community-led Covid vaccination campaigns.^{4,5,6}

More than 1 in 3 Southerners who previously had Covid have suffered Long Covid symptoms. In KY, TN, and WV, it's nearly 1 in 2.

Long Covid symptoms, June 1-13, 2022

Percent of adults who previously had Covid, with symptoms lasting 3 months or longer



Source: [Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey](#).

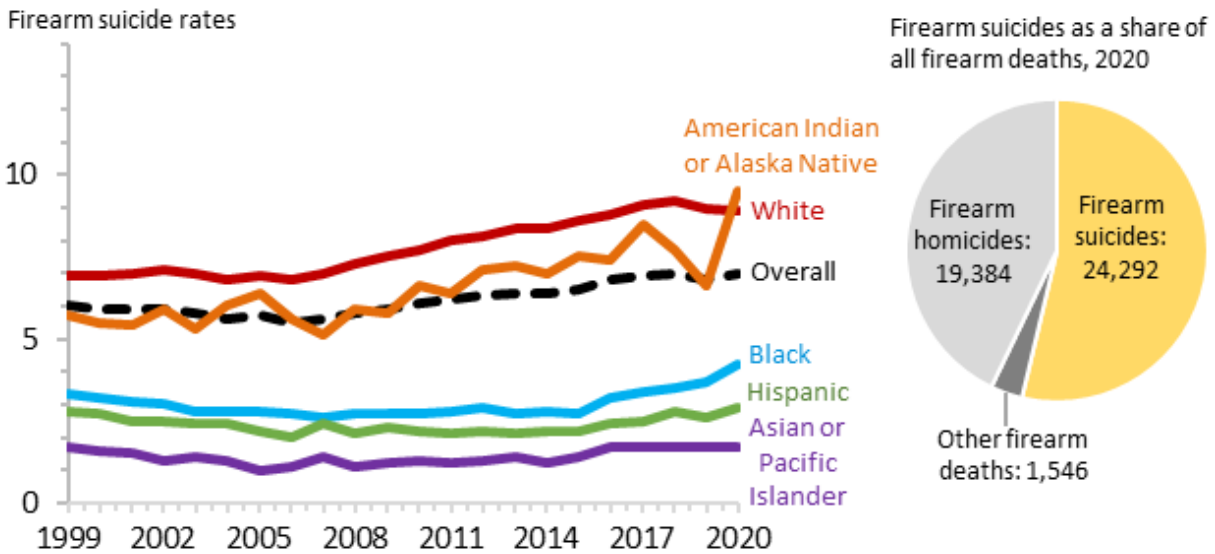
One in three adults who previously had Covid have experienced prolonged symptoms, known as Long Covid.¹ Recent studies show that Long Covid largely affects immune and circulatory systems, as well as the brain and lungs.^{2,3,4,5} This can result in additional sickness, exhaustion, brain fog, and shortness of breath. More than 40% of Covid survivors in 5 Southern states have reported Long Covid symptoms: 41.5% in LA, 44.2% in AL, 45.6% in KY, 45.9% in TN, and 49.3% in WV. With Covid cases beginning to increase across the nation in the week ending July 9,⁶ the number of people experiencing Long Covid symptoms will also increase.

While medical experts work to understand the causes, symptoms, and a cure for Long Covid, its potential impacts are concerning.⁷ Experts stress that access to primary care doctors, adequate health insurance, and disability coverage will be essential for patients who must navigate Long Covid.⁸ Too often, access to these critical supports differs by race and ethnicity. For example, 20% of nonelderly Hispanic individuals lacked health insurance in 2020 along with 12% of nonelderly Black individuals, but only 7% of nonelderly white individuals lacked insurance ([Lack of Health Insurance, by Race](#)). And because Long Covid is still poorly understood by the medical community, many patients are struggling to access needed disability benefits.⁹ As employers struggle to find workers, Long Covid could account for a sizable portion of unfilled jobs and, without better care, more people could fall out of the workforce and into poverty.¹⁰

Firearm suicides have increased since 1999. Firearm suicide rates are highest for white and American Indian/Alaska Native individuals.

Firearm suicide rates and number of firearm suicides, U.S.

Rates are age-adjusted per 100,000 pop, by race/ethnicity



Source: [CDC/Wonder](#) mortality data. Notes: Race groups are non-Hispanic. "Other firearm deaths" include accidental firearm discharge; undetermined intent firearm discharge; and legal intervention involving firearm discharge.

Suicides make up the majority of gun deaths each year but receive the least news coverage. Firearm suicides accounted for 24,292 deaths in 2020 compared to 19,384 firearm homicides and 1,546 other firearm deaths. The number of firearm suicides increased from 23,941 in 2019 to 24,292 in 2020, and then to 26,316 based on 2021 provisional data.

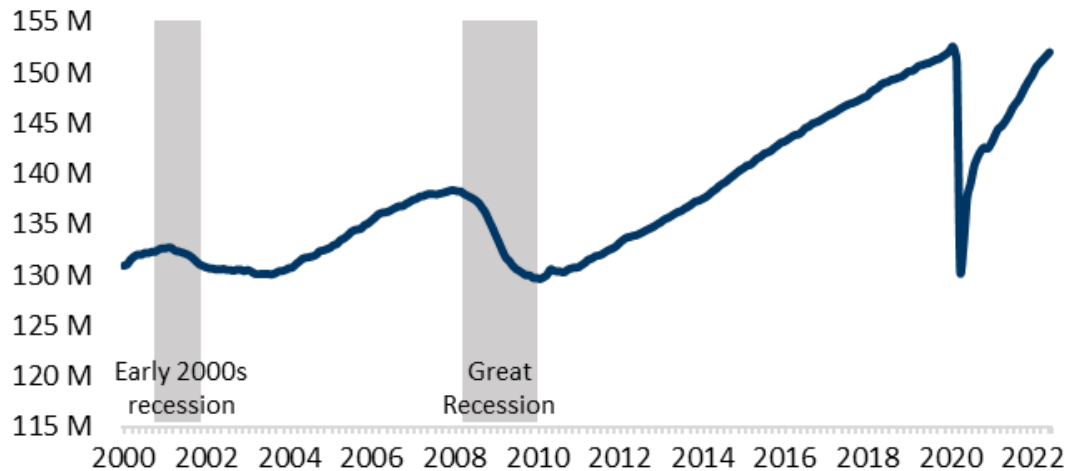
Firearm suicide rates vary by race and are typically highest among white Americans at rates averaging 7.8 per 100,000 from 2000 to 2019. Gun suicides were next most common among American Indians and Alaska Natives who experienced rates averaging 6.5 per 100,000 from 2000 to 2019. In 2020, gun suicides among American Indians and Alaska Natives exceeded that of white Americans, rising to 9.5 per 100,000 compared to 8.9 per 100,000. Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans consistently experienced lower firearm suicide rates. In 2020, firearm suicide rates for Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans were 4.2, 2.9, and 1.7 per 100,000 respectively.

Red flag laws allow law enforcement officers or individuals to petition local courts to temporarily take guns away from those who are a threat to themselves or others. While 62% of U.S. counties have declared themselves "Second Amendment sanctuaries," law enforcement officers in many of these same counties have subsequently used red flag laws. Studies of red flag laws conclude they measurably reduce gun suicides and homicides.^{1,2,3}

Monthly job growth averaged 450,000 in the first half of 2022. The U.S. is just 524,000 jobs shy of the Feb 2020 pre-pandemic peak.

Total jobs by month, U.S.

Jan 2000 - Jun 2022



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Note: Seasonally adjusted. Data for May 2022 and June 2022 are preliminary.

While almost 22 million jobs were lost when Covid hit, they have now, some two years later, been largely recouped. In contrast, the Great Recession caused a loss of more than 8 million jobs, which took more than four years to recoup.

While the nation still has 524,000 fewer jobs than at its pre-Covid peak in February 2020, enough people have dropped out of the labor force that the June 2022 unemployment rate of 3.6% is on par with the pre-Covid low.¹ Since Covid hit, workers have retired in record numbers ([Quits Rates](#)), and others have had to quit jobs due to lack of child care ([Child Care Disruptions](#)). Moreover, an estimated 1.6 million workers are sidelined each month because of Long Covid symptoms — a dynamic that may be a large, but poorly tracked, factor in the labor shortage.¹ Employers have responded with wage increases (up 5% compared to one year ago) but it's not clear these increases are enough for sidelined workers to pay for needed child and elder care — particularly when wage increases have not kept up with inflation, which is up 9.1% compared to last June.^{2,3}

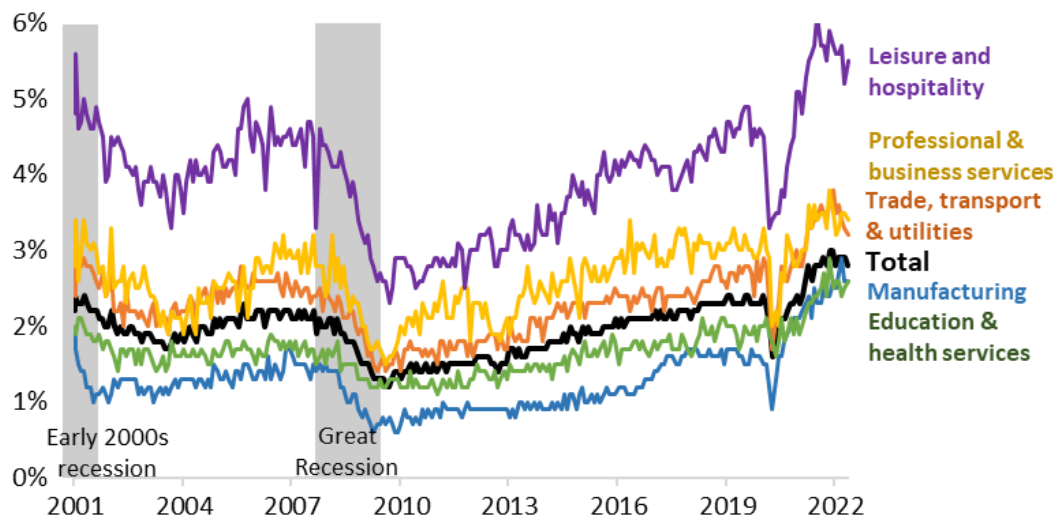
The economy is starting to cool, however, as inflation and rising interest rates are reducing consumer spending and a few large companies have already announced layoffs.⁴ But the summer months are a time when many women leave the labor force to care for their children during school closures. Close to 1 million women may leave the workforce temporarily over the summer, which may counterbalance declining jobs, and the labor market may continue to churn.⁵

Among Southern states, 6 have more jobs as of May 2022 than they did at their pre-pandemic February 2020 level. SC is up 0.6%, AR is up 0.9%, TN is up 2%, NC is up 2.3%, and FL and GA are up 2.5%. But 5 Southern states still have fewer jobs than in February 2020. Most notably, LA has 4.2% fewer jobs.

Across industries, workers are quitting jobs at high rates. In total, 26 million workers quit jobs between December 2021 and May 2022.

Quits rate by industry

Dec 2000 - May 2022



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 except retirements or transfers to other locations. Data is seasonally adjusted. May 2022 data is preliminary.

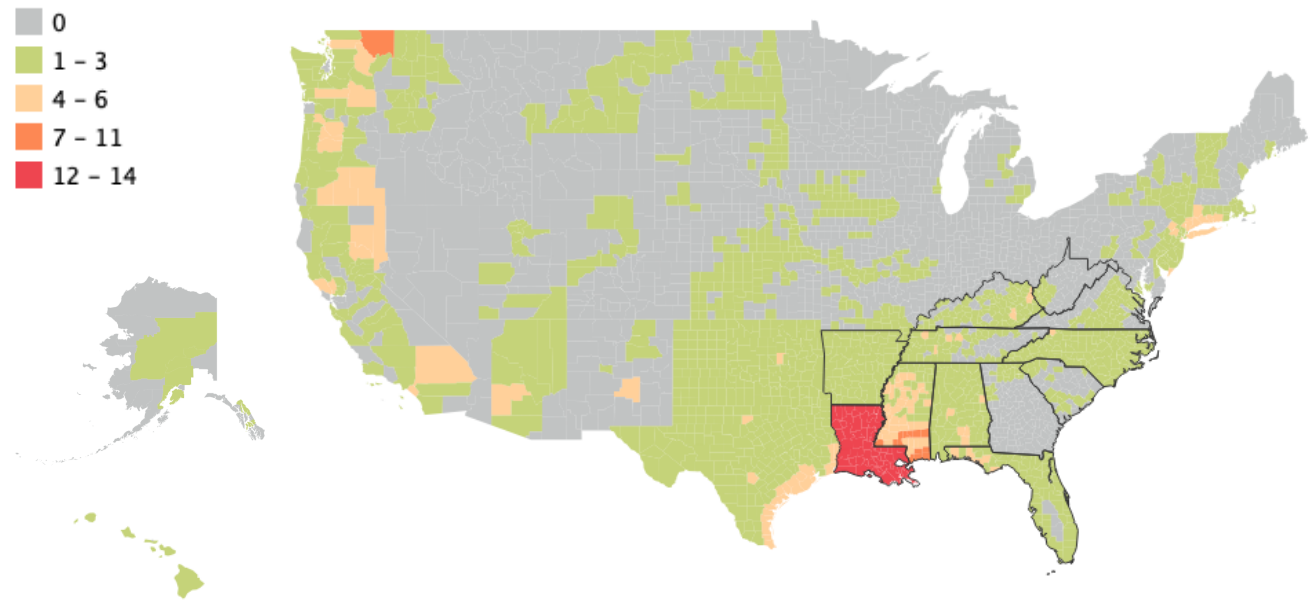
Since December 2021, 26 million workers have quit their jobs. The job quits rate was highest in leisure and hospitality (5.5% in May) and in retail (4.0% in May) where wages are low and working conditions are poor. 1 million parents of young children quit jobs in June due to lack of child care ([Child Care Disruptions](#)). An estimated 1.6 million workers are sidelined each month because of Long Covid symptoms.¹ 3 of the 5 states with the highest share of adults suffering from Long Covid are Southern states ([Long Covid](#)).

With fewer people in the labor market, workers are increasingly demanding higher wages and better working conditions.² A groundswell of grassroots activism has led to increased worker organizing across Starbucks stores and Amazon warehouses.^{3,4,5,6} Increased union organizing efforts have been observed across Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina despite long-standing anti-union sentiments across the South.^{7,8,9}

70% of Southerners live in counties that have experienced disasters since March 2020, compared to 58% of non-Southerners.

Number of FEMA county-level disasters

Mar 1, 2020 - June 30, 2022



Source: [FEMA](#). Notes: Excludes COVID declarations and statewide declarations. Includes hurricanes, fires, floods, tornadoes, levee breaks, landslides, earthquakes, severe ice storms, and other severe storms

Over the last 2 years, climate disasters have compounded the nation's misery. In 2021, there were 20 climate disasters that caused a billion dollars in damage — up from an average of 7 annually in the two previous decades.^{1,2} Southerners have been most likely to experience a disaster, with 70% of Southerners living in a county that has had a disaster since March 2020, compared to 58% of non-Southerners. In AL, AR, FL, LA, MS, and NC, more than 95% of the population live in a county that has had a disaster since March 2020.

41% of Americans have experienced multiple disasters in that short time frame. In Louisiana, every county (parish) has experienced 12 or more FEMA-declared disasters since March 2020.

As a result, federal spending on disaster relief more than doubled in 2020 and 2021 compared to 2018 or 2019.³ But the time- and document-intensive FEMA application process has been shown to increase inequity because it is too burdensome for smaller/rural municipalities and people with low-incomes.⁴ Moreover, the supply of available housing diminishes, and housing costs (including insurance) increase after disasters.⁵ The preponderance of disasters across the South likely contributed to the higher rate at which Southerners who were late on housing payments in June 2022 were fearful of being evicted or foreclosed upon ([Likelihood of Eviction or Foreclosure](#)).

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 continue to recover 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 sex.

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 key assessments of the accuracy of demographic data used to disseminate funding. We also include measures of the distribution of rental aid. This section ends with indicators on free and equal election protections, voting access, and representation on state supreme courts — keys to the health of our democracy which is essential for community well-being.

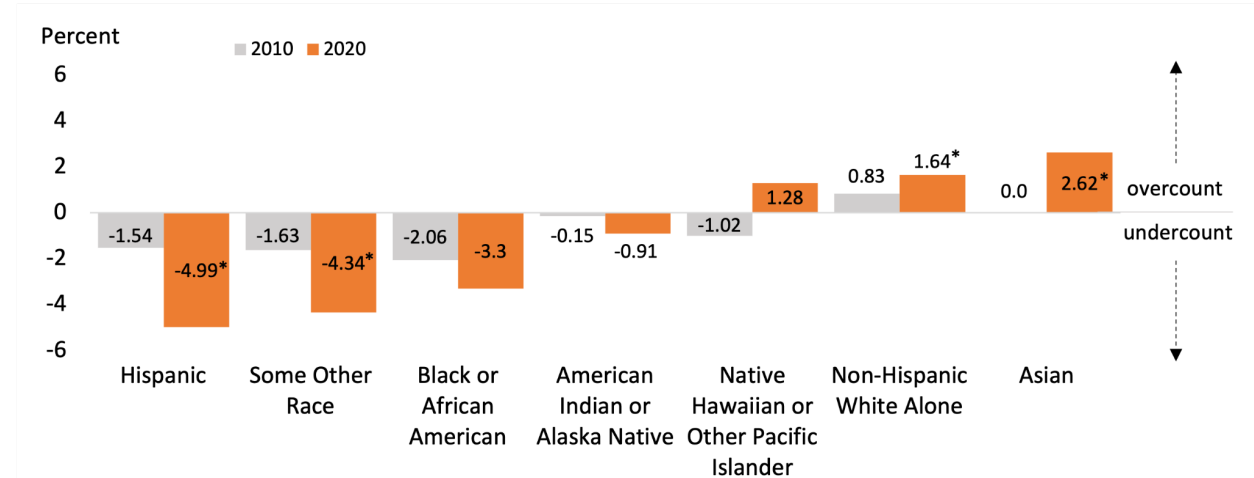
Indicators in this section

- 2020 Census differential undercounts, by race/ethnicity
- Emergency Rental Assistance distribution, by state
- Free and equal election protections, by state
- Voting access and infant mortality, by state
- State supreme court diversity gaps, by state

Undercount problems persisted or grew worse for Black, Hispanic, and other race groups in the 2020 Census count.

Net coverage error by race and ethnicity, U.S.

Percent of under- and overcounts, 2010 and 2020 Census PES data



Source: [Census Bureau: Post-Enumeration Survey \(PES\)](#). *Statistically significant change from 2010 Census PES data.

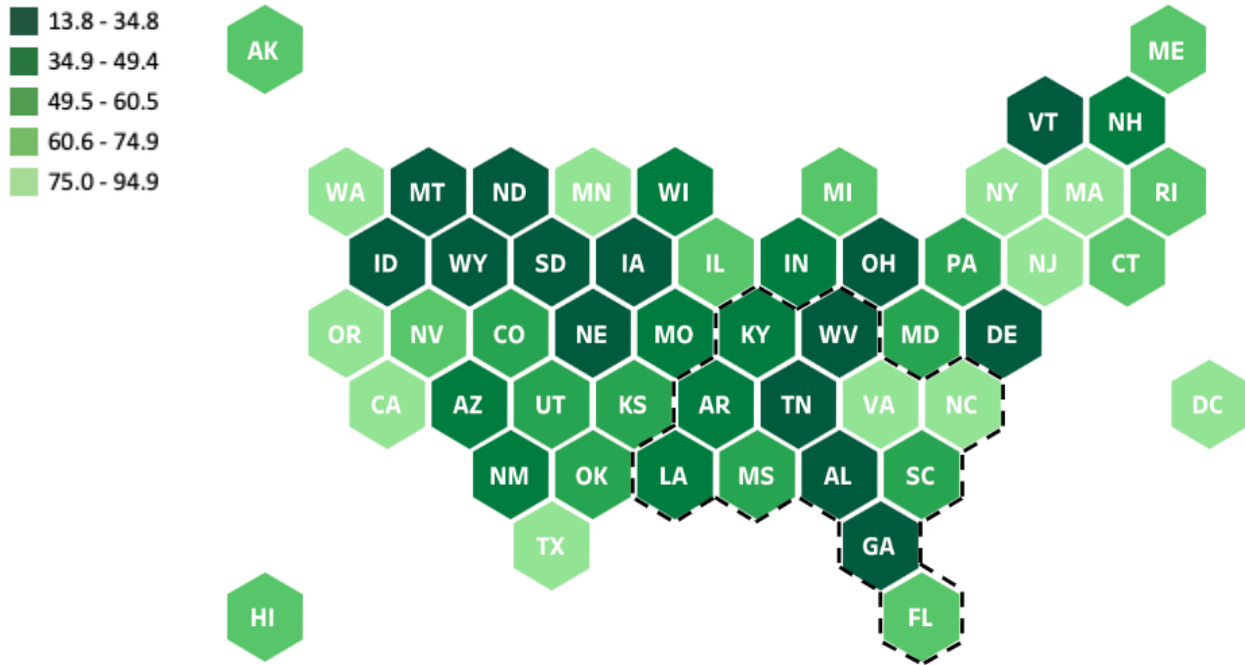
Census data has historically undercounted communities of color, with gaps widening in the 2020 Census count for some groups. The Census Bureau’s first assessment of accuracy for racial groups, the Post-Enumeration Survey, found that, in 2020, undercounts for Black or African American people remained high at -3.3%. American Indians/Alaska Natives were undercounted by about -1%, but a subgroup — those who live on reservations — had the largest undercount at -5.6%. For Hispanic communities, the undercount more than tripled from -1.5% in 2010 to -4.9% in 2020, meaning that 1 in 20 Hispanic persons were missed.¹ And for those of “some other race,” undercounts increased from -1.6% to -4.3%. For the first time, Asian communities were overcounted by 2.62%. But experts and advocates worry that the overcount masks the large variations amongst Asian ethnic subgroups.²

The Post-Enumeration Survey results by state that were recently released found that 4 Southern states had the most significant undercounts in 2020: AR at -5.0%, TN at -4.8%, MS at -4.1%, and FL at -3.5%.³ Experts highlight that 5 of the 6 undercounted states also have growing populations of racial and ethnic diversity, indicating a possible relationship between the two.^{4,5} Experts further note that rural counties were also likely undercounted and lack of trust in government is a factor.⁴

These undercounts reduce both political representation and funding for affected communities nationwide. The reduction in funding is particularly concerning as census numbers set the amounts for federal resources that will be provided for such areas as food, housing, education, and medical programs over the next 10 years. At least \$1.5 trillion in federal funding is distributed each year based on this data.¹ Efforts to improve annual population estimates will be critical for rightsizing federal funding flows for the remainder of the decade.

Only 59% of Emergency Rental Assistance funds have been distributed to renters across the South, compared to 67% in non-Southern states.

Percent of Emergency Rental Assistance funds distributed
Jan 1, 2021 - Apr 30, 2022



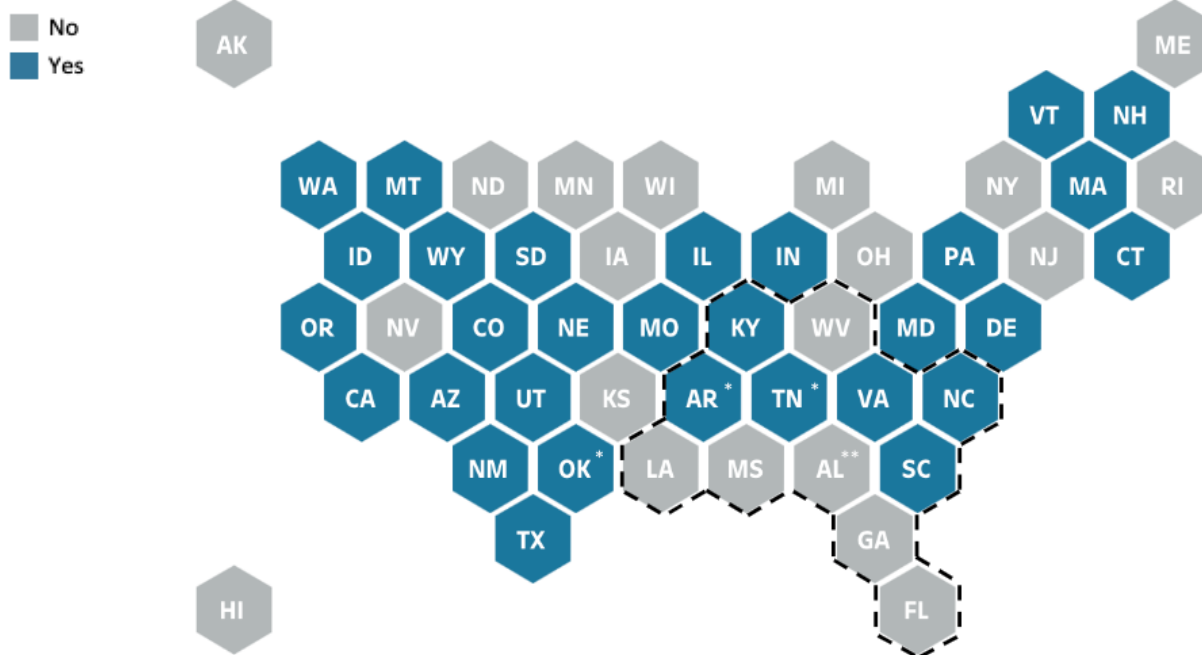
Source: [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#). Notes: Assistance to households is the total dollar amount of ERA1 and ERA2 award funds paid to or for households, including payments for rent, rental arrears, utility/home energy costs, utility/home energy arrears, and other eligible expenses. "Percent distributed" 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 (ARP) include a combined \$45 billion in Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds.¹ Many Southern states have been slow to distribute these funds, including TN where only 31% of ERA funds have been spent, WV with only 33% spent, AL with only 34% spent, and GA with only 35% spent. Meanwhile, rents are increasing rapidly — up an estimated 15% annually as of May.²

Grantees who fail to spend 50% of their ERA allotment may find some of their funds reallocated to ensure all funds are spent by September 2022. Kentucky and Virginia increased their distribution of ERA funds by reducing documentation burdens for accessing this aid.³ Additional rental assistance will likely be needed as inflation is impacting many families' pocketbooks. However, the federal government is focusing on eviction protection. In May, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced it was doubling the size of its eviction protection program from \$20 million provided in November 2021, to \$40 million.⁴ States and localities that are quickly expending their ERA allotment may use flexible ARP funds to provide additional rental relief, and this may trigger additional allocations of ERA funds.¹

Half of Southern states lack constitutional protections for fair and equal elections.

Free and equal elections clauses in state constitutions
2022



Source: [National Conference of State Legislatures](#).

*Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee have exceptions to this right for persons convicted of felonies.**Alabama does not explicitly contain the word "free," but does prohibit "all undue influences from power, bribery, tumult, or other improper conduct."

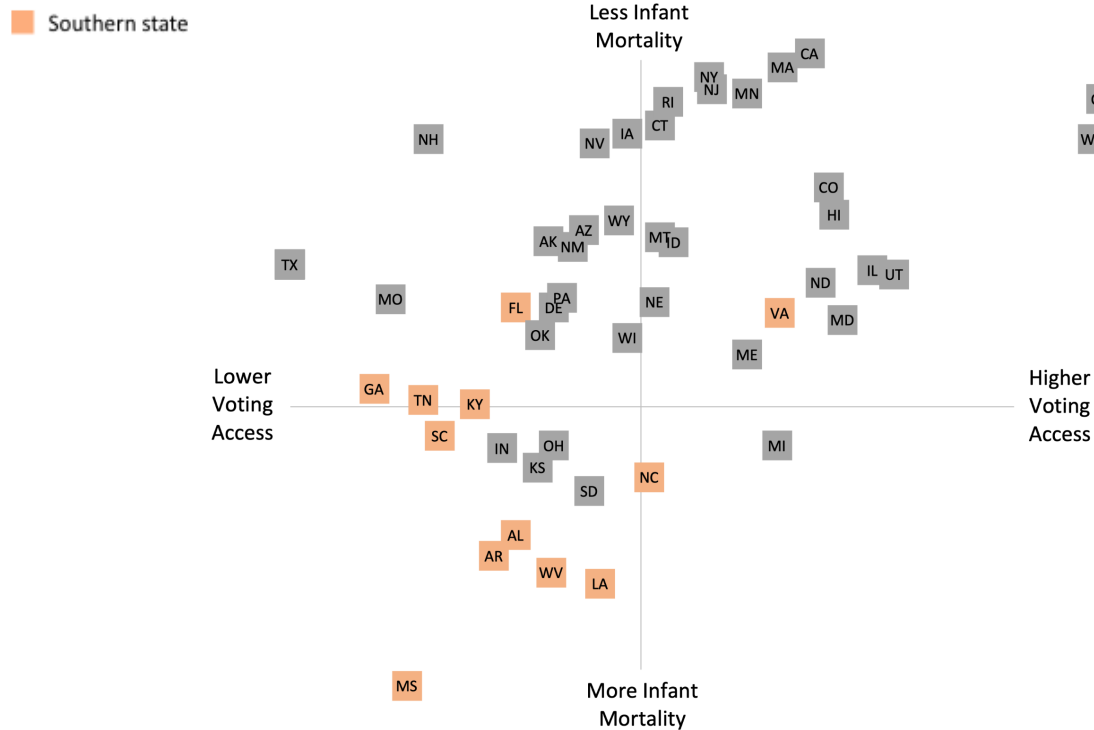
In addition to determining procedures for elections, state constitutions can include provisions that explicitly address fairness in voting and equal access to the ballot box. 30 states have constitutional requirements that elections be "free." In 18 of those states, the constitution goes further, requiring that elections be "equal" or "open," and 15 states explicitly prohibit improper influence or interference by "civil or military" powers with a citizen's right to vote.¹

These free and equal election provisions have played a role in countering voter suppression and gerrymandering. For example, in 2014 the Arkansas Supreme Court struck down a voter ID law, partially due to its violation of the state constitution's free elections clause.^{2,3} Free and equal election protections have also been used to fight gerrymandering in Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Utah.^{4,5,6,7}

With the increase in restrictive voting laws passed in 2021 and 2022, these constitutional provisions could play a critical role in protecting access to the ballot box and preventing improper influence in the voting process.^{8,9}

Barriers to voting in Southern states are strongly correlated with worse health outcomes, including high infant mortality.

Voting access and infant mortality 2020



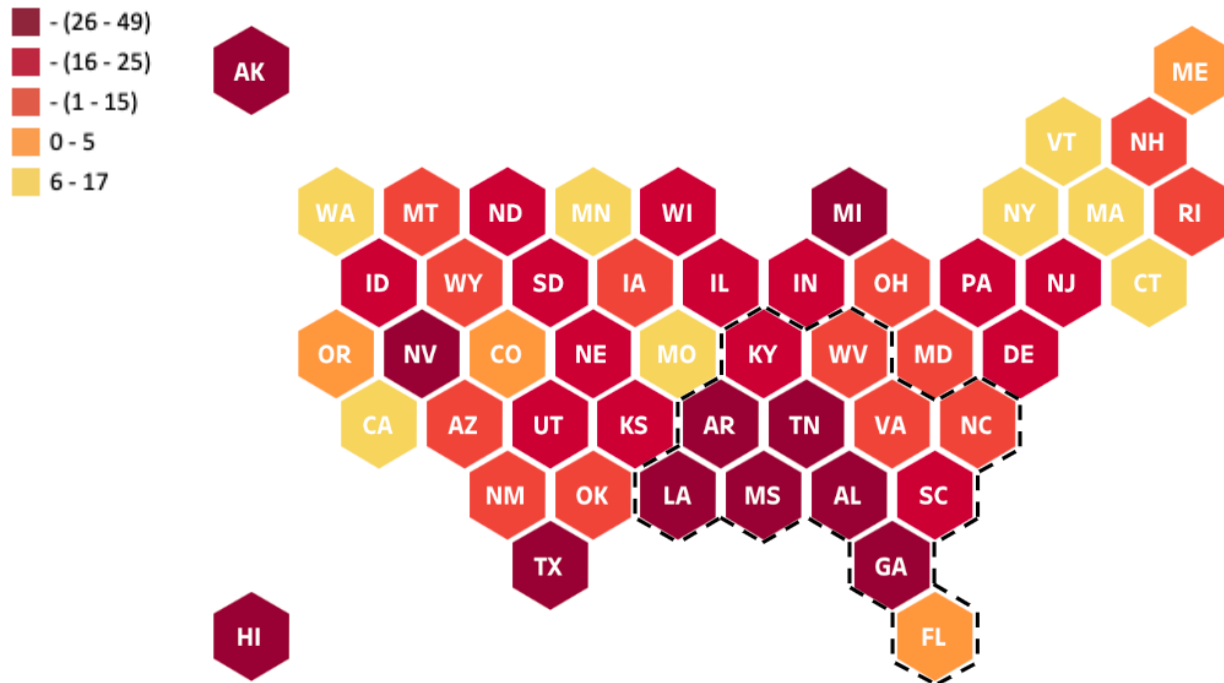
Source: [Scot Schraufnagel et al., 2020 \(Election Law Journal\)](#) and [CDC](#), inspired by the [Health & Democracy Index](#). Notes: Voting access captures ‘permanent’ changes in state electioneering practices and does not count temporary changes adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Infant mortality is the rate of infants dying within the first year of life. Vermont is missing because there was no available data on 2020 infant mortality.

Across nations, democracy and freedom are positively associated with better health outcomes, even after controlling for a country’s wealth.¹ Thus, it is no surprise that across the U.S., states with restrictive voting laws and greater barriers to civic participation also tend to have poor health outcomes.² Many Southern states are among the worst. Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Louisiana have the worst infant mortality rates in the country and also restrictive electoral climates. Infant mortality rates for Black communities are particularly high in these Southern states, and research indicates that better civic participation can make a difference in lowering these rates and saving infant lives.^{2,3}

38 states (including all but one Southern state) have supreme courts that lack the racial diversity of the state's population.

State supreme court representation gaps, May 2022

Difference between state supreme court justice racial diversity and population diversity



Source: [Brennan Center for Justice](#). Note: This map represents the difference between the percentage of non-white justices on state supreme courts (as of 2022) compared to the percentage of the non-white population in the state (based on 2020 census data). "Non-white" includes individuals who are Black, Asian, Latino, Native American, or multiracial. White is limited to non-Hispanic/Latino white individuals.

State supreme courts are highly influential institutions, making final decisions that impact the day-to-day lives of Americans on a wide array of critical issues including mask and vaccine mandates, gerrymandering, and challenges to state election certification efforts. As such, they have been important during the pandemic and are a critical part of governmental checks and balances. A diverse judiciary promotes richer jurisprudence, benefiting from judges who have seen problems from different angles.^{1,2} Many state supreme courts lack the diversity of the populations they represent.

Of the 12 Southern states, 11 have supreme courts that are less racially diverse than their state's population. There are 0 Black justices in 4 Southern states where Black residents make up at least 10% of the population (AL, AR, FL, and TN). Nationwide, men hold 59% of state supreme court seats and in 9 states, there is only one woman on the supreme court bench.³ Of the 340 state supreme court justices, only 10 openly identify as gay or lesbian (none in the South).⁴

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 pediatricians to understand our institutions' ability to educate and care for our children. Finally, we look at the availability of health insurance and mental health providers and identify gaps in these resources critical for helping Americans be healthy and productive.

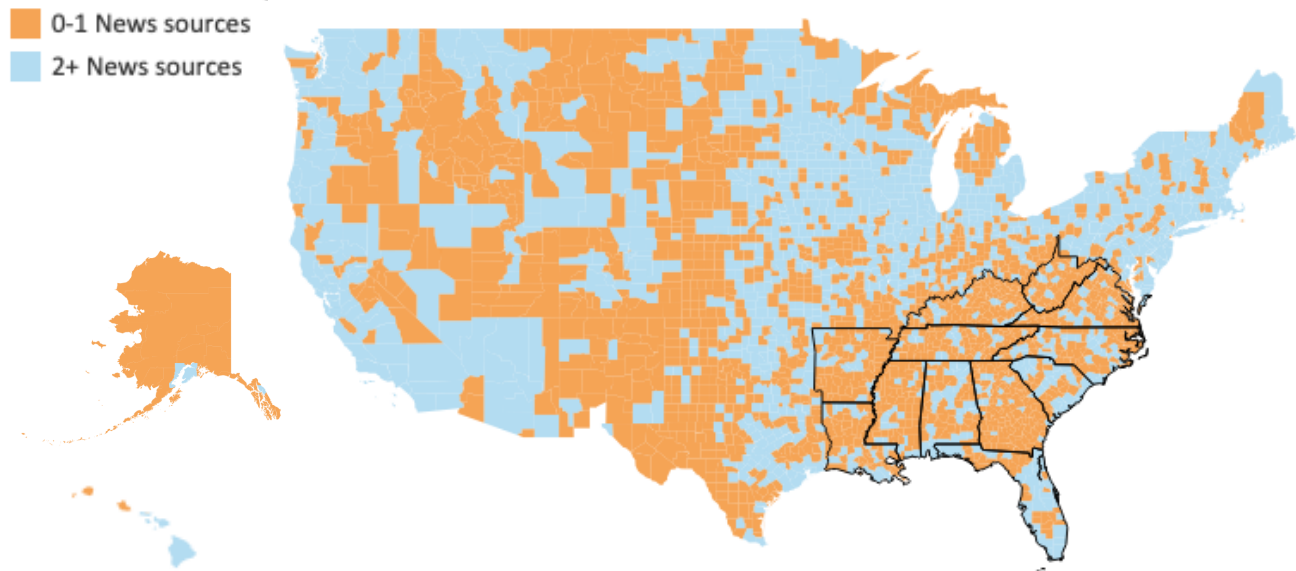
Indicators in this section

- News deserts, by county
- Lack of internet, by race/ethnicity
- Child care disruptions
- Lack of health insurance coverage, by race/ethnicity
- Mental health providers, by state
- Pediatricians, by county

75% of Southern counties (50% in the non-South) are “news deserts,” with only one or no newspapers reporting trusted local news.

Counties with no or only one newspaper (“news deserts”)

News deserts as of 2022



Source: [Northwestern Medill Local News Initiative](#).

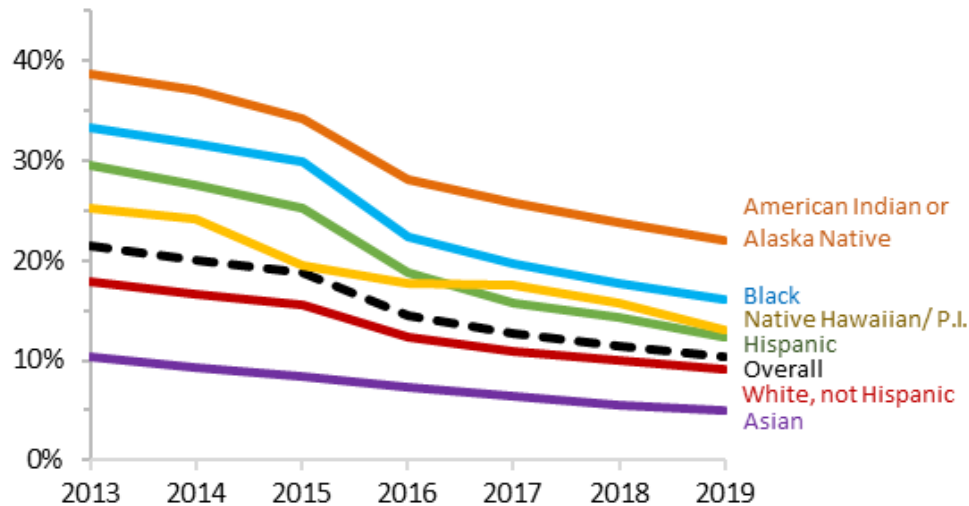
The pandemic has accelerated the decline of local news sources across the nation, with newspapers closing at an average rate of 2 per week.¹ 58% of U.S. counties are what experts call “local news deserts” that have either no newspaper or only one (often a weekly or a thinly staffed daily).² In the South, 75% of counties are news deserts, compared to only 50% of non-Southern counties.

As local newspapers continue to shut their doors, experts worry that political, cultural, and digital divides across the nation will be further exacerbated. A new study by the Medill Local News Initiative at Northwestern University finds that local news deserts tend to be communities that are older, poorer, and lacking the infrastructure for strong broadband — a crucial means for digital news to fill the gap left by closing print-based newspapers ([Lack of Internet, by Race](#)).^{1,3} Local news sources are essential for dispensing critical local information to small communities. Without them, constituents are forced to rely on national news, which can be more partisan and polarizing; use social media, which can be filled with misinformation and disinformation campaigns; or avoid the news altogether. According to a study by the Reuters Institute, the number of people who actively avoid the news has increased from 38% in 2017 to 42% in 2020, pointing to the repetitiveness of news stories (namely around politics and Covid), negative feelings, and mistrust.⁴ Regaining trust and providing accessible news are necessary efforts for the future of local news.

Although internet access improved from 2013 to 2019, more than 1 in 5 American Indians and 1 in 6 Black Americans lacked internet in 2019.

Lack of internet by race/ethnicity, U.S.

Percent of individuals without a computer, or without internet subscription



Source: [Census Bureau's American Community Survey](#).

In 2013, 39% of all American Indians, 33% of Black people, 29% of Hispanic people, and 25% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders in the U.S. lacked broadband internet access, compared to 18% of white people. By 2019, internet access had spread, but disparities remained such that 22% of American Indians, 16% of Black people, 13% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and 12% of Hispanic people in the U.S. lacked broadband internet access, compared to 9% of white people.

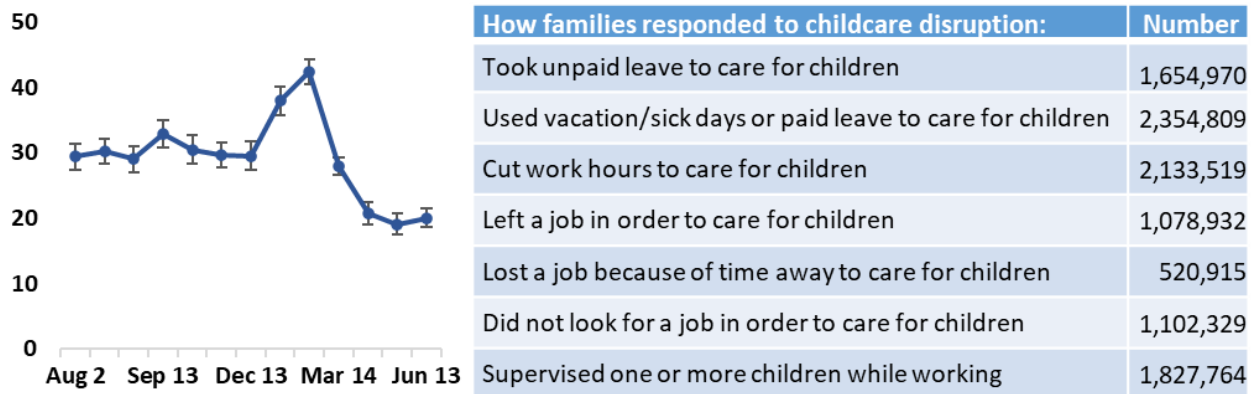
Broadband internet access has become an essential utility for every American family, even more so during the pandemic with work and school going remote, along with the need for essential information on how to deal with the virus. But even before the pandemic broadband internet was important for school-age children to support homework and education. In 2018, a majority of eighth graders reported using the internet to do homework but this was most common among suburban students (65%) and least common among rural students (44%).¹

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will send \$42.45 billion directly to states to collaboratively plan and execute broadband expansion in partnership with local and regional communities.² The goal will be to bring reliable, affordable high-speed internet to all residents and will require broadband providers that receive funding to offer at least one affordable service plan.³

Child care disruptions have declined recently. Still, 1 in 5 families had a care disruption in June, forcing 2.1 million families to cut work hours.

Child care disruptions, June 1 - 13, 2022

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



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

Child care disruptions have recently declined as the nation finds a new normal, with fewer restrictions, and more businesses and schools fully reopen. Families with children under 5, however, still face child care challenges. 1 in 5 adults experienced a child care disruption at some point during the 4 weeks ending June 13, 2022. Due to disruptions in child care, 2.1 million parents cut work hours, 1.6 million parents took unpaid leave, 1 million left a job, and another 521,000 lost a job.

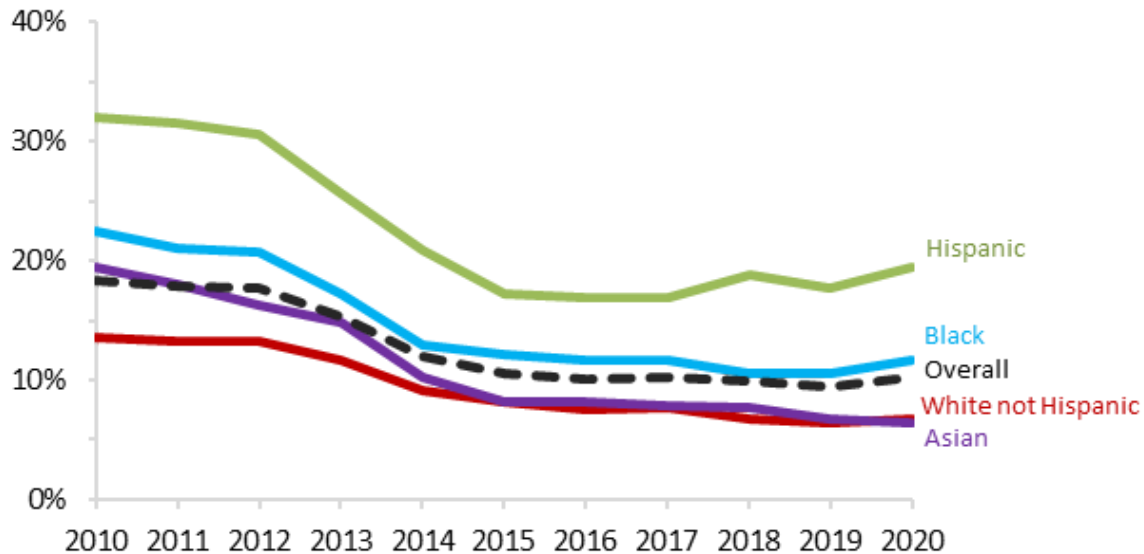
Women have disproportionately managed households and child care concerns during the pandemic and were more likely to cut hours and leave their jobs ([Employment Rate, By Sex](#)).¹ While employer-initiated decisions were the primary cause for workforce reductions at the start of pandemic, a recent survey finds that, in the last year, most women's decision to leave or reduce hours was driven by a lack of reliable child care.² In the same survey, 8 in 10 women said they could not afford to lose their jobs, with many suffering from high emotional stress when forced to make this decision ([Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression](#)).

The rising cost of child care remains a concern for families with children under 5 and inflation has only exacerbated the problem. Operating costs for child care centers are nontrivial, often leaving little in the budget for wages.³ American Rescue Plan dollars to support these costs are only a temporary relief, as experts say the sector has been underfunded for decades.⁴ Child care providers across the nation are concerned about having to continuously increase tuition in an effort to retain workers and keep their doors open, while also balancing how much more families can afford.⁵ A long-term investment in child care will be a critical step in stabilizing the sector.

From 2010 to 2016, the uninsured rate for non-elderly Americans decreased from 18% to 10%, then ticked upward for Black and Hispanic persons — widening disparities once again.

Lack of health insurance coverage by race/ethnicity, 2010-20

Nonelderly population age 0-64



Sources: [Census Bureau’s CPS ASEC](#) and [Kaiser Family Foundation](#). Notes: 2019 data (which was collected in March 2020) has known quality issues due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Changes in health insurance rates between 2016 and 2017, and between 2012 and 2013 are affected by changes in survey design.

Starting in 2010, the rates of the uninsured dramatically dropped with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. And while uninsured rates improved across all racial/ethnic groups, disparities remained with 1 in 5 non-elderly Hispanic individuals and nearly 1 in 8 non-elderly Black individuals in the U.S. lacking health insurance as of 2020. Notably, the uninsured rate among Black people actually increased by more than 1 percentage point from 2018 to 2020 – likely due to the loss of full-time employment when the pandemic hit.¹

Seven states in the South (AL, GA, FL, MS, NC, SC, and TN) have not adopted Medicaid expansion. As a result, according to the most recent American Community Survey data (2016-2020), 15% of working-age adults in AL, 18% in GA, 19% in FL, 18% in MS, 16% in NC, 16% in SC, and 14% in TN lack health insurance. In comparison, only 4% in Massachusetts were without coverage.

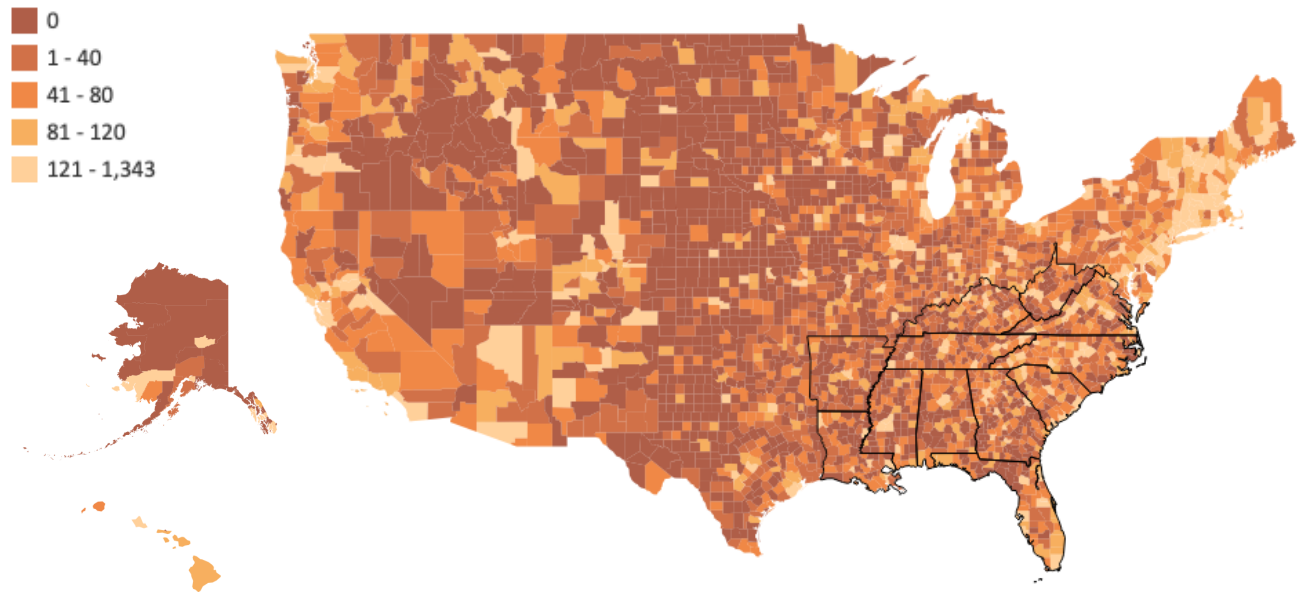
Lack of health insurance means many people incur medical debt. As of April 2021, an estimated 23% of Black working-age adults had medical debt, along with 20% of Hispanic working-age adults, and 16% of white working-age adults ([Medical Debt, by Race](#)).

Adults over 64 are not included in this indicator as they have the highest rates of health insurance coverage because most are eligible for Medicare.²

The South faces a shortage of pediatricians with only 100 per 100,000 children, compared to 111 per 100,000 in the rest of the nation.

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 2021 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.

The majority of 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. States in the Northeast have the most pediatricians, while states in the West and South have the fewest pediatricians per 100,000 children 0 to 14 years old. In the South, Mississippi has the lowest supply of pediatricians with only 68 pediatricians per 100,000 children and Arkansas has only 80.

Many American youth have experienced severe mental health issues during the pandemic, with one-quarter of all high school age girls and nearly half of all gay, lesbian, or bisexual high schoolers seriously considering suicide ([Youth Mental Health, by Sex and Sexual Identity](#)). The lack of pediatricians is concerning because these doctors are an important source of mental health care for children.¹ Moreover, pediatricians are parents' most trusted source of information on the Covid vaccine for children.² Without pediatricians to provide guidance, many young children may not receive this important protection despite its recent approval for children 6 months to 5 years old.³

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 from even before the pandemic struck, including student loan debt and household energy expenditures. Then, it examines current data on medical debt and employment rates by race and sex. 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 assessment of youth mental health and monthly child poverty rates.

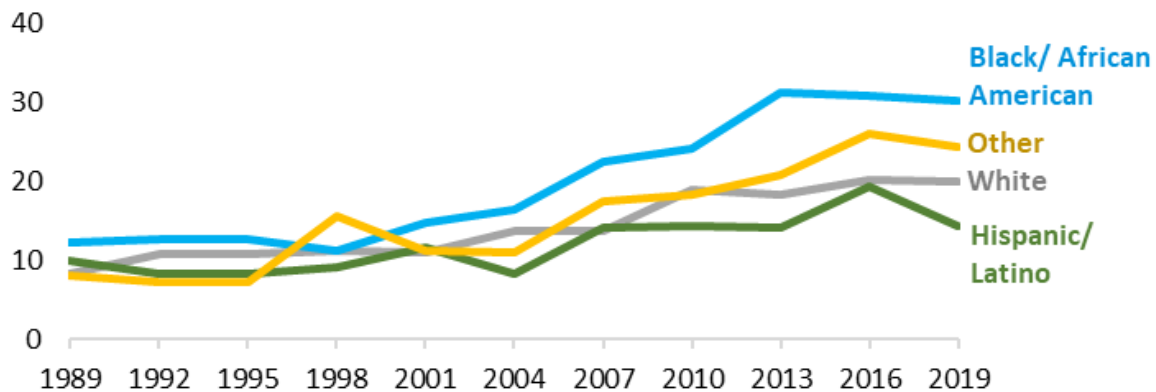
Indicators in this section

- Student loan debt, by race/ethnicity
- Home energy burdens, by state
- Medical debt, by race/ethnicity
- Employment rate, by race/ethnicity
- Employment rate, by sex
- Food insecurity, by state
- Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure, by state
- Symptoms of anxiety or depression, by state
- Youth mental health, by sex and sexual identity
- Monthly poverty rates, by age

The share of families with student loan debt has more than doubled over the last 30 years. Black households have been most likely to hold student loan debt, increasing from 12% in 1989 to 30% in 2019.

Education installment loans, 1989 - 2019

Percent of households holding education loans by race/ethnicity



Source: [Survey of Consumer Finances](#)

Before the pandemic hit, 1 in 5 families were saddled with student loan debt. In March 2020, the federal government paused student loan repayments in response to the economic toll of the pandemic. This saved borrowers an average of \$393 a month, an essential support as many struggled to cover basic household necessities. Once student loan payments resume, it is estimated that roughly 18 million borrowers will lose \$85.5 billion of their income annually.¹ This impact falls disproportionately on Black households, of which 30% held student loan debt in 2019.

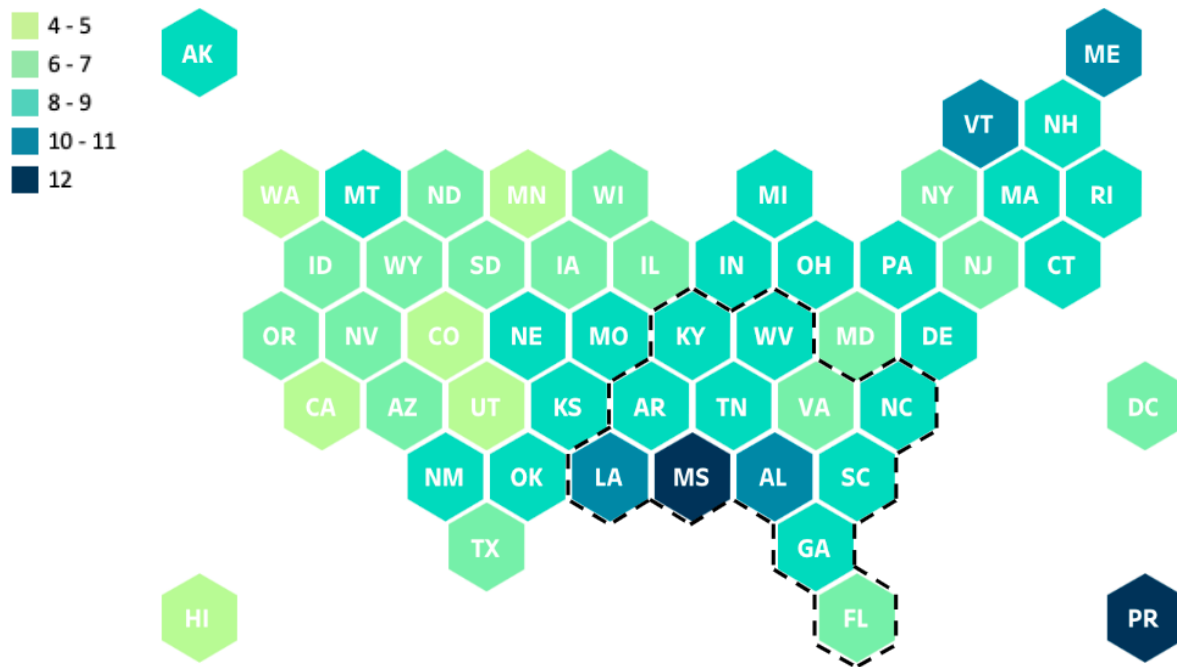
Recent studies found that women hold two-thirds of student loan debt, with Black women more than twice as likely to hold \$50,000 or more of undergraduate debt compared to white men.^{2,3,4} Though repayment plans such as Income-Driven Repayment (IDR) intend to lower borrowers' payments over an extended period of time, studies find that borrowers' student debt continues to mount because payments don't cover monthly interest.^{5,6} One Black borrower accepted \$24,000 in loans in 1990, yet after making 31 years of payments, owes \$125,000 today — their story is not unusual.⁷ A 2020 study by the American Council on Education revealed that twelve years after beginning college, Black graduates with a bachelor's degree owed 115% of their original loan amount, while Hispanic graduates owed 80% and white graduates owed 51%.⁸

While the U.S. Department of Education has taken steps towards addressing these historical failures, more substantial policy responses such as student loan debt cancellation up to \$50,000 per borrower would immediately increase the wealth of Black Americans by an estimated 40%, while adding \$174 billion to the nation's GDP in the first year.^{1,9}

Before Covid hit, low-income households in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi spent 10% or more of their income on home energy costs.

Home energy burdens among low-income households

Average percent of income spent on home energy costs, 2014-18



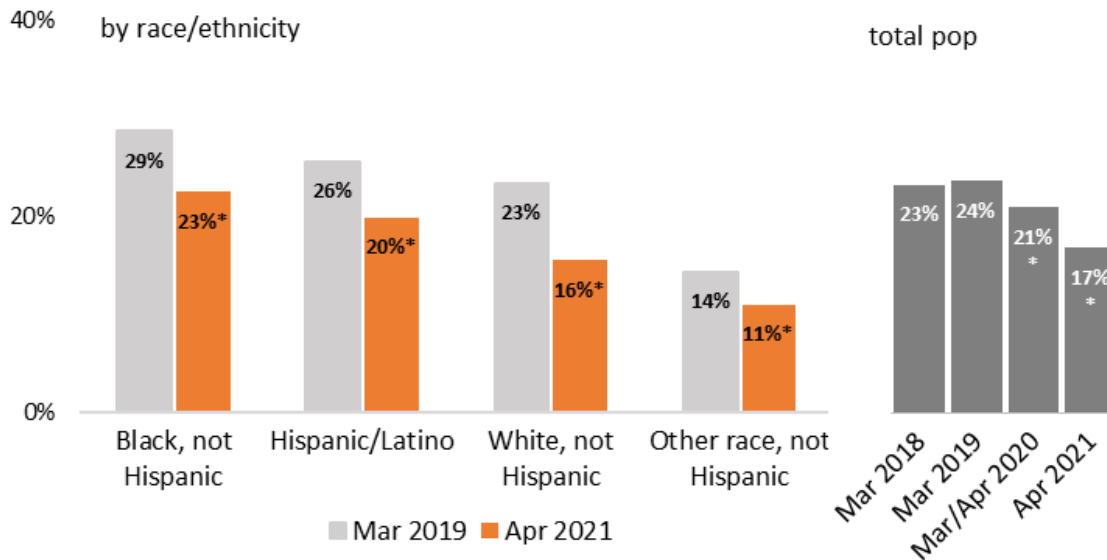
Source: [U.S. Department of Energy](#). Notes: “Energy burden” is defined as the percentage of gross household income spent on home energy costs. “Low-income household” is defined as below 80% of the Area Median Income, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Many Southerners with low incomes struggle to pay for home utilities. Before the pandemic, low-income households in AL, LA, and MS spent 10% or more of their income on energy costs. In November 2021, a survey of 3,500 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in AL, GA, MS, and New Orleans, LA revealed that most were struggling to pay for utilities. Respondents ranked this concern above all others including access to internet, affordable housing, employment, healthcare and child care.¹ A more recent (June 2022) survey of GA adults found that most continue to struggle to pay for utilities.²

Southerners often have higher energy consumption because they use more air conditioning in the hot summer months, and are more likely to use electric heating in the winter (which is more expensive than gas). More efficient lighting and appliances along with home insulation can cut electric consumption by up to one-third.³ The U.S. Department of Energy has long partnered with states and communities to help low-income families reduce their energy burden through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). The Bipartisan Infrastructure Act greatly expands WAP — allowing states and territories to access \$3.1 billion in funding to install insulation, update heating and cooling systems, and upgrade appliances to reduce utility bills for households with low incomes.³ Communities can also use ARP funds for utility assistance and weatherization programs.⁴

The share of working-age Americans with medical debt fell from 24% in 2019 to 17% in 2021. However, in 2021, 23% of Black adults still had medical debt compared to 16% of white adults.

Share of working-age adults (18-64) who reported medical debt, by race/ethnicity
March 2018 - April 2021



Source: [Urban Institute](#) Health Reform Monitoring Survey. Notes: Medical debt is self-reported, and does not indicate whether the debt is past due. “Other race” includes persons who reported a race not listed, or people who reported more than one race. *Statistically significant decline from March 2019.

Adults with medical debt often delay getting needed medical attention.¹ During the pandemic, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act boosted enrollments in public health insurance plans such as Medicaid, which contributed to lowering the share of adults with medical debt from 24% in March 2019 to 17% in April 2021.¹ But far more Black and Latino working-age adults continued to have medical debt in April 2021 (23% and 20% respectively) compared to white working-age adults (16%).

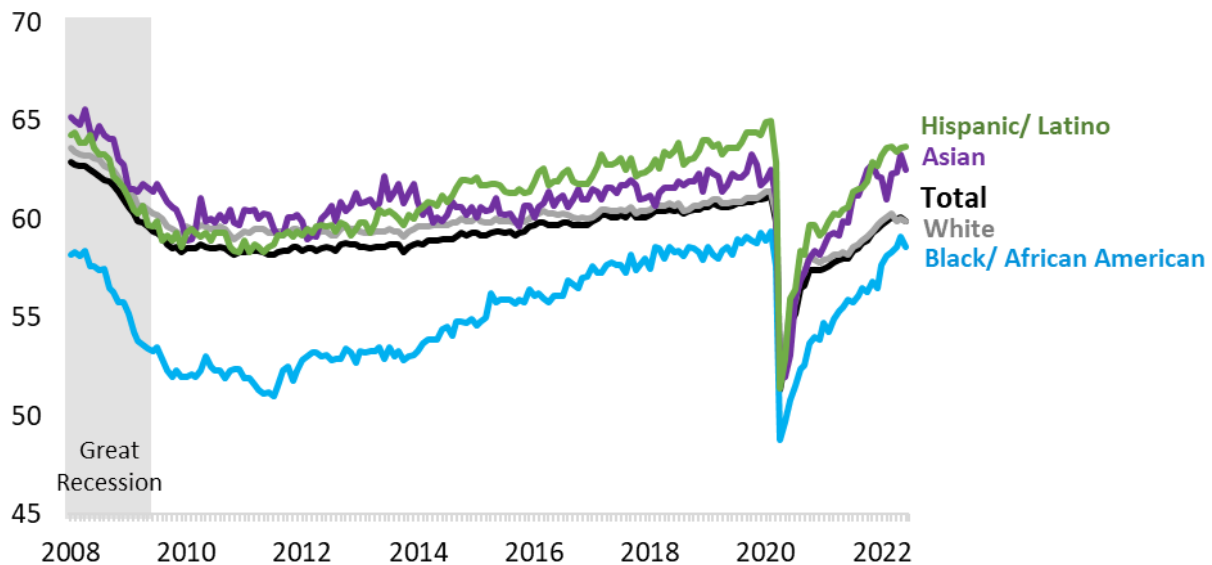
When the health emergency officially ends, many people will lose their public health insurance.² Residents of states that have not expanded Medicaid are particularly at risk. A June 2022 survey of Georgia adults, where Medicaid has not been expanded, found that 37% of Black Georgians, 33% of Hispanic Georgians, and 25% of white Georgians now have medical debt.³

The 7 Southern states that have not expanded Medicaid (AL, GA, FL, MS, NC, SC, and TN) can reduce medical debt levels by adopting Medicaid expansion. States that expanded Medicaid by 2014 saw a greater decline in medical debt among their residents than did states that failed to expand Medicaid.⁴

The employment rate for Black adults increased 2.1 points in the first half of 2022. Overall employment has inched up half a point.

Employment rate by race/ethnicity, U.S.

Jan 2008 - June 2022



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 employment rate for Black adults aged 16+ increased 2.1 points to 58.6% between December 2021 and June 2022, while overall employment increased 0.4 points to 59.9%. The overall employment rate remains 1.3 points below its pre-pandemic (Feb 2020) level of 61.2%.

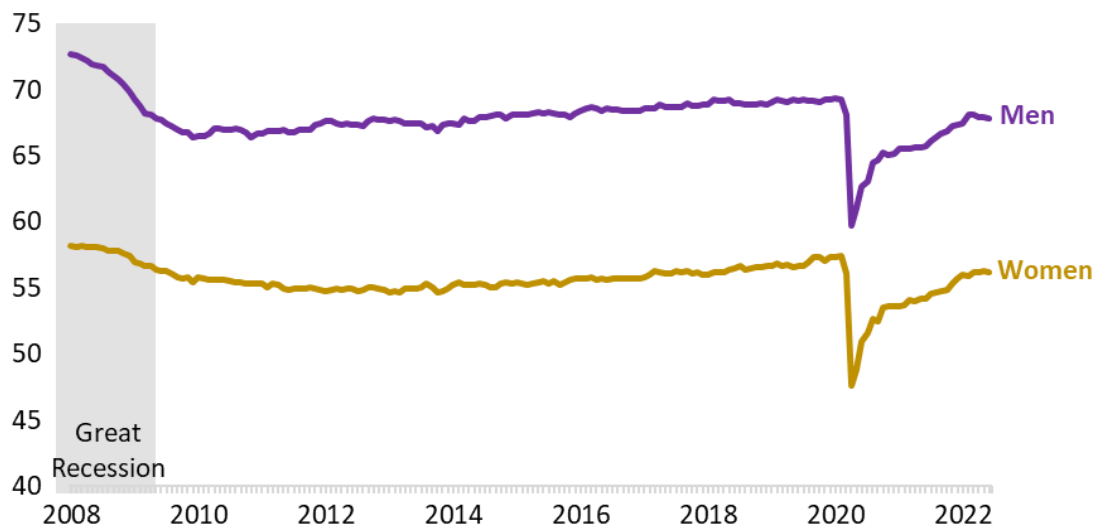
The economy has grown substantially in 2022, but inflation and rising interest rates are now slowing consumer spending, and a small number of employers have announced layoffs. Notably, the retail sector registered losses of nearly 28,000 jobs between March and June, and Black and Hispanic workers are overrepresented in the retail sector.^{1,2}

Many families are already struggling with food and housing insecurity ([Likelihood of Eviction or Foreclosure](#), [Food Insecurity](#)). If the economy begins to fall into recession and employment rates decrease this summer, more robust government benefits may be needed to keep families out of poverty.³

Employment rates for men and for women increased about half a point in the first half of 2022.

Employment rate by sex, U.S.

Jan 2008 - June 2022



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.

The employment rate for women increased 0.5 points to 56.2% between December 2021 and June 2022, while the rate for men increased 0.4 points to 67.8%. Employment rates for women remain about 12 points below those for men.

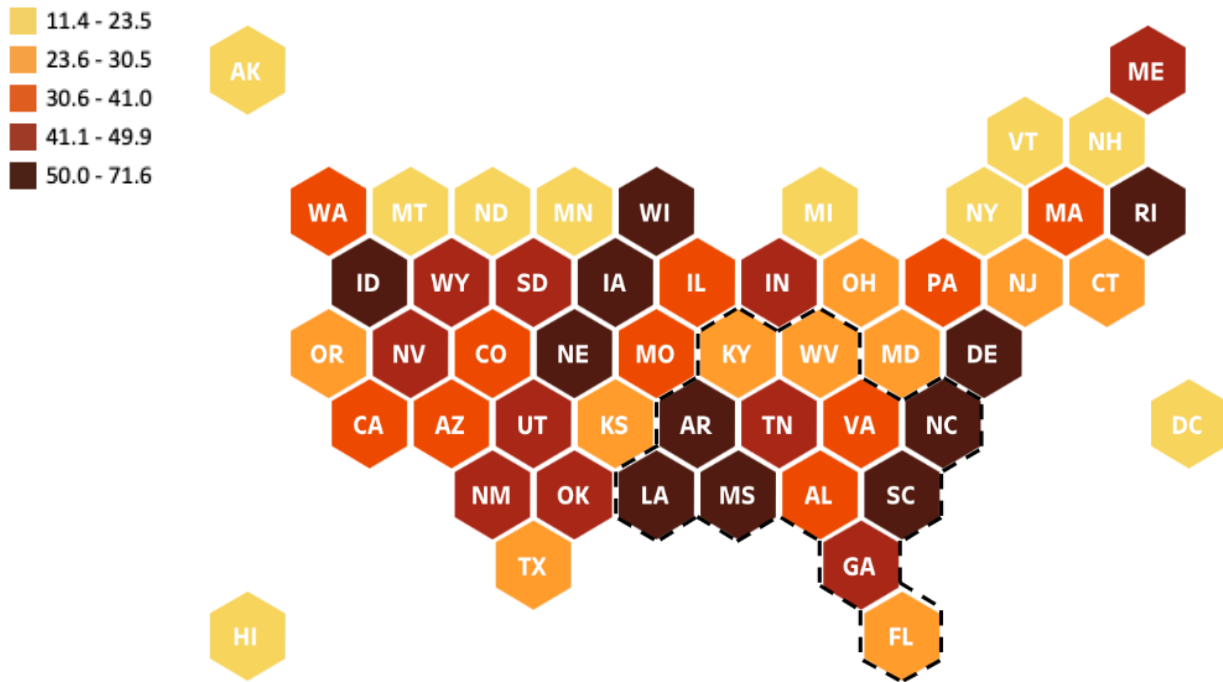
Child care and elder care remain significant impediments to women’s ability to return to work. In June, over 1 million parents left a job, another 520,000 lost a job, and 1.1 million didn’t look for a job because of child care disruptions ([Child Care Disruptions](#)). Mothers of children under 6 have been most likely to consider leaving their job or cutting back on hours.¹

The summer months are a time when many women leave the labor force to care for their children during school closures. Close to 1 million women could leave the workforce temporarily over the summer, contributing to a continued churn in the labor market.²

43% of Southerners (and 31% of non-Southerners) who were late on rent/mortgage payments as of June said they were at risk of losing their home. Arkansans were most at-risk at 72%.

Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure, June 1-13, 2022

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](#).

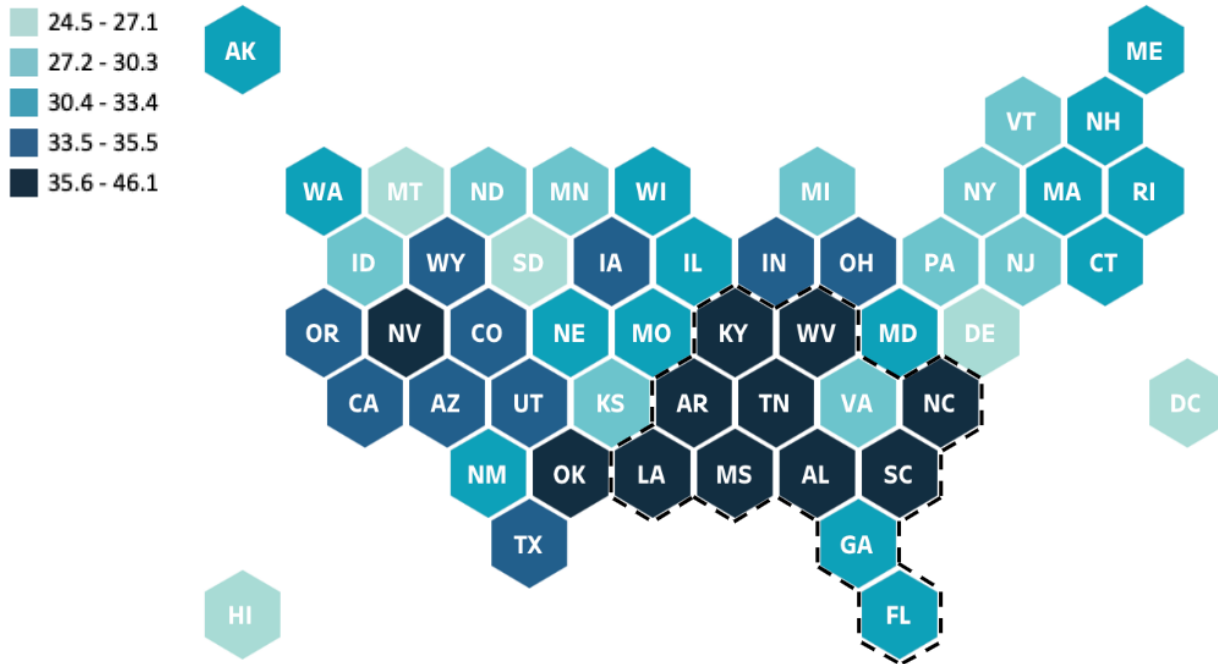
Over the last 12 months, the price of a single-family home has risen 20% and rising interest rates are making home buying even more expensive.^{1,2} These dynamics are increasing demand for rentals, which is pushing rents higher — now up 15% compared to one year earlier.³ Fears of foreclosure or eviction are rising, particularly across the South. Among adults not up to date on rent or mortgage, 72% of Arkansans, 62% of South Carolinians, 59% of Mississippians, 53% of North Carolinians, 50% of Louisianans, 46% of Tennesseans, and 45% of Georgians fear they will be evicted or foreclosed upon.

In May, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced it was doubling the size of its Eviction Protection Program from \$20 million provided in November 2021, to \$40 million. This program provides legal assistance for tenants who are at risk of eviction (it does not provide direct rental assistance).⁴ State and local officials that speed up the distribution of Emergency Rental Assistance funds can stabilize renters as inflation continues to threaten Americans’ financial stability ([Emergency Rental Assistance](#)).

33% of adults nationwide report symptoms of anxiety or depression, up from 11% in 2019. Southern states have the largest share of adults reporting symptoms: 46% in MS, 42% in KY, and 40% in LA and WV.

Symptoms of anxiety or depression, June 1-13, 2022

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.

Social isolation and uncertainty hit nearly every sector of society when Covid struck, amplifying anxiety and stress nationwide.^{1,2,3} The number of adults reporting symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorder has tripled since the start of the pandemic, up to 33% in June 2022 from 11% in 2019. 9 of the 11 states with the highest rates were in the South: 46% in MS, 42% in KY, 40% in LA and WV, and 36-38% in SC, AL, AR, TN, and NC.

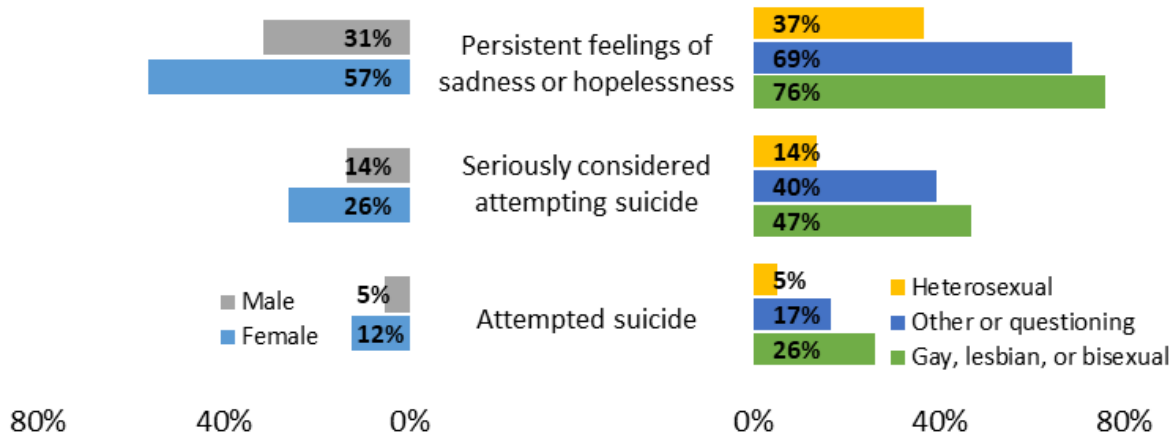
A new study finds that Black, Asian, and Hispanic communities experienced higher levels of anxiety and depression symptoms during the pandemic compared to 2019.⁴ Rates for unmet mental health care were similar across racial groups prior to the pandemic, but grew significantly for communities of color during the pandemic compared to white individuals ([Mental Health Providers](#)).

The effects of this mental health crisis continue to unfold, with increasing incidences of drug overdose deaths, road rage incidents, violent crime, child abuse, and firearm suicides^{5,6,7,8,9,10} ([Firearm Suicides](#)). Bolstering services like the updated three-digit national Suicide and Crisis Hotline “988” will be critical in supporting growing needs in long-term mental health care.¹¹

More than 1 in 3 high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness from 2020 to 2021, with rates higher among female, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other or questioning students.

Mental health among U.S. high school students, by sex and sexual identity

Jan 2020-June 2021



Source: [CDC Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey \(ABES\)](#). Note: The ABES survey was conducted Jan–June 2021 to assess student behaviors and experiences during the previous 12 months (n = 7,705).

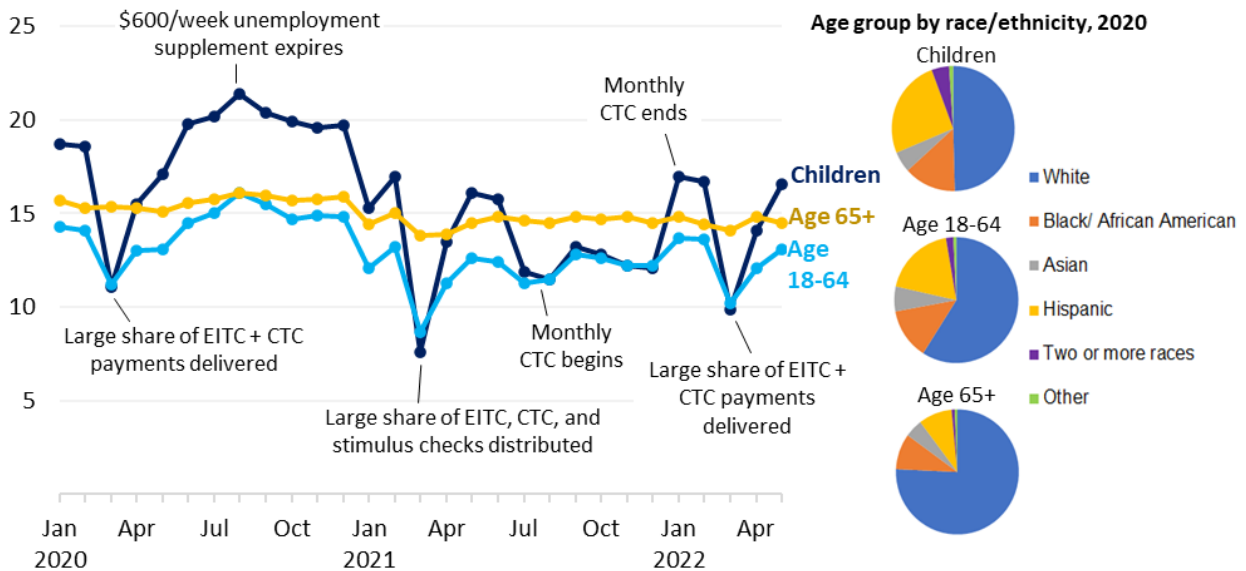
Between 2009 and 2019, the share of high school students experiencing feelings of sadness or hopelessness, seriously considering suicide, and creating a suicide plan increased by 40%, 36%, and 44%, respectively.^{1,2} Experts warn that the pandemic has caused these rates to spike again, declaring a youth mental health national emergency in October 2021.³ During the pandemic, the share of female high school students that experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and either seriously considered or attempted suicide, was twice the share of male students. Almost half of students that are gay, lesbian, or bisexual seriously considered attempting suicide, as did 40% of students who identify as other or questioning their sexuality. High school students that identify as other or questioning their sexuality attempted suicide at rates 3 times that of heterosexual students, while students who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual attempted suicide at 5 times the rate.

Many Southern states have advanced anti-gay legislation in recent months and a recent survey found these efforts have negatively impacted the mental health of LGBTQ youth.^{4,5} The American Psychological Association specifically condemned Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay” bill stating that it stigmatizes and marginalizes many children, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and even suicide.⁶

Building safe and affirming schools and expanding access to mental health care are among several systemic and institutional calls to action to avert the youth mental health crisis.¹

Child poverty spiked from 12% to 17% following the expiration of monthly child tax credit payments at the end of 2021.

Estimated monthly poverty rates by age group, U.S.
Jan 2020-May 2022



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 earned income tax credits (EITC), child tax credits (CTC), economic impact payments (stimulus checks), as well as unemployment, SNAP, and other benefits.

The American Rescue Plan provided monthly Child Tax Credit (CTC) payments from July through December 2021, raising children out of poverty such that the child poverty rate fell to about 12% each month. In July 2021, food insecurity among CTC recipients fell by one-quarter.¹ The loss of these CTC payments put children back into poverty. After their expiration in December 2021, child poverty spiked to 17% in January 2022, where, according to the most recent data, it remains (after a temporary dip in March when families received tax refunds).

The chronic stress that impoverished children experience actually disrupts the development of the brain. The accumulated burdens of economic hardship — including uncertainty about whether there will be enough food to eat each day, frequent home moves, exposure to violence, and lack of supervision when parents work irregular schedules in low-wage jobs — lead to chronic stress that adversely impacts brain architecture.^{2,3} Children living in poverty develop less gray matter volumes which, in turn, negatively impacts their school readiness, and results in later difficulties in memory and self-regulation.^{4,3} Large-scale, long-term studies have found that increasing government support for children boosts their academic achievement, increases their earnings as adults, decreases their likelihood of needing government support as adults, and reduces their likelihood of becoming incarcerated.^{5,6}

REFERENCES

Foreword

1. “COVID-19 Survey Summary: July 8, 2022”. Societal Experts Action Network. https://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/SEAN-COVID-19-Survey-Summary_7-8-22.pdf
2. “Dallas County raise COVID-19 threat level to orange”. FOX4 KDFW. July, 2022. <https://www.fox4news.com/news/dallas-county-covid-19-threat-level-orange>
3. “Civilian Labor Force Level”. FRED. July, 2022. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CLF16OV>
4. “Voting Laws Roundup: December, 2021”. Brennan Center for Justice. January, 2022. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-december-2021>
5. “Presence and Types of Internet Subscriptions in Household”. American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau. 2020. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B28002%20>

Vaccine-preventable deaths per 1 million adults

1. “New Analysis Shows Vaccines Could Have Prevented 318,000 Deaths”. Brown School of Public Health and Microsoft AI for Health. May, 2022. <https://globalepidemics.org/2022/05/13/new-analysis-shows-vaccines-could-have-prevented-318000-deaths/>
2. “Rates of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations by vaccination status”. CDC. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#covidnet-hospitalizations-vaccination>
3. “Rates of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Vaccination Status”. CDC. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#rates-by-vaccine-status>
4. “FDA advisers greenlight Novavax COVID-19 vaccine”. Wadman. Science Insider. June, 2022. <https://www.science.org/content/article/fda-advisers-greenlight-novavax-covid-19-vaccine>
5. “About 300,000 children under 5 have received at least one Covid-19 shot, White House says”. Klein. CNN. July, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/07/politics/covid-19-vaccine-children-under-5/index.html>
6. “This is how many lives could have been saved with COVID vaccinations in each state”. Simmons-Duffin, Nakajima. NPR. May, 2022. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/05/13/1098071284/this-is-how-many-lives-could-have-been-saved-with-covid-vaccinations-in-each-sta>

Long Covid infections per 100,000 population

1. “Long COVID: Household Pulse Survey”. CDC. June, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/long-covid.htm>
2. “Immunological dysfunction persists for 8 months following initial mild-to-moderate SARS-CoV-2 infection”. Phetsouphanh, Darley, Wilson, Howe, Munier, Patel, Juno, Burrell, Kent, Dore, Kelleher, and Matthews. Nature Immunology. January, 2022. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41590-021-01113-x>
3. “Persistent Exertional Intolerance After COVID-19, Insights From Invasive Cardiopulmonary Exercise Testing”. Singh, Joseph, Heerdt, Cullinan, Lutchmansingh, Gulati, Possick, Systrom, and Waxman. January, 2022. [https://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0012-3692\(21\)03635-7/fulltext](https://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0012-3692(21)03635-7/fulltext)
4. “Nervous system consequences of COVID-19”. Spudich, Nath. Science.org. January, 2022. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abm2052>
5. “The Investigation of Pulmonary Abnormalities using Hyperpolarised Xenon Magnetic Resonance Imaging in Patients with Long-COVID”. Grist, Collier, Walters, Chen, Eid, Laws, Matthews, Jacob, Cross, Eves, Durant, McIntyre, Thompson, Schulte, Raman, Robbins, Wild, Fraser, and Gleeson. MedRxiv. February, 2022. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.02.01.22269999v1>

6. "Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count". The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html?name=styln-coronavirus®ion=TOP_BANNER&block=storyline_menu_recirc&action=click&pgtype=LegacyCollection&variant=show&is_new=false
7. "U.S. scientists enroll nearly 40,000 patients in high-stakes, \$1.2 billion study of long Covid". Kimball. CNBC. July, 2022. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/08/long-covid-us-scientists-to-enroll-40000-in-1point2-billion-study.html>
8. "Living with COVID-19 will not be easy for many Americans suffering from long COVID-19, particularly those from diverse communities". Sanchez, Gilbert, and Busette. Brookings. June, 2022. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2022/06/21/living-with-covid-19-will-not-be-easy-for-many-americans-suffering-from-long-covid-19-particularly-those-from-diverse-communities/?utm_campaign=Brookings%20Brief&utm_medium=email&utm_content=217394132&utm_source=hs_email
9. "Covid long-haulers face grueling fights for disability benefits". Rowland. The Washington Post. March, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/03/08/long-covid-disability-benefits/>
10. "Is 'long Covid' worsening the labor shortage?" Bach. Brookings. January, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/is-long-covid-worsening-the-labor-shortage/>

Firearm suicide rates and number of firearm suicides, U.S.

1. "Sheriffs who denounced red flag law now using it". Hawryluk. Louisiana Illuminator. July, 2022. <https://lailuminator.com/2022/07/05/sheriffs-who-denounced-red-flag-law-now-using-it/?eType=EmailBroadcastContent&eld=b07d0829-701a-4f85-a7fb-b4ed91ad5ee6>
2. "Effects of Risk-Based Firearm Seizure Laws in Connecticut and Indiana on Suicide Rates, 1981-2015". Kivisto, Phalen. Psychiatry Online. June, 2018. <https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.201700250>
3. "Criminal Justice and Suicide Outcomes with Indiana's Risk-Based Gun Seizure Law". Swanson, Easter, Alanis-Hirsch, Belden, Norko, Robertson, Frisman, Lin, Swartz, and Parker. The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law. June, 2022. <http://jaapl.org/content/early/2019/04/15/JAAPL.003835-19>

Total jobs by month, U.S.

1. "Is 'long Covid' worsening the labor shortage?" Bach. Brookings. January, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/is-long-covid-worsening-the-labor-shortage/>
2. "Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. city average, by expenditure category". U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. June, 2022. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t01.htm>
3. "Wage Growth Tracker". Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. July, 2022. <https://www.atlantafed.org/chcs/wage-growth-tracker>
4. "Three questions for the labor market's near future". Henry-Nickie, Barr, and Seo. Brookings. June, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2022/06/17/three-questions-for-the-labor-markets-near-future/>
5. "The Summer Drop in Female Employment". Price, Wasserman. June, 2022. <https://www.brendanmichaelprice.com/research/working/PriceWasserman-SummerDrop.pdf>

Quits rate by industry

1. "Is 'long Covid' worsening the labor shortage?" Bach. Brookings. January, 2022. https://www.brookings.edu/research/is-long-covid-worsening-the-labor-shortage/?utm_campaign=Brookings%20Brief&utm_medium=email&utm_content=200588850&utm_source=hs_email

2. "Hunt for Cheap Labor Gets More Expensive for Corporate America". Gupta. Bloomberg. January, 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-07/hunt-for-cheap-labor-gets-more-expensive-for-corporate-america>
3. "How Two Best Friends Beath Amazon". Kantor, Weise. The New York Times. April, 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/business/amazon-union-christian-smalls.html?fbclid=IwAR11xPVDmq8rdQjMrgEzqGvjifks-ayrBCoBQ_RU_eFS1gX2D_TsCkUVS4s
4. "Union files objections to Amazon's actions in Bessemer, AL election". Clark. The Verge. April, 2022. <https://www.theverge.com/2022/4/7/23015822/union-objections-amazon-bessemer-alabama-election-re-do>
5. "How a bunch of Starbucks baristas built a labor movement". Molla. Vox. April, 2022. <https://www.vox.com/recode/22993509/starbucks-successful-union-drive>
6. "Why Worker Organizing Is So Essential To The Food Industry". Schweizer. Forbes. June, 2022. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/errolschweizer/2022/06/22/why-worker-organizing-is-so-essential-to-the-food-industry/?sh=7be2eb4a6e13>
7. "Will the message sent by Amazon workers turn into a movement?" Pazzanese. The Harvard Gazette. April, 2022. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/04/the-future-of-labor-unions-according-to-harvard-economist/>
8. "Why Organized Labor Struggles in the American South". Green. Union Track. January, 2020. <https://uniontrack.com/blog/labor-american-south>
9. "Starbucks union push in Atlanta part of national organizing trend". Kanell. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. June, 2022. <https://www.aic.com/news/starbucks-union-push-in-atlanta-part-of-national-organizing-trend/X63EYJ7KNBDVCECVU5JZIQ3OM/>

Number of FEMA disaster declarations by county

1. "2020 U.S. billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in historical context". Smith. Climate.gov. January, 2021. <https://www.climate.gov/disasters2020>
2. "Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters: Overview". National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/>
3. "Disaster Relief Fund, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security". USASpending.Gov. https://www.usaspending.gov/federal_account/070-0702
4. "As Disaster Costs Rise, So Does Inequality. Howell, Elliott. Sage Journals. December, 2018. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2378023118816795>
5. "Natural Disasters and Housing Markets. The Tenure Choice Channel". Dillon-Merrill, Ge, and Gete. December, 2018. <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2019/preliminary/paper/YZ56fSb6>

Net coverage error by race and ethnicity, U.S.

1. "Key facts about the quality of the 2020 census". Cohn, Passel. Pew Research Center. June, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/06/08/key-facts-about-the-quality-of-the-2020-census/>
2. "Experts: Asian population overcount masks community nuances". Tang, Schneider. AP News. April, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-us-census-bureau-lifestyle-race-and-ethnicity-771f885eff9fc0fc11fd3aafc533267b>
3. "2020 Post-Enumeration Survey". U.S. Census Bureau. May, 2022. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/2020-post-enumeration-survey.html>
4. "Arkansas declined to spend money on census, missed over 5% of its residents, report states". Vrbin. Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette. June, 2022. <https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2022/jun/27/no-funds-by-state-hampers-census/?news-arkansas>

5. “Mississippi has more people and is most likely more diverse than the 2020 Census reported. Harrison. Mississippi Today. May, 2022.
<https://mississippitoday.org/2022/05/29/mississippi-census-undercount-population/>

Percent of Emergency Rental Assistance funds distributed

1. “Treasury Announces \$30 Billion in Emergency Rental Assistance Spent or Obligated with Over 4.7 Million Payments Made to Households Through February 2022”. U.S. Department of the Treasury. March, 2022.
<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0688>
2. “Rental Market Tracker: Typical U.S. Asking Rent Surpassed \$2,000 for First Time in May”. Ellis. Redfin News. June, 2022. <https://www.redfin.com/news/redfin-rental-report-may-2022/>
3. “After Slow Start, U.S. States Spend Billions in Emergency Rent Relief”. Yee. Bloomberg. March, 2022.
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-22/how-the-race-to-deliver-emergency-rental-aid-w-as-won>
4. “HUD Expands Eviction Protection and Diversion Program with Additional \$20 Million”. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. May, 2022.
https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_22_091

Free and equal elections clauses in state constitutions

1. “Free and Equal Election Clauses in State Constitutions”. National Conference of State Legislatures. November, 2019.
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/redistricting/free-equal-election-clauses-in-state-constitutions.aspx>
2. “Arkansas Supreme Court strikes down state’s voter ID law”. Barnes. Reuters. October, 2014.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-arkansas-vote/arkansas-supreme-court-strikes-down-states-voter-id-law-idUSKCN0I42QR20141015>
3. “Arkansas Photo ID Law Struck Down, Violates State Constitution”. Brennan Center for Justice. October, 2014.
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/arkansas-photo-id-law-struck-down-violates-state-constitution>
4. “Free and Equal Elections: A New State Constitutionalism for Partisan Gerrymandering”. Khokher. Columbia Human Rights Law Review. 2020. https://hrlr.law.columbia.edu/files/2020/11/001_Khokher.pdf
5. “Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief”. Commonwealth of Kentucky Franklin Circuit Court Division. January, 2022.
<https://redistricting.lis.edu/wp-content/uploads/KY-graham-20220120-complaint.pdf>
6. “LWV Utah and MWEV v. Utah State Legislature”. Campaign Legal Center. March, 2022.
<https://campaignlegal.org/cases-actions/lwv-utah-and-mweg-v-utah-state-legislature>
7. “Maryland Congressional Redistricting Challenge”. Democracy Docket. April, 2022.
<https://www.democracymatters.com/cases/maryland-congressional-redistricting-challenge-szeliga/>
8. “Voting Laws Roundup: December, 2021”. Brennan Center for Justice. January, 2022.
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-december-2021>
9. “Voting Laws Roundup: May, 2022”. Brennan Center for Justice. May, 2022.
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-may-2022>

Voting access and infant mortality

1. “Effect of democracy on health: ecological study”. Franco, Álvarez-Dardet, and Ruiz. PubMed. December, 2004.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC535957/#:~:text=Democracy%20shows%20an%20independent%20positive%20association%20with%20health%2C,that%20seem%20to%20be%20associated%20with%20health%20status>
2. “Health & Democracy Index”. Democracy Index. <https://democracyindex.hdhp.us/>

3. "Infant Mortality". CDC.
<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/infantmortality.htm>

State supreme court representation gaps, May 2022

1. "Racial Diversity and Judicial Influence on Appellate Courts". Kestel. American Journal of Political Science. January, 2013. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23496550>
2. "What Research Shows About the Importance of Supreme Court Diversity". Bannan, Keith. Brennan Center For Justice. February, 2022.
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/what-research-shows-about-importance-supreme-court-diversity>
3. "State Supreme Court Diversity – May 2022 Update". Powers, Bannan. Brennan Center for Justice. May, 2022.
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/state-supreme-court-diversity-may-2022-update#:~:text=In%20July%202019%2C%20the%20Brennan.than%2060%20years%20of%20data>
4. "The Stunning Lack of Diversity on the State Court Bench". Lambda Legal.
<https://www.lambdalegal.org/node/42701>

Counties with no or only one newspaper ("news deserts")

1. "The State of Local News". Abernathy. Northwestern Local News Initiative. June, 2022.
<https://localnewsinitiative.northwestern.edu/research/state-of-local-news/report/>
2. "News Deserts And Ghost Newspapers: Will Local News Survive?" UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media. 2020.
<https://www.usnewsdeserts.com/reports/news-deserts-and-ghost-newspapers-will-local-news-survive/>
3. "We are becoming a nation of local news haves and have nots". Waldman. Poynter. July, 2022.
<https://www.poynter.org/commentary/2022/decline-of-local-news-steven-waldman/>
4. "Overview and key findings of the 2022 Digital News Report". Newman. Reuters Institute. June, 2022.
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/dnr-executive-summary>

Lack of internet access by race/ethnicity, U.S.

1. "As schools close due to the coronavirus, some U.S. students face a digital 'homework gap'". Auxier, Anderson. Pew Research Center. March, 2020.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/16/as-schools-close-due-to-the-coronavirus-some-u-s-students-face-a-digital-homework-gap/>
2. "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Implementation". Federal Register. January, 2022.
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/10/2022-00221/infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act-implementation>
3. "Fact Sheet: Department of Commerce's Use of Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal Funding to Help Close the Digital Divide". U.S. Department of Commerce. November, 2021.
<https://www.commerce.gov/news/fact-sheets/2021/11/fact-sheet-department-commerces-use-bipartisan-infrastructure-deal-funding>

Child care disruptions, June 1-13, 2022

1. "Gender differences in couples' division of childcare, work and mental health during COVID-19". Zamarro, Prados. Review of Economics of the Household. January, 2021.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-020-09534-7>
2. "Forced Out of Work: The Pandemic's Persistent Effects on Women and Work". Stanford University. June, 2022.
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e7cf2f62c45da32f3c6065e/t/62bde72fc48ebe6be04ea2da/1656612655531/rapid-women-and-work-factsheet-june2022.pdf>

3. “Why do parents pay so much for child care when early educators earn so little?” Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. April, 2020.
<https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/infographic/why-do-parents-pay-so-much-for-child-care-when-early-educators-earn-so-little/>
4. “The American Rescue Plan Shored Up Child Care, But a Long-Term Solution Is Necessary”. Gibbs, Falgout. Center for American Progress. March, 2022.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-american-rescue-plan-shored-up-child-care-but-a-long-term-solution-is-necessary/>
5. “Child care centers can’t afford to stay open. Here’s what this means for families”. Cohen. CNN. July, 2022.
<https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/06/economy/rising-cost-child-care/index.html>

Lack of health insurance coverage by race/ethnicity, 2010-20

1. “What Does the CPS Tell Us About Health Insurance Coverage in 2020?” Tolbert, Orgera, and Damico. Kaiser Family Foundation. September, 2021.
<https://www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/what-does-the-cps-tell-us-about-health-insurance-coverage-in-2020/>
2. “Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2015”. Barnett, Vornovitsky. U.S. Census Bureau. September, 2016.
<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-257.pdf>

Mental health providers per 100,000 population, 2021

1. “Uncertainty and stress: Why it causes diseases and how it is mastered by the brain”. Peters, McEwen, and Friston. Progress in Neurobiology. September, 2017.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301008217300369>
2. “More Proof That Money Can Buy Happiness (or a Life with Less Stress)”. Blanding. Harvard Business School. January, 2022. <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/more-proof-that-money-can-buy-happiness>
3. “Inflation Causing Hardship for 45% of U.S. Households”. Younis. Gallup. December, 2021.
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/357731/inflation-causing-hardship-households.aspx>
4. “Many Teens Report Emotional and Physical Abuse by Parents During Lockdown”. Barry. The New York Times. March, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/health/covid-mental-health-teens.html>
5. “Danger in danger: Interpersonal violence during COVID-19 quarantine”. Mazza, Marano, Lai, Janiri, and Sani. PubMed. July, 2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7190494/>
6. “2020 Fatality Data Show Increased Traffic Fatalities During Pandemic”. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. June, 2021.
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/2020-fatality-data-show-increased-traffic-fatalities-during-pandemic>
7. “Reports of Road Rage Shootings are on the Rise”. Burd-Sharps, Bistline. Everytown. April, 2022.
<https://everytownresearch.org/reports-of-road-rage-shootings-are-on-the-rise/>
8. “Preventing gun violence takes more than police”. Henderson, Brown. Brookings Institute. March, 2022.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2022/03/31/preventing-gun-violence-takes-more-than-police/>
9. “About Multiple Cause of Death, 2018-2020, Single Race”. CDC.
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-expanded.html>
10. “Building a sustainable behavioral health crisis continuum”. Frank, WAchino. Brookings. January, 2022.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/usc-brookings-schaeffer-on-health-policy/2022/01/06/building-a-sustainable-behavioral-health-crisis-continuum/>

General pediatricians per 100,000 children age 0-14, 2021

1. "Pediatricians are plentiful, but not in poorer states". Freed, Nahra, and Wheeler. University of Michigan. July, 2004. <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/476758>
2. "KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: Winter 2021 Update On Parents' Views Of Vaccines For Kids". Hamel, Lopes, Kearney, Stokes, Kirzinger, Sparks, and Brodie. Kaiser Family Foundation. December, 2021. <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-winter-2021-update-on-parents-views-of-vaccines/>
3. "CDC Recommends COVID-19 Vaccines for Young Children". CDC. June, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0618-children-vaccine.html>

Education installment loans, 1989 - 2019

1. "How Canceling Student Debt Would Bolster the Economic Recovery and Reduce the Racial Wealth Gap". Bustamante. Roosevelt Institute. December, 2021. <https://rooseveltinstitute.org/2021/12/08/how-canceling-student-debt-would-bolster-the-economic-recovery-and-reduce-the-racial-wealth-gap/>
2. "Deeper in Debt: Women & Student Loans". American Association of University Women. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/deeper-in-debt/>
3. "Resilient But Deeper in Student Debt: Women of Color Faced Greater Hardships Through COVID-19". Bamona, Glottmann, and Riojas. Center for Responsible Lending. June, 2022. <https://www.responsiblelending.org/sites/default/files/nodes/files/research-publication/crl-resilient-women-covid19-jun2022.pdf>
4. "COVID-19 Adds to Economic Hardship of Those Most Likely to Have Student Loans". King, Bennett, and Monte. U.S. Census Bureau. August, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/student-debt-weighed-heavily-on-millions-even-before-pandemic.html>
5. "Education Needs to Take Steps to Ensure Eligible Loans Receive Income-Driven Repayment Forgiveness". U.S. Government Accountability Office. March, 2022. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/720/719612.pdf>
6. "A regressive student loan system results in costly racial disparities". Seamster, Aja. Brookings. January, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2022/01/24/a-regressive-student-loan-system-results-in-costly-racial-disparities/>
7. "Jim Crow Debt: How Black Borrowers Experience Student Loans". The Education Trust. October, 2021. https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Jim-Crow-Debt_How-Black-Borrowers-Experience-Student-Loans_October-2021.pdf
8. "Student Debt: The Unique Circumstances of African American Students". Baum. American Council on Education. <https://www.equityinhighered.org/resources/ideas-and-insights/student-debt-the-unique-circumstances-of-african-american-students/>
9. "Department of Education Announces Actions to Fix Longstanding Failures in the Student Loan Programs". U.S. Department of Education. April, 2022. <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/department-education-announces-actions-fix-longstanding-failures-student-loan-programs>

Home energy burdens among low-income households

1. “Two years into the pandemic, Southern families’ struggle with housing weighs heavy as lawmakers begin ARP spending plans”. The Southern Economic Advancement Project. March, 2022. https://theseap.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ARP-Survey-Release_March_2022.pdf
2. “A Survey of Georgia Residents: State of the State”. The Southern Economic Advancement Project. June, 2022. https://theseap.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PerryUndem_GA_6.29-Deck.pdf
3. “Low-Income Household Energy Burden Varies Among States – Efficiency Can Help In All of Them”. U.S. Department of Energy. January, 2019. https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2019/01/f58/WIP-Energy-Burden_final.pdf
4. “May municipalities use ARP funds to promote increased home ownership among low-income residents or increase energy efficiency in homes?” Bloomberg Cities Network. <https://bloombergcities.jhu.edu/faqs/may-municipalities-use-arp-funds-promote-increased-home-ownership-among-low-income-residents>

Share of working-age adults (18-64) who reported medical debt, by race/ethnicity

1. “Medical Debt Fell during the Pandemic. How Can the Decline Be Sustained?” Karpman, Martinchek, and Braga. The Urban Institute. May, 2022. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Medical%20Debt%20Fell%20during%20the%20Pandemic%20How%20Can%20the%20Decline%20Be%20Sustained.pdf>
2. “Time to Get It Right: State Actions Now Can Preserve Medicaid Coverage When Public Health Emergency Ends”. Wagner, Erzouki. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. May, 2022. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/time-to-get-it-right-state-actions-now-can-preserve-medicaid-coverage-when-public>
3. “A Survey of Georgia Residents: State of the State”. The Southern Economic Advancement Project. June, 2022. https://theseap.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PerryUndem_GA_6.29-Deck.pdf
4. “Medical Debt in the US, 2009-2020”. Kluender, Mahoney, Wong, et al. JAMA Network. July, 2021. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2782187>

Employment rate by race/ethnicity, U.S.

1. “All Employees, Retail Trade”. FRED. July, 2022. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/USTRADE>
2. “Retail Jobs Among the Most Common Occupations”. Anderson. U.S. Census Bureau. September, 2020. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/profile-of-the-retail-workforce.html#:~:text=In%202018%2C%20there%20were%209.8,workers%20with%203.1%20million%20workers.>
3. “Three questions for the labor market’s near future”. Henry-Nickie, Barr, and Seo. Brookings. June, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2022/06/17/three-questions-for-the-labor-markets-near-future/>

Employment rate by sex, U.S.

1. “Mothers are being left behind in the economic recovery from COVID-19”. Bauer. Brookings. May, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/05/06/mothers-are-being-left-behind-in-the-economic-recovery-from-covid-19/>
2. “The Summer Drop in Female Employment”. Price, Wasserman. June, 2022. <https://www.brendanmichaelprice.com/research/working/PriceWasserman-SummerDrop.pdf>

Food insecurity, June 1-13, 2022

1. “Three questions for the labor market’s near future”. Henry-Nickie, Barr, and Seo. Brookings. June, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2022/06/17/three-questions-for-the-labor-markets-near-future/>

2. "Consumer Price Index Summary". U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. June, 2022.
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>
3. "Food banks note increased demand, seeking donations". Hutcheson. Camden News. June, 2022.
<https://www.camdenarknews.com/news/2022/jun/17/food-banks-note-increased-demand-seeking-donations/>
4. "Local food pantries are in danger of running out of food". Quynh. CBS Miami. July, 2022.
<https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/local-food-pantries-are-in-danger-of-running-out-of-food/>
5. "Central Ky. food pantries see growing need for help". Jones. WKYT. July, 2022.
<https://www.wkyt.com/2022/07/08/central-ky-food-pantries-see-growing-need-help/>
6. "More people seeking help from East TN food banks as prices rise, straining some food banks' resources". Garcia-Franceschini. WBIR. July, 2022.
<https://www.wbir.com/article/news/local/east-tennessee-food-banks-affected-by-inflation-and-rising-prices/51-da6816ac-731a-4c42-9f7c-0383c47959d3>

Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure, June 1-13, 2022

1. "S&P/Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index". FRED. June, 2022.
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CSUSHPIISA>
2. "MBA: Mortgage Application Rates Plummet Nearly 7% From Last Week". Wolak. National Mortgage Professional. June, 2022.
<https://nationalmortgageprofessional.com/news/mba-mortgage-application-rates-plummet-nearly-7-last-week>
3. "Housing Data". Zillow Research. <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>
4. "HUD Expands Eviction Protection and Diversion Program With Additional \$20 Million". U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. May, 2022.
https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_22_091

Symptoms of anxiety or depression, June 1-13, 2022

1. "Uncertainty and stress: Why it causes diseases and how it is mastered by the brain". Peters, McEwen, and Friston. Progress in Neurobiology. September, 2017.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301008217300369>
2. "More Proof That Money Can Buy Happiness (or a Life with Less Stress)". Blanding. Harvard Business School. January, 2022. <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/more-proof-that-money-can-buy-happiness>
3. "Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality: A Meta-Analytic Review". Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, and Stephenson. Perspectives on Psychological Science. March, 2015.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1745691614568352>
4. "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mental Health and Mental Health Care During The COVID-19 Pandemic". Thomeer, Moody, and Yahirun. Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. March, 2022.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40615-022-01284-9>
5. "Drug Overdose Deaths". CDC.
https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/dccd/viz/04_DrugOverdose/04_DrugOverdose
6. "Many Teens Report Emotional and Physical Abuse by Parents During Lockdown". Barry. The New York Times. March, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/health/covid-mental-health-teens.html>
7. "Danger in danger: Interpersonal violence during COVID-19 quarantine". Mazza, Marano, Lai, Janiri, and Sani. PubMed. July, 2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7190494/>
8. "2020 Fatality Data Show Increased Traffic Fatalities During Pandemic". National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. June, 2021.
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/2020-fatality-data-show-increased-traffic-fatalities-during-pandemi>

9. "Reports of Road Rage Shootings are on the Rise". Burd-Sharps, Bistline. Everytown. April, 2022. <https://everytownresearch.org/reports-of-road-rage-shootings-are-on-the-rise/>
10. "Preventing gun violence takes more than police". Henderson, Brown. Brookings Institute. March, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2022/03/31/preventing-gun-violence-takes-more-than-police/>
11. "988: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline launches new 3-digit number". Howard, Stracqualursi. CNN Health. July, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/16/health/988-national-suicide-prevention-lifeline-launches/index.html>

Mental health among U.S. high school students, by sex and sexual identity

1. "Protecting Youth Mental Health". The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory. 2021. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>
2. "Mental Health Among Adolescents". CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/factsheets/dash-mental-health.pdf>
3. "AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health". American Academy of Pediatrics. October, 2021. <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>
4. "LGBTQ Rights". ACLU. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/lgbtq-rights>
5. "Anti-Transgender Legislation". The Trevor Project. 2022. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/#anti-transgender-legislation>
6. "APA president condemns Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' bill". American Psychological Association. March, 2022. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2022/03/florida-dont-say-gay>

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

1. "Association of the Implementation of Child Tax Credit Advance Payments With Food Insecurity in US Household". Schafer, Gutiérrez, Ettinger, et. al. JAMA Network. January, 2022. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2788110>
2. "Irregular Work Scheduling and Its Consequences". Golden. Economic Policy Institute. April, 2015. <https://www.epi.org/publication/irregular-work-scheduling-and-its-consequences/>
3. "Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain". National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. January, 2014. https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2005/05/Stress_Disrupts_Architecture_Developing_Brain-1.pdf
4. "Association of Child Poverty, Brain Development, and Academic Achievement". Hair, Hanson, Wolfe, and Pollack. JAMA Pediatrics. December, 2015. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4687959/>
5. "Is the Social Safety Net a Long-Term Investment? Large-Scale Evidence from the Food Stamps Program". Bailey, Hoynes, Rossin-Slater, and Walker. National Bureau of Economic Research. April, 2020. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26942>
6. "Let the Child Tax Credit work". Berlin, Gale. Brookings. July, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2022/07/07/let-the-child-tax-credit-work/>

About this series

History has shown that large-scale crises accelerate pre-existing trends, exacerbate inequities, and permanently change societies and civic life. For decades, the American South has lagged on nearly every indicator of prosperity and equity, and similar patterns are emerging with the current crisis. *Pandemic to Prosperity: South* offers an overview of the Covid-related impacts on our lives and livelihoods, governments, civic institutions, and overall well-being, with a focus on the states of **Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.**

Pandemic to Prosperity: South's thoughtfully-curated data serves to illuminate the challenges facing the South'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 the progress made, or the lack thereof, over time.

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) launched the *Pandemic to Prosperity* series in July 2020 to look at the nation as a whole and this is the sixth edition of *Pandemic to Prosperity: South*.

About Fair Count (FairCount.org) Founded by Stacey Abrams in 2019 and anchored in Georgia, Fair Count works to build long-term power in communities that have been historically undercounted in the decennial census, underrepresented at the polls, and whose communities are often torn apart in redistricting.

About the Southern Economic Advancement Project (TheSEAP.org) SEAP works to broaden economic power and build a more equitable future in the South through research, policy, and network-building. Focused on 12 Southern states and marginalized/vulnerable populations within the region, SEAP amplifies the efforts of existing organizations and networks that work toward similar goals. The organization was founded by Stacey Abrams in 2019 and is a fiscally-sponsored project of the Roosevelt Institute.

About the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC.org) 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. 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 is also 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 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 supports nonprofit and government organizations across policy areas using data analytics and visualization to promote data-informed decisions for marginalized populations. Previously, Alysha's focus was on increasing college access and success for underrepresented populations, developing her expertise as an admissions counselor, a high school college advisor, and ultimately a nonprofit administrator. As the Director of Program and Operations for America Achieves and Bloomberg Philanthropies' CollegePoint initiative, she oversaw day-to-day programming and led the data operations, working closely with the research and evaluation team. Alysha also currently leads an Anti-Racism Discussion Series that she co-developed for Outer Coast, a postsecondary institution in Sitka, Alaska. She received her MPP from the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, and her BA from Adelphi University.

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 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 Program Manager for the Census Quality Reinforcement Task Force 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.

Acknowledgments

Substantive contributors to this Pandemic to Prosperity report:

Seth Amgott, Census research and strategic communications
Cameron Blossom, Communications and design, NCoC
John Kilcoyne, Project manager, NCoC
Allyson Laackman, Chief Strategy Officer, NCoC
Tamika Turner, Strategic communications

Suggested citation format:

Plyer, A., Rashid, A., Ortiz, E., & Savell, T. (2022, July 21). *Pandemic to Prosperity*. Retrieved from: PandemicToProsperity.org

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.



National Conference on Citizenship
Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.